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Editor's note

There we are, in 2021, in year two of a deadly pandemic, political upheaval and ecological disaster in many parts of the world that concern – directly or indirectly – the contributors, readers, and editors of the *Bulletin*. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you, for all your patience, support, and loyalty, we would not be able to keep going without you. With this, slightly belated, issue we are delighted to introduce a new series called 'Encounters with …', where scholars revisit works that have had a major impact on their research. We are honoured that Professor Charles Forsdick has agreed to start off the series with a wonderfully personal and incisive essay reflecting on Edward W. Said's seminal *Culture and Imperialism*. If you are interested in contributing an article about a critic, a particular book or article that has had a lasting impact on your thinking and writing, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Bonne lecture,

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Encounters with … *Culture and Imperialism*

My lightly faded and slightly battered copy of *Culture and Imperialism* is a reminder that eBooks will probably never have the potential to act as the personal archives that physical books can themselves become. Almost thirty years after its purchase, I can remember my anticipation before collecting the volume, when it appeared in 1993, from the campus bookshop at Lancaster University. Pre-Amazon, and before the use of email had become in any way widespread, it was a matter of placing an order and waiting patiently for a notification to reach you through the internal mail. I was at an early stage in my doctoral studies and was confident that this latest intervention from one of the most prominent and controversial Arts and Humanities scholars of the 1980s and 1990s would provide an invaluable steer at a crucial stage in the development of my project. A hardcopy book, particularly one that has been revisited regularly over a number of years, tells stories about its owner and reader. Looking at my copy of Said's volume, a book plate reminds me I purchased it with a token received as a prize in my finals the previous year. There are various marginal annotations, reflecting an enthusiastic initial engagement on publication, but also subsequent consultations (a post-it note marks the section on 'Camus and the French imperial experience' for instance, revisited when I was later grappling with the Camus-Sartre controversy for a chapter in Eddie Hughes's *Cambridge Companion to Camus*). Train tickets (Liverpool-Norwich; Norwich-Liverpool) and a letter from the bank (setting up a standing order to AUPHF in 2001) serve as bookmarks, but also as reminders of those contexts in which I have returned repeatedly to Said's work over the past three decades. Then tucked into the back flap of the dust jacket are four pages of initial notes, capturing my impressions and priorities on first reading (there is much on the references to counterpoint scattered throughout the book; an appreciation of the suggestion that espousing a critical approach should not equate to choosing an item from a menu; and a highlighting of Said's core thesis that '[m]ost professional humanists are […] unable to make the connection between the prolonged and sordid cruelty of such practices as slavery, colonialist and racial oppression, and imperial subjection on the one hand, and the poetry, fiction, and philosophy of the society that engages in the these practices on the other').[1] Among the pages is also a printout of Ibrahim Wade's review of *Culture and Imperialism* in *Le Monde diplomatique* (January 1994). The French translation of the book would only appear with Fayard in 2000, and my attention to this early *compte-rendu*–linking Said's work to a broader 'humanisme à vocation humaine'–was undoubtedly part of an emerging interest on my part in the (un)translatability of ideas and uneasy incursions of postcolonial ideas into French thought.

Such attention to the materiality and the material context of the books we study and on which we draw in our research–those volumes that accompany us across the decades and to which we regularly return–is in many ways deeply banal and of little interest to anyone except ourselves. There is arguably little exceptional about the personal archaeologies they reflect, which means that in sharing such detail there is a clear risk of self-indulgence. We each have, however, a few volumes that, through the persistence of their influence on us, achieve such a status. It can be enlightening to move away from any strictly autobiographical exploration of these examples in order to locate such books within those broader social, political and intellectual contexts in which we first discovered them and through which our engagement has evolved. While remaining deeply personal, encounters with these books, we grasp in retrospect, need to be understood in the broader frames of those worlds forming, reforming and re-forming around us.

What is particularly striking about this copy of *Culture and Imperialism* is the way it links back clearly to a particular moment in my own development as a teacher and researcher. No matter what our discipline or whatever the relative state of preparedness of the nascent project at the time, many will recognize in retrospect those emotions I experienced in the early stages of researching for a doctoral thesis in the Arts and Humanities. Daunted by the magnitude of the task ahead, I recall a feeling of liberation as I was–for the first and perhaps only time in my career–

[1] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. xiv.

encouraged to range freely across the existing scholarship that would allow me to shape my own thinking. It was in the context that I would engage actively for the first time with the work of Edward Said. I was in many ways lucky in that exploring the subject of my research, the Breton poet, novelist and theorist of the exotic Victor Segalen (1878–1919), had been an ambition since I had first discovered his work at the age of nineteen. Appointed in a year off–before beginning my undergraduate studies–as *assistant à temps partiel* to the Collège Jean Jaurès, Huelgoat, in the heart of Finistère, I stumbled in 1988 across the *stèle* in the forest that now marks the site of the author's death almost seventy years previously. I was immediately drawn in, initially through the bilingual poetics of *Stèles*, and then by the defamiliarizing voices of the ethnographic novel *Les Immémoriaux*, to the challenges of reading his *œuvre*. Segalen did not feature on my undergraduate curriculum (I decided to write an undergraduate dissertation on Unanimism in Jules Romains for reasons that now escape me, other than that of the purchase in Waterfield's bookshop of several volumes of the author's work that had once belonged to Enid Starkie, the influential scholar of French literature at Oxford), and so I waited until registering for a PhD to begin my study of his writings in earnest.

I started doctoral research in Lancaster in 1992, under the wise supervision of the eminent Gidean David Steel. Integrated rapidly into a lively cross-campus research culture, I joined the lunacy research group, led by a then fellow PhD student, the historian of medicine Rhodri Hayward, and this allowed me to develop an interest in the medico-literary dimensions of studying Segalen's work. I was drawn at the same time, however, towards the emerging fields of studies in travel writing and mobility studies, where I explored eclectically French-language sources (notably the work of semiologist and sociologist Jean-Didier Urbain, whose remarkable study of anti-tourism, *L'Idiot du Voyage*, had appeared in 1991) and blended these with new work by anglophone critics (Lancaster sociology professor John Urry's *Tourist Gaze* was published in 1990, Mary-Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* in 1992). My undergraduate experience had been largely canonical, providing me with groundings in literature from the medieval to modern periods that have since proved invaluable in research and teaching. The methodological nationalism underpinning this approach had not prevented access to a few non-French authors–Samuel Beckett, Henri Michaux, Eugène Ionesco and Jean-Jacques Rousseau all featured–but their alterity (translingual and other) was disguised by the capaciousness of a category of French literature adept at neutralizing any difference. The Copernican revolution of Peter France's 'literature in French', with all that such subtle rephrasing implied, was several years off: his *New Oxford Companion* would only appear in 1995. In terms of bibliodiversity, I recall an undergraduate lecture series by Christopher Robinson on queer fiction which led to his pioneering 1995 monograph *Scandal in the Ink: Male and Female Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century French Literature*, but the thought of reading authors from the wider Francosphere never occurred to me. Similarly, while I had enjoyed being part of a reading group run by my tutor Wes Williams on Freud and the Bible, I was otherwise in urgent need of a new conceptual and theoretical frame in which to orient my emerging research.

Broad and eclectic reading, guided largely by curiosity, allowed me to engage with a range of material that still resonates for me today. From Pratt, mentioned above, I drew on the concepts of 'contact zone' and 'travelee', both of which destabilized normative understandings of European travellers such as Segalen and opened up new approaches to accounts of their itineraries in the wild. Emerging work on exoticism proved invaluable and allowed me to challenge the then often-lazy under-theorization of the concept in postcolonial criticism: Chris Bongie had published *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle* in 1991, and two key titles by Jean-Marc Moura, *L'Image du tiers monde dans le roman français contemporain* and *Lire l'Exotisme*, appeared the following year. Engagement with new currents in critical anthropology proved to be particularly stimulating. James Clifford–one of the few anglophone scholars who had written at that time on Segalen–foregrounded the genealogies of cultural hybridity in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (1988), while reflecting at the same time on the anxieties and ambiguities of cross-cultural encounters and contact. Clifford's work with George Marcus was similarly a revelation, with those debates triggered by *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of*

Ethnography (1986) leading me towards an acknowledgement that travel narratives, while not 'made up', were (as Peter Hulme would later note in 'Talking about Travel Writing', his English Association conversation with Tim Youngs) always in some way 'made'. I turned also to the work of Renato Rosaldo, whose focus in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (1993) on imperialist nostalgia, that recurrent desire of colonizing societies to recover what their colonialism has destroyed, resonated in suggestive ways with Clifford's own engagement with salvage ethnography. At the same time, the experience of living in an international hall of residence further extended my reading lists: a friendship with Guyanese student Ashni Singh led in particular to a fascination with Walter Rodney, whose *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) contextualized and historicized for me the emerging strands of postcolonial thought evident already in anthologies such as Laura Chrisman and Patrick Williams's *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory* (1994).

I outline this range of references as it reminds me of that sense of that erratic, eclectic but ultimately invigorating immersion in theory and thought that I experienced in the early stages of doctoral registration–and in which Said's writings would play a key role. Reading Victor Segalen was at that time challenging on a number of levels. Segalen's work was scattered across multiple editions, most of which lacked any serious critical apparatus. Key texts–*Les Immémoriaux*, *Stèles*, *Peintures*, *Equipée*, *René Leys*–were available in paperback, but many others–*Les Cliniciens-ès-lettres*, *Le Double Rimbaud*, *Dans un monde sonore*, *Briques et tuiles*, and crucially the *Essai sur l'exotisme*–were only then published in the elegant but more difficult-to-find versions produced by Fata Morgana and Rougerie. The first *œuvres complètes*, edited in two volumes by Henry Bouillier in the *Bouquins* series for Laffont, would appear shortly after I had submitted my thesis in autumn 1995, and there was a further twenty-five years to wait before Segalen would be guided expertly by Christian Doumet into the Pléiade. Equally tricky was negotiating the criticism on Segalen's work. Henry Bouillier's 1961 doctoral thesis–breathtakingly erudite but characterized by the dead hand of a post-symbolist interpretation–continued, three decades later, to hold considerable sway. His deliberate avoidance of any colonial contextualization was already attracting, however, increasing scrutiny, not least in the wake of Gilles Manceron's remarkable 1991 biography published by Lattès. This latter work challenged many orthodoxies, still fiercely defended by Segalen's family, concerning the author's sexuality, drug habits and suicide. Tzvetan Todorov's inclusion of the *exote* as a key theoretical co-ordinate in his *Nous et les Autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine*, a text that had appeared in the year of bicentenary of the French Revolution, signalled other possible new directions in scholarship–rejected by the Segalenian old guard as *tiers-mondistes*–that I was nevertheless keen to pursue. (The dismissal of decoloniality and the confection of recent concepts such as *Islamo-gauchisme* have a lengthy pedigree in France.) Finally, the discovery that Edouard Glissant and Abdelkebir Khatibi had encountered Segalen at decisive stages in the emergence of their own thinking, in 1950s Paris and Casablanca respectively, further piqued my growing curiosity about the possibility of a hybrid, paradoxical 'Segalen postcolonial'.

Glissant had initially come across the author in the 1955 'Club du Meilleur Livre' edition of *Stèles, Peintures, Equipée*, his enthusiastic review of which ('Segalen, Segalen!') appeared in *Les Lettres nouvelles* (before being republished in *L'Intention poétique* in 1961). As Khatibi explains in his novel *La Mémoire tatouée* (1971), he had been given a copy of *Les Immémoriaux* by his literature teacher at the Lycée Lyautey: 'Quand il expliquait Segalen', Khatibi's narrator notes, 'en insistant sur la mort des cultures, je savais qu'il me donnait des armes.' In a 1989 interview with Jean Scemla reproduced in the *Bulletin de l'Association Victor Segalen*, the Moroccan writer described his relationship with Segalen in terms that have always fascinated me: 'il faut s'éloigner de Segalen tout en le mangeant, c'est-à-dire en l'absorbant magiquement.' The metaphor of anthropophagic consumption resonated with imagery to which I was drawn in Barthes's 'Phénomène ou mythe ?'. My attention had been drawn to this text, one of the *Petites mythologies du mois* from 1954, by a then early-career lecturer at Lancaster, Andy Stafford. Published, like Glissant's review of Segalen, in *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, it did not make the final cut when *Mythologies* was published as a volume three years later. Writing on Rimbaud as myth, Barthes promotes here an understanding of the poet 'mangé par les hommes, par ceux de l'Histoire réelle, et non ceux de l'empyrée littéraire'. The

approach seemed to combine an emphasis on the consumption and resultant transformation of literature with an interest in what Edward Said himself dubbed the 'worldliness' of the text. It was one that attracted me in particular as I sought to negotiate the often-contradictory colonial and postcolonial readings of Segalen, to understand the fundamental tensions in an author who was, in Glissant's terms, profoundly complicit in the systems of which his work serves as a sustained critique: 'le premier qui a posé la question de la diversité du monde, qui a combattu l'exotisme comme forme complaisante de la colonisation; et il était médecin sur un bâtiment militaire'.

In this task, the work of Edward Said played a fundamental role. I had not read him as an undergraduate (*Orientalism* might, and if not should, have featured in the bibliographies for lectures on texts such as *La Chanson de Roland*). The first book of his that I purchased was *After the Last Sky*, Said's portrait of Palestinian life and identity accompanied by images by the Swiss documentary photographer Jean Mohr. A reflection on identity and exile, *After the Last Sky* is also a study, invaluable for Modern Linguists, in double vision, in being simultaneously inside and outside a culture, and attempting to capture the creative tensions of that experience. It was inevitably *Orientalism*, however, that featured early in preparatory reading for my PhD. The text's inherent comparatism drew me to an earlier body of nineteenth-century French travel writing by Chateaubriand, Fromentin, Nerval and others that served as an immediate genealogy for Segalen's work and also featured heavily in his own reading, as the bibliographical fragments of his *Essai sur l'exotisme* make clear. The work also allowed me to explore the convergences and divergences of *Orientalism* and exoticism, important territory that had then attracted little attention, and to reflect at the same time on the (un)translatability of those terms. The largely ignored French translation of *L'Orientalisme: L'Orient créé par l'Occident*, published in 1980 (hence only two years after the English-language original), was prefaced by Todorov, inviting a reading of Said's work in relation to *Nous et les Autres*, a study that had, as noted already, appeared towards the end of the same decade.

The ability to work across traditions–linguistic, cultural, intellectual–has always struck me as a key aspect of the Modern Linguist's arsenal. I was drawn in this context to study, in real time, the emerging French resistance to postcolonial thought. In practice, this meant that a body of theory largely based on French-language sources, when translated back from anglophone campuses to France itself, was met in the early 1990s with genuine hostility. Another dimension of Said's work–on 'traveling' theory–allowed me to reflect on these iterations, and my broader debt to the diversity of his thought would become further apparent across the remainder of his career, notably with the publication of *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (2000), a timely collection that appeared when I was grappling with the distinctions between travel and exile, and *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (2006), a book that fed into my engagement with the final decade of Edouard Glissant's life.

My response on first reading to *Orientalism* was an ambivalent one. While I was of course attracted–as an emerging scholar of exoticism, travel writing and colonial discourse–to its core thesis about the West's discursive construction of elsewhere, I was struck also by the increasingly lively debates seeking to challenge and attenuate these ideas. Aijaz Ahmad's notable Marxist critique appeared in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature* in 1992. Here, he famously identified Said's 'Aeschylus-to-Kissinger narrative', a positing of discursive homogeneity whose rhetoric fails to acknowledge the diversity of Orientalist representations across the various ideological niches in which they are produced. One of Said's approaches, described by Daniel Martin Varisco in *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid*, his 2007 account of the reception of the book, is that of the catalogue. Segalen, who features only once in *Orientalism*, is drawn into this 'list mode' approach. I recall my perplexity when first faced with these sentences:

> Not that Pound, Eliot, Yeats, Arthur Waley, Fenollosa, Paul Claudel (in his *Connaissance de l'est*), Victor Ségalen and others were ignoring 'the wisdom of the East', as Max Müller had called it a few generations earlier. Rather the culture viewed the Orient, and Islam in

> particular, with the mistrust with which its learned attitude to the Orient had always been freighted.[2]

There was no denying that Segalen's work formed part of a pattern of misrepresentation of non-Western cultures: his emphasis (in a work such as *Equipée*) on the tensions between the *réel* and the *imaginaire* demonstrated active self-awareness in this regard, as did his claims in the *Essai sur l'exotisme*–anticipating Glissant's own call for a *droit à l'opacité*–about the mutual impenetrability of different cultures. In the afterword to the new 1995 edition of *Orientalism* that appeared just as I was submitting my PhD thesis, Said persisted in equating Segalen with a Romantic tradition:

> [F]or artists like Nerval and Segalen, the word 'Orient' was wonderfully, ingeniously connected to exoticism, glamour, mystery and promise. But it was also a sweeping historical generalization […] [T]he guild of orientalists has a specific history of complicity with imperial power, which it would be Panglossian to call irrelevant.[3]

What struck me in quotations such as these was the seemingly indiscriminate accumulation of examples, always an invitation for specialists to bring nuance. The relationship to China of those in the catalogue was radically different (Segalen was, for instance, the only author among those lists to have a good understanding of the country and one of the few to have spent time there), and the politics and poetics underpinning their work often radically divergent (the inclusion of Claudel made this clear).

The appearance of *Culture and Imperialism* brought some order to my thinking. Published fifteen years after *Orientalism*, it was eagerly awaited as a response to Said's critics and as a nuancing of the theses in his earlier book. In the event, although the author saw his new study as a sequel to its predecessor, *Culture and Imperialism* only obliquely fulfilled those purposes. As a student of exoticism with a particular interest in China and the Pacific and with reservations about the translatability of 'Orientalism' to other locales, I was drawn immediately to Said's acknowledgement of a 'more general pattern of relationships between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories'.[4] The 1993 book reveals a similar breadth of reference, both linguistic and chronological, but there is an effort to historicize the primary corpus in ways not evident in *Orientalism*. Said's claim that imperialism is 'the major, I would say the determining, political horizon of modern Western culture' made a significant impression on me as I grappled with the challenges of reading literature whose production was closely associated with, and actively facilitated by, its author's links to the French colonial empire.[5] At the same time, I was struck–as someone interested in literature and culture–by the premise that 'the enterprise of Empire depends on the idea of having an Empire'.[6] Said gave me licence, as a student of French literature and culture, to read Segalen in ways that were seen as deeply problematic in a context of criticism *outre-Manche*, in France itself: 'Now the trouble with the idea of culture is that it entails not only venerating one's own culture but also thinking of it as somehow divorced from, because transcending, the everyday world.'[7]

A chapter that attracted my particular attention at the time was the one on Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. It suggests how literature and culture can be deconstructed to demonstrate their imbrications in the imperial violence–in this case associated with the transatlantic traffic in enslaved Africans–that shaped the context of its production and initial reception. (The recent confection by the right-wing press in the UK of a controversy around limited proposals by curators at Jane Austen's House to update their museum displays in the light of Austen's proven links to

[2] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1995 [1978]), p. 252.
[3] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 341; 342.
[4] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xi.
[5] Ibid., p. 60.
[6] Ibid., p. 11.
[7] Ibid., p. xiv

slavery through her father, George Austen, reveals the continued necessity of such an approach.) A focus on canonical texts and a rigorously philological commitment to grounding the study in an extensive bibliography of existing scholarship sits alongside an active engagement with, and foregrounding of the continued importance of, key decolonial thinkers and activists such as Cabral, Césaire, Fanon, Lumumba and C.L.R. James. At the same time, I discovered in *Culture and Imperialism* significant earlier critical work, such as Alatas's *Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977), that predated and anticipated postcolonial theory, revealing in the process the complicated genealogies of that body of thought and critical practice. Said's reading of Johannes Fabian's critique of the denial of coevalness, elaborated in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983), also showed me how there was an urgent need to illuminate the Western constructions of civilizational hierarchies–and the complicity of scholars in such processes. In these critical manoeuvres, one of Said's purposes was to distance himself from any emerging postcolonial orthodoxy, accordingly challenging efforts to identify him as one of the founders, alongside Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, of that rapidly institutionalized body of thought. French-language material played a major role here. The foregrounding of Algeria, in the study of Camus, but also the reading of Fanon in the chapter on 'Resistance and Opposition', not only revealed to me the ways in which Francophone authors narrated their liberation in real time, coterminously with the processes of decolonization, but suggested also that different paradigms of postcoloniality were possible, divergent from those dominant in (anglophone) postcolonial criticism.

Although absent from the book's index, Segalen still featured, much in the same way as he had in Said's homogenizing catalogues in *Orientalism*. *Culture and Imperialism* again absorbs the Breton author into a catalogue of writers who are seen to introduce the space of empire into the metropolitan tradition of the novel: 'Loti, the early Gide, Daudet, Maupassant, Mille, Psichari, Malraux, the exoticists like Segalin [*sic*], and of course Camus [who] project a global concordance between the domestic and imperial situations'.[8] Said goes on also to link him to authors concerned largely with the Maghreb, where Segalen in fact spent only a brief period, and about which he wrote little: 'For writers like Segalen and Gide, Algeria is an exotic locale in which their own spiritual problems […] can be addressed and therapeutically treated.'[9] It was the deployment of counterpoint, however, that allowed me to negotiate any uneasiness with this denial of discursive heterogeneity and to address a sneaking suspicion that Said's familiarity with Segalen's work was limited. The musical image is key to *Culture and Imperialism*, and although Said's understanding of the contrapuntal is largely implicit (I had the honour subsequently of supervising two PhD theses, by Catherine McGlennan in Glasgow and Siobhán Shilton in Liverpool, that sought to unpick these intricacies), it suggests a means of bringing together, while retaining as distinctive, different political traditions, cultural artefacts and bodies of thought. Writing about Gide's *L'Immoraliste* and Camus's *L'Etranger*–texts that I had studied at A-level and as an undergraduate–Said outlined new approaches that spoke directly to the challenges I faced in my own research:

> To read these major works of the imperial period retrospectively and heterophonically with other histories and traditions counterpointed against them, read them in the light of decolonization, is neither to slight their great aesthetic force nor to treat them reductively as imperialist propaganda. Still, it is a much graver mistake to read them stripped of their affiliations with the facts of power which informed and enabled them.[10]

As I attempted in my doctoral research to read Segalen into the colonial context of French Polynesia, as well as in a semi-colonial frame linking France and China, this awareness of new approaches to what Said dubbed in his opening chapter 'Overlapping Territories' and 'Intertwined Histories' proved invaluable. At the same time, there was a clear resonance between Saidian

[8] Said, *Culture*, p. 85.
[9] Ibid., p. 222.
[10] Ibid., p. 195.

counterpoint and the aesthetics of diversity towards which Segalen himself gestured in the fragments of the *Essai sur l'exotisme*.

The contrapuntal methods underpinning *Culture and Imperialism* offered me new ways of reading, in particular beyond the 'French-and-Francophone' frame with which I was increasingly dissatisfied. Said's counterpoint suggested alternative understandings of the 'and' in this disciplinary label, implying that it was genuinely connective rather than serving as evidence (as often appeared to be the case in France itself) of an attempt to keep these two elements apart. Frustrated by the methodological nationalism deployed in French academic institutions to relegate Francophone postcolonial writing to the field of *littérature comparée*, I discovered in Said a way of moving away from any centripetal comparatism grounded in residual (colonial) hierarchies towards modes of analysis that were transnational and even transhistorical. *Culture and Imperialism* identified the consolidation of such an understanding in the work of major comparatists including Erich Auerbach, for whom 'the field was epistemologically organized as a sort of hierarchy, with Europe and its Latin Christian literatures at its centre and top'.[11] With the emergence of new literatures in the wake of World War II, Said notes somewhat laconically that 'Romania is under threat'. In that sense, this Saidian method become a means of unpicking those homogenizing catalogues in which Segalen featured in both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, of reading together different voices and forms: colonial and postcolonial; French and non-French; canonical and non-canonical. Said steered me in my own research towards 'a simultaneous awareness of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts'.[12] Although the implications of such an approach would become clearer in my ongoing research, not least in work on French colonial cultures, that has brought together literature, archival material, comics and ephemera from multiple perspectives, the initial manifestation of counterpoint was in my analysis of Segalen and his postcolonial readers. For in addition to Glissant and Khatibi, the Breton author had attracted the sustained attention of numerous other non-metropolitan writers, ranging from Patrick Chamoiseau (in whose *sentimentèque* Segalen features prominently) to Polynesian authors such as Chantal Spitz and Flora Devatine. Reading Segalen contrapuntally alongside Glissant and Khatibi (and vice versa) led me towards what Said described as 'a network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand'.[13] The polyphony provided by these Francophone postcolonial voices revealed aspects of Segalen's early twentieth-century reflection on exoticism that previous univocal approaches had marginalized or silenced. At the same time, reading Glissant and Khatibi a-chronologically, in the light of Segalen, permitted new understandings of texts such as *Soleil de la conscience* (1956) or *La Mémoire tatouée* (1971) that refused to treat the colonial and postcolonial as somehow discrete but instead revealed their imbrications in formations that Chris Bongie would subsequently, dub 'post/colonial' in *Islands and Exiles* (1998).

Said notes in *Culture and Imperialism* that 'there is no vantage outside the actuality of relationships among cultures, among unequal imperial and non-imperial powers, among us and others'.[14] Ultimately, in the light of this observation, the lasting impact of the book on me was much more than methodological. Its resonance was inevitably in part epistemological, as I developed an interest in the role of culture in the elaboration and perpetuation of systems of knowledge; but it was also profoundly political, as I was led to understand more clearly the role of the Humanities in public debate. The publication of Said's volume was accompanied by a very public spat in *The Times Literary Supplement*, an exchange that I recall following as it unfolded in real time. Reviewing *Culture and Imperialism*, the social anthropologist Ernest Gellner rubbished the book on the grounds that colonial empires did more good than harm (the balance-sheet view of history he espoused is one against which we must remain increasingly vigilant). His piece also

[11] See Said, Culture, p. 52.
[12] Ibid., p. 59.
[13] Ibid., p. 20.
[14] Ibid., p. 65.

tipped, however, into an assertion of disciplinary hierarchies: 'The problem of power and culture, and their turbulent relations during the great metamorphosis of course social world', he noted, 'is too important to be left to lit crit'. Said's reply was curt, dismissing Gellner's review as a 'shabby performance' and noting that 'those are the ways of Orientalism'. In 1993, Edward Said also gave the Reith Lectures, subsequently to appear as *Representations of the Intellectual*, examining the role of the intellectual in modern society. Through such interventions and exchanges, I began to understand not only why the Humanities matter, but also (and perhaps more importantly) the tactics according to which an enhanced public understanding of the Humanities may be built. More importantly, given the role of Césaire, Fanon, Genet and many others in Said's writings, I grasped that work in French studies could play an integral role in these efforts. In *Culture and Imperialism*, the author had challenged the risks of institutional introversion: 'you are responsible not so much to an audience in your community or society, as to and for your corporate guild of fellow experts, your department or specialization, your discipline.'[15] This indictment of disciplinary solipsism was further complicated in Modern Languages by our customary focus elsewhere, by a sense that any relevance at home was eclipsed by a chronic cultural extroversion, a positing of the field's importance in other national contexts. What excited me with Said's work in the early 1990s was the opportunity it afforded us to see authors we were reading, texts we were studying, subjects with which we were grappling, as integral parts of public and domestic debate. Far from being marginalized and irrelevant, 'lit crit'–particularly that exploring texts in languages others than English–had the potential to illuminate issues of pressing concern in a world that was increasingly mobile and interconnected, that was rapidly globalizing, and that was in urgent need of understanding the postcolonial ruins on which it was built.

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[15] Said, *Culture*, p. 389.

Review of *Abdelkébir Khatibi: Postcolonialism, Transnationalism and Culture in the Maghreb and Beyond*

Edited by JANE HIDDLESTON and KHALID LYAMLAHY. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020. 432 pp. Hb £95. ISBN: 978-1-789622-33-1.

As surprising as it sounds, Jane Hiddleston and Khalid Lyamlahy's hard-hitting collection of essays on Abdelkébir Khatibi represents the first major English-language publication devoted to the Moroccan thinker and his work. Like every time I put on a different Miles Davis record, surprise is what I feel whenever I read a page of Khatibi, or a page of criticism on Khatibi. In this sense, there can be no greater homage to, or recognition of, Khatibian destabilisation and instigation than the editors' thoughtful interfolding of elements of surprise into the collection's structure. Stabbing *sursauts* of jolt after intellectual jolt permeate the pages of the book.

A darker, different surprise lies hidden, couched deep in all of this, a kind of unkind critical *sursaut*—what Khatibi once called *cécité* in the context of french literary-critical norms with regard to postindependence Maghrebi literature. It is no small irony that the blindness and deafness that Khatibi alludes to throughout his work have haunted the legacy of his own œuvre. Though he needs no introduction in francophone postcolonial circles, one would have thought that his generic hybridity as a writer—his relentless pacifist invasions and countercolonisations of thought and language—could long ago have provided creative answers to some of the most difficult questions in literary and humanistic inquiry beyond our field.

Of course, critics like Matt Reeck and Françoise Lionnet have rebutted the longstanding dismissive smugness of intellectual attitudes toward Khatibi, and Hiddleston and Lyamlahy's collection bolsters the ongoing uphill effort that aspires toward nothing less than the total rehabilitation of Khatibi across 'Critical Thinking: From Decolonization to Transnationalism', 'Cultural and Philosophical Dialogues', and 'Æsthetics and Art in the Islamic World and Beyond'. These titles for the first three of the collection's four parts do nothing if not impress Khatibi's *obliqueness* (one of his favourite words) as a thinker. He cuts across, slashes through categories. Each of the book's parts conveys a never-ending sense of iterological[16] movement and fluidity between concepts. The fourth part, 'Translations', includes fresh renditions of selections from Khatibi by the first English-language translator of his poetry, Matt Reeck, as well as by Olivia C. Harrison. Here, Reeck and Harrison's hands at the translational task constitute an invaluable contribution to the emergent project of translating Khatibi into English. For translation, too, is never-ending in its engagement with the kinships of lingual flux.

Khatibi's writings are notoriously difficult if not impossible to classify, an observation that forms an arabesque or filigree running throughout the book. Thanks to this, there is naturally an enormous amount of elasticity in Hiddleston and Lyamlahy's editorial groupings. Their categorical freedoms are productive, since all of the essays, when read as an ensemble, at the same time, provide a remarkable articulation of Khatibi's thought that constantly stresses *inter-* and *trans-* as generative prefixes for the cultural, lingual, national, colonial, or semiotic. In fact, *inter-* and *trans-* poke many holes in the blind eyes of the Western literary and humanistic enterprise. Like the dyes that pattern and hue the Moroccan carpets discussed in Lyamlahy's contribution to the collection, and to use the kind of sanguine imagery beloved by Khatibi, everything bleeds into everything else—words, languages, signs, objects, artefacts, texts, national borders, identities and communities, both real and imagined (but almost always imagined).

Khatibi's infinite cool, as this book shows, lies in his constant rejection of the hippest

[16] With his tongue in his cheek, Michel Butor writes, 'Je propose donc une nouvelle science (elles poussent comme des champignons, ces années-ci, on en récolte à l'ombre de toutes les Sorbonnes; quelques-unes parmi la moisson finiront bien par porter fruit), étroitement liée à la littérature, celle des déplacements humains, que je m'amuse à nommer itérologie' ('Le voyage et l'écriture', *Romantisme*, 4 (1972), 4–19 [7]).

paradigms, constructs, and theories of the moment—like… postcolonialism! As Hiddleston and Lyamlahy highlight in their introduction (an excellent and eminently teachable overview of Khatibi), he once 'insist[ed] that he has not read postcolonial theory and has little to say about it', a rejection that 'appears […] to be based on the misapprehension that postcolonial thought has not properly mourned the passing period of colonial rule' (p. 31). At a time when Homi Bhabha's words echoed in the hallways of globish academe, as Alfonso de Toro's contribution displays (pp. 126–130), Khatibi's interest in unfashionable elsewheres was already taking modes of thinking associated with a field or theory or school (structuralist, poststructuralist, deconstructionist, postcolonialist) toward unexpected and exciting new places. The volume's most surprising interventions, then, nudge us away from unavoidable if seminal Khatibian notions like *bi-langue*, *pensée-autre*, *double critique*, and *étranger professionnel*, away from his dialogues with Jacques Derrida, and toward his many underexplored texts and concepts (and Hiddleston and Lyamlahy's handy bibliography of Khatibi's œuvres offers a thoughtfully organised chronological blueprint for where we may go next). Such essays dare to perform the kind of creative and speculative criticism in literary and cultural studies that must be the future of our field. They showcase a retuning of the ear, a reshaping of the tongue, and the belief that, in this case, Khatibi can guide, if not take, us there.

Some of this newly uncovered terrain actually articulates a refutation of some of postcolonialism's most hallowed figures (Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Memmi) and concepts (nation-building, identity formation). For instance, in her contribution to the volume, Olivia C. Harrison dwells upon how Khatibi's 'tricontinental dimensions' lend themselves to transcolonial dynamics 'structured through horizontal forms of relationality' (p. 152) that 'look beyond France to forge transversal relations with the rest of the Third World' (p. 153). Her reading of Khatibi's anti-Zionist pamphlet *Vomito blanco* (1974), one of his most polemical and 'seldom discussed' (p. 163) texts, not only brings the Palestinian question under the purview and critical-ethical imperative of francophone postcolonial studies but shows how the text actively 'refutes Jean-Paul Sartre's "conditional Zionism" and the "impasse" of Memmi's anticolonial Zionism' (p. 158). At the same time, *Vomito blanco* offers a remarkable double critique of both Zionism and pan/Arab nationalisms (pp. 155, 159, 170).

If dropping the Maghrebi intellectual like this in the midst of one of the planet's most impassioned political debates weren't enough, Edwige Tamalet Talbayev entirely uproots Khatibi from all land-based attachments to have him bear on the millennial space of the Mediterranean Sea. In this regard, she signals a riveting departure from Khatibi's well-known dialogues with Derrida on language and franco-Maghrebi identity. While Alison Rice astutely observes that 'if language in general is a liberating space when it has been freed from belonging', and that 'Khatibi contends that the French text of his creation is a freer space to inhabit as a writer because the tongue of composition remains a second language' (p. 75); and while Dominique Combe, in his magisterial and ludic portrayal of the Khatibi-Derrida dialogues, suggests that 'Derrida and Khatibi's relationship is one of both imitation and rivalry, not to say jealousy (a word often used about language itself), against the background of a friendly complicity' (p. 210); Talbayev counters that 'Khatibi ascribes the origin of his bi-directional reading' of the Maghreb's 'intrinsic plurality […] to a trans-Mediterranean lineage running from the Syriac and the Greek in ancient times to Arabic and Islamic thought' (pp. 90–91). Khatibi's 'unpredictable swerve' (p. 92) thus 'draw[s] from the fluctuation of the Mediterranean as a critical method', which effectively moves us past all manner of *bi-langue*, or patterns of North African de/colonial de/territorialisations, and closer to a more mindful 'prob[ing of] the form' of 'memorial idiom […] beyond the comfort of Manichean visions of belonging and being' (pp. 95–96). Khatibi's 'triangulation of desire unit[es] Morocco, France and Spain in a cross-Mediterranean "*chaînon indestructible de filiation symbolique*" ["*indestructible chain of symbolic filiation*"]' (pp. 105–106). In a final twist, this vision for a new Mediterranean (p. 108) becomes, in a double chiasmatic return (p. 107), intercontinental and interscriptural (p. 106), leaving *bi-langue* and *Amour bilingue* (1983) far, far behind.

Other contributors to the book abandon Mediterranean littorals altogether. Nao Sawada

and Charles Forsdick's essays jump ship; they all but strip Khatibi of the Maghreb and the Mediterranean space. They plunge him headfirst into the unknown, placing him in dialogue with Japanese literature and sinology respectively. Sawada shrewdly delineates three problematics in Khatibi's *Ombres japonaises* (1988)—'exoticism', 'the body and language', and 'Eros and Thanatos' (p. 221)—that isolate his encounter with 'the imaginary of the other whose thought is ideographic' (p. 226). Invoking Victor Segalen's influential notion of the *exote*, Sawada insists that 'Khatibi's exploration of [Junichirô] Tanizaki is not the result of a naïve trip made from an Orientalist standpoint, but an encounter with an *Other*, an Other that is absolutely different, an absolute Other' (pp. 221–222). Forsdick also pursues this line of thinking, specifically how Segalen inducts Khatibi into the surprising ways 'in which French is shaped lexically and syntactically by the presence of Tahitian' (p. 184)—or even Maori. Segalen aims to discern traces left by colonisation and destruction, 'an objective manifested not least in the very language of [his] text, "cette accumulation lancinante du lexique maori" ["this haunting accumulation of Maori words"]' (p. 185). Khatibi's unsettling brushes with Japanese, Tahitian, and Maori reveal 'the particular richness—both conceptual and creative—of their achronological encounter' (p. 190) in his imaginary. His 'achronological dialogue' (p. 195) with world languages followed no preprogrammed training and were quite frequently long-gestating—then sudden, unanticipated—discoveries along already unpredictable intellectual swerves.

Khatibi's interest in the far-flung and far-afield stems from one of the most understudied aspects of his persona and intellectual trajectory. Andrew Stafford's deeply researched articulation of Khatibi's sociological writings early in his career—a role frequently given no more than lip-service in most discussions of Khatibi—demonstrates to what extent he was 'a pioneering sociologist and essayist' (p. 43). Stafford depicts a striking portrait of Khatibi as a 'Marxian sociologist, trained in Paris, decolonizing Moroccan sociology and aware of the interventionist, albeit "indirect", responsibility of sociology' (p. 48). Delving deep into Khatibi's role at the helm of Moroccan sociological publications in the 1960s and 1970s, and his relentless engagements toward a praxis of decolonising European sociological archives, ideologies, and methodologies, Stafford showcases how figures as eclectic and varied as Ibn Khaldūn, Karl Marx, and Émile Durkheim 'are all combined—or left floating—in Khatibi's thought' (p. 63).

The floating indeterminacy of the essay, as one of Khatibi's privileged modes of writing, and which Stafford characterises as 'a writing of prose that could easily be poetry' (p. 52), lends itself to dreamier contributions by Assia Belhabib, Alfonso de Toro, and Lucy Stone McNeece. Out of a global backdrop of cultural commodification and mercantilisation, Belhabib extracts an 'added æsthetic value of the sign' (p. 113), a kind of 'galloping technology' (p. 114) and 'frenzy of communication' (p. 115) that amount to 'an æsthetics of transparency' simply shunned by Khatibi's novels (p. 116). In an extension of the Khatibian resistance to the global hegemony of æsthetic transparency, de Toro lauds what he dubs Khatibi's 'epistemological accent', or 'living, thinking and writing at the intersection or interface of systems […] to belong to two or more cultures and to live with several identities' (p. 126). This revolves around an expansive series of conceptual idioms coined by de Toro himself, namely 'performative pluri-language' (p. 129), 'cosmo-humanism' (pp. 131–132), and 'multi-polyphonic […] plural universality' (p. 134). McNeece furthers Khatibi's intellectual affinities along the expansive historical continuum of global mythology, educing in the process his attachment to 'esoteric or hermetic traditions' (p. 264), such that he succeeds at 'reinstating some of their ancient functions' (p. 264) and 'incantatory force' (p. 263). The writer becomes '"subject to" to the process of writing for which he often seems to be a *medium*' (p. 264)—a 'scribe' (p. 265), in the magical sense of the term.

Rounding out the collection are Khalid Lyamlahy and Jane Hiddleston's own essays. In a remarkable reading of the Moroccan carpet as 'an intricate web of representations, images and meaning' (p. 279) that 'allows for a circulation of signs' (p. 280)—in other words, an 'intersemiotic surface' (p. 283)—Lyamlahy convincingly shows how Khatibi uses the carpet as an artefact that rehabilitates 'religious practice, feminine agency and narrative techniques' (p. 280), as a figure for his own writerly processes, and as a continuation of 'his broader project of decolonizing Moroccan

culture and promoting its popular forms' (p. 281). One of the most fecund concepts mobilised by Lyamlahy in this essay is the alingual (p. 285) as a trigger for a wide range of nonverbal 'sensorial experiences' wherein 'the intersemiotic gives way to synesthesia' (p. 286). The pursuit of sensorial or sensical loss or disequilibrium in Khatibi is given fantastic panache in Hiddleston's closing essay, in which she argues for 'the open-ended and allusive effects of the interaction between different kinds of signs' (p. 307), and 'art as a play on forms transforming themselves and reflecting back on themselves' (p. 308). She engages a rich corpus of material that goes from the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (pp. 309–310) to 'non-iconic forms of representation' (p. 315), which amounts to 'not so much a strategy for practical decolonization as a world view of a completely different order' (p. 320), and a 'deconstructive view of æsthetic creation' that is intimately 'associated with a form of Islamic thought' (p. 322).

But all ain't hunky-dory in KhatibiLand. Sawada concludes his essay by lamenting that 'Khatibi's vision of the world remains very close to that of the West', such that 'the Maghreb—this other West—meets Japan—this other East, the Far East' (p. 231) in what, to me, amounts to a missed connection on the New York subway craigslist. And missed connections there are aplenty in Khatibi. For a critic so thoroughly obsessed with *inter-* and *trans-*, his notion of *aimance*, for instance, maintains an unflinching gender binary that is reflected even at the level of systematic structural partitions and sequestrations between *hommes* and *femmes* in his *aimance* sequences. There is plenty to be thought and unthought here, and while Hiddleston points to the term's usage in Derrida (p. 312), it remains to be seen whether *aimance* as a transhistorical, intertextual, psychological, and philosophical concept can be usefully discussed in the context of queer theory. But Khatibi, I, hopeless, fear, is irremediably straight.

One dimension to Khatibi, on the other hand, that this volume finally brings to light is his oblique attachment to Sufism. Rice (p. 72), Combe (p. 215), Sawada (pp. 227, 229), McNeece (pp. 273–276), and Hiddleston (p. 310) all evoke mysticism's many allures for Khatibi, but it is Rim Feriani, Jasmina Bolfek-Radovani, and Debra Kelly's essay that—beyond Khatibi's overarching and unrelenting attachment to Islamic art in all its manifestations—most fully unearths the role of mystical traditions in his literary production. The authors artfully abstract a certain pointillist æsthetic in Khatibi, a kind of 'writing in points' (p. 243) that places him within a strong Sufi tradition (p. 246), largely indebted to Ibn ʿArabī and the concept of the mystical vision. They focus on *La Mémoire tatouée* (1971) and 'Khatibi's own practice of deciphering signs' to draw out the particular 'ways in which the meaning of visions "migrates" from the Sufi Islamic heritage' (p. 248), and how they 'repose on an intersection between rationalist and Sufi mystical discourses' (p. 260).

Hiddleston and Lyamlahy's book is positioned to be of immense interest to students and scholars of postcolonialism who are invested in the complex intersections of politics, literature, language, and identity, both within and beyond the francosphere. One of the book's most precious contributions to (francophone) postcolonialism is how it points to fecund crossovers with adjacent fields of scholarship, and gestures toward potentially trailblazing interventions. And so I close with these comments on gender, sexuality, theology, and mysticism because they represent a vast, underexplored nexus of inquiry in Khatibi criticism. As Hiddleston and Lyamlahy insist in their introduction, Khatibi has always sought the theoretical dignity of popular expressions of culture (p. 7), and, as I said above, creative and speculative criticism in literary and cultural studies must be the future of our field. The next chapter in Maghreb studies may very well just be engrained in the instigative 'disciplinary eclecticism' (p. 26), 'disregard for cultural frontiers' (p. 27), 'unearth[ing of] local forms of eclecticism' (Talbayev, p. 90), 'culture of eclectic pleasures' (Belhabib, p. 114), and 'eclectic reading practices that underpin the progressive *bricolage*' (Forsdick, p. 182) of *Khatibi-Pop!*

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Moroccan Soul: French Education, Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912-1956. By SPENCER D. SEGALLA. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 340 pp. Pb £22.99. ISBN: 978-1-496202-14-7.

The Moroccan Soul is a study of the educational policy in Morocco under the French Protectorate. By taking the colonial school as an object of study, the book challenges two major narratives on both French colonialism and Moroccan nationalism. On French colonialism, Spencer Segalla joins the new scholarship opposing the widely held belief that the French colonial enterprise aimed at transforming 'natives' into 'Frenchmen' through colonial education (see, for example, Marie-Paule Ha and Gary Wilder). On nationalism, the author nuances the Moroccan nationalist account of the Moroccan opposition to the French language (see Allal al-Fassi and Mohamed Abed al-Jabri) by studying the contradictory demands of the native urban elite. By an in-depth examination of coloniser and colonised encounters in the field of education, Segalla sheds a new light on a well-studied period (see Edmund Burke III, John P. Healstead, Charles André Julien, Abdallah Laroui, Daniel Rivet, among many others).

Relying on a rich corpus of publications by the *Direction de l'Instruction Publique* (DIP), writings of colonial administrators and texts of Muslim graduates of French-run schools in Morocco, Segalla offers a critical account of colonial education. The book consists of three narratives of the colonial education system in Morocco: an institutional and intellectual history of the French-run schools, an account of the career of the colonial administrator Georges Hardy who was the director of Public Instruction in Morocco from 1919 to 1926, and a study of both elite and non-elite Moroccan Muslims' strategies of contestation and resistance to the colonial order through the education system.

Segalla scrutinises, in both discourse and policy, how 'the Moroccan protectorate was an attempt to do colonialism differently' (p. 12). By following the personal trajectories of colonial administrators, the author convincingly illustrates the impact of both their colonial beliefs and their movement between colonies on colonial policy making. Georges Hardy (1884–1972) was a central figure of French educational policy in Morocco and is the key character of Segalla's book. The book follows Hardy during his service in Senegal before joining Marshal Hubert Lyautey's administration in Morocco. Hardy's belief in the distinction between races and the need to reflect it in the education system found a favourable environment in Lyautey's rejection of assimilation and wish to conserve the traditional structure of Moroccan society (p. 26). Using the exact racialised framework he developed in West Africa (p. 61-84), Hardy promoted a 'psychological ethnology' as a way to better know the 'essence' of the indigenous population. He transformed the pedagogical bulletin into a publication aiming to identify the 'Moroccan soul' (p. 123–143). Segalla demonstrates that Hardy's education policy was based on the assumption that there was a 'Moroccan essence,' static and ahistorical, that the protectorate should first identify and then preserve for a successful colonial domination. Hardy's view, Segalla argues, resulted in an education system based on social reproduction, a restricted pedagogy, and a condescending view of native cognitive capabilities.

The book describes the different trajectories of distinct social classes in the colonial education system. In a detailed study of Muslim interactions with colonial authorities, the author shows how individual interests played a central role in the decisions of the colonised vis-à-vis schooling. The question of language is particularly interesting in that regard. Gaston Loth, first director of Public Instruction in Morocco, put in place a colonial educational project following Lyautey's doctrine, offering a pseudo-traditional Arabic and Islamic education aiming to preserve the structure of Moroccan society while working towards association with the local elite. However, the Moroccan leadership 'saw knowledge of French as the key to maintaining the economic and political power of the traditional elite in the new colonial context' (pp. 41–42). Segalla disagrees with the narrative promoted by Moroccan nationalists since the mid 1930s, according to which the

Direction de l'Instruction Publique aimed to assimilate Moroccans through the teaching of French (except for Berbers in the *collèges franco-berbères*). Instead, he argues that Loth's emphasis on the teaching of French came as a response to the Moroccan elite's demand for French-language instruction to ensure their children's access to jobs in the French administration and the private sector (p. 42–46). The author also stresses the ideological blindness of the colonial enterprise in matters of education. Operating within a racist ethnological pedagogy framework, Georges Hardy and his associate Louis Brunot blamed the non-compliance of the local population with their educational policies on a certain Moroccan essential character, thus omitting the more utilitarian logic guiding parents in the choice of their children's education (p. 191–202).

While offering an in-depth study of the colonial educational discourse in Morocco, the book's focus on the discourse of Georges Hardy might have led the author to overemphasise the impact of this colonial administrator's educational discourse on the Moroccan nationalist movement. Segalla rightly highlights interesting contrasts between the ethnological discourse promoted by the *Institut des Hautes Études Marocaines* and that advanced by Hardy and the publications of the *Direction de l'Instruction Publique* (p. 123). Whereas the distinction between Arabs and Berbers was a key element of the former, Hardy put forward Moroccan identity, located in an Islamised population, as the distinctive feature that should govern educational policy. By arguing that the 'Moroccan soul' discourse developed by Hardy was later used by Moroccan nationalists, the majority of whom attended French-run schools, the author has however diminished the importance of the global movement of nationalist ideas in which the Moroccan urban elite was immersed at the time. Middle Eastern news outlets made pan-Islamist and pan-Arabist ideologies available to literate Moroccans. In addition, a number of young Moroccans completing their higher education in France encountered the French Jacobine conception of the nation-state that later structured Moroccan nation-building. Nevertheless, *The Moroccan Soul* makes an extremely valuable contribution to the literature on French imperialism in North Africa and introduces welcome nuance in the scholarship on both colonialism and nationalism in Morocco.

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Ying Chen's Fiction: An Aesthetics of Non-Belonging. By ROSALIND SILVESTER. Oxford: Legenda, 2020. 176 pp. Pb £75. ISBN: 978-1-781886-81-6.

This is the first and most systematic book-length study of the novelistic works by the contemporary francophone Chinese Canadian writer Ying Chen to date, a refreshingly original and in-depth contribution that should be enthusiastically welcomed not only by scholars working in the specialist field of Franco-Chinese studies, but also by those who are more broadly interested in contemporary Québec literature, Chinese diasporic literature, migrant writings, and transcultural studies. The central argument of the book revolves closely around the idea of 'non-belonging', understood as a gradually established aesthetics that has evolved with Chen's life trajectory, intellectual development, and creative experiment over a span of more than twenty years; or, in Rosalind Silvester's words, as an 'uneasy co-existence' of 'various places', 'suggesting the belonging-in-transience of a subject whose identity is marked by movement' (p. 17). Among the twelve chronologically organized works of fiction and with the help of one collection of essays, Silvester is able to identify three 'cycles' of Chen's novels that are thematically preoccupied with place, time, and species respectively, while conceptually addressing the aesthetic evolution towards non-belonging. The result is a strong, lucid, and convincing line of enquiry that is relatively easy to follow, even for those who are unfamiliar with the writer.

Chapter One serves as an extended critical introduction of Chen's life and works. It associates Chen's 'aesthetics of non-belonging' primarily with ideas of absence, displacement, *dépaysement*, and alienation, and situates them in the inter- and transcultural landscape of Québec

migrant writings, especially in relation to other notable francophone Asian writers like Ook Chung, Aki Shimazaki, and Kim Thúy. Readers who are new to Québec migrant literature will benefit from the solid bibliography in this chapter. Chapter Two takes the usual but, in many ways, inevitable approach to migrant themes and aesthetics by examining Chen's first three novels from the perspectives of place and border crossing. The narrators' different identity formations in *La Mémoire de l'eau* (1996), *Les Lettres chinoises* (1998), and *L'Ingratitude* (1999) largely depend on their exilic experiences, either within China or from China to a foreign country.

Silvester's critical originality accumulates in Chapters Three and Four. In a sense, this is also in line with Ying Chen's own subsequent bold literary experiments with narrative styles and themes, which are largely spared the counterproductive burden of (cross-)cultural representation. Chapter Three investigates what Silvester categorizes as 'unnatural narratives' in Chen's fiction, i.e. stories narrated by the dead, the reincarnated, or the double in *L'Ingratitude* (1999), *L'Immobile* (1998), *Le Champ dans la mer* (2002), and *Querelle d'un squelette avec son double* (2003). The creative use of ghosts and reincarnation endows the narrators with an exceptional mobility in time and liberates narration and, by extension, the author, from the strict confinement of realism that largely dictates our cross-cultural and cross-historical discourses and narratives today. Subsequently, Chapter Four identifies the non- and posthuman paradigms in Chen's further engagement with the monster and the animal in *Le Mangeur* (2006), *Un enfant à ma porte* (2009), and *Espèces* (2010). By incorporating a wide range of literary and cultural theories—from Derrida and Deleuze to Rosi Braidotti, Giorgio Agamben, and Donna Haraway—in her reading of Chen's creative negotiation between the human and non-human modes of perception and reflection, Silvester expands effectively her critical framework beyond Franco-Chinese, migrant, or Québec literature, thus bringing Chen's aesthetics of non-belonging into a fruitful relationship with the thriving fields of posthuman enquiries.

Rather unconventionally, the book concludes with two of Chen's most recent novels, *La Rive est loin* (2013) and *Blessures* (2016), which are treated more briefly. Silvester indicates that they signal a thematic return to, and repetition of, the previous cycles of Chen's novels. Both novels are conceived to be narrated from the beyond, marking an end point to the cycle of 'unnatural narratives' explored in Chapter Three. Moreover, in *Blessures*, the ghost narrator of Canadian nationality revisits China and encounters the ghosts of the people he knew during his time there as a field doctor in the 1940s. The China-focused narrative rejoins Chen's first cycle of novels studied in Chapter Two. Thus, the final two novels appear to complete an overall novelistic cycle as well as to form an intellectual and artistic continuum.

However, this book is not meant to be exhaustive of Chen's fiction. On a few occasions, Silvester quickly refrains from detailing Chen's engagement with Chinese aesthetics, traditions, and thought. The idea of reincarnation, for example, has always been a popular trope in Chinese folkloric imaginations and literary works, reflecting, but by no means limited to, its 'Buddhist conception' (p. 69). In fact, narratives of time-travel by a transhistorical spirit/ghost through reincarnation constitute one of the most popular genres of contemporary Chinese fiction. On another occasion, Silvester mentions 'the wider context of world literature' (p. 87) but only in passing. This could have been dealt with in more depth, especially given the recent explosion of research interest in world literature. These relatively underdeveloped areas should inspire future research on Chen and promise other fruitful lines of enquiry.

Although the title of the book may suggest that this is a specialist monograph on a less-than-canonical author, its content and analysis afford an impressively broad intellectual scope that should interest students (under- and postgraduates alike) and researchers of Francophone Studies, Migrant Literature, Comparative Literature, and World Literature. The detailed content page and the chronological and thematic organization of the primary texts will greatly facilitate readers' navigation through the relevant material.

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Contesting the Classroom: Reimagining Education in Moroccan and Algerian Literatures. By ERIN TWOHIG. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019. 192 pp. Hb £80. ISBN: 978-1-789-62021-4.

The question of education in Morocco has recently been the focus of several academic publications including Hamid Irbouh's *Art in the Service of Colonialism: French Art Education in Morocco 1912–1956* (2005), Moha Ennaji's *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education in Morocco* (2005), Spencer D. Segalla's *The Moroccan Soul: French Education, Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912–1956* (2009), and Charis Boutieri's *Learning in Morocco: Language Politics and the Abandoned Educational Dream* (2016). Moroccan educational system and policies were approached through archival research, sociolinguistic analysis, historical investigation, and anthropological fieldwork. Erin Twohig's book offers both a geographic and thematic extension of these efforts. By exploring the representation of the postcolonial classroom in a selection of Moroccan and Algerian novels, Twohig adds a significant contribution to the understanding of North African education, pedagogy, and language policies through literature.

The introduction to *Contesting the Classroom* provides a helpful overview of the history of education in Morocco and Algeria with a focus on the French colonial strategies of exclusion and the challenging implementation of Arabization by post-independent states. The takeaway is that education has often been the site of contradictory, problematic or insufficient measures to the detriment of the region's cultural and linguistic diversity. Twohig's corpus of 'educational literature', which spans a forty-one-year period (1975–2016), has the merit of bringing together novels in French and Arabic, written at different times by authors who are familiar with local educational institutions. This bilingual and immersive approach is supported by a complementary analysis of literary and language textbooks in both countries as a way to cast light on official narratives and conceptions of literary national canons.

Contesting the Classroom is composed of five chapters, the first three being dedicated to Algeria and the final two to Morocco. Chapter One, based on two novels by Algerian writers Abdelhamid Benhedouga (1975) and Maïssa Bey (2006), questions the resurgent memory of colonialism in Algerian education. In the post-independent school space, 'suppressed elements of the national narrative' (p. 30) are revived through individual remembering and resistance to various forms of silencing. Both authors stage the act of reading to diversify national identity by promoting an active engagement with and renegotiation of the colonial past. In subsequently discussing the insufficient presence of modern novels in Algerian curricula, Twohig outlines the glaring 'lack of renewal of topics and authors' (p. 43) and the persistent 'disconnect between the school system and literature' (p. 45) which cast doubt on the capacity of the latter to serve as a 'site of memory' in the postcolonial school.

Chapter Two explores the emergence of 'a new colonial otherness' (p. 50) in the Algerian classroom. The social and political realities of linguistic practices are overlooked by French-Algerian writer Karima Berger (1998) who depicts Modern Standard Arabic as a 'foreign threat' (p. 53) and French language as 'both a vehicle and a symbol of resistance' (p. 54). For his part, Syrian author Haydar Haydar (1983), who builds on the experience of Middle Eastern teachers in Algeria, provides nuance to the pejorative perception of Arabization although his reductive representations of otherness fail to imagine a broader and more diverse Algerian identity. Both novelists are preoccupied with the classroom as 'a site of othering' (p. 67), a phenomenon that again mirrors the marginalization of local literature in Algerian textbooks.

Chapter Three is about the representation of the 'Black Decade', a period of Algerian history that deeply disrupted the relationship between literature and pedagogy. Novels by Nassira Belloula (2008) and Wahiba Khiari (2009) demonstrate the impact of violence on educational experiences as the no-longer protective classroom becomes challenged by less formal and sometimes dangerous networks of teaching. In the work of Bashir Mefti (2014), informal education and clandestine writing about trauma serve a pedagogical purpose by encouraging literary witnessing. Black Decade texts, Twohig argues, break taboos and develop their own approach to

pedagogy, both experimental and reaching beyond the classroom.

Chapter Four turns to Moroccan literature and the experiences of women and Tamazight (or Berber) speakers in the works of Brick Oussaïd (1984) and Leila Abouzeid (2000). The former explores the struggles of an Amazigh young boy in the Arabized school system, but his 'largely unmarked treatment of French' (p. 99) raises some questions about language practices for Amazigh authors which Twohig further analyses in relation to state control through the teaching case study of a posthumously published novel by Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine (2002). Writing from another perspective, Abouzeid seeks to resist the exclusion of women from educational spaces and 'to reconfigure associations between language, power, knowledge, and gender' (p. 111), including by casting dialect as a crucial linguistic competence and source of knowledge.

The fifth and final chapter focuses on the satirization of the crisis of education in more recent Moroccan literature. This 'turn to satire' (p. 119) is first discussed in Mohamed Nedali's work (2004) which parodies the genre of educational autobiography and plays with a French canonical figure to challenge the elitist perception of French literature in the classroom. In the same vein, Yacine Adnan's (2016) Internet-based satire of the education system condemns plagiarism and uses animal fables and digressions as a pedagogical tool that foregrounds 'the satiric ideals of openness, play, questioning, and contradiction' (p. 136) yet stops short of disrupting standard language and traditional forms of writing. *Contesting the Classroom* not only confirms a 'palpable anxiety over the state of education' (p. 144) among Moroccan and Algerian authors but also makes the effort in the conclusion to discuss how informal spaces, such as literary fairs and social networks, have the potential to reinvent learning experiences and to extend the boundaries of pedagogical writing.

While Twohig's rich and brilliant study convincingly demonstrates the centrality of literature to educational debates in Morocco and Algeria, it risks circumscribing literary works within a counter-narrative that tends to overemphasize either the undeniable deficiencies of public education systems or the pedagogical intentions of some writers. Twohig's choice to highlight 'moments where texts create friction with the linguistic and political hierarchies of education' (p. 14) leaves more harmonious and balanced educational experiences insufficiently explored. Besides Tunisia's absence from the book, which is explained in the introduction, the reader may regret the dismissal of other educational literary genres such as poetry and theatre, the lack of nuance concerning some cultural interpretations and societal attitudes toward language in Moroccan society, and the potentially confusing notion of 'new colonialism' which, as Twohig eventually admits, is 'insufficient to conceptualize the othering of Algerian literature in the school' (p. 70).

Despite these minor reservations, *Contesting the Classroom* offers a distinctive and ground-breaking analysis of the many ways in which education is thought, challenged, and reimagined in Moroccan and Algerian literatures. The book is undeniably a valuable resource for scholars of North African Studies, Arabic and Francophone literature, educational sciences as well as language policies in the Maghreb and beyond. By weaving together close readings of novels and textbooks, political and historical contextualization, and broader reflections on the social and cultural implications of the literary portraits of education, Twohig meticulously dissects and reinterprets the complexity of Moroccan and Algerian educational literature.

In the Maghreb, the relationship between literature and the classroom is inflected by educational, cultural, and institutional factors. The failure to promote the work of local writers in public curricula, for instance, has to do as much with a lack of official interest in and recognition of the transformative power of literature in the educational sphere as it does with a pernicious tendency to demean local production and cast suspicion on non-normative or subversive works. Ultimately, then, Twohig's book is both a scholarly acknowledgment of Maghrebi educational literature and an original invitation to rethink the challenges of education in the region through literary voices of criticism and dissent.

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Making* The Black Jacobins*: C. L. R. James and the Drama of History. By RACHEL DOUGLAS. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019. 306 pp. Pb $27.95. ISBN: 978-1-478004-87-5

During his long and productive career, Marxist historian C. L. R. James kept returning to the Haitian Revolution, the pivotal event he had explored so influentially in *The Black Jacobins* (1938; 1963). In *Making* The Black Jacobins: *C. L. R. James and the Drama of History*, Rachel Douglas expertly takes James' repeated return to Haiti as her point of departure. Rather than simply reiterating himself in historical and theatrical works, James continuously re-wrote his version of the Haitian Revolution for historical, pragmatic, and political reasons. The result was an amorphous text corpus spanning four decades or, as Douglas terms it, a 'palimpsest' and a 'text-network related to Haiti' (p. 6). Drawing upon the methodology of genetic criticism, Douglas offers minute presentations of multiple archival findings and despite some repetitions and an occasional lack of historical and theoretical contextualization, she succeeds in teasing out the rich significance of James' repeated re-writing of the Haitian Revolution.

Chapter One centres on James' 1936 play *Toussaint Louverture*. Douglas not only compares ten versions of this play, most of them in script version, she also explains how the collaboration with actor Paul Robeson inspired James to make changes in his play and shows that James returned to the text, presumably in the 1950s, seeking to make room for Moïse (an important, yet oftentimes overlooked, Haitian revolutionary) in the narrative. The young James did much to place Toussaint Louverture in the centre of the Haitian Revolution but over the years, he became interested in the significance of lesser-known Haitians. The attempt to nuance his narrative by inserting minor figures who challenged the authority of Toussaint is one of the reasons why Douglas considers James an early exponent of the Marxist history from below, made famous in the 1960s by Albert Soboul, George Rudé, E. P. Thomson, and others. For James, the multi-character dramatic form was particularly well suited for this purpose.

The two versions of *The Black Jacobins* are the topic of Chapters Two and Three. Douglas engages with David Scott's argument that the 1963 re-writing of the 1938 book entails an important generic shift from 'anticolonial romance' to 'postcolonial tragedy' (p. 94), but the highlights of these chapters are the overly brief comparisons made between James and other Caribbean Marxist intellectuals (Aimé Césaire and Eric Williams, pp. 78–85) and the complex discussion of James' rhetorical 'de-Marxification' (p. 111) in the 1960s. While Douglas does well to insist that the 1963 version of *The Black Jacobins* 'remains a Marxist analysis' (p. 111), a more detailed investigation of the theoretical similarities and differences between James, Césaire, and Williams could have clarified what this complex 'de-Marxified' Marxism entails.

Chapter Four focuses on James' second play, *The Black Jacobins*, originally staged in Nigeria in 1967. Again, Douglas offers a detailed comparison of various versions of the play, and, in amusing passages, she quotes from the pre-premiere correspondence between the ever re-writing James and the pragmatic and increasingly desperate director Dexter Lyndersay. Politically, the re-writings were crucial for James, however, because they emphasized the tensions between revolutionary crowds and political leaders of the Haitian Revolution in ways that resonated with his increasing frustration with Caribbean political leadership (especially the failed West Indies Federation) and with the ongoing Nigerian Civil War. Douglas here offers substantial support for her general claim that James re-wrote his version of the Haitian Revolution under the aegis of ongoing political struggles. For James, thinking about the past was a way of engaging with the present.

The final chapter maps the afterlives of *The Black Jacobins*. With descriptions of the multitude of translations of James' work and the many exhibitions, seminars, and reading groups he inspired, Douglas not only offers a useful overview of the lasting impact of James. She also demonstrates how his work and person have become a *lieu de mémoire* (p. 208) or 'palimpsest' (p. 209) that continuously serves to ground discussions of 'the Caribbean pasts, presents, and futures' (p. 213). While the closing idea that rewriting for James amounted to a form of Marxist dialectical

method could have been explored in greater detail, Douglas' conclusion effectively shows that the will to return to Haiti to understand the pasts, presents, and futures of decolonization stands out among the fundamental challenges James inspired later generations of activists and scholars to pursue.

The book will be of particular interest to students and scholars working on James and genetic criticism, but everyone interested in Haiti and decolonization should find it a rewarding read. Readers, however, should not expect a general introduction to the Haitian revolution akin to James' own book but rather a specialized study of his continuous attempt to write and think about the present through the prism of the Haitian Revolution.

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Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

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