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New Musical Explores Slavery: The Forgotten Story of Yarico

In February 2015, a new musical which explores slavery and its legacy opened in London. *Yarico* tells the story of a beautiful Amerindian woman whose English lover betrays her and sells her into slavery. But the tale is actually centuries old, and has undergone several transformations.

Although the name Yarico is unfamiliar in modern times, a search of the British Library archives (www.bl.uk) reveals over one hundred entries, demonstrating the cultural significance of the story for past generations. The original account of Yarico dates from 1657 and was recounted in *The True and Exact History of Barbados* by Richard Ligon.¹ Despite the work's title, it is impossible to ascertain whether Ligon's story was indeed 'true', but it struck a chord in the popular imagination. The story was retold in 1711 by Richard Steele in issue number 11 of the *Spectator*, and Steele's article reached a wide audience on both sides of the Atlantic.²

The cultural significance of the story was such that it was turned into an eighteenth-century comic opera *Inkle and Yarico*, by George Colman, which was performed first at the Haymarket theatre in 1787, and then at Covent Garden. The foreword to Colman's opera draws attention to its significance for the anti-slavery movement, suggesting that the drama 'might remove from Mr Wilberforce his aversion to theatrical exhibitions [...] it is one of those plays which is independent of time, of place, of circumstance, for its value.'³ Indeed, as the programme for the 2015 musical reminds us, the story was an important cultural tool in promoting the abolition of slavery.

Yarico has garnered several column inches focusing not only on the musical, but also on its producers, Jodie Kidd, and her father John. The supermodel was raised in Barbados, and there is considerable Barbadian involvement in the project to rediscover *Yarico*. In January 2015, the Prime Minister of Barbados unveiled the Yarico Monument, and the government is keen for this story to reach a wider public. In the programme for the musical, Stephen Lashley, the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth explains that the musical has both cultural and economic potential, as 'culture is one of the identified pillars on which the modern economy of Barbados is being constructed.'

Slavery and Resistance

Yarico explores the themes of love, sex, gender roles, money, enslavement and colonial exploitation in a careful and thought-provoking manner. In the first act, Yarico saves Inkle's life when her village votes to put him to death. The comedic potential of the relationships between the female Amerindians Yarico and Nono, and the male Europeans Inkle and Cicero, is fully developed, just as in Colman's 1787 opera. In scenes straight out of a teen drama, the nascent couples flirt, blush and wonder how to communicate with each other, and turn to their best friends to vent their feelings of attraction, angst and frustration. This goes a long

¹ Richard Ligon, *The True and Exact History of Barbados. Illustrated with a map of the island, as also the principall trees and plants there* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1657).

² Richard Steele, 'Inkle and Yarico', *The Spectator*, issue 11, 13 March 1711.

³ George Colman, *Inkle and Yarico: An Opera in Three Acts* (London: Longman, Hurst, Bees, Orme and Brown [1787]), [n. p.].

way to 'de-exoticizing' the plot, making the characters familiar and likeable, and underscoring the timelessness of love and attraction.

From the end of the first act, however, when Yarico is sold at a slave market, the musical explores more serious themes in an uncompromising manner. From this point onwards, it walks a tightrope between depicting the horror of slavery, and showing the flame of resistance. This recalls the Caribbean author Daniel Maximin's mantra that 'the story of slavery is also the story of the resistance of slavery'. And resistance, and the hope that springs from it, provide a counterbalance to the tragic treatment of Yarico after Inkle's betrayal. In her professional debut, newcomer Liberty Buckland's assured and nuanced performance ensures that Yarico retains her dignity throughout her enslavement. Nonetheless, slavery's violence and inhumanity become prominent as the musical develops.

Scenes such as the slave market and the flogging of slaves are particularly moving. The flogging is punishment for 'fornication' meted out on the conflicted house slave Jessica, whose inner turmoil and confused loyalties towards her white mistress elicit a masterful performance from Keisha Amponsa Banson. Also punished is Jessica's lover, an Irish indentured labourer, representative of the contracted European workers who also left for the colonies.

The flogging derives maximum impact from pared-down staging: the characters form a trio, the spectator's gaze moving between the vulnerability of the slaves' bare backs and the torturer, centre stage, who relentlessly cracks a length of rope onto the ground, as the bound slaves cry out in pain. The use of sound and imagery is reminiscent of the Liverpool International Slavery Museum's immersive installation on the Middle Passage, and elicits a similar response of claustrophobia, fear and tension in the audience.

True to the spirit of resistance running throughout, the musical's climax is a slave revolt, which is a modern addition not present in previous versions. This ending offers Inkle a chance of redemption, as (spoiler alert) his final act of bravery allows Yarico to escape from Barbados with their son.

Inkle thus atones for his previous life of vice as a gambling addict: the addiction which, in the musical, leads to Yarico's enslavement. This is another nod to Colman, although his opera's treatment of the addiction of humans to money contains a more blatant condemnation of the opportunities offered by colonialism for capitalists to accumulate wealth and climb the social ladder.

In Colman's *Inkle and Yarico*, Inkle must choose between his love for Yarico and an arranged marriage with Narcissa, the daughter of Sir Christopher Curry, a union which will guarantee Inkle status and riches. Colman satirizes the relentless pursuit of wealth. When Inkle informs Yarico that he is leaving her, he comments that the cultural differences between them are too great: rather than being born to hunt for wild animals and live off the land, Inkle tells a dismayed Yarico that 'we Christians, girl, hunt money'. Coleman also engineers a redemptive moment for Inkle: at the opera's climax, Sir Christopher, who has learned of Inkle's cowardice and betrayal of Yarico, demands that Inkle explain himself. At this, Inkle repeats his father's maxim that 'men now lived for themselves', and that the age of charity and compassion had given way to one of self-interest and profit. Under duress from Sir Christopher—Narcissa has fortunately found a more suitable match in the meantime—Inkle repents and agrees to commit to Yarico, and a happy ending ensues as the two are wed.

Although the 2015 musical does not grant Yarico this happy ending, the gambling sub-plot similarly underscores Inkle's addiction to the pursuit of wealth. This does, however, mean that the theme of social mobility through colonial speculation is not highlighted in the way it was in 1787. In the musical, Inkle's moment of gambling weakness is a personal, irresponsible flaw, rather than a cold, calculated decision to sell the woman he loves into slavery to get her out of the way because a woman with better social prospects is within his grasp. As such, the new adaptation loses some of the searing social commentary of Colman's

opera. Nonetheless, speculating on the colonies is likened to gambling at several points, and the wider observation—on the immorality of the ruthless pursuit of profit—prevails.

Another significant feature of the modernized *Yarico* is the female lead's agency in her own survival. Previous *Yaricos* were the stereotypical beautiful, innocent victims of male deception and scheming—the rhyming potential of *Yarico* and woe was a gift to poets—but in 2015, *Yarico* is supported by the wider slave community and fights her way to freedom, a powerful message.

Pre-Columbian Culture: the Amerindian Heritage

Rediscovering *Yarico*'s story reminds us that there is a great deal to be learned from the very earliest accounts of colonialism. The *Yarico* legend, from Ligon to Colman to the Kidds provides a very individual portrait of the moment when the initial colonial project of exploration gives way to unabashed exploitation. It also provides valuable insights into the pan-Caribbean history of Amerindian culture through its depictions of the cultures of the native American peoples who lived and travelled across the Caribbean before the arrival of Columbus.

Yarico's fate hints at the wide-scale cultural destruction—which some scholars have termed the Amerindian or Native American genocide—that accompanied the founding of the Americas. The English, Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese battled to control the fertile lands of the Caribbean, and as a result, clues about the indigenous cultures which they encountered are woven throughout European literature. In the French Caribbean context in particular, a 1667 publication by the priest and early colonial chronicler Jean-Baptiste du Tertre provides a wealth of information about Amerindian culture and language.⁴ Indeed, there is a rich lexical Amerindian heritage which has worked its way into English, French and Spanish through words such as 'hurricane/ouragan' and 'hammock/hamac', as the musical *Yarico* reminds us in a scene where Nono teaches Cicero the word 'hammock' to great comic effect.

Du Tertre records early European life on the island known by the Amerindians as Madinina, the 'isle of flowers', which received its modern name of Martinique when the French established a colony there in 1635. Du Tertre's detailed work includes a map of Martinique which provides a snapshot of a key moment in the destruction of the Amerindian culture. The map shows a line splitting the island into two, and dividing the western 'zone of the French' from the 'zone of the savages'.⁵ The 'savages' are the Amerindians, who had taken refuge in the higher, more remote areas along the west of the island. Two important museums, the Museum of Precolonian Art (Musée Départemental d'Archéologie précolombienne et de préhistoire) in the island's capital Fort-de-France, and the Ecomusée in Anse Figuière, include fascinating architectural finds from the pre-Columbian era, which have been used to reconstruct models of the societies that were decimated and exterminated by European settlers. Many place names across the Caribbean include references to the Amerindian past. In Martinique, the 'Caribs' Tomb' is a cliff where Amerindians chose to jump to their death in a mass suicide, rather than submit to the French.

⁴ A heritage I explore in another work, *Childhood, Autobiography and the Francophone Caribbean* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 83–85.

⁵ Jean-Baptiste du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français* (Paris: Thomas Lolly, au Palais, en la Salle des Merciers, à la Palme, & aux Armes d'Hollande, 1667).

The Yarico Project

The musical's programme tells us that this is just the beginning of 'The Yarico Project', which will include a future programme of school and community outreach events. Such developments are to be welcomed. From its colonial roots to its modern-day musical interpretation, the story of Yarico is a vital work of cultural translation which raises essential questions about the development of the Americas, just as it raises uncomfortable questions about the persistence of forms of exploitation and domination in our own modern era.

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Postgraduate Work in Progress

Introduction: Memory/Amnesia and (Post)Colonialism

Un souffle rauque traverse ma mémoire chaque fois que le monde se tait.
Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, contre-enquête* (2014)

In his often-quoted 1882 lecture *Qu'est-ce que une nation?* Ernest Renan emphasized the importance of both remembering and forgetting, of memory and amnesia, to the creation of a national narrative. He states that 'l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses',¹ ideas that have continued to form the basis of twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship on nationalism and (national) identity, such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983). Communal processes of selective remembering/memorialization are particularly pertinent and highly contentious in postcolonial contexts—to both the former imperial *métropoles* and the respective (post)colonial states and territories. In this context, imperial centres are characterized by an ambivalent desire to remember and indeed to commemorate, in the proliferation of colonial 'lieux de mémoire', often in historically symbolic sites such as the *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* in Paris, which opened in 2007 or the *Mémorial de l'abolition de l'esclavage* in Nantes, which opened in 2012—and also to forget in the necessarily selective process Pierre Nora describes as the crystallization of Maurice Halbwachs's 'mémoire collective' in this form of memorialization.² At the same time, ambiguous and attempted canonizations which seek to reappropriate colonial figures and narratives into a national narrative ensure an ongoing debate around memory/amnesia in the course of an unfinished process of decolonization. Examples of this are numerous in the case of France and its complex relationship to its former imperial empire, such as the 1998 inclusion of memorial plaques to Toussaint Louverture and Louis Delgrès in the *Panthéon*, two figures who famously opposed the French state.³ Henceforth, we will concentrate on a Mediterranean context while we are very well aware that similar dynamics can be detected in other parts of the postcolonial Francophone world and that these are not limited to a binary centre-periphery opposition. More precisely, the two following articles we have selected testify to what Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson call 'the importance of transcending nation-centred configurations of memory and teleological historiographies'.⁴ Acts of remembrance that go beyond practices such as those embodied by the 2013 inauguration of the *Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée* (MuCEM) in Marseille, which not only perpetuate the old orientalizing perception of 'Europe (us) vs. the rest' in its very title, but also, in a wider context, are characteristic of the interactions between memory and forgetting which are at stake in postcolonial memory politics in mainland France.

Adding to this are events of late, such as the fatal shootings in the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris or the centennial commemoration of the First World War and the problematic position of colonial troops, which have generated narratives in the public sphere that

¹ Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce que une nation?* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1882), p. 9.

² Pierre Nora, 'Entre Mémoire et Histoire: La problématique des lieux', in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, ed. by Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), pp. 23–43 (pp. 23–24).

³ Charles Forsdick describes the empty plinth where unrealized plans to reinter Toussaint's remains as reflective of the 'persistent and systematic silencing of slavery and the enslaved in national commemorations', which have traditionally focused on abolition. Charles Forsdick, 'The Panthéon's Empty Plinth: Commemorating Slavery in Contemporary France', *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents*, 9 (2012), 279–297 (p. 280).

⁴ Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson, 'Slavery and its Legacies: Remembering Labour Exploitation in the Francophone World', in *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World*, ed. by Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), pp. 1–21 (pp. 2–3).

demonstrate the strong connection between memory/amnesia and the legacies of colonialism in the Francophone world. Recent literary publications as well, like Kamel Daoud's *Meursault, contre-enquête* (2014) and Kim Thúy's *Mãn* (2013), express an ongoing preoccupation with the subject. For these very reasons, investigating the impact of colonialism on memory and/or amnesia and its literary and cultural representations remains one of the largest areas of interest within the field of Francophone postcolonial studies.⁵

In light of this developing research context, 'Memory/Amnesia' was the theme we chose for this year's SFPS Postgraduate Study Day which took place at Queen's University Belfast on 30 May 2015 and was generously supported by the Society and the host university's Fund for Student-led Initiatives. SFPS Postgraduate Study Days have been established as well-received and well-attended annual events and are evidence of both the strong commitment to research in Francophone postcolonial studies and sense of community within the Society. With previous events having been organized in Cambridge (2009), Liverpool (2010), Oxford (2011), London (2012), Stirling (2013) and Warwick (2014), we felt that the decision to hold this year's study day in Northern Ireland was particularly pertinent. Belfast did not only provide a historically significant location to discuss aspects of memory and amnesia in the contexts of colonialism and postcolonialism, but also allowed postgraduate students located on the northern geographical margins of the British academic sphere to attend the event more easily.

We were delighted to welcome Professor Max Silverman (University of Leeds) as the keynote speaker, who presented an engaging intervention on the complexities of memory in the colonial/postcolonial context entitled 'Palimpsestic encounters between colonial and Holocaust memories' and the current SFPS president, Dr Charlotte Baker (University of Lancaster) who kindly offered a training session that focused on 'Applying for an academic post'.

The day was structured around three panels, 'Theorising Memory', 'Memory and Gender', and 'Algerian Memories', demonstrating the wide spectrum of current postgraduate research in Francophone postcolonial studies. The programme⁶ fuelled discussions of different forms of memory, personal and collective, melancholic and forgetful, set within an impressively vast geographical context: from the Caribbean to Algeria, from the former Belgian colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. Moreover, there was an engagement with a wide variety of media, which presented the complexity of anamnesis and memorialization in the colonial/postcolonial context. Papers focused predominantly on literary texts, such as the paper by Laura McGinnis (Queen's University Belfast) on the 'Construction of Memory in the French Caribbean Novel' and the paper by Hugh Hiscock (University of Liverpool), entitled 'Recovering and Mapping Harki Memory through Narrative'. However, other media such as film and the visual arts were discussed in the paper by Barry Nevin (NUI Galway) which interrogated the 'Relationship between France and its *Algérie* in Jean Renoir's *Le Bled*' and in the paper by Stéphanie Brown (Queen's University Belfast), '*Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*: Cultural Encounter in the Third Space'.

We would like to thank Professor Kate Marsh, the editor of the SFPS *Bulletin*, and Dr Charlotte Baker for providing us with the opportunity to publish the papers of Edward Still (St Catherine's College, Oxford) and Antonia Wimbush (University of Birmingham) in this issue, testifying to the importance the Society continues to attribute to postgraduate research. The two presented their papers in the panel on 'Theorising Memory'. Their contributions to this issue pursue different theoretical approaches for interpreting literary

⁵ Recent academic events, such as the 2014 SFPS annual conference entitled 'Conflict and Commemoration in the Postcolonial Francophone World' and recently edited collections, like Fiona Barclay's *France's Colonial Legacies: Memory, Identity and Narrative* (2013), and Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson's *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World* (2015), further testify to this ongoing interest in memory studies.

⁶ The complete programme can be found at <https://sfpspostgrads2015.wordpress.com/final-programme/>.

responses to incisive moments in Algerian history. In 'Rocked: Cradled *and* Shaken: A Colonial Melancholic Stance in *Qui se souvient de la mer*', Edward Still departs from the conceptual confluence of the homophone 'mer/mère' and develops a theoretical framework that facilitates reading the narrator's colonial preoccupations with the maternal figure as melancholic in Mohammed Dib's 1962 novel. Moreover, this article argues that these representations of the mother serve to interrogate a specifically communal male experience against the backdrop of Algerian colonial and revolutionary society.

By contrast, Antonia Wimbush's article 'Memory and Exile in Nina Bouraoui's Autobiographical Narratives' introduces the themes of displacement, migration and exile into her analysis of remembering and forgetting. Combining Serge Doubrovsky's famous notion of 'autofiction' with a critical discussion of Western trauma theory, she investigates the complex constructions of female identity across borders—linguistic, national/geographical, and sexual—in a postcolonial context. This combination of both articles offers a geographically and historically circumscribed context—the impact of the French colonial legacy in Algeria on literary representations of remembering and forgetting—yet presents a vast range of perspectives and covers a timespan that runs from the last moments of the French imperial presence in North Africa (in Still's discussion of Dib's *Qui se souvient de la mer*) to the 1980 earthquake of El Asnam and the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s (which Wimbush addresses in her article). Thus, we showcase how the two approaches serve collectively to unpack the complexity and interactions of collective and personal memory between Algeria and France by privileging voices that offer alternative visions which '[transcend] nation-centred configurations of memory'.⁷

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⁷ Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson, p. 2.

Rocked, Cradled *and* Shaken: A Colonial Melancholic Stance in *Qui se souvient de la mer*

[L]a ville était morte, les habitants restant dressés au milieu des ruines tels des arbres desséchés, dans l'attitude où le cataclysme les avait surpris, jusqu'à l'arrivée de la mer dont le tumulte s'entendait depuis longtemps, qui les couvrit rapidement du bercement inépuisable de ses vagues.¹

At the conclusion of Mohammed Dib's ground-breaking representation of the Algerian War of Independence, *Qui se souvient de la mer*, at what might be adjudged to represent the final victory of the feminine force that the sea represents, the text attests to the ineluctable bond between 'la mer' and 'la mère' in the perspective of its representation. While she wipes away the dusty remnants of the crumbled colonial city and its inhabitants, she maintains her duty of care, her maternal credentials. Here, as at many other points in Dib's narrative, the reader is invited to recall the French nautical saying 'La mer berce comme la mère'. The sea's specific proximity to a conception of maternity within an understanding of femininity, beyond the obvious homophony, is reinforced time and again within the first-person narrative of the text through descriptions—repeated subjective responses that emphasize its soothing, nurturing qualities. Furthermore, the constant repetition of the verb 'bercer' and like terms comes to substantiate a metaphorization,² as the sea in the text remains peculiarly underdetermined (in contrast with other spatial zones such as the underground), in terms of its material attributes. The sea has very little descriptive texture as a space, it thus exists rather as a presence and invites metaphorization in a singularly direct manner. Some critics have seen this metaphorization as part of a symbolization that draws focus on a fear concerning the revolution's foreclosure of the Algerian woman's traditional guise as mother, a fear they argue is conveyed by a plaintive reading of the text's title as a question: 'Qui se souvient de la mer?' [Who remembers the sea/mother?]. Miriam Cooke, for example, writes that 'Dib was warning Algerians that the mother, the most honoured role for women within Algerian society was going to be forgotten'.³ Certainly, Dib's other pre-revolutionary texts do concern themselves with a breakdown in a certain ideal of motherhood. Aïni, of the *Trilogie Algérie*, is the nonpareil example of this sort of failure as, under the burden of crippling poverty, she does not provide the comfort that Omar, her son, seeks and instead must provide in a traditionally masculine sense—through work. It also cannot be denied that the narrator of *Qui se souvient de la mer* is greatly disturbed by what he sees as his wife Nafissa's abdication of a protective, maternal role that he would see as extending not just to their children, with whom he is periodically left, but also to himself. Thus, for example, he says of her the following, indicating his expectation of her catering to a male need for cradling:

Nafissa, elle, se gardait de dire quoi que ce fût. Gagnée par la douleur de l'homme? Non, patiente, attendant. Persuadée que son moment viendrait tôt ou tard, qu'il lui faudrait soigner, guérir, *bercer*.⁴

Nevertheless, what this article proposes is that though Dib's texts do focus heavily on the figure of the mother, making of her a somewhat oppressive figure in conceptualizing femininity, *Qui se souvient de la mer* in particular provides material rich in subversive potential in its depictions of metaphorized and real maternity. It does this by engaging both with the

¹ Mohammed Dib, *Qui se souvient de la mer* (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 2007), p. 216.

² The most famous citation that establishes the sea's motherly representation comes where we learn from the narrator that 'Sans la mer, sans les femmes, nous serions restés définitivement des orphelins; elles nous couvriraient du sel de leur langue et cela, heureusement, préserva maints d'entre nous! Il faudra le proclamer un jour publiquement.' *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 33.

³ Miriam Cooke, *Women and the War Story* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), p. 135.

⁴ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, pp. 33–44, my italics.

narrator's peculiar colonial preoccupation with the mother (a bond that can be viewed in the texts as melancholic, as representing an involuntary recalling) and with a contingent potential for a renewed relation to a feminine otherness. This renewed relation will be shown to oppose the limiting circumscription of feminine/maternal roles, engendering positive change and, possibly, epistemological revolution.

Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the narrator's bond with the figure of the mother may stand as a template that alludes to a shared male experience and that the attending ramifications for his epistemological quest are relatable to a wider context. Both Judith Roumani and Louis Tremaine have noted that the psychological journey that the narrator takes can be read as inviting a representative bond between the 'community and the "self"',⁵ and indeed Dib's monumental text does invite us to consider its narrator as exemplary, as just one of the 'orphelins' contending with colonial reality.⁶ This is achieved through statements that allude to a shared male experience; through the articulation in many passages of a feminine solidarity between 'porteuses de feu' and in opposition to the narrator's bewildered subjectivity; and also through the lack of description of the narrator. He, like the sea, can thus be understood as a historical figure, as well as a common result of a peculiar colonial structure.

Tremaine's study, 'Psychic Deformity in Mohammed Dib's *Qui se souvient de la mer*', produces a reading that sees the text as a depiction of arrested development among Algerian men. Indeed, in many ways his article sees Algerian male adulthood as a stage more intensely preoccupied with childlike concerns than childhood itself. Tremaine writes:

What is remarkable about these childhood sequences in the context of the novel, in fact, is precisely that they are unremarkable—that they are, relative to the narrator's experience as an adult, perfectly banal. It is the *adult's* world that is full of 'monsters'—iriaces, spyrovirs, minotaurs, mummies, and so on—not the child's.⁷

For Tremaine, then, the narrator is perennially beset by the psychic consequences of unsatisfied childhood needs, chief of which he cites as being 'the child's need for comfort and protection'.⁸

I would certainly agree that the narrator's monologue and his actions evince signs of an inescapable yearning for, and remembering of,⁹ a maternal presence, which is not acknowledged as lost but which is manifest in his reflections on people and spaces, from Nafissa to the sea. This connection would, to some extent, tally with the melancholic bond which this article argues as being fundamental to the construction of Dib's narrator. Where I would differ with Tremaine's conclusions, however, is in his gloomy assertions that see Dib's narrator as ineluctably constrained by this bond, as unable to admit new, complex existential understandings into 'full conscious consideration'.¹⁰ For example, Tremaine cites a passage that, he argues, demonstrates how the narrator is 'painfully aware of the arbitrariness of his perceptions';¹¹ however, he refuses to then grant him psychic development, despite this awareness. A section of the passage reads as follows:

Qu'est-ce qui me faisait redouter une métamorphose que je presentais devoir être inévitable et pourquoi

⁵ Judith Roumani, 'Mohammed Dib's *Qui se souvient de la mer*: Literary Technique and the Drama of Algeria', *Revue CELFAN*, 2.2 (1983), 8–11 (p. 10).

⁶ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 33.

⁷ Louis Tremaine, 'Psychic Deformity in Mohammed Dib's *Qui Se Souvient de la mer*', *Research in African Literatures*, 19 (1988), 283–300 (p. 286).

⁸ Tremaine, 'Psychic Deformity in Mohammed Dib's *Qui Se Souvient de la mer*', p. 286.

⁹ By *remembering*, as this article will go on to articulate, I understand a bodily connection to a maternal presence that is borne by the narrator and that stands in opposition to the masculine symbolic order.

¹⁰ Tremaine, 'Psychic Deformity in Mohammed Dib's *Qui Se Souvient de la mer*', p. 287.

¹¹ Tremaine, 'Psychic Deformity in Mohammed Dib's *Qui Se Souvient de la mer*', p. 297.

voulais-je refuser aux choses de se révéler sous d'autres figures? (Peut-être plus vraies; je m'arc-boutais à des significations que je savais être entre toutes les moins sûres.)¹²

Precisely what this passage illuminates is the narrator's opening up to new epistemological constellations, with the imperfect tense implying a past habit. At the very least the reader can determine that the narrator has been shaken in his certainty regarding the make-up of his existence and the figures which inhabit it. His affective relation with Nafissa, a figure of femininity bound to the mother in his psyche, disturbs his epistemological foundations, pushing him in the direction of considering existence otherwise. And, as the reader follows his quest, time and again s/he is compelled to view his goal as the reaching of a new configuration with a feminine other, sometimes figured as Nafissa, sometimes in more spatio-metaphorical terms (the sea, the underground).

Many passages could be cited to support this reading but one that is particularly of interest, considering its yoking of the sea and Nafissa, begins with the following citation:

Les plus coupables sont ceux qui se défiaient de la mer, choisissaient de s'enfermer chez eux. Celle qui prodigue le plus d'elle-même ne le fait pas par contrainte ou pour donner l'exemple, mais par une poussée, une nécessité qui récuse le calcul.¹³

The narrator thus establishes the feminine presence of the sea/mother as a force of primary importance with whom a relationship must be maintained. The reader is then immediately impelled to form a connection between the narrator's chastising of those who would turn their back on the feminine/maternal presence of the sea and his struggle to exist in relation to his wife:

Marchant et réfléchissant ainsi, je découvre devant moi Nafissa dont je reconnais l'allure rapide malgré le voile qui la dérobe aux yeux.¹⁴

Thus Nafissa and the sea/mother are located together, juxtaposed in the text and positioned in the narrator's quest as omnipresent *teloi* which are sought as a function of revolutionary progress. Moreover, Nafissa, as the representative of a feminine subject is depicted as partially revealed, as having her essence veiled, implying that the narrator is incapable of mastering an understanding of her ontology but that a search for comprehension thereof is of capital importance. Finally, of the section that then describes the narrator's meeting with Nafissa, Winifred Woodhull argues that the scene has her appear as 'a vanguard figure who brings her husband to consciousness of social change that renders the old public/private distinctions, and this the old order of gender relations, untenable'.¹⁵ The narrator presents her with two small figurines, a man and a woman, representing a former marital configuration, which she rejects, explaining that 'Tu voulais que je leur redonne vie et les réchauffe sur mon sein, de mon souffle. Le savais-tu au moins?'¹⁶ Importantly, her husband, the narrator, does recognize his unconscious will to have her nurture, to have her return to a maternal determination, allowing for a subsequent understanding of the precariousness of his positioning with respect to the feminine Other,¹⁷ stating 'C'était bien ça, je le reconnais'.¹⁸

¹² *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 105.

¹³ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 188.

¹⁴ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 188.

¹⁵ Winifred Woodhull, *Transfigurations of the Maghreb, Feminism, Decolonization, and Literatures* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 61.

¹⁶ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 190.

¹⁷ One thinks of Simone de Beauvoir's affirmation that, in respect of the relationship of *l'homme* to the Other, 'la conversation par laquelle il atteint la véritable sagesse n'est jamais faite, il faut sans cesse la faire, elle réclame une constante tension' and how this tension is ineluctably intensified by women's embodiment of his 'rêve de quiétude dans l'inquiétude'. Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986 [1949]), pp. 240–41.

Furthermore, though I would accept that the narrator does not find Nafissa herself again in the 'ville du sous-sol', it is certainly clear that his ingress therein is driven and conditioned by his focus on the feminine marker that she gives him (a rose) and by the feminine/maternal spaces with which she is so linked. With regards to his attempt to enter the underground, the text states:

Pour cela, les nuits ne me sont pas d'un faible secours. Influentes, elles m'enseignent le chemin. Les nuits, la mer. Identiques dans leur substance. Mais il me faut aussi surveiller l'apparition ou de la rose, ou de l'étoile, avant de retourner chez Osman Samed: c'est une condition nécessaire.¹⁹

This kind of motivated progression must, in my view, be understood differently to the infantile complaints of the adult narrator that litter earlier sections of the text. However, perhaps it is indeed this demand to be 'bercé', the intense connection with the figure of the mother that Tremaine associates with 'psychic deformity', that indicates a special foundation for the narrator's quest. Perhaps it is the melancholic incorporation, the maintenance of the loss of the mother that causes the narrator—and the Algerian male which he seems to represent—to enact a disturbed relationship to the masculine symbolic, and to seek an otherness that might instigate profound change. Interestingly, Judith Butler writes of how formulations of melancholy first developed by Abraham and Torok imply that the maternal body is given permanent residence in the body which is 'inhabited or possessed by phantasms of various kinds', echoing the subjection of the narrator in *Qui se souvient* to the mythical, possibly phantasmatic, beasts of the text.²⁰

Hédi Abdel-Jaouad contends that 'in many respects, the Maghrebian text in French—predominantly the story of an Oedipus searching for a Laius to kill—can in fact be seen as the vindication and glorification of motherhood'.²¹ He sites this partiality for the mother in the context of an oppressive patriarchy and refers to Abdel Bouhdiba's understanding of 'le complexe du hammam',²² as figuring a brutal separation from the mother that engenders an intense playing out of the Freudian Oedipal schema in adulthood. Though I would not disagree with this assessment, what Dib's work further indicates is that the colonial context itself intensifies a rupture from, and longing for, the maternal. Though many critics, including Louis Tremaine, have argued that *Qui se souvient* does not explicitly reference the Algerian colonial situation, and that its narrator is seemingly unaware of, or unable to process, the specificities of the colonial relation, I would echo Peter Hallward's statement that while Dib 'certainly evacuates the specified, he continues to write the *minimally specific*' [sic],²³ and would suggest further that the text does allude to a partially aware, specific subjective response to colonization. Certainly the reader is invited to read *Qui se souvient* within an Algerian colonial context as early on in the text s/he is presented with specific geographical coordinates: 'De la Souiqua au Beylick, je coupe à travers le cœur de la Cité.'²⁴

Indeed, it is my contention that in a passage which also refers to the realm of childhood, what is alluded to is the presence of the colonizer and of colonization as a determining force in an embracing of maternal otherness. At the same time, the father comes to fail in his role as a bridge to a greater symbolic order, to the precarious constellation of

¹⁸ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 190.

¹⁹ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 201.

²⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 93.

²¹ Hédi Abdel-Jaouad, "'Too Much in the Sun": Sons, Mothers and Impossible Alliances in Francophone Maghrebian Writing', *Research in African Literatures*, 27 (1996), 15–32 (p. 18).

²² See Abdel Bouhdiba, *La Sexualité en Islam* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975).

²³ By this we understand that though Dib does not produce a picture wholly determined by its context, we are still aware of a proximity to a specific milieu. See Peter Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing between the Singular and the Specific* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 193.

²⁴ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 29.

exchanges which constitutes the language of society, its hierarchies and divisions. The text encourages the reader to understand that in a colonial context in which outside space, understood by the subject as the space of men, is in some sense compromised by the colonizer, the father does not, or feels he cannot, shepherd his son, the narrator, into this realm. At least, the father's attempts or non-attempts to shepherd are perceived by the narrator as a failure. What the reader might then posit is that from this lack of introduction to the space perceived as external/masculine, the narrator forms a special melancholic bond with what he experiences as the internal/feminine/maternal. It is then from this that a more subversive, progressive epistemological stance is formed towards a feminine otherness, a subjective development to which I have previously referred.

In recalling his childhood, the narrator recounts how a mysterious figure appears, calling to him from the external space surrounding the property:

Immuable, enveloppé par la lumière, pendant que, le dos tourné au soleil, je le fixais avec saisissement, il ne semblait guère comprendre pourquoi il se trouvait ici.²⁵

The figure then vanishes and the narrator is left in a position of peculiar dissatisfaction while an interdiction from discussing this outside zone reigns in the household:

Ma rencontre avec cet inconnu ne fit qu'aiguiser ma haine de cette existence, de cette maison, de l'atmosphère qu'on y respirait.²⁶

The figure is referred to as '*il*', in italics, and the reader is told that '*son image ordonnait le monde*'.²⁷ When the narrator finally speaks of him in front of his parents, italics are again employed, signposting a heightened significance attributed to this masculine figure for the narrator. Upon speaking about '*lui*', the narrator's parents, in particular his father, act such that he understands that '*je ne devais plus parler de lui [sic], que je ne pouvais faire moins qu'effacer l'impression déplorable que j'avais produite*'.²⁸ Dib's character achieves this desired repression, stating:

Je me sentis, miraculeusement et sans restriction, doué de ce génie qui consiste à se réinventer à tout coup sous une autre apparence pour donner le change.²⁹

Dib's text invites interpretation of the figure and the familial interplay that proceeds from the son's discovery of his presence. An initial reading, indeed, might see '*lui*'—a masculine presence that disrupts the life of the home—as the colonizer himself. Certainly, the parental injunction against speech that appears as a desire to shelter the son and themselves against the outside would support this assumption. However, two small details somewhat undermine this conclusion: the narrator refers to the figure as '*mon ami*',³⁰ and describes him pointedly, in the final sentence of a paragraph of description as not being '*ped-noir*': '*Ses pieds étaient nus comme les miens*'.³¹ These details notwithstanding, the figure constitutes a reminder of an external reality that could be identified as colonial. This identification is encouraged most clearly, beyond the historical context of the novel, the appearance of an intriguing yet disruptive masculine figure, and the reaction of the parents, at the conclusion of the passage. Here doubly failed repression emerges, with the second failure stemming from

²⁵ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 91.

²⁶ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 93.

²⁷ *Qui se souvient de la mer* p. 93.

²⁸ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 94.

²⁹ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 94.

³⁰ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 94.

³¹ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 91.

the continued presence and impact of 'ces choses qui continuaient, sans rémission, à lancer leurs attaques sournoises'.³² The narrator's claim that he could have borne the presence of these external chimera, if 'ces événements, à l'origine de quoi nous ne sommes pour rien n'étaient venus tout jeter bas et créer une situation nouvelle',³³ compels the reader to view them as products of colonialism which are to be exposed to the light and swept away by revolutionary events.

To return to the father's failure, after having been driven to repress the image of the figure designated as *lui*, the narrator refers to the attitude of his parents towards himself following his outburst as 'dépourvue de clémence' but focuses immediately on his father without any mention, even concessive, of his mother's potential presence as being without clemency. The father, the masculine, is framed as follows:

Mon père, je n'avais qu'à l'observer, m'écrasait sous la vigueur de ses sens et de ses muscles, son égoïsme naturel, l'inflexibilité de son caractère. Ce n'était très certainement qu'un piège, très certainement, ce faisant, il visait ailleurs. Seulement, le piège m'étant tendu, il me fallait l'éviter, mais l'évitant, je devais prendre garde de tomber dans un autre.³⁴

What this passage seems to allude to is twofold: first, the presence of the narrator's father is mortifying, he forms no bridge to understanding, he simply orders, stands as interdiction, providing no resolution. Second, this status, understood from an advanced narrative position, in appearing to present a 'piège', while 'il visait ailleurs' alludes to the sense that, in the narrator's perception, the danger of crossing his father stems from his father's targeting of another space, that of the colonial exterior. Furthermore, if taken in conjunction with Memmi's and with Fanon's understandings of ossified cultures, of the perceived need to preserve the integrity of the home in the face of the discourses and institutions of the colonizer, it is possible again to interpret the father's role in the scene as a product of a colonial reality.³⁵ The narrator thus comes to attach extra anxiety-in-repression to the unexplained (what the figure represents of the colonial exterior) and does not assume a masculine psychic template that would be adequately reconciled with the law of the father. I pointed out that in Louis Tremain's reading of *Qui se souvient*, the narrator yearns for a maternal comforting deprived in childhood. It is my contention that he also lacks paternal guidance provided in the text, for example, in the figure of El Hadj. Because of the father's over-protection, an oppressive closing-off from access to the symbolic of the colonial/external is staged that forges the external in a forbidden, repressed, unexplicated *unheimlich* material while allowing the masculine and the colonial in the guise of the law to become psychically entwined. This then provokes a particular sensitivity to, and valorization of, the maternal that starts the narrator on his journey towards another epistemological stance, which manifests in a melancholic relation wherein he is unable to accept the loss of the maternal.

It could be argued that the underground, the night, the sea and initially Nafissa are perhaps on one level welcoming because they represent an order of comforting *jouissance*. Judith Butler writes that dependency on the woman is 'pursued by the masculine subject, for the woman as reassuring sign is the displaced maternal body, the vain but persistent promise of the recovery of preindividuated *jouissance*'.³⁶ Crucially however, as I have been intimating above, Dib's text shows us that this obsession with figuring the maternal goes beyond a simple configuration of desire and is borne as a kind of melancholic attachment. The narrator

³² *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 95.

³³ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 97.

³⁴ *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p. 95.

³⁵ See Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé; précédé du Portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), and Franz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Éditions Maspéro, 1968).

³⁶ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 61.

cannot escape, is unable to process the loss of the mother and this leads to a quest to understand the world and its hierarchies and separations, differently. The state as subject is rocked: cradled *and* shaken, by an appreciation of feminine difference, instigated by a maternal focus in the psychic development of the child. Following on from the previous citation, Butler writes that 'his [man's] seemingly self-grounded autonomy attempts to conceal the repression which is both its ground and the perpetual possibility of its own ungrounding'.³⁷ In Dib's text, where a melancholic structure is revealed by paternal influences or their lack, this repression is under-realized, the text, as a representation of the narrator's psyche, can and does speak the mother, constantly, involuntarily, finding her to be omnipresent in those sites of opposition to colonial space. She is *remembered* and her body shifts the representative narrator's epistemological position, as the reader follows his movements towards revolution.

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³⁷ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 61.

Memory and Exile in Nina Bouraoui's Autobiographical Narratives

At the core of exile is the idea of a departure, an enforced movement across national borders, which evokes notions of loss and suffering. Under further examination, however, it emerges that this departure reveals complex networks of political, identitarian and cultural factors, highlighting the necessity and difficulty of remembering exile. On the one hand, remembering is a therapeutic process in which exiled subjects relive their experiences to repair what Edward Said calls the 'unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place'.¹ On the other hand, the memory of exile is often so traumatic, due to the violence and persecution which lead to this forced displacement, as well as the departure itself, that sometimes exile is best forgotten. Exile, then, is found at the interplay of memory and amnesia, raising questions about the most effective framework for postcolonial writers to express their displacement.

This article applies Serge Doubrovsky's term of *autofiction* (1977) to Franco-Algerian author Nina Bouraoui's literature, examining the complex relationship between exile and memory. Doubrovsky defines autofiction on the back cover of his 1977 novel *Fils* as 'fiction, d'événements et de faits strictement réels'.² I argue that Bouraoui departs from conventional autobiographical models, fictionalizing her lived experiences to create a more reflective, reimagined account of her trauma. The prolific and critically acclaimed author was born in 1967, shortly after the Algerian War of Independence, and so has frequently experienced exile as both a geographic movement between Algeria and France and as a psychological state of alienation. Discussing *Le Jour du séisme* (1999) and *Mes mauvaises pensées* (2005),³ this article reconsiders the boundaries between autobiography and autofiction in an exploration of how autofiction has become Bouraoui's mechanism of coping with exile, as she remembers and forgets her trauma to come to terms with her condition.

Autobiography as a mode of writing is useful for female exiles and immigrant writers; historically marginalized by the literary canon because of their gendered and ethnic minority status, their personal accounts activate memories which have largely been ignored. The genre, however, is not clearly defined. From Philippe Lejeune's 'pacte autobiographique', in which 'il faut qu'il y ait identité de l'auteur, du narrateur et du personnage' [original emphasis],⁴ to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's preferred model of 'life narrative', which engages with questions of memory, experience, identity, space, embodiment, and agency,⁵ autobiography has been interpreted in numerous ways. Yet these Eurocentric models, which focus almost exclusively upon the self, are inappropriate for postcolonial exilic narratives which emphasize wider social and historical issues, nor do they facilitate a reflection of exilic suffering. Instead, as Leigh Gilmore argues, they risk silencing such trauma by presuming a legalistic notion of truth, carrying with it a risk of judgement by the reader which 'may be too similar to forms in which trauma was experienced'.⁶

In contrast, Bouraoui's exilic representation is better explored through an autofictional lens. Doubrovsky first theorized this concept to contradict Lejeune's claim that a text whose narrator and author had the same name could not be fictional, although he

¹ Edward W. Said, 'Reflections on Exile', in his *Reflections on Exile: And Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta, 2001), pp. 173–86 (p. 173).

² Serge Doubrovsky, *Fils* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1977), back cover.

³ Nina Bouraoui, *Le Jour du séisme* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 1999), and *Mes mauvaises pensées* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 2005).

⁴ Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975), p. 15.

⁵ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd edn (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010 [2001]), p. 5.

⁶ Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 3.

admits that autofiction had existed long before he arrived on the literary scene: 'simplement j'ai inventé le terme et le concept, mais absolument pas la chose'.⁷ Armine Kotin Mortimer observes that the meaning of the term has also changed over time.⁸ Doubrovsky defines autofiction as 'la fiction que j'ai décidé en tant qu'écrivain de me donner de moi-même et par moi-même, en y incorporant, au sens plein du terme, l'expérience de l'analyse, non point seulement dans la thématique, mais dans la production du texte'.⁹ The genre enables a psychoanalysis of the self and manipulation of reality. As Dominique Rosse explains, autofiction breaks the autobiographical pact between author and reader: 'le vrai y est faux et le faux y est vrai'.¹⁰

This article offers an autofictional reading of Bouraoui's narratives, positing that the genre is particularly suitable to examine her depiction of exile. First, the ability to distort reality, suppressing or fictionalizing her painful departure, allows Bouraoui to control her exile; this freedom had been previously denied by Algeria. Second, as autofiction provides opportunities for psychoanalytic interpretations of lived experience, she can reflect upon the multiple consequences of exile, rather than becoming overly concerned with factual information. As Doubrovsky remarks, whereas autobiography is reserved for political elites, autofiction, in contrast, is a genre with which '[l]es humbles, qui n'ont pas droit à l'histoire', can tell their story.¹¹ While Bouraoui is a successful author, she is not an influential politician for whom autobiography was traditionally reserved, and so this genre allows her to voice her exile. Exilic representations, then, expose the limits of traditional autobiographical models and constitute a call for a reimagining of the genre.

Nina Bouraoui: Trajectories of Exile

Bouraoui writes her narratives to remember exile on her own terms. Exile pervades her personal story: she left France for Algeria when she was only two months old and returned at fourteen. Born in Rennes to a French mother and Algerian father, she spent the first fourteen years of her life in Algiers. Regular visits to her grandparents in Rennes preceded her exile to France in 1981 as ensuing tensions after independence escalated. Moreover, exile was catalytic for Bouraoui's family, since both her parents were driven out of their respective native countries, and, problematically, her identification with either France and Algeria implies the negation of either of her parents.¹² After marrying in France in 1960, her parents were persecuted as Franco-Algerian relations deteriorated.¹³ Their decision to move to Algeria in 1968 is visualized in *Garçon manqué* (2000) as a form of exile. Given that Algerians no longer held French citizenship after independence in 1962, the family were considered 'des clandestins. Des étrangers. Sans travail. Sans argent'.¹⁴ They were therefore displaced to Algeria. Exile, then, forms the backdrop to Bouraoui's family life. The family's inability to feel 'at home' in either country is replicated by Bouraoui's heroines, who feel alienated from

⁷ Serge Doubrovsky, 'Serge Doubrovsky', *Le Grand Entretien*, France Inter, 28 March 2011: <http://www.franceinter.fr/player/reecouter?play=44131> [accessed 17 July 2015].

⁸ Armine Kotin Mortimer, 'Autofiction as Allofiction: Doubrovsky's "L'Après-vivre"', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 49.3 (2009), 22–35 (p. 22).

⁹ Serge Doubrovsky, 'Autobiographie/vérité/psychanalyse', in his *Autobiographiques: De Corneille à Sartre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988), pp. 61–79 (p. 77).

¹⁰ Dominique Rosse, 'Autofiction et autopoïétique: la fictionnalisation de soi', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 42.4 (2002), 8–16 (p. 9).

¹¹ Doubrovsky, 'Autobiographie/vérité/psychanalyse', p. 69.

¹² Nina Bouraoui, *Garçon manqué* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 2000), p. 20.

¹³ Helen Vassallo, *The Body Besieged: The Embodiment of Historical Memory in Nina Bouraoui and Leïla Sebbar* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2012), pp. 40–41.

¹⁴ *Garçon manqué*, p. 133.

French and Algerian society. Bouraoui's writing echoes texts by other contemporary female Francophone writers of the Maghreb for whom, as Valérie Orlando argues, 'literacy force is a multiplicity that includes interaction' between French and Arabic cultures, although it is questionable whether Bouraoui embraces this cultural negotiation as the other authors do. Rather than exile being a site in 'multiple connections with other peoples, ethnicities, and languages as well as diverse notions of becoming and being' can be created,¹⁵ for Bouraoui, and her literary personae, it constitutes a site of tension and anxiety.

Le Jour, Bouraoui's fifth text, narrates the devastation caused by the cataclysmic earthquake which shook Algeria's northern city of El Asnam (renamed 'Chlef' after the earthquake) on 10 October 1980. The first-person narrative describes the effects of this powerful earthquake upon Algeria: the earthquake ravages the beautiful landscape, kills five thousand people and tears many more from their homes. The young female narrator describes the destruction of Algeria, comparing the earthquake to fire as devastation overwhelms her: 'il couvre la terre, drapée, il renverse ses beautés, il noie les plaines'.¹⁶ She then evokes her painful flight across Algeria to safety.

The topos of exile here is twofold. First, the earthquake uproots the narrator from her land, causing her to feel lost and abandoned. She remarks that 'je suis marquée, à jamais' by her exile across Algeria,¹⁷ she loses her home and familiar surroundings. Short sentences puncture the entire novel, revealing her distress at being displaced from her home. She cannot articulate her emotions, instead speaking in very short sentences which convey the speed and urgency of her flight, viz., 'Je cours. Je fuis'.¹⁸ This attention to narrative form confirms the text's autofictional status, since 'la recherche d'une forme originale' is an important criteria in Doubrovsky's definition of autofiction, according to Philippe Gasparini.¹⁹ Bouraoui thus manipulates language, emphasizing her traumatic flight across Algeria while forgetting her true pain of being straddled across two cultures. Anaphora accentuates her trauma: the repetition of structures, such as 'ma terre tremble',²⁰ portray the narrator's intense melancholy. The following passage is particularly poignant for its nostalgic reflections on loss and displacement. The repeated verb phrase, 'je deviens', indicates the enormous change caused by the earthquake, while the repetition of 'sans' emphasises that away from Algiers, the young girl feels lost and abandoned:

Je deviens sans Alger.
Je deviens sans enfance.
Je deviens sans attaches, soumise au bruit et au souffle violent.
Je deviens une ombre sans lumière.²¹

Although the narrator recognizes that exile is collective, as the earthquake causes Algeria 'perdre, son enfance. Perdre, son pays. Perdre, ses lieux',²² her own experience seems particularly traumatic because of her deep connection with the Algerian landscape. Through exile she become 'une étrangère' in her own land as she constantly seeks familiar places, but realizes that she, and everything around her, has changed.²³ *Le Jour* departs from conventional readings of exile as displacement or banishment across territories, suggesting that exile can

¹⁵ Valérie Orlando, *Nomadic Voices of Exile: Feminine Identity in Francophone Literature of the Maghreb* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999), p. 53.

¹⁶ *Le Jour*, p. 22.

¹⁷ *Le Jour*, p. 9.

¹⁸ *Le Jour*, p. 13.

¹⁹ Philippe Gasparini, *Autofiction: Une aventure du langage* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2008), p. 209.

²⁰ *Le Jour*, p. 9, p. 11 and p. 46.

²¹ *Le Jour*, p. 74.

²² *Le Jour*, p. 53.

²³ *Le Jour*, p. 9.

occur within one's home community. The narrator's exile thus exemplifies Hamid Nacify's understanding of exile as geographic, social or economic deprivations within the country itself.²⁴ Although her exile does not involve a crossing of national borders, nor a banishment for illicit political or intellectual activity, it still provokes sentiments of alienation which are common to the exilic condition: she is expelled from her home by the earthquake. Her exile is perhaps more traumatic than that of others who are displaced across national borders, since her home, presumed to be a place of comfort, safety and protection, is transformed into a location of exile.

For Bouraoui, then, exile is an inherent source of trauma, the memory of which she negotiates through autofiction. A current wave of literary scholars are using Western trauma theory to analyse Francophone women's life-writing. In her analysis of autobiographical narratives published by French women since 1968, Kathryn Robson defines trauma as a bodily and psychic injury which 'is relived endlessly in the present',²⁵ arguing that trauma can be articulated and overcome through self-writing. Zoe Norridge, meanwhile, examines pain and trauma in Anglophone and Francophone African literature, claiming that fiction in particular 'is uniquely placed to explore the particularities of individual pain experiences'.²⁶ Although Stef Craps' arguments surrounding the problematic use of Western trauma theory for postcolonial narratives must be acknowledged, including its failure to recognize the sufferings of non-minority groups on their own terms,²⁷ I argue that autofiction, as the merging of fiction and autobiography, enables a more reflective, critical and fictionalized articulation of trauma. Bouraoui is therefore well-placed to voice the difficulties of remembering the trauma of exile.

However, for Bouraoui, exile is also a positive experience, offering safety and protection. Shielded from collapsing buildings and falling trees, she escapes physical harm as others around her are wounded by the earthquake. Furthermore, exile represents her passage from childhood to adulthood as she matures and becomes more independent, embracing her femininity and accepting her new identity which she forged during her exile: 'j'apprends à être une femme'.²⁸ For Orlando, exile is the only space in which postcolonial female writers can 'continue a feminine dissident discourse',²⁹ by the same token, in *Le Jour* exile is the sole space which guarantees the young woman's freedom and empowerment. Exile allows her to survive in a time of despair and devastation.

Le Jour can be interpreted as a condemnation of Algeria's civil war of the 1990s. Bouraoui compares the earthquake's destruction of Algeria to that inherently engendered by war by likening it to 'une guerre'.³⁰ Although no specific war is named, the Arabic term describing the earthquake, 'el zilzel',³¹ implies that religion is involved, because, as Marjorie Attignol Salvodon notes, the word 'signifies an apocalyptic end of the world in a well-known passage of the Koran'.³² The religious allusion denotes the ideological conflict between the secular, military-backed regime and Islamist fundamentalists during the civil war. This metaphorical reading reinforces exile's role as offering safety from violence.

²⁴ Hamid Nacify, 'Phobic Spaces and Liminal Panics: Independent Transnational Film Genre', in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, ed. by Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 119–44 (p. 123).

²⁵ Kathryn Robson, *Writing Wounds: The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women's Life Writing* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), p. 11.

²⁶ Zoe Norridge, *Perceiving Pain in African Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 22.

²⁷ Stef Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 3.

²⁸ *Le Jour*, p. 83.

²⁹ Orlando, *Nomadic Voices of Exile*, p. 73.

³⁰ *Le Jour*, p. 46.

³¹ *Le Jour*, p. 22.

³² Marjorie Attignol Salvodon, *Fictions of Childhood: The Roots of Identity in Contemporary French Narratives* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2008), p. 48.

Le Jour demonstrates that exile is traumatic as well as life-saving, and through autofiction, exile can be remembered and forgotten. Facts about the narrator's displacement contrast with the fictional characters Maliha and Arslan while her wanderings are interspersed with mystical incidents. Catherine Cusset observes that for Doubrovsky, facts can be manipulated through language, but the facts themselves are real.³³ This is the case here: Bouraoui admits in interviews that the text stems from personal experiences, but she has distorted the truth through her choice of language; this form of writing acts as 'le seul baume, la seule douceur et la seule réparation'³⁴ in the resolution of her traumatic exile, because she can omit or fictionalize details which she would rather forget, while still undergoing the restorative process of remembering. Although remembering can be painful, requiring time, courage and determination, it is an important step in the recovery of exiled subjects.

Exile in *Mes mauvaises pensées* seems more complex. Winner of the Prix Renaudot in 2005, Bouraoui's seventh text portrays a woman's visits to a Parisian psychotherapist. The text centres on Bouraoui's own psychotherapy treatment which she underwent in 2001, addressing her troubled childhood, sexuality and nationality.³⁵ This first-person narrative adopts the form of an interior monologue, and, according to Sara Leek, the absence of chapters and paragraphs creates 'an experimental stream of consciousness'.³⁶ In an emotional identity quest, the unnamed narrator adopts an adult perspective as she evokes important events which have shaped her life. She tackles her problems with her psychotherapist and uses writing to heal her wounds, declaring that 'je peux trouver ma place dans le monde'.³⁷ Yet this resolution seems superficial as the narrator continually questions her identity, wondering where she truly belongs. She still appears traumatized by her multiple exilic experiences.

Here, exile manifests itself in various ways. First, it is an enforced movement between Algeria and France due to repercussions after the Franco-Algerian conflict. In *Garçon manqué*, the narrator is assaulted in Algeria: she is sent anonymous parcels of poisoned food and buckets of urine are thrown over her head as a punishment for her Franco-Algerian origins.³⁸ The family then leaves Algeria because, as Helen Vassallo remarks, the Algerians consider them 'representative of the Metropolitan enemy',³⁹ refusing to distinguish between the innocent individual who played no part in the war and the collective former colonizer. In *Mes mauvaises pensées*, the narrator examines everything she has left behind when moving to France: 'je laisse ma chambre d'Alger, je laisse mes livres, je laisse mes vêtements, [...], je laisse ma première vie'.⁴⁰ She defines herself as 'une déracinée'.⁴¹ Exile has caused her to lose her roots, forcing her to settle in a country which feels alien to her.

The narrator also experiences exile in its metaphorical form of exclusion and isolation. As Vytautas Kavolis explains, a contemporary phase in the usage of the term *exile*

³³ Catherine Cusset, 'The Limits of Autofiction', Paper presented at conference on Autofiction, 19–21 April 2012, New York University: <http://www.catherinecusset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/THE-LIMITS-OF-AUTOFICTION.pdf> [accessed 7 September 2015].

³⁴ Nina Bouraoui, 'Entretien avec Nina Bouraoui: l'écriture au corps', Interview by Damien Aubel, *Transfuge*, 39 (April 2010), 40–47 (p. 43).

³⁵ Karen Ferreira-Meyers, *L'Autofiction d'Amélie Nothomb, Calixthe Beyala et Nina Bouraoui: De la théorie à la pratique de l'autofiction* (Berlin: Books on Demand GmbH, 2012), p. 434.

³⁶ Sara Leek, "'L'Écriture qui saigne": Exile and Wounding in the Narratives of Nina Bouraoui and Linda Lê', *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 15 (2012), 237–55 (p. 240).

³⁷ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 63.

³⁸ *Garçon manqué*, pp. 80–81.

³⁹ Vassallo, *The Body Besieged*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 97.

⁴¹ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 19.

departs from its political associations, encompassing 'all conceivable forms of alienation'.⁴² Exile is thus a sense of otherness, in which issues of gender, race and sexuality segregate exiled subjects from society. Although the narrator is comfortable with her lesbianism, her sexuality still 'others' her because her family do not approve of her lifestyle. Neither does she conform to a conventional model of femininity in France: when remembering a summer in France with her male cousin, she remarks that people assumed she was his brother because 'j'ai longtemps cette relation avec les garçons, l'image-miroir'.⁴³ Moreover, while she has always respected her father, this admiration is taken to extremes when she replaces him as head of the family while he remains in Algeria, imitating how he acts, speaks and dresses: 'je prends mon père pour modèle', quite literally.⁴⁴ These unique relationships with male family members contribute to her alienation, because they differ widely from what they are commonly expected to be. Her Franco-Algerian origins add to her metaphorical exile. Feeling isolated because her dual heritage sets her apart from everyone else, she remarks that 'je crois n'être d'aucun camp'.⁴⁵ This metaphorical exile is more painful than her physical displacement, because it occurs within the domestic sphere, supposedly a space of safety and security.

Finally, she is marginalized through language because of her problematic relationship with Arabic and French. French is her mother tongue, and despite attending Arabic classes at school in Algeria, she is not proficient in the language. This troubles her, for she considers Arabic 'une magie',⁴⁶ of which a command would be a step towards her integration into her father's culture, to which she wants to belong. At a party in Paris, she cannot understand people speaking in Arabic and 'je m'en veux de cela';⁴⁷ Algeria is part of her heritage, yet she is locked out of its culture due to this language barrier,⁴⁸ and she resents the French language for preventing her integration into Algerian life. These linguistic tensions remind us that, as Kinga Olszewska argues, exile is much more than a geographic displacement; it inherently 'involves a sense of loss of identity and a separation or even banishment from indigenous culture, community, language, tradition and history'.⁴⁹

Although the narrator slowly learns to accept her exile, this process seems incomplete, as exile in one of its forms still constitutes the underlying cause of her suffering. Writing allows Bouraoui and her narrator 'effacer mes mauvaises pensées':⁵⁰ it is an ongoing mechanism of self-discovery in the recovery of painful, repressed memories. Suzette Henke terms this process *scriptotherapy*, defining it as 'the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of authorial reenactment'.⁵¹ However, Henke does not conceptualize a fictionalization of lived trauma, a crucial stage in Bouraoui's remembering of exile. Autofiction, in contrast, suggests the possibility of manipulating exile, empowering the author and permitting her to come to terms with her trauma through a rewriting of her displacements.

Bouraoui's writing underscores the narrator's struggle of living with the memory of her exile, as the text, woven together as a single paragraph, challenges linguistic norms and

⁴² Vytautas Kavolis, 'Women Writers in Exile', *World Literature Today*, 66 (1992), 43–46 (p. 43).

⁴³ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 38.

⁴⁴ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 117.

⁴⁵ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 52.

⁴⁶ *Garçon manqué*, p. 8.

⁴⁷ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 93.

⁴⁸ Although Algerian culture is also produced in Berber languages, the narrator feels that her limited Arabic prevents her participation in society, particularly given Algeria's imposition of Arabic in 1963.

⁴⁹ Kinga Olszewska, *Wanderers across Language: Exile in Irish and Polish Literature of the Twentieth Century* (London: MHRA and Maney Publishing, 2007), p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 79.

⁵¹ Suzette A. Henke, *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life Writing* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. xii.

textual expectations. Punctuation is sporadic as commas and semi-colons replace full stops, suggesting that the battle with her demons is ongoing and will never cease.⁵² These long sentences emphasize the text's orality as it appears to be a spoken confession to her psychotherapist, portraying the speed and urgency of her speech. Here, Bouraoui's style echoes that of authors such as Marie Cardinal and Christine Orban, whose autobiographical work fits into the category of 'récits d'analyse'. As Françoise Tilkin explains, in this genre, first identified in the seventies, 'les "analysés" prennent, eux aussi, la plume',⁵³ giving voice to the subjects of psychoanalysis. While there are clear generic similarities between Bouraoui's *Mes mauvaises pensées*, and Cardinal's *Les mots pour le dire* (1975) and Orban's *Deux fois par semaine* (2005), including, as Emma Webb remarks in her analysis of Cardinal's œuvre, a focus on the relationship between language and identity and a writing style described as a 'rhythmic free flow',⁵⁴ a thematic connection can also be made. Cardinal was a *pied-noir* and Orban was brought up in Morocco before living in France, so exile played an important role in their lives and narratives. Contextualizing Bouraoui's work thus demonstrates the prevalence of displacement in Francophone women's literature and their engagement with innovative, psychoanalytical writing. For Bouraoui, this style reveals the interaction between memory and amnesia, enabling her to remember her exile and resolve her personal issues while forgetting the suffering it has caused her.

In conclusion, *Le Jour* and *Mes mauvaises pensées* explore connections between exile and identity within the Algerian context, demonstrating that forced displacements can engender both positive and negative consequences upon exiled subjects. Autofiction provides a useful framework to analyse Bouraoui's relationship with exile and memory. Factual episodes offer a poignant reminder that exile in its many forms affects real lives, whereas fictional characters and personal reflections allow her to distance herself from her painful past. In *Mes mauvaises pensées*, the narrator admits that 'j'ai toujours voulu fuir la vie' because of her traumatic exile.⁵⁵ By rewriting the memory of her exiles, Bouraoui begins to accept these difficult experiences to move forward, rather than run away from life.

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⁵² *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 25.

⁵³ Françoise Tilkin, *Quand la folie se racontait: Récit et antipsychiatrie* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990), p. 57.

⁵⁴ Emma Webb, 'Introduction', in *Marie Cardinal: New Perspectives*, ed. by Emma Webb (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 13–30 (p. 17).

⁵⁵ *Mes mauvaises pensées*, p. 14.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism. By MAYANTHI L. FERNANDO. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014. 313 pp. Pb \$25.95. ISBN: 9780822357483

Mayanthi Fernando's *The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism* will prove to be one of the most important books of our decade in French Studies. Fernando considers the vexed terrain that pits the largely undifferentiated demographic category of Arab/Muslim/Islamic against a French republican exigency to secularity, or *laïcité*. Boldly, she proposes that 'French national identity is secured through the exclusion of a homogeneous Muslim difference, an analytical framework that underpins wider-ranging studies of Muslim alterity in the West' (p. 19). To those in the field, her claim might not seem entirely new, but as she herself points out, even extremely subtle and erudite thinkers such as Étienne Balibar, Christian Joppke, Gilles Kepel and Will Kymlicka misunderstand the contradictory dynamics that predicate French national identity on defining itself against a 'Muslim other'. What this work generates that is new, and has been desperately needed, is a common vocabulary that can be shared by all members of the rapidly evolving French public sphere: from the politicians and specialists who served on the Stasi Commission (published in 2004) whose mission was to examine '*Laïcité* in Question', to those whom Fernando reluctantly refers to as Muslim French, for lack of a better socio-demographic appellation (p. 26).

Extremely accomplished, having graduated from the University of Chicago, trained under the scholarly aegis of Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Fernando combines an intimate knowledge of Arab and French anthropological and historical theory with ethnographic practice. Following Trouillot's call for anthropologists from the global South to study the global North, Fernando conducts 'an inquiry into dominant modes of secular-republican power', and as such focuses on 'contradictions' of secularism as much as on those of Islam (p. 25). In other words, she sees herself as a 'counterexpert' to those specialists whose voices are accorded the most currency: intellectuals, who even despite their best intentions, continue to propagate a status quo that stubbornly insists on misunderstanding both the religious underpinnings of contemporary French secularism and the political potentialities of French Muslim voices (p. 76). Fernando's interlocutors are at once Muslim French but also the voices of politicians and public figures, such as Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux, Bertrand Delanoë, Claude Guéant, Nadine Morano and Véronique Rieffel.

Fernando sets out this new epistemological terrain by taking the 'Muslim French interlocutors seriously as sources of knowledge and as a theorists' (p. 24), considering their lifework side by side that of theorists such as Talal Asad, Étienne Balibar, Alain Touraine and Michel Wieviorka. Her interlocutors include adults and young adults notably in the Nantian Bellevue and the Parisian Goutte d'Or neighborhoods. For example, Farid Abdelkrim, of Algerian parents living in France since the mid-1900s and strongly affected by his friend Radouane's death at the hands of a policeman (p. 33); Younès, a social worker of Tunisian descent in his early forties, and a founding member of the Union of Young Muslims (UJM) and the Collective of French Muslims (CMF), who came of age in Lyon during the Beur movement (p. 39); and 'Karima, an unemployed law clerk of Moroccan descent in her late twenties who had been born and raised in Lyon' (p. 70), provide new perspectives on what it means to participate in contemporary French society. The discussions with her interlocutors reveal the importance that a history of secularism in France has in shaping how Muslim French see their own relationship to the state. For example their discussions include: the laws that regulate the Alsace-Moselle departments, where the 'French state pays the salaries of clergy' (p. 9); the 1901 law of association, which has allowed the government to contribute to the construction of the Institute for the Cultures of Islam (ICI, p. 122) as well as that of

the Great Mosque of Paris (p. 134); the 1905 law of separation between church and state; and analyses of how 'secular sovereignty' (p. 22) has only become more strict over the past decades. She compares the 'first headscarves affair' in 1989 with the second in 2004, whereby 'these republicans had changed their tune and were advocating an outright ban on headscarves' (p. 180), culminating in the law of 15 March 2004 restricting religious signs. Fernando's overlapping of multiple Muslim French discourses with that of equally divergent academic perspectives creates a sort of epistemological clearing house, which works through the fraught categories of the 'religious' and the 'secular', considering terms such as: *le vivre ensemble*, *l'ouverture*, *le repli*, communalism (p. 129), *communautarisme* (p. 89), and 'secular sovereignty' (p. 22), among others.

Fernando successfully takes on a Sisyphean theoretical feat, illustrating how a commitment to secularism by the status quo French intellectual and political milieu is intimately linked to a specific 'theological-political' history (p. 23), one in which religion is not as separate from the state as the French public sphere would have us believe. It follows that Fernando is obliged to attempt to disassemble the complex matrixes of theology and politics. Yet, any responsible study must admit that secularism is inextricably linked to religion (p. 22). Fernando shows that for France to move forward, it must let go of its commitment to an idealist notion of *laïcité*. Instead, it must consider how Muslim French see themselves as political French subjects, on which terms they claim their own 'right to citizenship' (chapter two), and how they imagine their own belonging to a French public sphere. What matters is not if *laïcité* is upheld or not. Rather, as Fernando's Muslim French interlocutors point out, the key is to bring social actors together from divided social groups, so as to create a social space that 'offers the best hope for a tolerant world' (p. 261). In so doing, she also considers how it may even be possible that several expressions of a Muslim 'theological-political' ethos may not be so out of step with French republican notions of the political. In other words, in avoiding a theoretical apparatus that posits the secular against the religious, Fernando reveals the 'simultaneous convergences and divergences' that in turn allow her to 'carefully consider the possibilities, and impasses, of alliances between disparate groups' (p. 25).

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Vietnam and the Colonial Condition of French Literature. By LESLIE BARNES. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 301 pp. Pb \$70.00. ISBN: 9780803249974

La plupart des histoires de la littérature française moderne—même celles publiées ces dernières années—traitent du colonialisme et de l'exotisme en se focalisant sur la représentation de l'Autre, mais elles oublient de s'interroger sur l'influence que, en retour, le contact avec l'Autre aurait pu avoir sur la production littéraire française elle-même. Considérant la littérature française comme une littérature nationale homogène, les chercheurs français s'efforcent de trouver le potentiel créatif interne de celle-ci, oubliant du même coup de s'interroger sur l'influence que le contact avec les espaces des autres cultures aurait pu avoir; sur les innovations qu'il aurait pu produire dans la littérature hexagonale. Cette observation sert de point de départ à l'étude de Leslie Barnes, chercheuse à l'Université Nationale Australienne. Dans son livre, Barnes analyse la relation entre les colonies—leurs cultures, leurs langues et leurs habitants—et les changements *formels* dans la production littéraire française. Barnes se concentre sur l'exemple du Vietnam et choisit trois auteurs très différents—André Malraux, Marguerite Duras et Linda Lê—afin de démontrer qu'il existe un

lien spécifique entre les expériences vécues en Indochine (ou au Vietnam) et les œuvres littéraires publiées par lesdits écrivains. En analysant les traces textuelles de l'expérience coloniale vietnamienne, Barnes cherche à prouver que le contact avec le Vietnam a essentiellement changé le développement du roman français des vingtième et vingt-et-unième siècles.

La première partie du livre est consacrée à André Malraux. Lorsqu'il part pour l'Indochine, en 1923, Malraux est encore un inconnu. Mais trois ans plus tard, à son retour en 1926, il compte parmi les jeunes talents les plus remarquables de l'époque. L'analyse se concentre d'abord sur *La Tentation de l'Occident* (1926). Barnes démontre que cet essai de Malraux est aussi bien déterminé par la tradition française de l'exotisme littéraire que par les expériences vécues par l'auteur en Indochine coloniale. Elle situe cette publication de Malraux dans un contexte littéraire et historique et démontre comment Malraux relie la philosophie de l'absurde à ses expériences avec l'Autre afin de créer une distance qui lui permet de critiquer l'Occident, incapable selon lui de comprendre la réalité politique et sociale du début du vingtième siècle. Dans son essai, Malraux démasque la décadence et l'illusion responsables du déclin de la société européenne, et Barnes en conclut que *La Tentation de l'Occident* est 'a work of negation' (p. 67) qui fait table rase pour que puisse naître 'a new notion of man' (p. 67). Le nouvel homme d'action ('new man of action', p. 67) est développé par Malraux dans *Les Conquérants* (1928), *La Voie royale* (1930) et *La Condition humaine* (1933). Barnes lit ces romans de Malraux en les comparant à d'autres œuvres coloniales exotiques de l'époque. Elle montre que, dans sa trilogie asiatique, Malraux recourt à l'imaginaire du roman colonial exotique et se sert de ses techniques littéraires mais qu'en revanche, les héros de Malraux, eux, se distinguent nettement des héros des romans coloniaux exotiques. Tandis que les voyages de ces derniers s'orientent toujours vers l'extérieur, vers les colonies, les voyages des héros de Malraux se dirigent aussi vers l'intérieur. Confrontés à leur finitude existentielle dans un univers étranger, ils sont forcés à réfléchir à leurs actions et à se repositionner en tant qu'individus. Par son analyse de la trilogie asiatique, Barnes réussit ainsi à prouver que les premières manifestations de l'existentialisme français ont, en fait, leurs racines formelles et sociopolitiques en Indochine coloniale.

La deuxième partie du livre se concentre sur la présence et la fonction de l'inconnu dans l'œuvre autobiographique de Marguerite Duras, notamment dans *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique* (1950), *L'Amant* (1984) et *L'Amant de la Chine du Nord* (1991) ainsi que dans *L'Eden Cinéma* (1977), l'adaptation théâtrale d'*Un Barrage contre le Pacifique*. Née près de Saïgon en 1914, Duras a quitté l'Indochine après son baccalauréat en 1931 afin de poursuivre ses études en France. Elle a grandi avec deux cultures, française et vietnamienne, parlant couramment le vietnamien pendant son enfance et sa jeunesse. Pourtant, selon Barnes, l'élément de métissage est sous-estimé dans la plupart des études sur l'œuvre de Duras dont les innovations littéraires sont surtout associées au nouveau roman et à l'écriture féminine. Dans sa relecture de l'œuvre de Duras, Barnes focalise d'abord sur la position anticoloniale exprimée dans *Un Barrage contre le Pacifique*. Son interprétation tient compte des expériences que Duras a vécues en Indochine coloniale pendant son enfance, démontrant comment le message critique du roman a été neutralisé au moment de sa publication en 1950, et insiste sur l'échec de la langue claire et précise que Duras utilise dans ce roman pour articuler sa critique politique. Dans un deuxième temps, Barnes analyse la langue hybride que Duras a développée dans *L'Amant* (1984) et *L'Amant de la Chine du Nord* (1991). En la mettant en relation avec la morphologie, la syntaxe et le rythme de la langue vietnamienne, Barnes montre que, après l'échec de sa critique littéraire réaliste de l'ordre dominant, Duras a visé la langue elle-même en tant qu'institution de pouvoir. Le français qu'elle crée, tissé de sons, de rythmes et de modes d'expression autres permet en réalité de contourner la langue française et le pouvoir que celle-ci représente.

La dernière partie de l'analyse se focalise sur l'œuvre de Linda Lê. Née au Nord-Vietnam en 1963, l'auteure a quitté son pays natal en 1977 pour s'installer en France. Bien que son œuvre soit marquée par le colonialisme français en Asie du Sud-Est, Lê refuse fermement d'écrire sur le Vietnam et ne se considère ni Française ni Vietnamiennne. L'analyse se concentre d'abord sur la manière dont Lê raconte le trauma dans 'Vinh L.', un des récits de *Les Évangiles du crime* (1992), ainsi que dans *Les trois parques* (1997), *Voix: Une Crise* (1998) et *Lettre morte* (1999). Barnes lit le trauma comme une pratique formelle ('a formal practice', p. 170) et démontre que les narrations de Lê oscillent entre des expériences spécifiques (les expériences individuelles de l'auteure, les expériences de la communauté vietnamienne vivant en diaspora, l'expérience de l'exil en général) et l'universalisme du projet formel de l'auteure. Elle en conclut que les narrations de Lê lui permettent de 'write through' (p. 170) la crise générale de la représentation littéraire de la fin du vingtième siècle. Par la suite, Barnes se concentre sur les traces du passé littéraire qui traversent les œuvres non fictives de Lê, i.e. *Tu écriras sur le bonheur* (1999), *Le Complexe de Caliban* (2005) et *Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau* (2009). Lê y crée un réseau de voix et de thèmes apparemment infini qui lui permet d'interroger l'autorité, l'histoire et l'avenir de la littérature. Mais ce réseau de voix et de thèmes se lit aussi comme une poétique de l'exil qui reflète non seulement les circonstances dans lesquelles les textes de Lê ont vu le jour, mais aussi la condition universelle de toute production littéraire.

L'étude stimulante de Leslie Barnes convainc par une thèse innovante, par une argumentation claire et précise, et par un choix d'auteurs persuasif—Malraux, Duras et Lê occupent sans doute des positions limites dans la littérature française des vingtième et vingt-et-unième siècles. Elle se distingue par des (re)lectures attentives et des analyses nuancées et détaillées des œuvres analysées, ainsi que par des approches théoriques qui varient selon le contexte et l'œuvre à analyser mais qui ne perdent jamais de vue l'objectif de l'étude. Barnes a sans doute le mérite d'avoir comblé une lacune avec son dévouement minutieux des traces textuelles que l'expérience coloniale vietnamienne a laissées dans la littérature française. Mais elle a surtout le mérite d'avoir attiré l'attention sur la nécessité de relire d'autres œuvres canoniques françaises et de réévaluer leurs innovations littéraires en tenant compte des expériences coloniales de leurs auteurs. Dans quelle mesure les histoires littéraires françaises seront réécrites par la suite reste en suspens.

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Debating Orientalism. Edited by ZIAD ELMARSAFY, ANNA BERNARD and DAVID ATWELL. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. 282 pp. Pb £55.00. ISBN: 9780230303522

Before his life was cut short by leukaemia in 2003, Edward Said was targeted by several fellow academics from the US academy who subjected his work to vehement and mostly unfounded criticisms. In the three-and-a-half-hour discussion of his life's work, recorded in 2002 and bravely (and accurately) entitled *The Last Interview*, Said is clearly affected by the attacks staged by these critics, as he attempts both to refute their often outrageous claims while simultaneously understanding the source of the venom that so often infused them. More than ten years after the publication of *Orientalism* (1978) Said had been labelled the 'Professor of Terror' by English Professor Edward Alexander, and, as late as 2002, Middle Eastern Studies scholar Martin Kramer found it necessary to attack him once more, claiming that '*Orientalism* made it acceptable, even expected, for scholars to spell out their own political commitments as a preface to anything they wrote or did'. While this latter

statement, though intended as an insult, might read to some as the highest of compliments, the association of Said with the word 'Terror' as far back as the late 1980s is at the root of the most insightful strand of thought that runs through the essays collected in *Debating Orientalism*. It is regrettable that it is not more openly embraced and thereby more thoroughly explored.

For although the title of the collection is *Debating Orientalism*, and although a Google search of 'Edward Said' yields the Wikipedia pages for the man and the book, *Orientalism*, as its top two hits, it seems something of a surprise that now, over a decade after Said's death, academic criticism still struggles to look beyond that one contribution, ignoring the numerous other writings that Said produced throughout his astonishingly productive career. This is not to deny the ground-breaking nature of *Orientalism*, a rather dry academic book that is nevertheless a Penguin Modern Classic now in its sixth reprint. Instead, it is to fail to see the importance of the two companion books that Said published alongside *Orientalism*: *The Question of Palestine* (1979) and *Covering Islam* (1981). The titles alone of these other texts, in the age of 'the war on terror', should suggest their profound foresight and continuing applicability. Though *Orientalism* was the officially 'academic' text, Said more explicitly drew direct continuities—both theoretical and historical—between the 'Orientalism' of the past and the 'Orientalism' of the present in these other works. It was, of course, Said's ongoing and vocal criticism of the plight of the Palestinians that earned him the title 'Professor of Terror'. Both of Said's critics, Alexander and Kramer, write extensively on Jewish history in the region and believe that, as US citizens, the primary purpose of their writings about the Middle East should be to strengthen the ability of the US government to support Israel: they are self-confessedly 'Orientalist' scholars unashamed of the political underpinnings of the function they perform. In the same vein, one book that pops up in a number of these essays is Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind*, a neo-Orientalist text that, though first published in 1973, was re-published post-9/11 as essential reading for those sitting in the boardrooms of the Pentagon. Said's wider writings teach us not to be surprised by this—Orientalism was always used to pursue geopolitical interests by imperial powers, and Said made it clear that this practice was returning with new levels of obsessive pursuit in the final years of his life.

Thankfully, it is the blindness to these wider writings by Said, obscured by the now tired theoretical debates around the methodologies and historical inaccuracies of *Orientalism*, that the best essays in this collection do important work to correct. If it is ironic that these articles are included in a book called *Debating Orientalism*, the title of the collection is not entirely misplaced. One of Said's most vocal critics, Robert Irwin, spends twenty pages deconstructing *Orientalism*'s reading of Flaubert's writings on Egypt, claiming that Said's politics obscured his ability to read what was nothing more than 'good' travel literature—an argument that, no matter how articulately constructed, will make any postcolonialist flinch. And the 'debate' within the volume is undoubtedly present and suitably heated: in defence of Said, Robert Spencer's contribution to the collection describes Irwin's work (alongside work by Alexander and by Kramer) as 'a manifestly anti-intellectual project' (p. 156). In their introduction, the editors claim that they wanted to move away from the Manichean responses—of reverence or hatred—to *Orientalism*. They have certainly moved away from the theoretical qualms that have long dominated academic discussions of Said's text (namely, does he use Foucault correctly? is there a reality or truth within Said's theory of discourse?), but they reignite the political antagonisms to which the book, along with the other writings that Said must have purposefully published in *Orientalism*'s immediate aftermath, gave birth. This is far from a bad thing, however: representations of the Middle East as a region, and Islam as a religion, as both savage and barbarous continue to dominate Western media outlets—it is only a great shame that Said himself is no longer around to comment on the pertinence of *Orientalism*.

There are a number of essays in this collection that continue Said's work in important ways, highlighting his limitations not to ridicule him but rather to build on his foundational contributions. Mishka Sinha points out that the US began pedaling Orientalist tropes as far back as the 1850s, predating the time acknowledged by Said; Nicholas Tromans speculates on what Said's work might offer to the discipline of art history; Joanna de Groot highlights Said's repeated failure to address issues of gender and representation; and Nicholas Harrison wonders what Said's reflections on 'The Representation of the Intellectual' might teach us about contemporary academia and its obsession with 'impact' beyond the university. These are all valuable contributions that read Said productively, remembering him not as a 'Professor of Terror' but rather as a compassionate and self-critical humanist. This book should not have been published to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of *Orientalism* (which was in fact in 2008, as was the conference out of which the papers and discussions contained in this collection grew), but rather to celebrate Said's whole career, and marking instead the tenth anniversary of Said's death. His was a truly astonishing output, contributing to a number of academic disciplines and social and political spheres. Despite the fact that the critics in this collection are ostensibly returning somewhat wearily to *Orientalism*, many of their contributions in fact bear testament to the significant legacy that Said's extensive broader writings and interviews have for any self-critical, justice-seeking and genuinely interested scholar in both the humanities and beyond.

DOMINIC DAVIES
ST. ANNE'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The Literatures of the French Pacific: Reconfiguring Hybridity. By RAYLENE RAMSAY. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. 384 pp. Hb £75.00. ISBN: 9781781380376

Ramsay offers a study of New Caledonian literatures in the various senses of the term. She explores texts by the indigenous Kanak population, by descendants of settler communities and by European explorers and anthropologists. The types of text she looks at are equally diverse, from translations of oral tales to travelogues and novels. This mix of authors and genres is central to the focus of Ramsay's book, which is the interplay of the different strands of New Caledonian literature and the hybrid forms resulting from this interaction.

Ramsay's book is richly illustrated by a vast number of examples of New Caledonian literature. Chapter one looks at European travelogues, as well as translations of Kanak oral culture by anthropologists Louise Michel, Maurice Leenhardt and Alban Bensa, with the second chapter also contributing to this theme. Chapter three, on the other hand, covers predominantly non-Kanak texts, by children of colonial settlers, such as Jean Mariotti and Nicholas Kurtovitch. The fourth chapter examines how three indigenous Kanak writers—Jean-Marie Tjibaou, Déwé Gorodé and Denis Pourawa—interpret the Kanak myth of the first man (Téa Kanaké). The focus then shifts in chapters five and six specifically to the work of Gorodé, looking at how she challenges the oppression of women in New Caledonian culture. Chapters seven and eight chart the evolution of a traditional Kanak tale and of the concept of *métissage*, respectively, in terms of how they are rewritten by a vast array of different writers from various backgrounds.

Throughout the book, Ramsay delineates the intertextuality at play in New Caledonian literature, from the Enlightenment paradigms to be found in the travelogues of early explorers, to Kanak writers drawing on the work of Leenhardt, to European myth pervading the first Kanak novel. Ramsay shows that this intertextual network also runs in the opposite direction, back through history as today's reader approaches New Caledonian

literature in terms of their modern-day interpretative frameworks. She makes the interesting observation that this process of reading back through history from a modern-day perspective can be more helpfully understood as 'palimpsestic' (p. 33), rather than hybrid. The original text, she argues, is covered by layers of different interpretations, to the extent that this text is 'itself almost effaced' (p. 32).

This is one way in which Ramsay rethinks hybridity, by challenging its ability to describe particular situations of intercultural and intercontextual encounter, and by suggesting more applicable terms. Elsewhere in her book she stresses that hybridity must be considered as fluid, and that diverse hybrid forms are created in various moments of contact between cultures or contexts. She illustrates this by showing the many similarities between numerous examples of New Caledonian literature, both Kanak and non-Kanak, but by also making clear the many differences between them. The texts she examines share common modes of representing New Caledonian identity, such as an interest in the themes of exile and home. Yet, these themes are dealt with in particular ways by particular authors, thus demonstrating that the 'local' exists alongside the 'universal' (p. 306). While showing signs of progression towards a future shared by New Caledonians of all backgrounds, each text is always still reflective of the individual author's particular background and origin. In making this point, Ramsay stresses the importance of the situatedness of writers within their own historical moment for the text that they produce.

It is in the ninth chapter that Ramsay's book truly comes into its own. This chapter brings the work to a fascinating conclusion by showing how the texts studied contribute to the debate on the concept of hybridity and to the question of a 'destin commun' for New Caledonian communities. She suggests that although the commonalities of the texts imply a communal embrace of a modern shared and hybrid culture, diversity remains, with tradition still determining distinctive communities. Modernity does not supplant tradition; instead, the two coexist. In this way, Ramsay again stresses that hybridity does not create a monoculture but that it instead gives rise to a multitude of forms as different cultural elements combine in various contexts of encounter.

Ramsay's emphasis on the situatedness of writers and how this determines the texts they produce is an extremely valid point that is worth reiterating within postcolonial studies. It is an observation that will also greatly interest other fields, in particular translation studies. It is from this field that Ramsay's earlier chapters draw quite considerably. Her use of translation theory greatly illuminates her study of European travelogues, and the book as a whole would have benefitted from more sustained engagement with translation studies methodology throughout. This could have opened up further ways of rethinking the notion of hybridity and contributed to a currently burgeoning field of research. Ramsay's work is nonetheless a highly valuable addition to the humanities as a whole, as a timely reflection on how multicultural communities interact without erasing their core identities.

REBECCA EWART
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World. By GARY WILDER. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015. 384 pp. Pb \$28.95. ISBN: 9780822358503

If Gary Wilder's *The French Imperial Nation-State*, published in 2005, was a landmark in the study of French colonial history, his new book on Césaire and Senghor, *Freedom Time*, is likely

to be no less influential. Like the former work, *Freedom Time* astutely combines historical research with philosophical inquiry to offer a highly sophisticated analysis of the politics and poetics of two of the great anti-colonial intellectuals of the twentieth century. What is unique about the work, however, is its ability to articulate the nuances of Césaire's and Senghor's visions of decolonization while also setting these in dialogue with a wide range of political thinkers. Analysis of the historical and political contexts that defined their thinking, then, is juxtaposed both with highly subtle examination of their originality, and with extensive discussion of related relevant thinkers, such as Toussaint Louverture, Victor Schoelcher and Hannah Arendt.

Wilder's argument, moreover, is distinctive and incisive, and consists in the observation that Césaire's and Senghor's visions of freedom place it far beyond the framework of the nation-state. In this radical critique of the underlying structures of imperialism, they conceive time in complex ways to envisage a future mode of political organization, created outside of history, presented at the same time as possible in the present. Throwing into question the status of France as imperial nation, and expanding the boundaries of local nationalism, Césaire and Senghor envisage not merely independence but a larger future democratic federation serving the needs not of particular peoples but of universal humanity. Their thinking calls not so much for the championing of local knowledge against the short-sightedness of colonial discourse, but a much more ambitious idea of political organization that would succeed at the same time in affirming universal humanist values and in celebrating cultural multiplicity and diversity. Freedom will be achieved, according to Césaire and Senghor, not necessarily simply through national liberation. Rather, 'they too understood self-determination as a people's right to choose the particular form through which to manage its affairs rather than the requirement that it create a sovereign nation state' (p. 105).

The study is divided up according to the various facets of Césaire's and Senghor's political thought. Two initial chapters, 'Situating Césaire' and 'Situating Senghor', relate their thinking to Antillean and African history, after which chapters on broader concepts such as 'freedom', 'federalism', and 'decolonization' are interspersed with reflections on 'Antillean autonomy' and 'African socialism'. The historical and philosophical sophistication of Wilder's analysis throughout is frequently associated with celebratory affirmations of Césaire's and Senghor's rousing and at times utopian calls for liberation, lending their work both a dramatic sense of importance and a strong resonance for the resolution of more current global political tensions. Politics and poetics, moreover, are understood to be intricately intertwined with one another, as it is in part through literature that these thinkers are able to envisage a wholly new complicity between universal humanism and local culture. Given Wilder's emphasis on the association between politics and poetics, it is perhaps a little surprising that more time is not spent reading Césaire's and Senghor's poetry and plays, and although these are brought into the political analysis, the complexity of their aesthetics is not the subject of Wilder's study. This is, however, above all a political and philosophical work, and it is compelling in the depth of its understanding of the nuances of Césaire's and Senghor's visionary writing. A highly intelligent and knowledgeable book, it rightly demonstrates the extraordinary power of two major anti-colonial thinkers in ways that will be invaluable for postcolonial critics as much as for political scientists and philosophers.

JANE HIDDLESTON
EXETER COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Adaptation: Studies in French and Francophone Culture. Edited by NEIL ARCHER and ANDREEA WEISL-SHAW. Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2012. 224 pp. Pb £20.37. ISBN: 9783034302227

Originating from the 2009 Cambridge University French Graduate Conference, this collection of essays redefines the study of adaptation and provides a compelling analysis of various adaptations across time and media within French and Francophone contexts. In a chronological fashion from the Middle Ages to the present day, *Adaptation* moves beyond the traditional conceptions of adaptation in literature, theatre and film, and examines adapted texts with regards to pastiches, language, linguistics, translation, mimesis, literary property law, scientific discourse, comics, spectacle theory, visual culture, and creolization. This volume shifts the focus on adaptations from their reduction as second-hand, imitative, safe, marketable works, to their artistic value stemming from their originality, ingenuity and impulse. *Adaptation* consists of an Introduction and five thematic units: Translation and Adaptation of Scripts and Images from the Medieval and Early Modern Periods; From Source to Stage: Adaptation in French Theatre; Adaptation and Translation in Postcolonial Writing; Trans-cultural and Trans-historical Reception in Literature and Film; and Performance, Adaptation and Subjectivity.

Editors Neil Archer and Andreea Weisl-Shaw provide a refreshing theorization of adaptation in their 'Introduction: Theorizing Adaptation' and take as their point of departure the idea that adaptation in its various literary and visual-cultural forms must be considered within its scientific sense: to adapt is to survive, arouse our curiosity, improve our abilities and develop a better sense of the world. Through this lens, an artistic practice of creating and studying adaptations enables an inquiry into the correspondence between art forms and whether or not there exists a hierarchical value between the original and the copy. Archer and Weisl-Shaw emphasize 'that the pleasures and meanings of adapted texts are always intelligible in terms of difference and dialogue' (p. 4). To further this point, their reference to Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* elaborates not only on the 'classical' adaptation of the novel into film and television but on the prominent status it has gained due to its musical version, which is now known as *Les Miz*. As such, the musical adaptation has, in the editors' own words, 'usurped' the very source and it has now 'come to exist within their own signifying field of popular musical theatre, almost totally divorced from the novel to which it is notionally affiliated' (p. 4).

Although there are a number of excellent essays in this collection, I would like to turn readers of SFPS to the analyses focusing on Francophone and postcolonial studies.

Claire Bisdorff's essay, "'Ecrivain? Qu'est-ce qu'un écrivain?'" *Oraliture* Translated in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la Mangrove*, explores how adaptation and translation are shaped by the oral tradition present in the novel. Bisdorff considers Condé's 'original' novel as an initial translation from oral to written discourse, a transfer into French as a second translation, and ultimately the English translation as a third conversion. Creolization is manifested in the essential role that Creole plays in Condé's French writing, whose emphasis on the spoken voice recreates a proverbial speech and oral storytelling style; such unique stylistic elements turn Condé's narrative into a challenging endeavour for the English interpreter. If the translator is to maintain Condé's original aesthetic project, translating her work 'means transcribing a work which is already the result of an intense cultural translation process' (p. 118). In this sense, the act of translation promotes the discussion on creolization and its aesthetic definition. It accentuates the pivotal function of Creole in Caribbean hybrid-language narratives since translation requires dismantling the signs of plurivocality in the original text.

Furthermore, Bart Miller's essay, 'Adaptation to Colonialism in Paris: Damas's *Pigments*', studies the 1937 collection *Pigments* by French Guyanan writer Léon-Gontran

Damas. Building on Peter Barry's 'adopt, adapt, adept' theory of postcolonial writing, Miller establishes Damas's poetry within the movement of *Négritude* writers, who resisted colonialism and colonial racism while living as migrant authors in Paris. Convincingly, Miller points out the significance of Damas's poetic imagery, where the narrator seems to 'dance a waltz' between different cultures. Such dancing suggests the ambivalence of his situation, as he finds himself between traditions and territories which he does not consider his own. Questioning such a sense of belonging brings forth the *Négritude* writers' concern of situation and its relation to a polyvalent process of anti-colonialism. On the one hand, Damas's anti-colonial position reflects a legacy of slavery, where the slave's emotional turbulence shifts between fear and rage against his master; this is the site of resistance where rebellion explodes, resulting in the independence achieved by using the colonizer's violence against him. And on the other, a process of adaptation and assimilation in imperial Paris leads to situational racism, where the author has many confused allegiances. He becomes a 'rebellious évolué' (p. 132) and adapts his writing strategy. This is the point where 'his anti-colonial position is complicated through his discourse, and cultural hybridity for him implies neither complete insurrection nor cooperation against or with a societal mindset' (p. 134).

The last essay focusing on a Francophone postcolonial subject, 'Adopting and Adapting: Ethnic Minority Women's Quest for Identity in the *Bande Dessinée*', is written by Catriona McLeod, who examines the adaptation process of ethnic minority females in the *bande dessinée* production in post-imperial France and Belgium. McLeod situates this medium as a significant and influential cultural force, whose widening market and popularity shapes societal values and opinions. The combination of visual and textual aspects reflects a hybrid form, which renders this medium commercially appealing in contemporary Francophone popular culture. Within this context, McLeod examines the depiction of ethnic women in the *bande dessinée*. Her academic contribution sheds light on narrative and memory on the one hand; and, on the other, it brings forth some specific challenges of Francophone postcolonial representation: immigration, identity, marginality, exclusion, sexuality, and gender and racial diversification.

The ambitious objective of the editors to include such a vast selection of essays could be understood as undermining the unity of this volume. However, taken on their own, most of the analyses in *Adaptation* provide gratifying reading. The collection's interdisciplinary approach evokes stimulating questions and invites the reader to embark on an adaptation project of his or her own.

LUIS NAVARRO-AYALA
ST NORBERT COLLEGE

Decolonising the Intellectual: Politics, Culture, and Humanism at the End of the French Empire. By JANE HIDDLESTON. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. 280 pp. Hb £75.00. ISBN: 9781781380321

Jane Hiddleston's new monograph begins with a skilfully woven introductory chapter which investigates the complex philosophical and historical currents which permeate the writings of the intellectuals treated: Senghor, Césaire, Fanon, Amrouche (Jean El-Mouhoub), Feraoun and Kateb. With characteristic subtlety and finesse, Hiddleston provides us with an incisive analysis of the pitfalls of a history of European Humanism which has simultaneously sought to efface difference within 'humanity' while barring the colonized subject from access to this category. However, as Hiddleston expertly articulates, what is interesting about the intellectuals in her study, each one an *engagé* to differing degrees, is how the idea of humanity

has been mobilized, stretched and grappled with by them, in the service of colonized peoples. At the same time, by reference to texts such as Sartre's *Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels* (1972), among others, we are invited to appreciate the difficulty faced by these authors of fulfilling notions of representation, of speaking for the humanity of a people, without performing a further effacement of difference or its obverse: an essential split, separating the colonized from the rest of mankind. Hiddleston identifies a resultant sense of isolation that plagues the colonized intellectual as he (and she is keen to problematize the theorization of humanity as male), attempts to envisage and create in writing the blueprints for new inclusive conceptions of humanity which can incorporate ethnic and historical difference. We are given to understand that the historical moment of French decolonization was exceptional in its production of intellectuals who, with great dynamism and creativity, worked through the question of articulating for others what it means to be human.

Throughout the book, Hiddleston is both insightful in her criticisms of unresolved problems in the writings she explores and also illuminating in her refreshing nuancing of established reproofs which ignore certain complexities. This latter proclivity is evidenced in the first chapter on Senghor's political and poetic writings, as while she does not shy away from elucidating problematic aspects of his Francophone *négritude*, she simultaneously sheds light on the tensions within his poetry which subvert his essentializing position of certainty regarding ethnic belonging and its characteristics. The second chapter, on the works of Césaire, again negotiates conceptions of *négritude* and is particularly enlightening when emphasizing its relational nature in his writing, drawing comparisons both with Heidegger's notion of *Mitsein* and with Levinasian ethics. The following chapter on Fanon excels in its delicate demonstration of Fanon's disconnection from the Algerian people he intended to represent, highlighting how in seeking to express the liberation of colonial subjects in the present, he neglected to incorporate sufficiently the past of their complex cultural specificity. The three chapters after the study of Fanon's works can be understood to form a closer grouping than the preceding three in that they focus on autochthonous Algerian writers who all sought to represent an emergent people while contending with differing levels of estrangement from it. For this reason they are singularly helpful for scholars, such as myself, who wish to understand the position of the 'évolué' intellectual in the inscription of the revolutionary period and the intriguing productivity of their dilemma. Furthermore, the movement from the less well-known Jean El-Mouhoub Amrouche to the canonical Kateb allows the reader to appreciate the juxtaposition of minor and major voices within the intellectual arena. This is to say both that some intellectuals seemingly came to hold positions of greater relative importance than others and that writers acquired and conveyed, in differing fashions, an understanding of their position of singularity and the limited powers of representation. So while Amrouche's Christianity-inflected writings seek a *civilisation de l'universel*, he acknowledges that 'je ne suis pas un politique professionnel, mais un intellectuel, perversi, fantaisiste, irresponsable et déchiré' (p. 158). Similarly, though in a less self-deprecating fashion, Feraoun acknowledges his lack of representative mastery as he articulates the impossibility of putting into words the day-to-day suffering of the Algerian people during the war. Kateb, however, though certainly not claiming to produce a definitive image of the Algerian people in gestation, can perhaps be associated with a more major key as his revolutionary poetry purports to overthrow literary norms and outdate retrograde epistemes.

Hiddleston concludes with an engrossing chapter on the history of Humanism and conceptions of the human after decolonization. Acknowledging the undermining of the metaphysics of Western humanism operated by poststructuralist thinkers, she argues that the reappearance of the category of humanity in recent years, to identify a shared though unstable ontology, owes much to the 'extraordinary dynamism with which the term was injected around decolonisation' (p. 251). Contemporary theorization around the idea of the

human is interestingly shown to have cast a spotlight on an ethical responsibility for, and involvement with, both the animal kingdom and the natural world in general, provoking further debate about our place in existence. *Decolonising the Intellectual* thus proves to be both an elegantly articulated and meticulously nuanced study of the intellectuals of the past and a compelling evocation of the importance of continually rethinking and reformulating the human in the present.

EDWARD STILL
ST CATHERINE'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Rethinking Global Mauritius: Critical Essays on Mauritian Literatures and Cultures. By SRILATA RAVI. Trou d'Eau Douce, Mauritius: L'Atelier d'écriture, 2013. 119 pp. 800 Mauritian roupies. ISBN: 9990336806

Published in Barlen Pyamootoo's wonderful new, Mauritius-based press, *L'Atelier de l'écriture*, Srilata Ravi's slim but rich collection of essays on contemporary Mauritian fiction and cinema is a welcome addition to scholarship in this burgeoning, but still under-researched, area. In four distinct chapters, exploring different texts and using diverse theoretical frameworks, Ravi sets out to explore 'Mauritian literatures' complex interactions with modernity, colonialism and globalization' (p. 16). Despite the eclecticism of both corpus and approach, there emerges in Ravi's study, to borrow Mauritius's national motto, an overarching 'unity in diversity', in the way that Mauritian cultural production is shown to enrich and contest dominant theoretical paradigms of postcolonial identity.

In a brief, largely autobiographical introduction, Ravi recounts her first encounter, as a French-speaking Indian academic, with the disorientating, familiar and yet strange, multi-cultural and multi-lingual realities of Mauritius. As these first impressions suggest, and as her subsequent research has confirmed, 'there is', according to Ravi, 'no single grand narrative of cultural mixing in Mauritius' (p. 15). Continuing the ground-breaking findings of her previous monograph, *Rainbow Colors* (2007), *Rethinking Global Mauritius* thus seeks to examine a plurality of narratives of national, group and individual belonging, as these engage with the interrelated issues of history, memory and identity.

In the first chapter, 'Strategic Francophonies: Postnationalism, Transculturalism and Cosmopolitanism in Mauritian Literature', Ravi examines how the ambivalent, prestigious but non-dominant status of the French language in modern-day Mauritius is reflected in the linguistic, literary and publishing strategies deployed by contemporary Francophone Mauritian writers, as they negotiate with other languages spoken on the island. Following a very useful overview of the linguistic and cultural complexities of Mauritius's postcolonial situation, Ravi explores the ways in which works by Barlen Pyamootoo, Ananda Devi and Jean-Marie Le Clézio—three of the island's best-known authors—nuance and/or contest the postcolonial paradigms of postnationalism, transculturalism and cosmopolitanism which are at the heart of recent debates around 'la francophonie' and 'littérature-monde.' The second chapter, 'Intertwined Narratives of Servitude, Oppression and Exclusion,' explores the often covert ways in which the painful issues of slavery and indenture are treated in Ananda Devi's *L'Arbre Fouet* and *Pagli*. Reading these novels in relation to Ricœur's theories of forgetting and remembering, Ravi argues that Devi's fiction obliquely presents 'an ethics of remembering/forgetting of past H/histories of domination and exclusion' (p. 65)—an ethics which ultimately privileges collective 'reconstruction' over aestheticized violence. The third chapter, 'Sport as Aesthetic and Sport as Narrative', offers an original reading of Carl de

Souza's most recent but least studied novel, *En Chute libre*—a novel which, in terms of both setting and subject-matter, 'diverges from the more pressing ethnic, social and political concerns raised in his earlier novels' (p. 68). Building on Feezell's theories of sport as narrative, sport as play and sport as aesthetic, Ravi analyses Souza's depiction of the trajectory of a professional badminton-player from a fictional (post)colonial island as a metaphor for a new postcolonial, aesthetic paradigm of falling rather than of soaring. The fourth chapter, 'The Absent City: Port Louis in Mauritian Visual Cultures,' explores the representation of the Mauritian capital in a range of recent short films by David Constantin, Barlen Pyamootoo and Harrikrisna Anenden. Far from being a typical postcolonial city of ethnic and cultural mixing, Port-Louis recurrently emerges, from Ravi's comparative analysis of these films, as an empty or absent administrative centre with which Mauritians have only a functional relationship. Instead, Mauritians' places of attachment are depicted as being elsewhere, in the 'heartland utopias' of Mauritius's interior, and the only places of inter-ethnic contact are the bus, the street or the peripheral *cit *.

A brief conclusion finally draws an interesting and arguably underexplored comparison between Mauritius and Canada, on the grounds that 'in both countries, literatures in French have evolved under dominating Anglophone cultures and in multicultural milieus' (p. 107). She then posits the Port Louis dockside as a new and productive metaphor for 'a liminal space of contacts and exchanges' (p. 110), characteristic of much Mauritian cultural production. Given the complexity of the historical, linguistic, political and socio-cultural contexts that Ravi discusses, and the wide range of theoretical frameworks with which she engages, it is perhaps inevitable that some of her textual analyses are rather brief and under-developed. There is also the occasional lapse into highly allusive self-reference, which is likely to be disorientating to a reader not already acquainted with Ravi's work. There are, nonetheless, many new and original lines of enquiry opened up in this dense, well-written and thought-provoking book. As a result, it will be of interest both to scholars of Mauritian literature and film, and to those working in Francophone Postcolonial Studies more broadly.

JULIA WATERS
UNIVERSITY OF READING

Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

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

The deadline for the receipt of articles to be included in the spring 2016 issue is 15 January 2016.

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