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Publishing sub-Saharan Africa in Paris 1945 – 67

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of literary institutions and print culture in France during the two decades following the Second World War. It demonstrates how the changing metropolitan literary marketplace, driven by new methods of book production and bookselling; the rise of internationalism and *tiers-mondisme*; and a nascent notion of *francophonie*, accommodated writing of and on sub-Saharan Africa. The first half of the thesis focuses on three institutions of particular significance: the publishing houses of Le Seuil and Présence Africaine, and the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l’outre-mer, known for the literary prizes it administered. Diverse strategies for evaluating representations of sub-Saharan Africa are explored through new research in the archives of these institutions. The tensions between specialist and more commercially orientated publishing, between anti-colonial and exotic representations of sub-Saharan Africa do not map cleanly onto separate institutional contexts in this period. These tensions are underpinned by shared political and aesthetic debates, technological resources, and social contexts. The second half of the thesis analyses in greater detail the publishing process of selection, production and distribution in seven individual case-studies of novels by Christine Garnier, Abdoulaye Sadj, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Malick Fall, Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe and Peter Abrahams. Aspects considered include: readers’ reports and editorial revision; the use of pseudonyms; the development of named collections; the role of literary translators. My methodological approach works with, and at times against, a Bourdieusian framework, to describe the literary field in this period. More specifically, Pascale Casanova’s depiction of Paris as capital of the “World Republic of Letters” is tested and nuanced through the historical focus on the period 1945 – 67. Rather than a passive annexation to the colonial centre, African literary production is shown to be intrinsic to and constitutive of the restless political and aesthetic landscape of post-war reconstruction and decolonisation in the French-speaking world.

Long abstract

This thesis is an investigation of literary institutions in France responsible for creating, mediating and disseminating African literature during the two decades following the Second World War. Based on research in publishers' archives, it examines how the changing metropolitan literary marketplace accommodated writing of and on sub-Saharan Africa in the period of decolonization. It explores ways in which material shifts in methods of book production and bookselling accompanied the rise of *tiers-mondisme*, and shows that the emphasis on the French language as a symbolic unifying force was both reinforced and challenged by the reception of African writing in the metropolitan literary field.

The first section of the thesis focuses on three institutions of particular significance: the publishing houses of Le Seuil and Présence Africaine, and the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer, known for the literary prizes it administered. Their diverse strategies for evaluating representations of sub-Saharan Africa are illustrated through new archival research. The tensions between specialist and more commercially orientated publishing, between anti-colonial and exotic representations of sub-Saharan Africa do not map cleanly onto distinct institutional contexts in this period. Those contexts are underpinned by shared political and aesthetic debates.

The second section of the thesis analyses how those debates shaped the publishing process of selection, production and distribution in seven case-studies of novels by Christine Garnier, Abdoulaye Sadj, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Malick Fall, Amos Tutuola, Chinua

Achebe and Peter Abrahams. I argue that the work of editors and translators and the mediation of paratextual packaging, generated particular forms of symbolic value and recognition. Aspects considered include: readers' reports and editorial revision; the use of pseudonyms; the development of named collections; the role of literary translators.

This evidence is used to work with, and at times against, a Bourdieusian framework to describe how the literary field in this period responded to the changing status of French republican universalism in the period of decolonisation. Pascale Casanova's depiction of Paris as capital of the "World Republic of Letters" is tested and nuanced through my historical focus on the period 1945 – 67. Rather than a passive annexation to the colonial centre, African literary producers are shown to be intrinsic to and constitutive of the restless political and aesthetic landscape of post-war reconstruction and decolonisation in the French-speaking world. This methodological background is set out in my first chapter, along with the historical and archival context. The originality of this project comes from the new archival material presented and the focus on relationships between different institutional settings in which ideas of African literature emerged and developed during this period. In dialogue with postcolonial and world literature theories, a central aim is to demonstrate the role of book history and the sociology of literature as integral tools for world literary study.

Chapter Two explores the publication of poetry anthologies in the years immediately following the Second World War. I focus primarily on anthologies edited by Léon Gontran Damas at *Le Seuil* and Guy Lévis Mano, with some consideration of Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache* (1948). The analysis demonstrates

how the selection, packaging and distribution of these texts responded to a resurgent post-war nationalism in the nascent Fourth Republic. Anthologies are presented both as manifestos and as barometers for the tensions between universalist representations of the Union Française and racial particularism in *négritude* writing.

Against the contexts set out in my second chapter, Chapter Three examines the founding of *Présence Africaine* by Alioune Diop in 1947, focusing primarily on its activities as a publishing house in the period 1949 – 67. I evoke comparisons between *Présence Africaine* and other young publishers in this period, such as Minuit and Maspero, through a study of its complete catalogue for these years. The aim is to nuance the common assertion of *Présence Africaine*'s links with ideas of *négritude* by considering its activities in a wider publishing context. For example, I consider the significance of the birth of the *livre de poche* in France and the notion of *édition engagée*. This presentation of *Présence Africaine* moves beyond a mode of homage to highlight the symbolic and material contexts surrounding the work of this key journal, publisher and cultural hub. While it depended to an extent on the structures of the metropolitan field that shaped its culturalist rhetoric and contingent promotion of more radical political voices, *Présence Africaine* also played a vital role in internationalising Parisian post-war literary geography.

Chapter Four considers prize culture as it pertained to African literature in this period through a socio-historical study of the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer and its associated literary prizes. Archival material shows how, in a specific institutional setting, the dominant universalist conception of the French language responded to the political changes of 1960 while remaining attached to the goal of

securing an “Empire de la langue française” (Rapport de l’Assemblée générale de l’ANEMOM, 1959). Particular attention is paid to the declared “autonomy” of the association in light of its evident dependence on the financial and human resources of the French state, and the changing demographic of both the Association’s members and the recipients of its prizes. In that respect, I point to the apparently surprising, yet highly contingent, presence of more radical anti-colonial writers, including Mongo Beti and Tchicaya U Tam’si, in the list of members.

Moving into the second part of the thesis, Chapter Five considers the role of publishers in packaging literary representations of Africa in this period. Via Mongo Beti’s celebrated essay, “L’Afrique noire, littérature rose”, I examine the use of African pseudonyms and the performative significance of an African author’s name. Christine Garnier’s bestselling *Va-t’en avec les tiens!*, published under an African name by Grasset, is the central example. Press reception illustrates the success of her publisher’s response to the ongoing taste for “exotic”, “authentic” representations of sub-Saharan Africa – what Roland Barthes terms the “mythe petit-bourgeois du nègre” – in the early fifties. Rather than a synchronic Genettian analysis of paratext, this chapter historicises the “effet pseudonymique” in a literary marketplace whose means of recognition were shaped by the changing political context and French national imaginary of the post-war period. Ousmane Sembene’s *Docker Noir*, considered at the end of the chapter, provides an active critique of these dynamics in the literary field.

Chapter Six returns to Le Seuil through archival work on readers’ reports. These reports chart the rejection of manuscripts by three African writers across the period: Abdoulaye

Sadji's *Maïmouna*, Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë*, and Malick Fall's *La Plaie*. Continuing the previous chapter's discussion of the symbolic value of "authenticity" in the context of changing colonial hierarchies, the reports suggest how and why editors and literary *passeurs* sought to impose normative ideas of the French language, together with notions of literary style and genre. Connections are traced to concomitant developments in the Parisian literary avant-garde and ideas of literary legitimacy, notably through the success and influence of Kafka and the rise of the *nouveau roman*.

The final chapter moves beyond a colonial-nation-language paradigm to consider the status of literary translations from English in this period. Normative editorial criteria of language and style that can be located in reference to the French colonial context are tested in three translingual case-studies: the French translations of Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (*L'Ivrogne dans la brousse*), Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (*Le monde s'effondre*), and Peter Abrahams' *A Wreath for Udomo* (*Une couronne pour Udomo*). The translators' own prestige affected the recognition these texts, together with the relative symbolic and material capital of each publisher. While Raymond Queneau's visibility as Tutuola's translator and Gallimard's prestige secured success and long-term presence for *L'Ivrogne dans la brousse*, Achebe's and Abrahams' texts have had less certain trajectories in French translation. Achebe's paradigm-shifting novel is currently out-of-print in French. The short-term success of *Une couronne pour Udomo*, given Senghor's patronage, and despite its flawed portrayal of African independence, is indicative of the burst of metropolitan interest in anti-colonial politics in sub-Saharan

Africa. We detect in these books' reception in France a certain reluctance to articulate the strained contacts between francophone and anglophone writers.

The different trajectories explored in these case studies show how metropolitan publishers responded to the changing relationship between the politics of decolonisation and independence, and the aesthetics of literary form. Criteria of literary value responded gradually but directly to shifts in colonial politics, while the mediation by publishers at the stages of selection, production and distribution shows how political pressures worked their way into writers' choices of language, form, and content. In some instances, writers also responded to such positioning in the literary field, offering countervailing responses to editorial interventions in text and paratext. Their strategies cannot be reduced to modes of French or African nationalism, but attest to the complex ways in which political uncertainties and tensions between universal and particular aesthetic ideals were negotiated in the literary field.

The interdisciplinary methodology underpinning this work enables a fresh perspective on the interwoven history of ideas and institutions in the period 1945 – 67. Literary representations of sub-Saharan Africa were written, published and read in response to changing political and aesthetic ideas that extended beyond and moved between institutional contexts during the *épuration* trials of the late forties and the anti-colonial struggles of the fifties and early sixties. Such ideas concerned both the legitimate definition of the literary – on a spectrum from art for art's sake to committed literature – and the complex epistemological as well as political relationship between France and Africa.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Locating sub-Saharan Africa in the field of literary production in French 1945 – 67

This thesis is an investigation of literary institutions and print culture in France during the two decades following the Second World War. It will demonstrate how the changing metropolitan literary marketplace, marked by the growth of *livres de poche*, a literary internationalism signalled by an unprecedented increase in translation, and a nascent notion of *francophonie*, accommodated writing of and on sub-Saharan Africa in response to the recalibration of France's political and literary position in the world. The tensions between specialist and more commercially orientated publishing houses and their diverse publishing strategies will be explored through new archival research. This research will work with, and at times against, a Bourdieusian framework, to describe the literary field in this period. More specifically, Pascale Casanova's depiction of Paris as capital of the "World Republic of Letters" will be tested and nuanced through my historical focus on the period 1945 – 67. African literary production will be shown as intrinsic to and constitutive of the restless political and literary landscape of post-war reconstruction and decolonisation in the French-speaking world, rather than a passive annexation to the colonial centre.

Recent critical writing on national identity, race and the politics of immigration in French contexts continues to retrace the complex political, economic, and cultural relationship between France and its former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa in the face of France's "fracture coloniale" (Blanchard, Bancel and Lemaire, 2005: 13). The cause and the

outcome of this work from both within and without the academic sphere, has been a renewed questioning of Republican universalism and a polemical critique of the bias of French national historiography.¹ The increased visibility of topics such as French transatlantic slavery, Human Zoos and France's 1931 Colonial Exhibition has remapped black history in France through groundbreaking publications, exhibitions and television documentaries that aim to "replacer le passé colonial de la France dans la pensée et l'historiographie nationales" (Blanchard, Bancel and Lemaire, 2005: 30).² Such projects that aim at reorienting French republican historiography have received contesting critical responses within the French academy (Bruckner, 2002; Lefeuvre, 2006; Liauzu, 2007). Travelling concepts from postcolonial thought, as will be shown below, have further informed these historical revisions. My work responds to the restorative and politicised directions of transnational debate in francophone postcolonial studies by turning to the history and historiography of the post-war literary field.

After identifying the broad range of publishers producing representations of sub-Saharan Africa in the period, I shall focus on three institutions of particular significance: the publishing houses of Le Seuil and Présence Africaine, and the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer, known for the literary prizes it administered (including the *Grand Prix littéraire de l'Afrique Occidentale Française* and *Grand Prix*

¹ This work began, in part, as a reaction to Pierre Nora's occlusion of France's colonial history in his seven-volume *Les lieux de mémoire* (Nora, Pierre, 1992). A second impulse came in 2007 with Nicolas Sarkozy's Dakar speech, at which he declared: "Le drame de l'Afrique, c'est que l'Homme africain n'est pas assez entré dans l'Histoire." Available: <http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2007/11/09/le-discours-de-dakar_976786_3212.html> [accessed 21 September 2012]. Among several published responses to this speech, see: Konaré, Adame Ba, 2008. See also: Benot, Yves, 1994; Thomas, Dominic, 2007; Ndiaye, Pap, 2008.

² Further to travelling exhibitions on these themes at the musée du Quai Branly and across France, a series of three documentaries, entitled *Noirs de France*, authored by Pascal Blanchard and Juan Gelas was screened in 2011 by France 5. These programmes cover the period 1889 to the present day, forming the most recent expression of the ground-breaking work of ACHAC (Association pour la Connaissance de l'Histoire de l'Afrique Contemporaine), a French research collective active since 1989.

littéraire de l'Afrique Equatoriale Française, now amalgamated as the *Grand Prix littéraire d'Afrique noire*). Sources include literary texts and their paratexts, publishers' archives, interviews, press, and trade publications. Through case studies of seven literary texts, the second part of the thesis considers the publishing process as it played out in these institutions. Features of that process to be examined include: readers' reports and editorial revision; the use of pseudonyms; the development of named collections; the relative significance of literary translation from English. The mediating roles of individual editors, *passeur* figures, translators, printers, and booksellers will be highlighted. Such detail – often overlooked as quotidian – provides insight into the structures of the literary field, and reveals some of the gradual and uneven ways in which this field mediated representations of sub-Saharan Africa in the period.

The range of post-war writing in French concerning sub-Saharan Africa is huge, spanning high and lowbrow literary genres, together with history, philosophy, ethnography, school textbooks and government publications. The vast majority of this printed material was published in Paris. My focus here is on literary texts, mainly novels, but with some discussion of anthologies, theatre, *contes*, and poetry. I aim to rethink the critical framework through which this period has been approached in literary historiography: firstly by reorienting the methodology of much critical writing on *négritude* and anti-colonial literature that considers the work of African writers, and on occasion publishers, in relative isolation; and secondly by giving sub-Saharan Africa a presence which is almost entirely lacking in existing French publishing history concerning this period. In volume four of *Histoire de l'édition française* (covering 1900 – 1950), Alfred Fierro makes no acknowledgement of the very wide dispersal of texts by African authors among

different publishers: “Les auteurs [Africains] désireux de se faire éditer envoient leurs manuscrits à Paris où la maison Présence Africaine, fondée en 1947, s’est donné pour tâche de les faire connaître” (Fierro, 1986: 101). Elsewhere in the same volume, Pascal Fouché dismisses the first black French writer awarded the Prix Goncourt: “à côté des oubliés comme Pérochon, Bachelin, Maran ou Gojon, il faut reconnaître que le prix Goncourt a au moins désigné Proust et Malraux” (Fouché, 1986: 220). This stands in clear contrast to Franco Moretti’s assertion (among others) of Maran’s key position in the genealogy of the novel (Moretti, 2000).³ Fouché’s own edited 933-page tome, *L’Édition française depuis 1945* (1998), contains only one passing reference to Présence Africaine as part of the syndicate behind the founding of Nouvelles Éditions Africaines in 1972 (1998: 823).

Graham Huggan’s conclusions in *The Postcolonial Exotic* describe a recurrent anxiety regarding the correlation between postcolonial critical projects and the commodification of marginal cultures in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.⁴ As a result the book evokes (and to an extent invokes) a state of critical paralysis in postcolonial studies. One way through this impasse, I would like to suggest, is a clearer historicisation and grounded awareness of anti-colonial cultures of the book. Whether through deliberate choice (for example when broaching the thorny questions of textual ownership), lack of archival sources, or apparent indifference, there has been little dedicated critical engagement with the colonial politics of the post-war literary marketplace in French-

³ On Maran’s importance, see also: Edwards, Brent Hayes, 2003: 69-118. Proceedings are forthcoming from the international conference “René Maran: un écrivain engagé dans la défense des Noirs?” held at Reid Hall, Paris, 9-10 December 2010.

⁴ Huggan’s book appeared during the same period as a number of projects reflecting similar concerns. In an essay first published in 2000, Elleke Boehmer makes a related argument concerning the “neo-orientalist” critical reception of Sarojini Naidu in the 1890s and Arundhati Roy in the 1990s (Boehmer, Elleke, 2005b: 158-71). See also: Chrisman, Laura, 2003: 9-11; 107-24.

speaking contexts, beyond substantial research on censorship and the Algerian war.⁵ Jean-Yves Mollier suggests that the discrepancy between the publication of texts on Algeria and the more limited publication of sub-Saharan African literature reflects the dominant concerns of French intellectuals in this period (Mollier, 1994: 385). This hierarchy is arguably reflected in today's academic agendas. The implied spectrum regarding national debates on decolonisation presents a hypothesis that will be tested in the current project.⁶ The question must be raised of how critical complicity with categories generated and sustained by the literary marketplace sustains this relative opacity in the national narrative. In fact, as Moretti's inclusion of René Maran in his genealogy of the novel intimates, and as will be shown in the following chapters, published representations of sub-Saharan Africa continued to shape and be shaped by the metropolitan field throughout the period in question.

Existing critical writing on the publication of francophone African literature in the post-war period has focused, understandably, on *Présence Africaine*, the groundbreaking journal and publishing house founded in Paris by Alioune Diop in 1947.⁷ V.Y. Mudimbe writes that *Présence Africaine* was “a manifesto and a program” (xvii), bringing new subjective voices on colonial issues to the metropolitan centre and basing itself on “a universal ‘right to thought’” (xviii). By locating sub-Saharan Africa in the wider metropolitan publishing context and investigating the underlying structures specific to the

⁵ For accounts of censorship in the late 1950s in relation to Algeria, see: Simonin, Anne, 1998; Mollier, Jean-Yves, 2008; Hage, Julien, Alain Léger, Bruno Guichard and Pierre-Jean Balzan, 2009; Hubert, Nicolas, 2012.

⁶ Mollier argues that: “La prose des Maghrébins subissait une hausse à la bourse des valeurs symboliques tandis que les textes des Africains, moins politisés quoique souvent critiques, étaient sinon dépréciés, du moins victimes d’une opinion moins favorable, ce qui pourrait expliquer leur tentative de créer sur place, après 1965, des structures d’accueil à la littérature indigène” (Mollier, Jean-Yves, 1994: 385).

⁷ For detailed accounts of *Présence Africaine*, see: Mudimbé, V. Y., 1992; Jules-Rosette, Bennetta, 1998; Branly, Musée du Quai, 2009.

literary field, this study aims to cast further light on the work of *Présence Africaine*. The emphasis throughout is on material connections and networks linking literary producers across colonial binaries of race or culture.⁸ This work extends current understanding of institutional conditions in ways that contribute further questions for the project of postcolonial book history.⁹ The centripetal force Pascale Casanova ascribes to Paris will be historicised in the detail of this period to suggest a more multidirectional, unstable, and potentially more convivial account of “Black Paris” (Jules-Rosette, 1998).¹⁰

As Adèle King has shown in her painstaking investigation of the publishing history of Camara Laye’s *L’Enfant noir*, by some way the best-selling novel in French by an African author in the fifties and sixties, investigating the clandestine work of literary mediators poses particular challenges for literary critics (King, 2003: 164). Laye’s apparent collaboration with French writers and the French State while writing his first two books gives way to a spectre of “intercultural hoax” that troubles any clear sense of authorial

⁸ Julien Hage cites the following conditions faced by African writers in the post-war period: censorship and self-censorship, lack of readers, pressure of European traditions and European languages (Hage, Julien, 2009a). As well as developing Hage’s helpful account via new archival research, my project considers the ways in which these conditions – which operated in both afrocentric and eurocentric modes – work back into the texture of publications themselves.

⁹ Francophone African publishing history has often been discussed in relation to development policies (for example in UNESCO policy on book development: UNESCO, 1969; Estivals, Robert, 1983). This work has been extended and applied in the valuable work of Luc Pinhas and the Alliance internationale des éditeurs indépendants on more recent publishing contexts (Pinhas, Luc, 2005). Several theses have carried out important work in cognate areas that will be acknowledged further in my own thesis (Cévaër, Françoise 1992; Small, Audrey, 2005; Steemers, Vivan, 2007; Ducournau, Claire, 2012). Dominique Zidouemba has also carried out extensive empirical research on publishing in West Africa (Zidouemba, Dominique, 2001: 264-66). Vivan Steemers presents new evidence of the reception of African writing in the French metropolitan press in case studies of four authors (recently published as a monograph: Steemers, Vivan, 2012). The work of Audrey Small, Françoise Cévaër, and Claire Ducournau on publishing post-1960 is based on extensive fieldwork in France and in West Africa, including interviews with writers and publishers. Ducournau’s thesis presents the first comprehensive sociological analysis of the “mécanismes de consécration” for a population of 404 writers from 1983 to 2008. Her rigorous empirical research shows the structural emergence of an “espace littéraire africain” in the 1980s following the entry of Léopold Sédar Senghor to the Académie française and the award of the Nobel prize to Wole Soyinka (Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 29).

¹⁰ Conviviality refers to cohabitation and interaction, and “the radical openness that [...] makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, and reified identity and turns attention toward the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification” (Gilroy, Paul, 2005: xv).

identity. My own work will develop further implications of these complex issues through new examples. Publishers in this period have been described as “culture brokers” (Casanova and Debevoise, 2004: 21), “midwives” (Rabemananjara, quoted in: Jules-Rosette: 44), or more combative “border guards” (Watts, 2005: 86) who control to varying extents how newness entered the literary marketplace. Christopher Miller has argued in respect of African literature that “French publishers were seeking universality in the 1950s, whereas in the 1980s [i.e. at the time Miller is writing] they have decided that the specificity of national literatures is the order of the day” (1986: 117). He highlights the need to consider the conditions of publication in the post-war period, asking to what extent African writers were subject to “generic, grammatical, rhetorical, even ideological norms” (ibid).¹¹ In the light of more recent theorisations of the postcolonial and global literary marketplace, Miller’s hypothesis and line of questioning stimulate my engagement with the archives of publishers in this period.¹² Who were these publishers? Who were the individuals in the publishing process, and how did they work? Did their conception of their *métier* react to the changing historical context? Did they in fact seek “universality” and why might that have been the case? The mediation that occurs between the composition of a literary manuscript and its appearance as a printed book can at times be an unwieldy object of study. A Bourdieusian vocabulary helps frame a response to these questions, by seeking a more objective understanding of African discursive and physical presences in French literary institutions of the post-war period. The analysis provides necessary foregrounding for present-day discussions of postcoloniality, the

¹¹ Mohammadou Kane’s view was more circumspect: “En réalité, on nous aura trop tôt convoqué au rendez-vous de l’universel. C’est bien une caractéristique de notre temps que cette impatience, cette exigence pour tout homme, pour tout peuple de préparer le rendez-vous de l’universel” (Kane, Mohamadou, 1966: 30).

¹² Publishers’ archives have provided new insights in several recent studies of anglophone African publishing: Lizarribar Buxó, Camille, 1998; Davis, Caroline, 2005; Van der Vlies, Andrew Edward, 2007; Currey, James, 2008; Bejjit, Nourdin, 2009; McDonald, Peter D., 2009; Low, Gail, 2011. This empirical work is an essential means of testing and developing theoretical critiques of the literary marketplace.

commodification of cultural difference, and the global literary marketplace, in francophone contexts.

Periodisation: from colonial to anti-colonial nationalism

The interwar years are generally recognised as the founding period of “African literature in French”, with René Maran’s Prix Goncourt of 1921, and the publication of books by Amadou Mapaté Diagne, Bakary Diallo, Paul Hazoumé, and Ousmane Socé Diop.¹³

Cultural production of the 1920s in Paris was characterised by the cosmopolitan vogue for Harlem Renaissance poetry in the anthologies of Alain Locke and Nancy Cunard, and the popularity of jazz music and so-called “primitive” art among the metropolitan avant-garde.¹⁴ By the 1930s, criticism of French colonialism had been overlaid by a valorisation of black culture, despite early radical calls for independence by Africans such as Lamine Senghor and in working-class newspapers such as *Le Cri des nègres* (Miller, 1998: 9-54; Senghor and Murphy, 2012). These writings existed alongside a strong tradition of “colonial literature”, that continued to present positive portrayals of France’s overseas work and to use “exotic” settings as backdrops to adventure stories or romances.

Following the success of Maran’s Goncourt-winning novel, subtitled “véritable roman nègre”, titles such as Gaston Joseph’s *Koffi, roman vrai d’un noir* (J. Bale, 1922), Edmond Haraucourt’s *Vertige d’Afrique* (Albin Michel, 1922), or the Frères Tharaud’s *La Randonnée de Samba Diouf* (Plon, 1922) continued to present themselves as authentic

¹³ On anti-colonial writing in the 1920s and earlier, see: Midiohouan, Guy Ossito, 1986; Malela, Buata B., 2008; Murphy, David, 2008. Guy Midiohouan forcefully reminds us that “la littérature négro-africaine d’expression française n’est pas née en France!” (Midiohouan, Guy Ossito, 2002: 17) citing early writers who never stepped foot in Europe such as Ahmadou Mapaté Diagne and Félix Couchoro. See also: Ricard, Alain, 1987. Influential overviews of African writing in French include: Kesteloot, Lilyan, 1963; Blair, Dorothy S., 1976; Kane, Mohamadou, 1982; Mouralis, Bernard, 1984.

¹⁴ Jane Nardal attempted, without success, to interest Éditions Payot in her translation of Locke’s *New Negro* anthology into French (Salgas, Sarah Frioux, 2009: 8).

novels of Africa with similar paratextual framing (Hage, 2009a: 86).¹⁵ Maran's novel follows the story of its eponymous character in a series of vignettes that describe village life, initiation ceremonies, polygamy and the main plot surrounding his wife's affection for a younger man. When Batouala is killed by a panther, the scene is set for uniting his favourite wife with the young Biss'ing'ua. It was the novel's preface that caused most consternation and attracted accusations of anti-French sentiment for its comments on the French treatment of Africans in Afrique Équatoriale Française. Maran's claim to have provided direct insight into the experience of black Africans led to his resignation from his post as a colonial administrator (Edwards, 2003: 81-98). Roland Lebel described a growing distinction between colonial and metropolitan writing on the colonies in this period as symptom of a new mindset, typified by the work of Robert Randau: "ce colonialisme qui est une qualité d'âme à voir les choses d'un point de vue moins hâtif, moins métropolitain, plus colonial en un mot" (Lebel, 1931: 140). Such titles continued to sell extremely well and received legitimating literary prizes (Lebel, 1931; Riesz, 2001).

The first publications associated with the term *négritude* appeared in the 1930s, animated by a number of ephemeral publications and a black intellectual community around the salons of Jane and Paulette Nardal. Journals such as *La Dépêche africaine* (1928), *La Revue du monde noir* (1931) *Légitime défense* (1932), and the single surviving issue of *L'Étudiant noir* (1935), whose aims and attitudes towards the colonial relationship diverged in some important ways, all included literary rubrics.¹⁶ Léon Gontran Damas,

¹⁵ Gaston Joseph's much less controversial novel was awarded the Grand Prix de la Littérature Coloniale in 1923, a prize founded to counter Maran's Goncourt win (Edwards, Brent Hayes, 2003: 82).

¹⁶ Jennifer Boittin notes that *La Race nègre* and *Le Cri des nègres*, neither of which carried literary content, formed the more controversial output of black print culture in this period. The readership of each paper was divided by social class and occupation, as well as by political orientation (Boittin, Jennifer Ann, 2010: 133-70). In his finegrained "Black Atlantic" reading of these newspapers, Brent Edwards draws out the detail of

Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor published their first volumes of poetry in the late 1930s, though more overtly politicised debates around the term “nègre” had begun earlier than this.¹⁷

Several important studies of the interwar period have shown how these cultural trends cannot be simply conflated with political change or the changing self-perception of France’s colonised populations. Buata Malela argues that the “rapport à l’Afrique” was the primary “enjeu de lutte” that characterised African literary production in the period 1920 – 60. The Afro-Antillean authors considered in his book, “[passent] par des stratégies d’émergence qui visent à placer le *rapport à l’Afrique* au centre des enjeux du microcosme parisien” (2008: 12). For Brent Hayes Edwards, black internationalism of the interwar period in Paris (in particular between African Americans and French-speaking African diaspora) was characterised by “a failure to translate even a basic grammar of blackness” and a persistent “décalage” between different individuals and groups (Edwards, 2003: 5).¹⁸ In comparison, Gary Wilder’s investigation of *négritude* in the interwar period galvanises the “black public sphere” of the 1930s as a “working through” of the French imperial imaginary and its structural opposition of universalism and particularism. Employing the terminology of political and social theory, he maps the political and the imaginative dimensions of *négritude* writing alongside different ideas of the imperial nation-state in this period (Wilder, 2005: 8). *Négritude* formed both a response and a correlative to these ideas, which, as Wilder shows, remained unresolved by the time of the Second World War

transatlantic diasporic dialogues. Important research has also been carried out on ephemeral literary production in early press activity in francophone and anglophone Africa: Lüsebrink, Hans-Jürgen, 2003; Ricard, Alain, 2004; Barber, Karin, 2006; Newell, Stephanie, 2013.

¹⁷ See: Anon, 1927.

¹⁸ His work presents ideas of internationalism in the period in their institutional conditions, moving between and across French, American, and African contexts. Its reading of the actions of black writers and cultural producers through a model of “décalage” as “failures” or “necessary haunting” (14) seems potentially limiting in the light of Wilder’s theoretical focus on “working through”.

(300).¹⁹ These three accounts of the period each show the imbricated political and aesthetic concerns of writers, and the contrasting interdisciplinary frameworks through which this period has been analysed. In particular, Wilder's book complicates existing accounts of *négritude* writing by producing fine-grained textual analysis that retains a broad historical scope.

The publishing of representations of sub-Saharan Africa during the period covered by this thesis (1945 – 67) is closely linked to the interwar expansion of black print culture in Paris and provides a set of responses to changing ideas of French imperialism. The post-war period was marked by the crisis, reconstruction, and consolidation of French national identity in line with a reconsolidated “politique culturelle”. The latter culminated in the founding of Malraux's Ministère de la Culture in 1959, staffed by colonial administrators whose overseas function had been suddenly curtailed by decolonisation (Lebovics, 1999). These two decades encompass the formal dismantling of the British and French Empires, marked by the independence of India in 1947, then of Indochina in 1954, followed by Ghana in 1957, Guinea in 1958, seventeen other sub-Saharan African countries in 1960, and Algeria in 1962. Under the Fourth Republic (1946 – 58), France maintained its overseas territories in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean, which became *Départements d'outre-mer* or *Territoires d'outre-mer* in 1946. Between 1944 and 1958, France had a total of 26 governments, as attempts at coalition governments resulted in instability and frequent change (Gildea, 2002: 41). This political and economic context affected the conditions of literary production, for example in the government's restrictions on paper in

¹⁹ Wilder's and Edwards' work suggest the need to consider a broader set of contexts, including the political dynamics of communism and fascism and questions of religion.

the years of shortage after the war, their support of certain literary prizes, and later in policies of censorship surrounding publications on Algeria.

Following four years of German occupation, in 1945 the country remained divided along the visible line that had demarcated Maréchal Pétain's Vichy France. The insidious sense of suspicion regarding collaboration and the role of French citizens in the Jewish holocaust was bolstered by the *épuration* trials, including those of writers and publishers.²⁰ This context is vital to understanding the specific context of literary production and publishing in the 1940s and early 1950s, as will be shown further in Chapter One.²¹ Gisèle Sapiro's groundbreaking account of writers during the period of the war and its aftermath, and the "logiques littéraires" of both Résistance and collaboration focuses on key literary institutions and populations of writers, rather than on individuals in relative isolation. Her approach, powerfully shaped by its Bourdieusian underpinning and drawing on institutional archives, seeks to avoid a "surpolitisation" of the work of individuals involved by maintaining relative objectivity. The research identifies specific ways in which the literary world responded to tumultuous national and international events, such as the *épuration* trials of collaborationist writers and publishers.

National reconstruction of the post-war period included the recalibration of France's colonies as the Union française in 1946. The period was also marked by wars in

²⁰ The estimated number of people sentenced to execution in France following these "purges" in the period 1944-49 is around 10,000 (Gildea, Robert, 2002: 67). Around 800 executions were actually carried out. Marcel Orphüls' documentary, *Le Chagrin et la pitié* (1969), captures something of this deeply divisive atmosphere.

²¹ On the trials of publishers and writers for collaboration with Germans in the "années noires" see: Fouché, Pascal, 1987; Sapiro, Gisèle, 1999. The politicisation of questions of race in this period was epitomised by the UNESCO statement, "The Race Question" in July 1950, and the series of influential publications that followed it.

Indochina, Algeria, and less well-known conflicts in Senegal, Ivory Coast and Cameroon (Benot, 1994). These frictions south of the Sahara, and the ambivalence surrounding France's ongoing influence in the region, belie the general assumption that decolonisation in sub-Saharan Africa was either a peaceful clean break or a "successful" and mutually beneficial process.²² Kristin Ross's cultural history of France in the fifties and sixties has shown convincingly the "re-ordering of French culture" that occurred under rising American hegemony, a nascent Cold War, and the pressures of decolonisation, leading to an "exploded world where Europe was no longer centre" (Ross, 1995: 82). This recalibration of world imperial systems, closely imbricated with Cold War politics and the rise of "tiers-mondisme" as a project rather than a label, following the 1955 Bandung conference, provides a historical framework for the current project.²³

The period studied extends to 1967 in order to consider some ways in which literary institutional conditions changed in the years following the independences, in the wake of De Gaulle's return to power. The year 1967 marks the publication of the latest of my case studies (Malick Fall's *La Plaie*). More significantly, this year followed the Tricontinental conference in Havana and the 1966 *Premier festival mondial des arts nègres* in Dakar, organised by Présence Africaine and Senghor's government. According to Robert Young,

²² According to Tony Chafer, "the idea that France and Africa should become partners for development was promoted, which enabled France to maintain a sphere of influence in the region after independence [...] the cultural aspect of French imperialism, and its association with French messianism – that is, with a certain idea of France and of the French nation – have been so important in helping to produce a real sense of a common, shared identity between French and African post-colonial governing élites" (Chafer, Tony, 2002: 13). Todd Shepard makes a related argument regarding the impact of decolonisation in Algeria on ideas of French Republicanism (Shepard, Todd, 2006).

²³ Vijay Prashad argues for a more complex social genealogy of the latter term: "Third World as an idea could not have become common currency only from Sauvy's coinage or the First World media's use of it. The anticolonial nationalist movement produced a series of gatherings and a language of anticolonialism that elicited an emotional loyalty among its circle and beyond [...] participation and risk in the struggle produced the trust that gave the term social legitimacy" (Prashad, Vijay, 2008: 12). Prashad also emphasises the internationalist ethos of these movements. See also: Young, Robert, 2001: 191.

the former marked a new set of global anti-imperial cultural and political intentions, preceding the events of 1968, which however lie beyond the scope of this study (2001: 213). The latter marked a culminating performance of Senghorian *négritude* as a cultural *and* political philosophy that was not without its critics. My focus on the literary marketplace in France does not extend in detail to the early history of publishing within sub-Saharan Africa, for example surrounding the foundation of Éditions CLE in Cameroon in the early 1960s.²⁴

The postcolonial politics of locating

The present participle of my chapter title, “locating”, denotes both the act of searching and that of finding. From *locare*, to place, the verb has spatial and monetary definitions: to fix boundaries, particularly in a pecuniary sense; to establish or to assign to a particular place; to take ownership (in French, *location*, refers exclusively to the rental of property). In the context of colonial and postcolonial writing, the term is loaded and resonates with a language of economics that – via Marx or Marxist critics – dominates much of the criticism with which this thesis engages. “Locating sub-Saharan Africa” describes firstly the work of publishers in the post-war period, seeking to locate writing on Africa in the literary marketplace by attributing value in literary and monetary forms. Secondly it refers self-reflexively to my critical project, responding in part to Homi Bhabha’s influential though sometimes controversial writing on the location of culture in a postcolonial hybrid space and time. Bhabha’s work challenges the idea of fixed or stable identities through notions of mimicry and liminality, though, as will be discussed below, it does not offer an obvious route into the more empirical questions and methods of postcolonial book

²⁴ For an account of Éditions CLE in Yaoundé, generally recognised as the earliest francophone African publishing house, see: Dihang, Jean, 1975.

history.²⁵ Bhabha's work speaks from within the heterogeneous critical space of postcolonial studies, a space that has hosted a number of varied critical debates with different regional emphases since its rapid expansion in the 1980s.²⁶ The weight placed on South Asian writing and Caribbean literature in early anglophone postcolonial studies contrasted with a less pronounced engagement with the terms of these debates by anglophone Africanist literary scholars. Beyond their almost exclusive focus on English-language writing, these dialogues have been dominated by perceived oppositions and discrepant critical modes of Marxist and deconstructive or poststructuralist thought. In brief, there has been a constitutive, often productive and increasingly nuanced, tension between ideas of "textualism" strongly influenced by Michel Foucault, via Edward Said's *Orientalism*, and Jacques Derrida, via the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and the "materialist" critiques of such tendencies by Benita Parry and others (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1999; Parry, 2004; Lazarus, 2011). More recently, francophone postcolonial studies has established itself as a fertile branch of these debates and with a similar breadth of critical positioning.²⁷ Viewed, in the main, as an export from anglophone academic institutions (despite their debt to French theory), postcolonial terms have gradually worked into French academic discourse, particularly in departments of Social Sciences and more widely into political debates on issues of race, immigration and identity in France. Yet work by some of the leading names in the postcolonial field, Said, Spivak and Bhabha,

²⁵ *The Location of Culture* was first published in French translation in 2007 as: *Les Lieux de la culture. Une théorie postcoloniale* (Paris: Payot, 2007). Reception was mixed, as indeed was the reception of postcolonial studies more broadly in France (Bayart, 2010).

²⁶ Important overviews which set out and critique the "elasticity" (Moore-Gilbert, B. J., 1997: 11) of these debates include: Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, 1989; Moore-Gilbert, B. J., 1997; Gandhi, Leela, 1999; Lazarus, Neil, 2004; Boehmer, Elleke, 2005a. Most indicate the various continuities with and divergences from radical ideas of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and third world nationalism that have informed and generated the assumptions and practice of these academic debates.

²⁷ See, for example: Hargreaves, Alec G., 1997; Forsdick, Charles and David Murphy, 2003; Harrison, Nicholas, 2003; Hiddleston, Jane, 2005; Marshall, Bill, 2009.

translated only relatively recently into French, has met with a mixed reaction (Forsdick and Murphy, 2003: 8).

The politics of “locating”, like those of “situating”, or “positioning”, raise epistemological questions, namely who is locating and with what authority. My work here points to the need for theoretical frameworks that enable a close attention to empirical material. To this purpose, I will work through the notion of a “field of literary production” by engaging with the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his interlocutors.²⁸ Grounded in poststructuralist thought and Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, Bhabha’s critical and theoretical project appears in many ways separate, even opposed, to certain epistemologies of literary sociology that will be developed below. In particular, Bhabha aims to escape “the politics of polarities”, by suggesting agency locates in an ongoing process, in an interstitial “between” space – a “Third Space” – in the fluidity and non-linearity of narratives of identity and of history, thus avoiding binaries such as East/West (Bhabha, 1994).²⁹ In contrast, Bourdieu’s preoccupation with “poles” in his empirical investigations and models of the nineteenth century literary field derives from an aim to escape the rigid opposition of subjective and objective points of view. As will be elaborated below, his aim upholds a notion of scientific rigour dependent on the idea of an epistemological break or

²⁸ Robert Young cites Bourdieu primarily as part of his wider discussion of the significance of the Algerian war for the emergence of French poststructuralism (particularly through the work of Derrida, Cixous and Althusser) (Young, Robert, 2001: 414; Syrotinski, Michael, 2007). Benita Parry gestures briefly towards Bourdieu’s influence in her critique of Homi Bhabha’s “insistence on the absolute primacy of discourse” (Parry, Benita, 2004: 54). On a more developed discussion of Bourdieu’s pertinence to postcolonial studies, emphasising his early sociological work in Algeria, see: Lebovics, Herman, 2006; Puwar, Nirmal, 2009.

²⁹ Peter Hallward’s critique of Bhabha labels postcolonial theory more widely as: “a general theory of the non-generalisable” (Hallward, Peter, 2001: xi). He dismisses the theoretical “refusal of all binaries” (xiv), when held up against the historical world of anti-colonial activity and its “constituent antagonisms”, arguing for a renewed focus on the “specific” (xii) in literary study. Robert Young makes a related argument in his demonstration of the ways in which postcolonial theory has privileged interpretation of texts and representations to the detriment of the specific contexts and aims of anti-colonial intellectual activity, notably that of the oppositional politics of tricontinentalism (Young, Robert, 2001).

rupture that seems at times inimical to postcolonial tropes of movement, fluidity and hybridity.

Nonetheless, Bhabha's core postcolonial concepts, and poststructuralist theory more widely, are centrally concerned with material aspects of language and of enunciation.

Michel Foucault writes, for example:

L'énoncé est toujours donné au travers d'une épaisseur matérielle, même si elle est dissimulée, même si, à peine apparue, elle est condamnée à s'évanouir. Et non seulement l'énoncé a besoin de cette matérialité; mais elle ne lui est pas donnée en supplément, une fois toutes ses déterminations bien fixées: pour une part, elle le constitue. (Foucault, 1969: 132).

Here materiality denotes the act of articulating a statement ("énoncé"), whether in speech or writing. Such material properties establish or modify the statement's status in its various networks and fields of use. It is this materiality, and its institutional conditions – what Edward Said terms the text's "worldly" qualities (Said, 1984: 35) – that give the statement mobility either towards recognition, or towards erasure (Foucault, 1969: 116).

Bhabha's description of a "Third Space" also alludes to institutional settings integral to the production of meaning:

The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation. (Bhabha, 1994: 53).

Setting out these "performative and institutional strategies" with greater historical precision does not predetermine the potential ambiguities or hybrid identities towards which Bhabha's work leads. Empirical methodologies for exploring socio-historical conditions of literary production do not necessarily seek to pin down a singular "pact of

interpretation”.³⁰ Instead, polarised conceptualisations, such as centre/periphery, dominant/dominated, colonial/anti-colonial, North/South or East/West, can be usefully disturbed by archival work and developed via selected insights of sociological theories of cultural production. Materialist-poststructuralist oppositions contribute to what Robert Young describes as a “theoretical creole” (Young, 2001: 69), if both are understood as modes of facing up to critical responsibility. The critical gesture and language of “locating” is here to be understood relationally and self-reflexively as not separate from the literary field it describes.

Book history and the sociology of literature

The study of colonial, postcolonial and world literatures has only relatively recently begun to engage with questions and methodologies of material cultures of the book. This research has, hitherto, taken place almost entirely in the anglophone academy, leading to stimulating scholarship that will be put to use comparatively in my final chapter on the French translations of Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, and Peter Abrahams. My main focus elsewhere will be to redress this apparent imbalance by focusing on the francophone space. The central questions enfold recurrent issues of authenticity and legitimacy and can be summarised as follows: in the post-war period, who wrote, and who could write, about Africa? How were these representations mediated and legitimated by publishers, in what context, and for which readerships? In dialogue with postcolonial and world literature

³⁰ Aijaz Ahmad, as might be anticipated given the Marxist framework of his writing, argues that “Determination does not mean [...] the kind of entrapment of which structuralists and Foucauldians speak; it refers, rather, to the givenness of the circumstance within which individuals *make* their choices, their lives, their histories” (Ahmad, Aijaz, 2008: 6). Such an argument depends on a distinction between determining circumstances and individual choice that cannot be sustained in the Bourdieusian framework and its emphasis on relationality set out below.

theories, the aim here is to demonstrate the role of book history and the sociology of literature as integral tools for world literary study.

Currently subject to further profound and as yet uncertain changes, as the cultural politics of globalisation emerge from and shape new textual media, the history of the book in Europe has always structured and been structured by underlying currents of political, economic, and cultural change.³¹ The post-war literary field arguably anticipated the effects of globalised electronic media and the transnational corporatisation of publishing in a “global literary marketplace” (Brouillette, 2007: 80). Its internationalisation, for example, was marked by a dramatic increase in translations, while the first *livre de poche* in 1953 and the growth of competition with film and television industries led to significant changes in patterns of reading. As Roger Chartier has shown, the “indissoluble” (1992: 7) association of book, text and author following the invention of movable type in Europe in the fifteenth century transformed the relationship of reader to text. The coming of the book challenged ideas of ecclesiastical and political authority by forging a new industry and associated marketplace and a concurrent development of new modes of textual expression (Febvre and Martin, 1958). In the nineteenth century, printed newspapers and novels consolidated national (and imperial) “imagined communities” as “inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson, 1991: 6). Print was the key method for establishing and circulating the languages of Empire, through educational, cultural, and political circuits, and particularly through ephemeral publications.³² For D.F. McKenzie, the interpretive

³¹ See, for example: Febvre, Lucien Paul Victor and Henri-Jean Martin, 1958; Darnton, Robert, 1985; Thompson, John B., 2010.

³² Anderson’s thesis has been widely disputed in African contexts, given the contesting evidence of low literacy levels and poor or slow distribution networks that undermine the idea of daily simultaneity inherent in both Anderson’s, and Ernest Renan’s (via Hegel) linking of newspapers and nation-building. These

function of bibliography seeks “to understand better the creation and communication of meaning as the defining characteristic of human societies” (1999: 4). This model of book history develops a dynamic understanding of the socio-historical situation within which books are produced and read, rather than conserving a primary focus on the physical attributes of the book itself, or the biography of its author or publisher.³³

In the latter half of the twentieth century, literary theory has contested the idea of the book as discrete object. Poststructuralist ideas of text and writing – Derrida’s claim that the end of the book signalled the beginning of writing – worked against the notion that the enclosed unity of the codex form, dominant since the second century, could ever contain a singular or total unity of meaning. Instead the text was seen as an open and productive generator of proliferating meanings. My book-historical project is not opposed to these theoretical currents of thought.³⁴ It acknowledges that the multiplicity of meanings that emerge in reception are also constituted by the material contours of the medium, by “the book as expressive form” (McKenzie, 1999: Ch 1), and therefore by the social and historical context of that form.³⁵

The questions, “What is an author?”, and the scarcely less open-ended “What is literature?”, have accumulated numerous responses and echoes at different points in the

critiques were further developed at the “Book in Africa” international symposium, held at Senate House, London, 20 October 2012.

³³ See also: Darnton, Robert, 1982; McDonald, Peter D., 2006.

³⁴ For Peter McDonald, these projects of poststructuralists and book historians have “a shared interest in radically rethinking the idea of the book” since contextual settings, if appropriately presented, can open out to new meanings and understandings (2006: 223).

³⁵ More recently, changing notions of authorship (and textual authority) have been linked once again to changing technologies of the text. As Sean Burke argues, “the reconstruction of the political may depend in considerable measure upon the rematerialisation of the author” (Burke, Sean, 1998: 201).

history of literary criticism. Sartre's response in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* lingers over the post-war period, as writers and intellectuals negotiated their sense of political commitment in relation to their aesthetic aims. From the Latin verb, *augere*, to increase or to grow, the resonance of *auctor*, literally "one who causes to grow", points to the importance of the process of authoring, rather than the end result. The mediating presence of the publisher in this process is to be understood as that of a heterogeneous group of individuals operating under the sign of a business name to select, produce, and distribute books. The political, aesthetic or commercial biases of particular publishing houses, as Bourdieu has shown, respond to the struggles specific to the literary field. In this period, those struggles include the consolidation of legitimate ideas of the French language and of literary style in relation to powerful notions of political *engagement*.

The classic definitional question, "what is African literature?" can be supplemented by a more complex set of questions that accommodate the political and cultural dynamics of literary production. As seen in the bibliographies surveyed below, "African literature" has often been defined either according to the essentialised identity of its authors or of its literary content (whether geographical, social, or racial).³⁶ In his chapter on the Heinemann African Writers series in *The Postcolonial Exotic*, Graham Huggan suggests that:

Perhaps what is needed is less an anthropological understanding of African literature, more a sociological grasp of the specific material conditions under which such understandings are constructed; and a wider historical sense of how cultural knowledge about 'foreign' cultures is effected, through which channels that knowledge is routed, and in whose interests it is deployed. (2001: 57)

³⁶ The issue of author identity is of course far from straightforward. To take one example, René Maran is often considered the father of African literature in French. While *Batouala* is set in French Equatorial Africa, Maran himself was born on a boat between Guyana and Martinique and educated in France.

So the question changes: rather than what is African literature, the present study asks how, and for what purpose, did ideas of African literature emerge in this period? In what material conditions were such understandings constructed? Here the comparisons drawn to the London publishing scene in my final chapter are instructive. While Amos Tutuola's publishing history shows the relative belatedness with which British publishers accommodated African writers, in contrast to their Parisian counterparts, responses to these critical questions have, as mentioned above, thus far been generated almost exclusively from within anglophone contexts.³⁷

There is no fixed body of writing that can be termed "sub-Saharan African literature". Nonetheless, such a group is often defined in francophone and anglophone contexts and various permutations of the category certainly exist in critical discourse and in the literary marketplace. The contiguous formation of an anglophone African literary constellation in the late 1950s and 1960s from West, East and Southern Africa has some significant institutional parallels and contrasts with the francophone context: bilingual journals and individuals moved between these linguistic spaces with growing mutual awareness of the cultural and political affinities and differences between their projects. These points of contact will be explored further in my final chapter to evoke the (limited) porosity of language borders, as sustained by print culture in this period. There is much scope for further comparative research in this area, and indeed for further book historical work on early anglophone African literary institutions.

³⁷ See, for example, the following range of theses, monographs and journal articles: Lizarríbar Buxó, Camille, 1998; Huggan, Graham, 2001; Alleyne, Brian W., 2002; Davis, Caroline, 2005; Van der Vlies, Andrew Edward, 2007; Currey, James, 2008; Bejjit, Nourdin, 2009; McDonald, Peter D., 2009; Low, Gail, 2011.

As Bourdieu asserts, the definition of a population is central to the struggle for recognition and, more specifically, legitimacy in the literary field. Thus Lilyan Kesteloot's foundational sociological study, *Les Écrivains noirs de langue française: naissance d'une littérature* (1963) aimed to present a population of writers as a clearly defined group – “un mouvement littéraire authentique” (Kesteloot, 1963: 275). Similarly, the activities of *Présence Africaine* have been described as those of a shared goal of literary *engagement* and a corresponding form of cultural stock-taking linked to the recuperative aims of Senghorian *négritude*.³⁸ As set out in Alioune Diop's introductory essay to the first issue of the journal, its purpose was to “définir l'originalité africaine et de hâter son insertion dans le monde moderne” (1947: 7). The detail is more complex, as half a century of valuable scholarship has established, yet terms such as “littérature négro-africaine”, “littérature africaine d'expression française”, “littérature africaine”, “littérature noire” persist, and have yet to be stemmed by the boisterous debate surrounding the 2007 “Manifeste pour une littérature monde en français” (Collective, 2007b).³⁹

Fielding questions: Existe-t-il un champ littéraire africain?

The task of “locating” sub-Saharan Africa in the field of literary production calls on a range of interdisciplinary methodological tools and heuristic concepts, starting from the very term “literary field”. In his exploratory essay, “Existe-t-il un champ littéraire belge?” Pierre Bourdieu sets out to test the concept of the literary field in a transnational framework. He concludes controversially that there is no autonomous Belgian literary field in the period he is studying, since the institutions on which Belgian writers depend

³⁸ Dominic Thomas and others have identified this predetermining focus on engagement as a limiting factor in Kesteloot's work (Thomas, Dominic, 2007: 219n88).

³⁹ See, for example: Lionnet, Françoise, 2009; Hargreaves, Alec G., Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, 2010; Thomas, Dominic and Alain Mabanckou, 2011.

for publication and subsequent “consecration” are invariably French and based in Paris (1985). Though Bourdieu subsequently nuanced this conclusion, admitting he had underestimated the resistance of Belgian writing, a similar hypothesis has often been applied in the context of African writing in the post-war period. Bourdieu’s critical vocabulary enables us to consider the construction of “African writing” as a porous category, and thus avoid repeating the essentialising gesture of earlier work on “African writing” as a discrete body of texts. The changing colonial relationship in the post-war period can be more helpfully conceptualised using the “field” as a theoretical tool rather than as a means of categorising writing.

Bourdieu does, then, provide a sophisticated set of tools for understanding the dynamic and relational nature of literary taste and literary institutions. The apparent centripetal force of the French capital in this period, amid the changing colonial circumstances of republican universalism, can be traced through this relational understanding of institutions and taste. Bourdieu’s concepts and analytical tools for studying “the productive idea of context” (McDonald, 2006: 225) have only recently come to be used by critics in the area of postcolonial/Empire studies. This perhaps owes something to the limiting perception of the national framework of his project. While Bourdieu never defines the field in explicitly national terms, French metropolitan borders undoubtedly frame his research on the nineteenth- and late twentieth-century literary fields.⁴⁰ Examples developed in *Les Règles de l’art*, focus on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in France. One of Bourdieu’s last research projects, published in an article, “Une révolution conservatrice

⁴⁰ A national framework remains implicit in other accounts of the literary field: “Le modèle du champ littéraire est avant tout français et hexagonal. L’histoire et la configuration des champs sont différentes selon les pays [...] L’histoire se lit aussi, à l’échelon francophone, comme l’émergence de champs nationaux différenciés, où les questions identitaires jouent un rôle plus fort qu’elles n’en ont eu dans l’hexagone” (Ponton, Rémy, 2002: 89).

dans l'édition", marked a return to the study of publishing conglomerates in the contemporary French metropolitan context. Developments of Bourdieu's ideas that can accommodate global movement and transnational exchange in the literary field have been proposed in the work of Pascale Casanova among others. These proposals will be tested throughout this thesis as I investigate different locations of "African literature" in the post-war literary field.⁴¹

Rising out of Bourdieu's body of investigation, the literary field describes the space of structural relationships between individuals, their text-producing activities, and textual objects. This space is defined by its relative autonomy from political and economic fields. Since the literary field retains its own specific practices, codes, values, and rules, the impact of changes in political or economic fields – what Bourdieu terms the "champ de pouvoir" – are felt through shifts in structural relationships, rather than in a direct causal relationship. The struggles of the literary field "ont des enjeux spécifiques, et [...] le pouvoir et le prestige qu'elles poursuivent sont d'un type tout à fait particulier" (Bourdieu, 1987: 170). As will be seen, this framework avoids a reductive direct transfer of political context onto literary production. Bourdieu's definition and demonstration of the field in literary contexts derive from his aim to present a more rigorously "scientific" perspective on literary production and expand from the humanist ideal of the "Republic of Letters" developed in Western Europe during the seventeenth century.⁴² Developed against Marxist "théorie du reflet", in the work of Lukács and Goldmann among others, Bourdieu argues that, rather than biographical interpretation, when linking formal characteristics of texts to

⁴¹ On transnational uses of Bourdieu's notion of the literary field, see: Boschetti, Anna, 2010; Sapiro, Gisèle, 2010; Speller, John, 2011. Recent re-engagements with Bourdieu's work on literature include: Zimble, Jarad, 2009; Martin, Jean-Pierre and Pierre Bergounioux, 2010; Speller, John, 2011; Ahearne, Jeremy and John Speller, 2012.

⁴² See: Bots, Hans and Françoise Waquet, 1997: 63-90; Diaz, José-Luis, 2002: 537.

the social position of their authors, the critic must take into account “l’effet de *réfraction* qu’exerce le champ de production culturelle fonctionnant comme prisme” (1989: 16).

Accordingly, the degree of the field’s autonomy, which is never fixed or stable, can be gauged by the extent to which the interests of writers and cultural producers are imbricated with those of external patrons, as in the nineteenth century, when French writers became independent of the system of literary patronage.⁴³ The literary field aims to include and thereby reconcile the opposition between subjective and objective, or internal and external readings of texts by enabling an integrated consideration of the wider socio-historical context.⁴⁴

The literary field, for Bourdieu, is structured between two poles: that of elite, “restricted” production, where symbolic capital is derived from an apparent disinterestedness in commercial concerns of the marketplace and a relatively high level of autonomy; and that of commercial “mass” production, which is heteronomous and favours financial over symbolic capital. Within the former, defined by Bourdieu as an “economy reversed”, publishers are particularly significant, as “ces personnages *doubles*, par qui la logique de l’‘économie’ pénètre jusqu’au coeur du sous-champ de la production pour producteurs” (1989: 6). In her reading of the postscript to *Les Règles de l’art*, Sarah Brouillette convincingly questions the validity of these polar oppositions in the context of a globalised literary marketplace under late capitalism, where many “high-brow” writers are deeply aware of the commercial stakes of their work. In mid-twentieth century France, as

⁴³ Bourdieu’s readings of the work of Baudelaire, Flaubert and Manet posit a sociological reconstruction of the literary field as way of showing these writers’ “position impossible” in the “espace des possibles” (Bourdieu, Pierre, 1998; Bourdieu, Pierre, 2003). The latter term is defined in *Les Règles de l’art*: “un univers infini de combinaisons possibles enfermées à l’état potentiel dans un système fini de contraintes” (170).

⁴⁴ Alain Viala writes that the institutions of literary life (as opposed to literary institutions such as form and genre) form “la meilleure charnière entre les structures propres du champ et les structures de la sphère sociale où il se situe” (Viala, Alain, 1988: 66).

Gisèle Sapiro's work has shown in much greater detail, the definition of these poles was bound up with a renewed sense of French nationalism during and following the Second World War. The positions which writers took ranged from "art for art's sake" to literary *engagement*, but there was a renewed emphasis on commercial disinterestedness, and the pursuit of autonomy, following the revelation of collaboration with the Nazi regime on the part of many writers and some publishers (Sapiro, 1999: 690). The tension between post-war recuperative nationalism and imperial decline in the following decades can be traced through ongoing struggles to define "legitimate" literary form, style and language in the case of writing on sub-Saharan Africa. Such struggles operated through relationships of domination, complementarity and antagonism within literary institutions, often in covert or apparently neutral ways. For example, press reviews or literary prizes that focused on the political relevance of literary texts with little or no consideration of their literary qualities, inadvertently shored up the imperial order of metropolitan literary legitimacy. Post-war African writing responded to the French national imaginary in transition – either through contiguity with or resistance to literary and political structures. Its publishing history illustrates constitutive tensions in the metropolitan literary field.

This period saw the publication of an unprecedented range of authorial voices on Africa occupying a range of positions across the structures of the French literary field. Yet "African literature" did not naturally form a unified field, or "sub-field", and will not be identified as such here. There is no homogeneous body of African literature, but rather representations and discourses that have been identified (for certain purposes, whether critical or ideological) as sharing certain characteristics (such as author identity, publisher location, or textual aspects of literary form and style). Such an approach frames Bernard

Mouralis's assertion that, "proclamée et revendiquée avec insistance aussi bien par les écrivains que par les critiques, l'africanité, apparaît [...] comme une donnée fondamentale, un élément constitutif essentiel de cette production littéraire" (Mouralis, 1984: 7). My work enables a clearer contextual presentation of the contingencies of the instrumental notion of "africanité" in the period by juxtaposing texts by French and African writers, including texts in translation. It has been argued that the status of "African literature" as an "autonomous" field begins only in the late 1960s, with key works: Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence* (1968) and Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les Soleils des Indépendances* (1970), whose stylistic innovation is seen as breaking away from dependence on European forms.⁴⁵ Such an argument, however, overlooks the full implications of the notion of the "field", which would locate this "innovation" less by appending a geographical marker, than by seeking a fuller, relational, understanding of these texts' mediation, pre- and post-publication, in the structures of the literary field. The chequered publishing history of each of these novels, marked by their rejection by French publishers and, in the case of Ouologuem, a polemic concerning alleged plagiarism, is testimony to the ways in which institutional conditions remained challenging, even hostile, in the late 1960s, for certain representations of Africa (Fonkoua, Halen and Städtler, 2001; Steemers, 2007).

The relative autonomy of publishing houses and of literary associations was compromised to an extent in the post-war period, as some institutions remained closely linked to colonial structures in the political field. Policies such as the Ministère de l'outre-mer's control of paper supplies, or Charles de Gaulle's patronage of the *Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer*, show how the publication of new, potentially

⁴⁵ On the early writing of Ouologuem, Mudimbe, and Kourouma as "novels of delegitimation", see: Appiah, Kwame Anthony, 1992: 150-57.

more disruptive, voices continued to be overseen by the French state. Authors and literary mediators used contingent strategies to negotiate the “rules” and “effects” of a literary field whose structures adjusted gradually and unevenly in response to the changing relationship between France and sub-Saharan Africa. Strategies do not necessarily imply a conscious negotiation of the field however: writers and literary mediators have sought symbolic and material profit in conditions which they are not necessarily fully conscious of – a situation accounted for by Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*. Throughout the period 1945 – 67, there is a structuring tension between works which align themselves with the colonial status quo in terms of their content but also, and more insidiously, in terms of their form, style, and language (the paradigmatic example being Laye’s *L’Enfant noir*), and those which occupy a position of opposition, either in their explicitly anti-colonial themes or, to a limited extent, by challenging the literary criteria according to which they were evaluated (the novels of Mongo Beti or the poetry of David Diop, but also, as will be shown here, the less categorical work of Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Malick Fall).⁴⁶

Pascale Casanova’s book, *La république mondiale des lettres*, has been a major, if much-disputed point of reference, especially since its translation into English in 2004.⁴⁷ She presents a model of international literary space, extending Bourdieu’s field theory via concepts from Fernand Braudel’s world economic history. Her aim is to work through and against a nation-based idea of literary history by theorising the hierarchical structure of global literary time and space, arguing that writers struggle and compete for consecration

⁴⁶ Mouralis suggests, somewhat reductively, that African writers were limited in the options available to them: “L’écriture est ainsi, pour l’écrivain africain, une donnée de fait plus qu’une option. C’est là sans doute un trait important qui le différencie de l’écrivain européen qui, lui, garde, dans une certaine mesure, une possibilité de choisir entre plusieurs formes d’écriture” (Mouralis, Bernard, 1984: 157).

⁴⁷ Given the range of (often hostile) responses to Casanova’s work from anglophone postcolonial critics, I will here cite from the English translation, published in Edward Said’s “Convergences” series. See: Prendergast, Christopher and Benedict R. O’G Anderson, 2004; Speller, John, 2011: 74.

and symbolic literary capital around the pull of a “Greenwich meridian” of literary modernity. Since the eighteenth century, this Greenwich meridian has been located, in her view, by the aesthetic universalism of Paris, which she designates “capital” of the “World Republic of Letters”.⁴⁸ This aesthetic universalism maintains a legitimate/dominant definition of literature and the “literary” which is ultimately ethnocentric. Literatures occupying a “dominated and peripheral position” (176) are annexed through a phenomenon Casanova terms: “Parisianization, or universalization through denial of difference” (2004: 154). Her argument, which remains powerfully suggestive rather than conclusive, depends on broad generalisations about the conditions of literary production which should stimulate further empirical research in these areas. “Paris”, for example, functions as a monolithic synecdoche in her account of the “tragic” situation of colonial/postcolonial writing in France:

Unlike London, the scope of whose cultural jurisdiction depended mainly on its stock of literary capital and the extent of its linguistic territory, Paris never took an interest in writers from its colonial territories; or, more precisely, it long despised and mistreated them as a species of extreme provincials, too similar to be celebrated as exotic foreigners but too remote to be considered worthy of interest. (2004: 122)

Such generalisations about the conditions of literary production and reception, though inherent to any totalising theoretical model, overlook the ways in which individuals and communities have also challenged and resisted dominant modes of literary evaluation, working to aims that were not necessarily those of attaining a literary modernity defined at the Greenwich meridian. My project remaps one area of the heterogeneous literary production that both contributed to and diverged from this paradigm. Existing studies

⁴⁸ Postcolonial criticism has dismantled the Eurocentric hierarchy Casanova appears to maintain between the “literary Greenwich meridian” and “small”, “peripheral” or “destitute” literatures. Critics have repeatedly evoked the need to consider multiple centres, minor to minor transnationalisms, peripheral modernisms, and a world literary system that is singular and yet uneven. See, for example: Lionnet, Françoise and Shu-mei Shi, 2005; Lazarus, Neil, 2011.

bringing together publishing history and print culture with the history of Empire in anglophone contexts similarly show the need to pluralise, and thereby enrich, Casanova's schematic model. The accusation of ethnocentrism that might be levelled at the designated capital of the World Republic of Letters is weakened by an unhistorical idea of universality or modernity as indicator of literary merit that rarely takes sufficient account of multiple sites and modes of such universality within the French capital.⁴⁹

African literature was often described as “regional” by early critics and by writers who claimed the need to secure a particular, local voice rather than answer to putatively “universal” criteria demanded by institutions in the capital, in response to their perceived readership. In his survey, *L'Institution de la littérature*, Jacques Dubois includes Belgian, Swiss, Québécois, and African literatures under the umbrella of “littératures régionales” owing to their dependence on Parisian publishing houses (1978). A project of “provincialising” Paris by unpicking its apparent ethnocentrism might pause to note that in France the term “province” strongly connotes anything outside the capital. French regional literature from within the metropole has a long and fascinating relationship with Paris that can inform our understanding of colonial literary paradigms. As Anne-Marie Thiesse has shown, regional literary writers did at times explicitly define themselves *against* literary styles generated from the capital (thereby retaining an antagonistic relationship). They also created their own associations and regional literary prizes to counter the draw of the capital. Under the Third Republic such literature did not aspire to reach a “universal” consecration that could be administered from Paris itself, while under the Fourth, the strength of regional literature failed to respond adequately to the affronts to national

⁴⁹ In an interview, Casanova defends her description of the universal as “un universel toujours historicisé” (Pradeau, Christophe and Tiphaine Samoyault, 2005: 143). Bourdieu's postface to *Les Règles de l'art*, as described above, performs a similar role in avoiding the tendency to establish any totalising model.

discourses of unity and diversity (Thiesse, 1997: 121). Elsewhere Herman Lebovics argues that the conditions of the occupation “made possible, indeed necessitated, breaking the grip of Paris on national cultural life” (Lebovics, 1999: 46). This serves as an important reminder that power dynamics between region and capital, centre and periphery are not unique to the French (post)colonial situation that informs the scope of this thesis. They function intra- as well as inter- nationally.

The “World Republic of Letters” will here be set in a specific material context, mapped not according to the unidirectional idea of “Parisianisation”, but by recognizing how struggles for definitions of literary value move and are transformed by relational sites and modes of production. The project locates selected writers’ representations of Africa not as homogeneous protests against (or for) colonisation, but as responses that shaped and were shaped by the effects of the literary field as it refracted seismic changes in national and transnational political contexts.

Summary of chapters

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first part presents institutional contexts, through analysis of the “presence” of sub-Saharan Africa at *Le Seuil*, *Présence Africaine* and the *Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l’outre-mer*. The second part contains case-studies of individual texts, drawing on selected aspects of the publishing process, namely paratextual packaging (in particular the use of pseudonyms), editorial craft, and translation. It shows how such mediating processes generated particular forms of symbolic value and recognition.

Having established the epistemological and methodological debates that have shaped this research, I will now set out the content of each chapter. The originality of this project comes from the new archival material presented and the focus on relationships between different institutional settings in which ideas of African literature are located during this period. There is not a separate chapter on educational publishing, though I have carried out initial work in the Hachette archives on this crucial aspect of post-war publishing history and discuss its implications in relation to Abdoulaye Sadju in Chapter Four.⁵⁰ School textbooks did increasingly contain extracts from African literary texts following the independences, yet larger publishers, Hachette, Fernand Nathan, and Hatier maintained their dominant position in the market for school books.⁵¹ The rationale for not extending that direction of research is my primary focus on how writing of and on Africa negotiated literary publishing contexts in Paris.

My second chapter explores the publication of poetry anthologies in the years immediately following the Second World War. I focus primarily on anthologies edited by Léon Gontran Damas at Le Seuil and Guy Lévis Mano, with some consideration of Senghor's

⁵⁰ Anne-Marie Thiesse's work on regionalism in school textbooks under the Third Republic is paramount here. She shows how teaching primary school students in France how to read and write about their local region was an integral part affirming French "unity in diversity" of the metropole post-1870. As she points out however, these local pedagogies made little note of successive waves of immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and were unable to sustain themselves in the post-WW2 period: "en fait la Quatrième République, et plus encore la Cinquième, délaissent le discours articulant fortement le local et le national et ne gardent que l'image, de plus en plus éloignée de la réalité d'une France de fermes et de clochers villageois. Cette désarticulation du local et du national, associée à la représentation nostalgique et idéalisée d'un monde révolu, explique en partie certains aspects du régionalisme des années post-68. L'opposition construite alors entre certaines régions et 'la France' puise dans les discours anti-colonialiste et tiers-mondiste contemporains les concepts de sous-développement, exploitation, aliénation et colonialisme interne" (Thiesse, Anne-Marie, 1997: 120).

⁵¹ See also: Bush, Ruth, 2013. My article compares *Présence Africaine* to Heinemann's African Writers Series, the renowned anglophone collection based at Heinemann Educational Books, the success of which depended largely on school markets and a strong infrastructure for distribution in Africa.

Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache (1948). The analysis demonstrates how the selection, packaging and distribution of these texts responded to the national imaginary of the nascent Fourth Republic. Anthologies will be presented both as manifestos and as barometers for the tensions between universalist representations of the Union française and racial particularism in *négritude* writing.

Against the contexts set out in the second chapter, Chapter Three presents the founding of Présence Africaine, focusing primarily on its activities as a publishing house. I have not set out to present Présence Africaine through prosopography or to give a complete account of its position in the field. Instead, I evoke comparisons between Présence Africaine and other young publishers in this period, via a study of its complete catalogue for the period. The aim is to nuance the assertion of Présence Africaine's links with ideas of *négritude* by considering the wider socio-historical context of its activities in the literary marketplace and as a space for working through political possibilities. In particular I consider the significance of the birth of the *livre de poche* in France. My presentation of the social, material, and political context of Présence Africaine seeks to move beyond existing homages to its symbolic importance as a journal, publisher and cultural hub, to show how it depended on broader structures of the literary field which shaped its culturalist rhetoric and contingent promotion of more radical political voices.

Chapter Four considers the processes of legitimation and consecration for literary representations of sub-Saharan Africa through a sociohistorical study of the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer and its associated literary prizes. The archival material presented shows how, in a specific institutional setting, a universalist

conception of the French language responded to the political changes of 1960, while remaining attached to the goal of forging an “Empire de la langue française” (Rapport de l’Assemblée générale de l’ANEMOM, 1959). Particular attention is paid to the paradoxical declared “autonomy” of the association, in light of its evident dependence on the financial and human resources of the French state, and the changing demographic of both the Association’s members and the recipients of its prizes.

Moving into the second part of the thesis, Chapter Five addresses the performative role of publishers in packaging literary representations of Africa in this period. Via Mongo Beti’s celebrated essay, “L’Afrique noire, littérature rose”, I consider the use of African pseudonyms in this period. Christine Garnier’s bestselling *Va-t’en avec les tiens!*, published under an African name, is the central example, showing how her publisher, Grasset, responded to the ongoing taste for “exotic”, “authentic” representations of sub-Saharan Africa – what Roland Barthes terms the “mythe petit-bourgeois du nègre”. Rather than a synchronic Genettian analysis of paratext, this chapter considers the “effet-pseudonyme” (Genette, 1987: 48) as it relates to representations of Africa in a literary marketplace that was decisively structured by changing political contexts in this period.

Chapter Six returns to Le Seuil through archival work on readers’ reports that record the rejection of manuscripts by three writers across the period: Abdoulaye Sadjì’s *Maïmouna*, Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s *L’Aventure ambiguë*, and Malick Fall’s *La Plaie*. Continuing the previous chapter’s discussion of the symbolic value of “authenticity” in the context of changing colonial hierarchies, these reports suggest how, and why, editors and literary

passeurs sought to impose normative ideas of the French language, together with notions of literary style and genre, in the case of each of these novels.

The final chapter moves beyond a colonial-nation-language paradigm to consider the location of literary translations in this period. Normative editorial criteria of language and style that can be located in reference to the French colonial context are tested in three translingual case-studies: the French translations of Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (*L'Ivrogne dans la brousse*), Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (*Le Monde s'effondre*), and Peter Abrahams' *A Wreath for Udomo* (*Une couronne pour Udomo*). The contrasting long-term reputations of these texts in France, only one of which remains in print, have been shaped by the relative symbolic and economic capital of their translators and publishers (Gallimard, Présence Africaine, and Stock). Their different trajectories show how metropolitan publishing strategies for representations of sub-Saharan Africa responded to the changing relationship between the politics of decolonisation and independence and the aesthetics of literary form and content. These strategies can be reduced neither to structures of French or African nationalism nor to their distinct universalist ideals, but instead attest to the complex ways in which such political questions were negotiated in the literary field.

Bibliographies and archives

A survey of existing bibliographies formed the starting point for my project, enabling the identification of relevant publishers of the period based on available data. The biases of each quantitative presentation of “African” writing are instructive in themselves. They

establish the need for the qualitative case studies presented in the second half of the thesis in response to the task of “locating sub-Saharan Africa”.

Bibliographies, in a different way to the anthologies that will be studied in Chapter One, define and reify a population of writers. Even if ostensibly neutral in intention, such definitions reveal particular, historically situated effects of the literary field. Drawing from three bibliographies, with awareness of their biases, I have compiled a database of titles for the period 1945 – 70 in order to identify publishers in a more systematic way. An expanded database might have included African diaspora writing in French and “colonial” writing on Africa written in French, though viable bibliographies do not currently exist for either (for the reasons outlined above). The purpose of my database is less to present a population, defined according to race, nation, or continent, than to locate, using available research tools, the main publishers who produced literature identified as African. It also provides a route through which to identify relevant publishers’ named collections in the period and reconstruct *Présence Africaine*’s catalogue.

For a total of 593 titles drawn from these bibliographies in my database, there are 162 separate publishing institutions, showing that, contrary to Alfred Fierro’s suggestion that all African literature was funnelled through *Présence Africaine*, there was a very wide dispersal across the field for these delimited populations. The five most common publishers are *Présence Africaine*, Éditions CLE, Seghers, P.J. Oswald, and Le Seuil. The majority of publishers presented by this bibliographical work only published one or two titles, suggesting a low level of specialisation in “African literature” as a category in this period. Many smaller publishers and printers are present in this list, given that the range of

writing includes more ephemeral poetry pamphlets. It is interesting to note the absence of the avant-garde and anti-colonial publishing house Éditions de Minuit which, despite its numerous publications on Algeria, published no texts concerning sub-Saharan Africa.⁵²

The main shared characteristic of the bibliographies, apart from an insistence on their provisionality, is the absence of North African writing and of any writing of the African diaspora. Janheinz Jahn's 1971 bibliography, for example, contains:

All creative writing which has been written in Agisymba – a term which I picked from Ptolemy to be used for 'Black Africa' – as far as has been published in the form of books and plays which have been performed on the stage. Manuscripts which were ready for print have also been included. (Jahn and Dressler, 1971vii)

Jahn includes a map of "Agisymba" with its Northern border "drawn along an imaginary line running directly east from the mouth of the Senegal (including the Mauritanian inhabitants of the Senegal valley), past Timbuktu and via the Northern end of Lake Chad towards Khartoum. From there it runs in a south easterly direction towards the coast"

(vii). Jahn includes work in English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, together with 404 books in African languages. Madagascar and Mauritius are also present. This bibliography is the only one to take into account unpublished texts and performed plays, such as those at the William Ponty School in the 1930s, an important reminder that print-publishing is not a necessity for literary production in Africa.⁵³

⁵² According to Anne Simonin, while Jérôme Lindon at Éditions de Minuit accepted polemical texts on Algeria, these were kept separate, in the "Documents" collection, "qui, en accueillant des témoignages, 'fait la guerre' sans se préoccuper de 'faire de la littérature'" (Simonin, Anne, 1994: 363). Maintaining this distinction was key to the success of Minuit as a small independent publisher with a high level of literary legitimacy *and* clear anti-colonial position. As will be shown in Chapter Three, *Présence Africaine*, whose aims and resources differed considerably from those of Minuit, did not follow the same strategy: its diverse political and aesthetic projects were consistently brought together and its books rarely achieved the same kind of literary recognition as those in the Minuit catalogue.

⁵³ Important studies of ephemeral and popular forms of textual production in West Africa include: Obiechina, Emmanuel Nwanonye, 1973; Barber, Karin, 1997; Newell, Stephanie, 2013.

Thérèse Baratte-Eno Belinga's bibliography appeared in four editions between 1965 and 1979, expanding from 254 authors in the first, to 1170 in the fourth. It was produced under the auspices of the national Organisation Radio-Télévision Française (ORTF), who gave significant financial support to new African cultural production in this period, notably with the Concours théâtral interafricain, which led to a series of publications and productions for radio diffused across the French-speaking world.⁵⁴ The bibliography contains texts "écrits directement en français par les auteurs d'Afrique noire" and is organised by country, though the introduction by Robert Cornevin notes that in several cases these national labels are provisional as several authors (such as Félix Couchoro and Videret Mensah) have changed nationality.⁵⁵

Hans Zell's bibliographies, *African Books in Print*, produced in five editions from 1975 to 2008, and now available as an online database, together with the journal *African Book Publishing Record* are certainly the best-known reference works in anglophone African bibliography. The 1978 edition includes few francophone publishers, with 17 percent of the total 12,000 titles in French, and 62 percent in English (and 21 percent in African languages). Their major distinguishing point is that they include only books published "on the African continent" (Zell, 1978: xv) that, crucially, are still in print.⁵⁶ The bibliography is based on a comprehensive survey of publishers in Africa and their catalogues, and

⁵⁴ The role of the radio should be a significant area for future research (Kane, Mohamadou, 1966: 25). Edouard Maunick's literary magazine, *Les Bonnes Feuilles*, was designed to be used by radio stations to promote new writing and there are various references to radio promotion scattered through publishers' archives.

⁵⁵ Another list, *Les années littéraires en Afrique*, sets out literary production from 1912-87, but reveals some inconsistencies when checked against the BnF catalogue (Ngandu, Pius Nkashama, 1993).

⁵⁶ As he explains: "The titles of British expatriate publishers operating in Africa are also included, but are confined to books that are published under the imprint of a local African branch. Titles merely distributed by expatriate publishers are not included, even though the books may be written by African authors" (xv).

includes writing in all fiction and non-fiction genres. Zell's books are arguably less comprehensive concerning francophone writing, as the preface admits that the response rate to catalogue requests was lower from francophone countries. In the preface to the first edition, Zell writes that the sections on African literature include not only black African writing, but also fiction, drama and poetry by white South African writers. His bibliographies originally served a practical purpose for bookshops, libraries, educational institutions, and publishers themselves by setting out current book production in Africa. The others, with their focus specifically on literary or creative texts also served a practical purpose but their compilers' criteria suggest an additional overarching aim to set out literary production by black Africans – a definition of the field based primarily on criteria of racial identity. Jahn's use of the term *Agisymba* implies an appeal to an African specificity, in line with his writing in *Muntu* (1958), while Belinga's work stems directly from the work of the French media in light of the changing nature of African cultural production post-1960.⁵⁷ My own quantitative work on the wide range of publishers evident in this analysis of bibliographic sources provides a comparative context and a framework within which to situate the qualitative work in my case studies.

My examples seek to locate and examine in closer detail selected instances of the mediation of literatures on and of Africa, by editors, translators, and prize juries.⁵⁸ Certain effects of the field can thus be registered, such as the institutional mediation of writers'

⁵⁷ Further to Zell's subscription-based online database, another online database, LITAF, hosted at the Centre d'Étude d'Afrique Noire de Bordeaux, and put together by Virginie Coulon, now claims to be the most complete online database of African writing. Available at: <<http://www.litaf.cean.org/index.html>> [accessed 21 September 2012]. A version of this has been published as a printed bibliography: Coulon, Virginie, 2005; 1994.

⁵⁸ Katharina Städtler writes: "Les champs littéraires africains sont caractérisés par l'absence d'autonomie, même relative, par rapport au champ du pouvoir" (Städtler, Katharina, 2001: 206). The term is also used by Alain Ricard and Janos Riesz to describe the Togolese literary field as an autonomous space (Ricard, Alain and János Riesz, 1992: 11-20).

use of the French language against the changing political context, and the ongoing lack of recognition in France for anti-colonial texts concerning sub-Saharan Africa. Editors' processes of selection and editing, together with modes of paratextual packaging and processes of translation and distribution, provide key "prisms" through which to study these issues during the selected period. My analysis depends on a critical distinction between the performative strategies of writers (how and by whom they sought to be read), publishers (how they shaped literary reception, via selection, packaging, and distribution), and lastly texts (how the texts themselves seek to be read), which can be best understood by testing my hypotheses against the available archival material.

My archival research followed avenues that emerged during periods of research in France and Senegal as the core aims of the project took shape in response to available material. The project initially envisaged work in the archives of *Présence Africaine*, which will now open in January 2013 at the Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC) in Caen. *Présence Africaine* remains a small, independent, family-run business that has only recently had the resources to dedicate time to cataloging its archives. Its bookshop and offices at 25 bis rue des Écoles have undergone extensive modernisation and re-organisation in 2011/12. A 2009 exhibition at the Musée du Quai Branly, entitled "Présence Africaine, une tribune, un mouvement, un réseau", featured material from the archives, together with documents from the archives of Michel Leiris and Jacques Howlett, and the Colonial Archives at Aix-en-Provence.⁵⁹ A second exhibition in 2010 on

⁵⁹ This exhibition took place from November 2009 to January 2010 at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. It subsequently travelled to the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar in summer 2010, where it was exhibited in the entrance hall of the university's library. Archival material highlighted the links between African-American cultural production and the Harlem Renaissance and cultural-political movements in France in the 1940s and 50s, complemented by video interviews with Edouard Glissant, René Depestre, Sarah Maldoror,

Les Statues meurent aussi, a film made by Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, and Alioune Diop in 1953 that was censored until 1968, also included archival documents surrounding its censorship that hint at the potential significance of this material (Martínez-Jacquet, 2010: 21-22).

During frequent visits to *Présence Africaine*, meetings with directors Christiane Diop and Suzanne Diop and the journal's editor, Romuald Fonkoua, and conversations with the staff of the bookshop over the past three years, I have come to understand some of the circumstances of *Présence Africaine* today as it negotiates the celebration, preservation, and understanding of its past activities and plans its current and future publishing activity.⁶⁰ Seen at first as an impasse, my lack of direct access to this archival material meant that rather than carrying out a detailed study of *Présence Africaine* that might parallel Anne Simonin's seminal study of *Éditions de Minuit*, or Julien Hage's recent thesis on *Éditions Maspero* (2010), I decided to work across several different institutional contexts. These included the archives of Le Seuil, Stock, Maspero, Grasset, Fasquelle, Heinemann, and the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer, now called the Association des écrivains de langue française. The broad scope of this research has enabled me to build up a wider understanding of the field which *Présence Africaine* negotiated in this period.

Georges Balandier, and Christiane Diop and a fully illustrated special issue of the *Gradhiva* journal (Salgas, Sarah Frioux, 2009).

⁶⁰ Two afternoons were also spent in their offices compiling a spreadsheet of print-runs from hand-written cards on which staff monitor stock levels [May 2011].

Archives are simultaneously enticing and misleading in their presentation of what genetic criticism terms the “avant-texte”.⁶¹ Debate relating to the study of history, memory, and amnesia through the archive evokes both the physical site and precise moment of encounter with traces of the past and a related, abstract concept of “archival consciousness” (Sheringham: 48).⁶² These discussions emphasise the need for reflexive awareness of our strategies for reading archival material, of the technologies of archivisation, and sensitivity to any archive’s limitations and silences. Publishers’ archives, which vary considerably in form and content, do not provide a direct route to textual meaning, nor present a transparent view into the activity of publishers. Material ranges from readers’ reports and manuscripts to contracts, correspondence with authors, printers, translators, and journalists, production invoices, rights paperwork (dealing with translations, reproductions for anthologies, school textbooks), press dossiers, and more. As business archives, a lot of the material preserved relates to legal requirements, as well as to preservation for historical posterity. Yet much of the discourse surrounding publication – telephone and face-to-face conversations, publishers’ lunches, letters excised from the archive, or withheld from consultation – remains hidden. The conclusions drawn here therefore make some specific suggestions for further archival work. My direct contact with staff of *Présence Africaine* and members of what is now known as the Association des écrivains de langue française, together with interviews carried out with other publishers and writers, have complemented my archival work and textual analysis. Such

⁶¹ Rather than trying to reach an originary meaning, or set of meanings for a text, or to show endless contingency of meaning, the French tradition of genetic criticism can be described as: “the study of textual invention” (Deppman, Jed, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, 2004: 11). It seeks to show concrete, empirical traces of textual instability in what it terms the “avant-texte” – the process of literary production prior to the publication of the text. The work is based on careful reconstruction using available documents (letters, drafts, manuscripts, etc.), without the reconstruction of social setting that is central to sociological approaches. See also the recent special issue of the journal of the Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes (ITEM): “Afrique-Caraïbe”, *Genesis* 33 (2011).

⁶² See, for example: Farge, Arlette, 1989; Derrida, Jacques, 1995; Steedman, Carolyn, 2001; Sheringham, Michael, 2005; Barber, Karin, 2006.

face-to-face exchanges have been a welcome reminder of the human relationships central to the interwoven history of ideas and institutions considered here.

CHAPTER TWO

Anthologies and the Union française

In April 1946, Paul Flamand, director of Éditions du Seuil, wrote to the Gouverneur des Colonies asking for 550 kilograms of paper. National paper shortages, made apparent nowadays by the flaking, yellowing quality of printed pages from the 1940s, precipitated particular forms of editorial diplomacy in the colonial context.⁶³ Thus Flamand wrote:

Il ne vous échapperait pas, Monsieur le Gouverneur Général, quel intérêt s’attacherait à ce que soit largement diffusé, tant dans la métropole que dans la France d’Outre-mer, cet ouvrage d’un auteur dont le rayonnement croît rapidement et qui peut porter au-delà des mers le témoignage des résultats de la culture française diffusée parmi les Indigènes. (Flamand, 1946a)

His request appealed to the ways in which the “results” of the French *mission civilisatrice* might be transmitted through “indigenous” writing. The claim depends on a notion of cultural assimilation that continued to be integral to the French colonial myth in the years following the war. The author in question was Léopold Sédar Senghor, and the book, his *Hosties noires* collection, written during his imprisonment in two prisoner of war camps in occupied France. This book, published by Le Seuil in 1948, evokes the sense of sacrifice and of dedication to France experienced by African soldiers who had fought for the Allies. It also signalled a more ambiguous mood anticipating change and a re-evaluation of the colonial relationship.⁶⁴ Its poetic voice probes the lived and the imagined emotional complexities of French-African mutual dependencies. As the last stage of the book’s

⁶³ The French publishing industry was severely hit by paper restrictions in the post-war period. 150,000 tonnes were needed to refill stocks, which had fallen to 12,000 in 1945. While levels rose to 42,000 in 1946, and had recovered by 1949, these material consequences of the war were to weigh on French publishing until the mid-1950s (Simonin, Anne, 1998: 32). Alioune Diop also faced this problem when seeking the means to put the first issue of *Présence Africaine* into print during the “année noire” of 1947 (Verdin: 154).

⁶⁴ One poem draws directly on events at Thiaroye, Senegal in 1944 when twenty-four *tirailleurs sénégalais* protesting against their lack of pay were killed by French troops.

material production shows, this voice depended on the manoeuvres of a willing publisher and a sympathetic colonial ministry in Paris, and a paratextual appeal to the dominant colonial imaginary of the interwar period.

France's colonial imaginary was reconfigured, at least on paper, by the founding of the Union française in October 1946 in the Constitution of the Fourth Republic. This document set out "l'égalité des droits et des devoirs, sans distinction de race ni de religion".⁶⁵ Such diplomatic optimism aimed at preserving the French "grandeur" was contested by violent confrontations between French troops and colonial subjects/citizens at Thiaroye, Senegal in 1944; Sétif, Algeria in 1945; in Madagascar in 1947; and Côte d'Ivoire 1949 – 50; before the full-scale wars of independence in Indochina from 1946 – 54 and Algeria from 1954 – 62 (Benot, 1994). Labour disputes and trade union activism in sub-Saharan Africa during this period – notably the railway strikes of 1947-48 – also signalled widespread economic and social discontent. At the same time, a new generation of elite African leaders educated in France were elected to the Assemblée nationale and/or returned to lead and reform local political parties. These leaders took political steps towards improving the disappointing terms of the Union française, though for most, formal decolonisation was not seen as an aim that was either achievable, or desirable.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ "La France forme avec les peuples d'outre-mer une Union fondée sur l'égalité des droits et des devoirs, sans distinction de race ni de religion.

L'Union française est composée de nations et de peuples qui mettent en commun ou coordonnent leurs ressources et leurs efforts pour développer leurs civilisations respectives, accroître leur bien-être et assurer leur sécurité.

Fidèle à sa mission traditionnelle, la France entend conduire les peuples dont elle a pris la charge à la liberté de s'administrer eux-mêmes et de gérer démocratiquement leurs propres affaires ; écartant tout système de colonisation fondé sur l'arbitraire, elle garantit à tous l'égal accès aux fonctions publiques et l'exercice individuel ou collectif des droits et libertés proclamés ou confirmés ci-dessus." ("Préambule", 1946)

⁶⁶ Many of those campaigning against colonialism did so on the grounds of dissatisfaction with the outcome of the post-war French policy in sub-Saharan Africa . It was not until the 1956 Loi-cadre, for example, that universal suffrage was extended to sub-Saharan Africa.

Further to black African and Caribbean writers who had been in Paris in the 1930s, a second generation of students from the colonies arrived in France after 1945 as beneficiaries of new bursaries released by the government. The number of African students in France rose from 250 in 1946 to 800 in 1950, and 2000 in 1955 (Dewitte, 2004: 204). Transnational diasporic communities centred around universities in Paris, Lyon, Tours, Marseille and Bordeaux were formalised by the creation of new student associations, the most important being the *Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France*, founded in 1950.⁶⁷

Following the “*années noires*” of the Occupation, intellectual discourse in France redefined the republican national imaginary according to ideas of intellectual responsibility that depended on national and universal frameworks revived by the Resistance.⁶⁸ As Gisèle Sapiro explains, the Resistance was characterised by a patriotic reappropriation of “*l'esprit français*” across the French intellectual spectrum, from Communists to Catholics (1999: 67). She demonstrates how this field was structured through oppositions between moralists, the avant-garde, proponents of “art for art's sake”, and popular writers. In this context, Jean-Paul Sartre's argument for a detached form of individual, existential responsibility depended less on a duty to any fixed, potentially corrosive, idea of the French nation, than on humanist universalism and a philosophy of freedom (Ibid: 630). In the metropolitan intellectual field, as well as in African intellectual

⁶⁷ This association was dominated by a younger, more militant generation of African students. Diané cites one témoignage by Rahandi Eloi Chambrier: “C'est au sein de la FEANF que les étudiants africains ont pris conscience du fait national africain et des méfaits du colonialisme. Par l'analyse et la pratique des luttes syndicales, ils se sont forgés cet idéal de liberté, de fraternité et de solidarité” (Diané, Charles, 1990: 16). See also: Dewitte, Philippe, 2004: 230.

⁶⁸ As Sapiro notes, “à la Libération, c'est bien en tant que traîtres à la nation que furent jugés les collaborateurs, à une époque où la notion de crime contre l'humanité ne constituait pas encore une catégorie juridique en France” (Sapiro, Gisèle, 2011b: 629).

and political milieux, rhetoric surrounding the Union française met with mixed reactions.⁶⁹

Publishing – a key part of that space – was reconfigured by the *épuration* trials. During these trials, publishers and writers were accused, and convicted, of collaboration.⁷⁰ Their crime was that of betraying the nation in print. Sapiro observes:

L'imprimé constituait une pièce à conviction qui avait l'avantage de présenter à la fois un caractère objectif par sa matérialité et une manifestation des intentions de l'auteur. La publication était bien conçue, du point de vue juridique, comme un acte. (2011b: 569)

Since writing was, more than ever, to be seen as a defining act (“parler, c’est agir” (Sartre, 1951: 72)), there was a parallel growth in opportunities for publishing political and cultural dialogue across lines of class, race, gender, and geography.⁷¹ Published texts on colonialism and race took on new valency amid tensions between different ideas of the French nation in intellectual discourse and ongoing political appeals to reconsolidate republican universalism in the Union française.

After 1945, the changing constitution of the literary field led a number of metropolitan publishers to create new space in their catalogues for voices from the French colonies, now termed *départements* or *territoires d’outre-mer*. This changing “espace des possibles” precipitated a burst of publications which accounts in part for the large number of young publishers and of journals founded, or refounded, in the late 1940s (Simonin, 1998: 36). Many were born out of the Resistance and differentiated themselves from the prestigious journals and publishers of the interwar years, such as the NRF and Gallimard.

Bourdiesian terms here emphasise my focus on the relationships between certain literary

⁶⁹ For discussion of these tensions, see: Chafer, Tony, 2002; Dewitte, Philippe, 2004.

⁷⁰ Of the 172 trials held, only 90 reached conclusion.

⁷¹ Sapiro’s erudite sociological study of 185 writers active in the period 1940 – 1953 does not include writers active in France in this period from outside the metropole.

producers (writers and publishers) which might appear to occupy very different spaces in the literary and political fields. This chapter will consider the relative positions and strategies of selected editors who added literary voices concerning the Union française to their catalogues in the late 1940s. Paul Flamand at Le Seuil, Charles Fasquelle of Éditions Fasquelle, Charles-André Julien at Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), and Guy Lévis Mano present contrasting examples of editorial intervention in sub-Saharan Africa.⁷² Each provides a prism through which to consider how writers of the Union française were published within shifting structures of the political and economic fields in this period. In such contexts, as will be explored in Chapter Three, the founding of the journal *Présence Africaine* in 1947 and its publishing house in 1949 provided unprecedented visibility for writers of the *négritude* movement and a clear gesture towards greater autonomy of literary production.⁷³

Damas' collection, *Pigments* (1937), prefaced by his close friend and poet, Robert Desnos, was the first book-length poetry publication of what has since been overly-simplified as a cohesive *négritude* "movement". According to Desnos, Damas' powerful, staccato poems offered "un chant d'amitié offert, au nom de toute sa race... à tous ses frères blancs".⁷⁴

⁷² Several critics have pointed to the need to research these publishers' strategies in more depth (Miller, Christopher L., 1986: 117-9; Jules-Rosette, Bennetta, 1992: 41; Mangeon, Anthony, 2009: 45).

⁷³ *Présence Africaine* will henceforth be italicised when referring specifically to the journal. Otherwise *Présence Africaine* (non-italicised) implies the publishing house, movement, and hub of its surrounding community.

⁷⁴ The book was an inspiration to both Césaire and Senghor. It was subsequently censured for inciting anti-war sentiment among West African soldiers in the lead-up to the Second World War (Warner, Keith Q., 1988; Ojo-Ade, Femi, 1993: 6). The devastating final lines of the final poem in the collection are addressed to "Combattants sénégalais":

Moi je leur demande
De commencer par envahir
le Sénégal

Moi
je leur demande

de foutre aux Boches la paix. (Damas, Léon-Gontran, 1937: n.p.)

While the work of Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Léon Gontran Damas in the 1930s has been extensively researched by literary scholars, historians, and political scientists, the role of Alioune Diop as mediator and fourth party in the post-war period has been critically neglected. Damas' indefatigable presence as a multilingual "commis voyageur" (Maximin, 2009: 157) – to be explored in more depth in this chapter – also remains less understood than the deep political and poetic influence of Senghor and Césaire. The aim here is to show how publishers responded to political and aesthetic ideas of national (and transnational) reconsolidation and to their material effects. Gary Wilder's designation of *négritude* as a "working through" of debated possibilities rather than enacted political realities is helpful. As he argues:

Négritude's political imaginary was not only expansive, creative and utopian. It was also grounded in the material conditions and socio-political structures around which the interwar imperial order was actually organized. Here the immanent and the imaginary, the given and the possible, the historically specific and the utopian were not antithetical to one another. (2005: 255)

These utopian projects spilled over into the transforming material conditions of the immediate post-war period. Writers such as Damas, who had spent the Second World War in Paris in the circles of Resistance writers, unsurprisingly felt deep sympathy for those who had suffered the German occupation, a shared experience that fostered important relationships of solidarity between European, African, and Antillean writers and literary producers. Wilder's balanced assessment of the antinomy between universalism and particularism points to the need for analysis that considers the poetic and the literary in its socio-political context. Such context is not deterministic, but may rather be considered as always already intrinsic to the act of imagining and articulating other possibilities.

The anthologies presented here carefully crafted proto-manifestos for literature in French from beyond metropolitan borders while being subject to their position of production within that imperial space. Archival evidence together with paratextual analysis shows how publishers and anthologisers positioned themselves and the texts they published according to ongoing debates over language, style, and form as means of *engagement*, tied to the political context of the period. More specifically, these anthologies offer ambivalent calls for greater cohesion, equality and fraternity in the Union française. They range from evident sympathy and a strong (if paradoxical) sense of national and transnational responsibility to more radical appeals for a “Renaissance africaine” (C. A. Diop, 1948) via greater autonomy in sub-Saharan Africa. The complex aesthetic, political, and cultural coordinates of the resulting web of literary producers illustrate these struggles in the field and the positions taken by certain key individuals in those debates. The epistemological implications of this period and its sense of pragmatic, if at times strained, conviviality underpin the chapters that follow.

The 1948 centenary of the abolition of slavery

The 1948 centenary of the abolition of slavery is a key moment in this period that displays a recalibration of the colonial relationship. The official commemoration took place on April 27th at the Sorbonne and was attended by President Vincent Auriol, with speeches celebrating abolitionist Victor Schoelcher by Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor.⁷⁵ The ceremony was followed, several months later, by the transfer of the ashes of both Schoelcher and the distinguished black colonial administrator, Félix Éboué, to the Pantheon. Speeches given at the official ceremony confirm a certain ambivalence

⁷⁵ David Murphy has evoked the symbolic importance for anti-colonial groups in the 1920s of paying homage to Schoelcher (Murphy, David, 2012).

surrounding the new constitution.⁷⁶ While championing the role of Schoelcher, Senghor used the opportunity to reaffirm Africa as “une pièce essentielle dans l’Union française” and remind those present that:

Les anciens sujets de “L’Empire Français” ont eux aussi, depuis 1946, mordu au pain de la liberté et ils ne sont pas près d’en oublier le goût. Plus exactement, depuis 1940, quand, et dans la Résistance intérieure et dans les Forces Françaises Libres, ils mêlaient leur sang rouge au sang rouge de leurs frères blancs.
(Collective, 1948: 17)

This carefully measured appraisal is indicative of the growing confidence of Senghor’s diplomatic voice in the months leading to his break with Lamine Guèye, the more senior Senegalese representative in the National Assembly, later that year. The symbolic capital of West Africans’ role in the war is reiterated here in a gesture towards national (i.e. French) unity.⁷⁷ In his speech, Césaire set out Schoelcher’s contribution to abolition and called for Antillean self-emancipation as the basis of an ongoing communion with France:

Quand ils jettent un regard en arrière, ils ne sont pas tentés d’être ingrats, mais à la lumière même de ce passé, ils apprennent à considérer que la vraie émancipation n’est pas celle qui se décrète, mais celle que l’homme conquiert sur lui-même, qu’elle n’est pas derrière eux, mais qu’elle est devant eux, et que c’est à eux qu’il appartient de la préparer en communion avec le peuple de France, dans le sillage lumineux de 1848. (Collective, 1948: 33)

Both Senghor and Césaire affirm the importance of the subjectivity of the colonised, and, in Césaire’s case, the need for self-realisation. The focus on Schoelcher as republican hero, suggests that this event and its coincidence with the founding of the Second Republic were used to bolster the reconfigured Union française in the Fourth Republic

⁷⁶ A recent parallel with such ceremonial investment of symbolic capital by the French State would be Aimé Césaire’s *panthéonisation* in April 2011, televised live on the national television channel France 2.

⁷⁷ As Janet Vaillant notes, “in the early 1950s, Senghor never used the word independence, but he began to speak frequently of the need for greater African autonomy within the French Union” (Vaillant, Janet, 1990: 241).

through an emphasis on historical continuity and French benevolence.

This “sillage lumineux” prompted a number of commemorative publications. A new edition of Schoelcher’s *Esclavage et colonisation* (1948) appeared with an introduction by Aimé Césaire, together with Senghor’s *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache* (1948a), and special issues of several journals, including *Les Temps modernes*, *Le Musée vivant*, *La Table ronde* and *Europe*. As will be discussed further in Chapter Four, the Grand Prix littéraire de l’Afrique Occidentale Française was reinstated this year by the *Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l’outre-mer*, and first awarded the following year. A contributor to *Présence Africaine* remarked:

Une chaleur de sang noir circule en cette année d’hommage à Schoelcher – où valeurs et problèmes d’Afrique constituent la matière sensible la plus répandue et le foyer actif des discussions esthétiques, économiques, politiques. Des éditeurs s’en inspirent malgré eux, d’autres en profitent. (Caillens, 1948a: 706)

Press coverage of the memorial ceremony was limited, with short reports appearing in both *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* emphasizing France’s “geste généreux” (Editorial, 1948) and the ongoing “fidélité des populations noires” (H.G, 1948). It would be anachronistic to make a direct link between this anniversary and cultural production, on the scale of events in 1998 for the 150th anniversary.⁷⁸ Yet the public, symbolic affirmation of French colonial acts of “benevolence” in Paris provided an opportunity for promoting new literary and political voices from “outre-mer”. Reluctance to criticise the failings of 1848 and, in curious symmetry, the incipient weaknesses of the new Fourth Republic, despite the importance placed on colonial subjects being at the centre of the events, is reflected by revised discourse framing publications produced during the memorial year.

⁷⁸ This was accompanied by the campaign for the Loi Taubira, passed in 2001, which declared slavery a crime against humanity.

A special edition of *Le Musée vivant* was published under the title “1848 Abolition de l’esclavage – 1948 Évidence de la culture nègre”. This journal was founded in 1936 by the Association populaire des amis des musées, an anti-Fascist association with links to the workers’ movement. The tone of its publications was broadly anti-colonialist. It was closely linked with the Musée de l’Homme, one of the few museums to remain open during the war and a centre for the Resistance.⁷⁹ This special issue was edited by a prominent curator and cultural figure, Madeleine Rousseau, and Cheikh Anta Diop, then a student of science at the Sorbonne. The issue was fully illustrated with photos of African art from museums and private collections. It featured prefaces by Richard Wright and Michel Leiris, and articles by Cheikh Anta Diop, Jacques Howlett and several prominent art historians. The title stressed a desire to affirm black culture by evaluating and conserving a longer tradition, as seen in the echoes of ethnographic discourse that remain central to the journal’s scientific conception of African cultures. The memory of slavery as a unifying theme in the magazine is discussed to a varying degree by the different contributors. According to Danielle Maurice, the theme “semble tellement étranger, voire anachronique, à la France moderne que la société métropolitaine ne s’implique pas dans ce souvenir” (Maurice, 2007: 78). The suggestion of anachronism in “modern” France depends on a perceived gulf between the past of slavery and present republican values that belies the symbolic role of the former. On closer consideration, these gestures towards continuity contained an ambivalent performance of the Union française.

⁷⁹ Since its founding as part of the 1937 Exposition Internationale, the museum provided a site for the growth of French ethnographic science, underpinned by guiding values which were “cosmopolitan, progressive, and democratic” (Clifford, James, 1988: 139). Léon Gontran Damas and the influential critic and editor, Maurice Nadeau studied ethnology at the Musée de l’Homme during this period. On the early networks of the musée de l’Homme see also: Hogenhuis, Anne, 2009.

Cheikh Anta Diop's contribution to the issue: "Quand pourra-t-on parler d'une renaissance africaine?" is an important early example of the Afro-centrism that would develop into his landmark publications: *Nations nègres et culture* (1954) and *L'Unité culturelle de l'Afrique noire* (1960). The article powerfully evokes the paradox of literary production for African writers who are overwhelmingly dependent on a "European" readership and on "European" languages. Diop sets out a polemical argument in favour of literature written in African languages, stating that "on ne peut pas écrire pour deux publics aussi différents que le public européen et celui que, globalement, on peut appeler africain" (58) – anticipating the binary opposition of what Anthony Appiah describes as "topologies of nativism" (Appiah, 1992: 56). He points to oral literature, but also to existing written literature in Wolof, in particular the works of Moussa Ka, and a longer tradition of epic literature.⁸⁰ He elaborates an essentialist idea of reception regarding representations of Africa by European writers: "une telle littérature ne peut avoir qu'un intérêt dérisoire pour l'Africain parce qu'elle n'a pas été conçue essentiellement pour lui" (58). Encapsulating the vexed issue of what Alain Ricard terms "linguistic consciousness" (2004: vii), Diop's article criticises the attempts of African writers to hone the French language in order to reach (and by implication gain approval from) a European readership. A related argument is made by many other commentators of this period, not least in the pages of *Présence Africaine*, in Mongo Beti's critiques of Camara Laye, and later at the 1956 Congress of Black Writers and Artists. This alienation effect and the growing linguistic consciousness of literary producers were central to attempts to demarcate (francophone) African literary spaces in the post-war period.

⁸⁰ Diop's work here resonates with Mudimbe's influential Foucauldian analysis of "the invention of Africa". Mudimbe argues that "when one speaks of African literature one is referring both to a body of texts whose authors are known and to anonymous discourses which carry on successive deposits of supposedly unknown imaginations" (Mudimbé, V. Y., 1994: 177).

In the post-war period, the distinction between the ethnography and fictional literature on and of sub-Saharan Africa remained at times blurred. The perceived need for anthropological knowledge in order to read African texts has been explored at length by Christopher Miller, with reference to James Clifford's work on ethnographic authority. Clifford argues that 1950 marks the beginning of a shift from the authority of participant-observation towards a form of ethnography that was more aware of its polyphonic nature.⁸¹ As a result such writing became more reflexive regarding its own authoritative practices and the position of the writing subject in relation to his/her written objects. As Clifford writes, "Paradigms of experience and interpretation are yielding to discursive paradigms of dialogue and polyphony" (1988: 41).⁸² The paratextual presentation of novels and poetry suggests that such epistemological shifts translated only gradually and partially into the publishing strategies for fiction in this period.⁸³ The constant presence of explanatory glossaries and footnotes in texts on and of Africa in this period suggests a secondary awareness of reception that was separate from the process of writing. Senghor's *Chants pour Naett* (Seghers, 1949a), for example, contains a glossary prefaced by the following statement:

Certains lecteurs se sont plaints de trouver dans mes poèmes des mots d'origine africaine, qu'ils ne "comprennent" pas. Je crois – et ils me pardonneront – qu'il s'agit de com-prendre [sic] moins le réel que le surréel. J'ajouterai que j'écris d'abord pour mon peuple. Et celui-ci sait qu'une *kôra* n'est pas une harpe non plus

⁸¹ Michel Leiris' groundbreaking article, "L'ethnologue devant le colonialisme" first published in *Les Temps Modernes* in 1950 was an important expression of this turning point.

⁸² An apt example of this shift would be Georges Balandier's more self-reflexive ethnographic text *L'Afrique ambiguë* (1957). Balandier and Leiris were close collaborators with *Présence Africaine* (see Chapter Three).

⁸³ Richard Watts argues that the affirmation of cultural singularity and gradual waning of voices of metropolitan authority apparent in the paratext of "decolonial" texts signal a progression from the colonial paratextual "discourse of domination" (2005: 64). He acknowledges the symbolic capital accrued by forms of post-war patronage: "to be a patron of these vibrant new literatures from the colonies was to be an active participant in France's efforts to discover a postwar identity that was not tainted by the German occupation or the Vichy regime" (Watts, Richard, 2005: 87-88). A related argument can be developed in reference to the publishing context of the period, whereby patronage also served a practical purpose, protecting *Présence Africaine's* activities from "the spitefulness of what we called the Ministère des Colonies at that time" (Jacques Rabemananjara, quoted in: Jules-Rosette, 45).

qu'un *balafong* un piano. Au reste je pense que c'est en touchant les Afro-Français que nous toucherons le mieux les Français et, par-delà mers et frontières, les autres hommes. Cependant mon intention n'est pas de faire de l'exotisme pour midinettes, encore moins de l'hermétisme à bon marché. C'est pourquoi j'ai pensé qu'il n'était peut-être pas inutile de donner une brève explication des mots d'origine africaine employés dans ce recueil et les précédents.

This paratext hints at Senghor's awareness of the writer-reader relationship in Europe. His measured comment on the limitations of translating terms specific to the West African context such as musical instruments is framed by an appeal to a particular aesthetic ("le surréel") and the designation of his intended readership. Despite Senghor's rejection of "exotisme pour midinettes", what Mudimbe describes as "the freedom of thinking of [oneself] as the starting point of an absolute discourse" (1988: 200) remained mediated, in practice, by the structures and institutions of the metropolitan literary field.⁸⁴

Anthologies: Topologies of a *grandeur française*

Blaise Cendrars' *Anthologie nègre* was published in 1921, the same year as René Maran received the Prix Goncourt for *Batouala*. Cendrars' collection of translations of over eight hundred African contes and legends was sourced from existing anthologies by explorers and missionaries. He notes in his brief preface:

Le présent volume est un ouvrage de compilation. C'est pourquoi je me suis fait un devoir d'indiquer exactement dans la BIBLIOGRAPHIE la date et le lieu de publication des ouvrages compulsés. J'ai reproduit ces contes tels que les missionnaires et les explorateurs nous les ont rapportés en Europe et tels qu'ils les ont publiés. Ce ne sont pas toujours les versions les plus originales, ni les traductions les plus fidèles. Il est bien à regretter que l'exactitude littéraire ne soit pas le seul souci légitime de ces voyageurs lointains. En effet, l'étude des langues

⁸⁴ The recent Le Seuil edition of Senghor's *Oeuvre poétique* removes this gendered reference from the appendix: "mon intention n'est pas de faire de l'exotisme pour l'exotisme" (Senghor, Léopold Sédar, 1990: 435). The link between the exotic, middle-brow fiction and gender will be further explored in Chapter Five.

et de la littérature des races primitives est une des connaissances les plus indispensables à l'histoire de l'esprit humain. (Cendrars, 1921: 8)

The project is described in the scientific terms of an ethnographic mission dependent on the samples collected by missionaries and explorers. The contes have been brought together and classified in order to contribute to a universalised “histoire de l'esprit humain”. Cendrars' collection has been republished seven times by seven different publishers, in 1922, 1927, 1947, 1972, 1979, 2002, and 2005, and remains a significant point of reference due to its influence on the “primitivist” movement of the 1920s, despite what Edwards describes as its role in silencing “black modern expressive culture” (2003: 72). The publication of the 1947 revised edition by Corrêa coincided with a number of other post-war anthologies: *Latitudes françaises: Poètes d'expression française 1900 – 45* (Damas, Le Seuil, 1947); *Les plus beaux écrits de l'Union française et du Maghreb* (Senghor et al., La Colombe, 1947); *Poèmes nègres sur des airs africains* (Damas, Guy Lévis Mano, 1948) ; *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache* (Senghor, PUF, 1948). Anthologies had been significant sites of black diasporic and transatlantic contact since the 1920s, in particular the following the influence of Alain Locke's *The New Negro* (1925) and Nancy Cunard's *Negro: an anthology* (1934). Though, as Anthony Mangeon suggests, Senghor appears to echo Locke's distinction between African folklore and the work of the “New Negro” in his *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*, this pattern of influence genealogy also expressed a form of *décalage* (Edwards, 2003: 13-15). Anthologies perform a similar endeavour to manifestos in that they establish a body of work based on shared criteria, be it an ideological conviction, a common aesthetic or language, or a unifying geographical or temporal location. Emmanuel Fraisse describes this as a constant tension between the function of preservation and that of showing a new literary formation or grouping (Fraisse, 1997: 8).

Revisiting the post-war anthologies of Damas and Senghor through the prism of their publishing context locates these texts in a heterogeneous network of actors (individuals, groups and institutions). The binaries of racial or colonial discursive paradigms that dominate postcolonial criticism of these anthologies and of Sartre's renowned preface to Senghor's collection in particular, can be resituated in the context of production and reception. This in turn constructs a more complex location for sub-Saharan Africa within literature of the *Union française*. As anthologists, Damas and Senghor sought, in different ways, to present literary traditions and writers that could be identified as French, non-metropolitan, and to some extent, colonial. Their choices were made in relation to the gradual response of metropolitan publishers to post-war political reconfigurations of the Empire. The differential long-term reception of these texts can be understood partly as a result of this early positioning and the anthologies' divergent presentation of alterity, not least in their contrasting forms of patronage, their implicit and explicit commentary on language, and the paratextual selection and presentation of their contents.

I will now consider Damas' work in this period in relation to the positions of his publishers at Le Seuil, but also at Fasquelle and Guy Lévis Mano, in the literary field. This contextualisation will suggest reasons for the limited recognition of his anthologies, in contrast to both Cendrars' and Senghor's anthologies. Furthermore, I will demonstrate the interpretive and epistemological implications of a focus on strategies of literary production in this ambivalent period of national reconstruction in France. Such an approach points to spaces that were more productive and potentially convivial than discursive expression of colonial power hierarchies might suggest.

Damas at Éditions Fasquelle: in pursuit of l'Union française

Born in Guyane in 1912, Léon Gontran Damas was educated in Cayenne, then at the Lycée Schoelcher in Martinique, where he first met fellow student Aimé Césaire. He moved to France in 1927 to study first Law, then languages and anthropology at the Institut de l'Ethnologie. His contributions to *Légitime Défense* and collaboration with Senghor and Césaire on *L'Étudiant Noir* preceded his first volume of poetry, *Pigments* (1937). This was followed by an ethnographic essay: *Retour de Guyane* (1938), based on a research trip financed by the Musée de l'Homme.⁸⁵ Damas was elected to the Assemblée Nationale from 1948 to 1951, having served in the French army briefly during the war and worked as a journalist. During the war he continued to expand his literary network in France and dedicated himself to encouraging young writers from France's overseas territories. Birago Diop describes the process of communicating his manuscripts to Damas in this period:

Damas prend le manuscrit, comme il avait pris celui de mes poèmes LEURRES ET LUEURS, dans son pigeonier de l'Hôtel Victoria où, entre deux démêlés avec la Gestapo, les Waffen SS ou la Milice, il triait et assemblait les éléments de son 'PANORAMA DES POETES D'EXPRESSION FRANCAISE.' (Diop, 1978: 223)

This reminder of the conditions of editing and circulating physical manuscripts evokes the measure of good fortune that also determined the first publication of texts during the occupation.

⁸⁵ Damas' letter to Jose Corti reprinted in the most recent edition of *Retour de Guyane* details his efforts to publicise the book, first published *à compte d'auteur*, to ensure its distribution to Guyane, Martinique and Guadeloupe. He also criticises the main book distribution service, Messageries Hachette: "vous voyez que personnellement j'entends faire l'impossible pour la diffusion d'un ouvrage qui doit être et sera vendu et lu. Parce que 'Retour' ne mérite nullement un de ces enterrements de première classe comme savent en préparer les MESSAGERIES" (Damas, Léon-Gontran, 2003: 19).

Damas' promotion of "outre-mer" literature was enabled by his role as editor for the "Écrits français d'outre-mer" collection at Éditions Fasquelle. This small collection contained nine books between 1946 and 1950, including Birago Diop's *Les Contes d'Amadou Koumba* and Raphaël Tardon's *Bleu des îles*. A large, established publisher founded in 1896 by Eugène Fasquelle, Éditions Fasquelle had been home to the celebrated "Bibliothèque Charpentier" since the end of the previous century. Its authors included Alfred Jarry, Marcel Pagnol, and Valéry Larbaud. The opportunity Charles Fasquelle (son of Eugène) provided for Damas to publish authors of his own choice formed an exception in the publisher's catalogue, though not in terms of the personal interests of its director. In 1953, Charles Fasquelle would cede his role to his son in order to pursue his interest in film-making in sub-Saharan Africa (Olivier, 1999).⁸⁶ In 1948, Jean Caillens published two articles in *Présence Africaine* entitled "Culture et civilisation noire à travers l'édition française". In one, he interviewed Charles Fasquelle, recently returned from a trip to I'A.E.F.:

Depuis le livre déjà ancien de Paul Adam jusqu'à cette vivante collection des Ecrits d'outre-mer, Monsieur Fasquelle mérite le même hommage. L'Éditeur de Lola et de Vallès courant les grands fauves de la forêt équatoriale, y chasse activement le manuscrit. Butin littéraire assez faible, avoue-t-il à son retour. Au moins garde-t-il le mérite et l'avantage de ce contact direct avec l'espoir de renouvellement dont nous attendons avec impatience les résultats. (Caillens, 1948a: 709)

The tone of this incongruous description of the publisher-explorer likens a relationship between publisher and manuscript to that of a colonial game-hunter and his exotic trophy.⁸⁷ There is no mention in the article of Damas's role in editing the collection. The

⁸⁶ He subsequently produced several short documentaries in central Africa.

⁸⁷ Young publisher Pierre Seghers visited Birago Diop at Bobo Dioulasso in Haute Côte d'Ivoire in 1946. His trip – which also took in Gabon – is recounted in Colette Seghers' homage to her husband: "Seghers sait que pour donner aux mots une énergie nouvelle, singulière (qu'il s'agisse de ceux des autres ou des siens) il faut aller voir les hommes de près, admettre ce qu'ils sont, être curieux de l'individu" (Seghers, Colette, 2006: 81). Pierre Seghers' reported aspiration reconfirms the shifting epistemology of this period: "Parler en

collection of small-format paperbacks included titles by authors from Guyane, Martinique, Indochina, Senegal, Cambodia, India, and Madagascar. Most titles were fiction and *contes*, and the collection also included a history of French India.⁸⁸ The lack of geographical specificity in a collection that is really only united by its writers' use of the French language is characteristic of the notion of a Union française sustained by writers and publishers in this period. The movement towards national literatures (including Pan-African and Black nationalisms) would build momentum from the mid-1950s onwards.

The prefaces of Damas' collection provide particularly interesting early examples of how these diverse texts were packaged for a metropolitan readership. Richard Watts locates a generalised paradigmatic shift away from the consecrating role of metropolitan prefaces to "francophone" writing in the late 1950s. Léopold Senghor's many allographic prefaces in this period at times repeated the colonial rhetoric of literary patronage in the "uncomfortable middle-ground between the colonial and the postcolonial" (Watts: 77). According to Gérard Genette, the authorial preface "a pour fonction cardinale d'*assurer au texte une bonne lecture*". He expands this statement to the author's double need to: "être lu et [...] être bien lu" (1987: 183), which in turn accounts for the preface's position before the main text, despite the reader's ability (or indeed tendency) to skip prefatory

Afrique n'est pas parler à l'Afrique. Il faudra, se dit-il, rassembler les éléments d'une anthologie de la poésie africaine d'abord" (75). This desire to speak to, rather than only *in*, Africa contrasts with the reality of his reception: "A Port-Gentil, au Gabon, le commissaire de police vient accueillir le voyageur. Mi-goguenard, mi-furieux: 'Je ne sais pas qui vous envoie, mais il ne faut pas connaître cet endroit pour oser venir parler de la poésie!'" (76). Seghers subsequently published several African writers across different collections, including five books by Bernard Binlin Dadié, and three by Keïta Fodeba. He was a close acquaintance of Langston Hughes, who co-edited a later anthology: *Trésor africain et malgache* (Seghers, 1962) with Christiane Reygnault.

⁸⁸ Titles in the collection: René Jadfard, *Nuits de Cachiri, récit guyanais* (1946) ; Pham Van Ky, *L'Homme de nulle part, légendes* (1946) ; Raphaël Tardon, *Bleu des îles. Récits martiniquais* (1946) ; Makhali-Phâl, *Le Festin des vautours* (1946) ; Birago Diop, *Les Contes d'Amadou-Koumba* (1947) ; Gilbert de Chambertrand, *Titine Grosbonda* (1947); Danika Boyer, *Joël, roman* (1949); Baghio'o, Jean-Louis, *Issandre le mulâtre* (1949) ; Dr Samboo Gopaljee, *Les Comptoirs français dans l'Inde nouvelle: de la Compagnie des Indes à nos jours* (1950).

material. Birago Diop's preface to *Les Contes d'Amadou Koumba* which would subsequently become a long-term best-seller at Présence Africaine, sets out the way in which these stories were collected and how he hopes they will be read:

J'ai voulu, tisserand malhabile, avec une navette hésitante, confectionner quelques bandes pour coudre un pagne sur lequel, grand-mère, si elle revenait, aurait retrouvé le coton qu'elle fila la première; et où Amadou Koumba reconnaîtra, beaucoup moins vifs sans doute, les coloris des belles étoffes qu'il tissa pour moi naguère (1947: viii)

Diop sets out an individualised, modest account of himself as *passeur* for stories that he has heard in their West African setting. Acknowledging potential infelicities in his act of recreation, there is a clear shift here from the ethnographic tone of Cendrars' anthology, republished the same year.

The *contes* of Cambodian writer, Makhali-Phâl are also prefaced by the author:

Ce nouveau livre plaira-t-il à mon double public [10] – au public de l'Europe, au public de l'Asie? Je prie mes lecteurs européens de ne pas s'effrayer de l'étrangeté parfois sanglante de mes contes – et mes lecteurs orientaux de ne pas s'étonner si je n'ai 'adapté' dans mon livre aucune légende de l'Extrême Orient, car c'est justement, je le répète, de cet esprit d'imitation dont se meurt aujourd'hui l'Asie. A elle de créer de nouveaux symboles si elle veut ressusciter. (Makhali-Phâl, 1946: 9-10)

Makhali-Phâl's paratextual appeal to a dual readership can be contrasted with Birago Diop's highly personal account of these "mêmes histoires qui bercèrent mon enfance" (vii). Phâl's awareness of readership in Europe and in Asia is evidence of her confidence as a published author, and her ambition here to write her own stories, rather than present (or recreate) existing legends: "en réaction contre cette négation du génie de l'Asie [...] j'ai tenu à forger mes propres mythes" (8). Of her four other published texts, one had

represented the “roman français” at the Concours International du Roman in 1939, while another, *Narayana* (1942, Albin Michel), had been lauded by the Académie Française in 1944.⁸⁹ The scarcely tangible association between Phâl and Diop’s literary aims, through their inclusion in Damas’ collection, anticipates both the hoped-for transcolonial contacts, and the challenge of building lasting literary solidarities on the shifting political foundations of the Union française.

Damas at Le Seuil: “Une question de latitudes, de climat et d’affinités naturelles, pour ne pas dire raciales” (Damas, 1947: 8)

Damas’s anthology, *Poètes d’expression française 1900-45* (Le Seuil, 1947) covers an earlier period and a different geography to Senghor’s *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache* (PUF, 1948). The volume is divided into six sections by geographical zone, and includes two African writers (Senghor and Birago Diop), seventeen Antillean writers, three writers from Guyane, five from Indochina, two from Madagascar and six from Réunion. Its periodisation is mapped onto metropolitan literary movements in the allographic blurb: “Jamais, enfin, un tel panorama n’a été dressé qui, du mouvement Parnassien vieillissant, aboutit au surréalisme d’Etienne Léro et d’Aimé Césaire, en passant par Makhali-Phâl, L.S. Senghor et Pham Van Ky” (Front flap). Within these literary co-ordinates the anthology is presented as testimony to the transformative, expressive potential of the French language as “le plus précieux témoignage que [ces écrivains] puissent rendre à la culture française” (Inside flap). The result is framed in terms of Republican values: its writers “nous deviennent tout à la fois, égaux et fraternels” (Front flap), despite Damas’ more ambivalent political position expressed in his preface.

⁸⁹ See: <<http://makhali-phal.org/makhali-phal-research-network/>> [accessed 5 July 2012].

The anthology appeared in Le Seuil's "Pierres Vives" collection, its cover bordered by an epigraph from Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*: "Je ne bastis que pierres vives ce sont hommes". Created in October 1945, the collection demarcated the selections of Paul Flamand, director of Le Seuil, from those of Emmanuel Mounier, patron of Le Seuil and editor of *Esprit*. "Pierres Vives" was a prestigious collection for Le Seuil at the moment of its return to activity after the war. It ran to ten titles in its first year, a significant proportion of the total of ninety titles published that year. It would include Senghor's *Chants d'ombre* (1945) and *Hosties noires* (1948), as well as Maurice Nadeau's *Histoire du surréalisme* (1944) and Barthes' *Degré zéro de la littérature* (1953), forming "un lieu d'expérimentation où le Seuil rend visibles ses ambitions et son ouverture intellectuelle, au-delà de la ligne strictement catholique des origines" (Serry: 32).

The front flap of *Poètes d'expression française 1900-45* notes that two further volumes are planned in a *Latitudes Françaises* mini-series: "Romanciers et conteurs d'expression française" and "Essayistes d'expression française". Neither of these titles ever appeared and it is evident from the Le Seuil archives that the first volume of poetry was substantially delayed before being published, due to material obstacles and to equivocation over the book's content. In October 1945, Flamand wrote to Damas:

S'il y avait un moment favorable pour faire paraître votre anthologie d'essais coloniaux, c'était bien celui que nous vivons actuellement. De toutes façons on aurait pu publier l'anthologie poétique – ou du moins vous auriez pu m'envoyer un mot pour me tenir au courant de vos intentions. (Flamand, 1945)

While Damas was caught up in the post-war political turmoil and his decision to enter a political career, this letter reveals Flamand's desire to publish in the "moment favorable"

at the threshold of the Fourth Republic's engagement with its re-named Union française. His use of the descriptor "coloniaux", despite the new political formation, suggests that retrospective critical distancing between "colonisers" and "colonised" masks more fluid relationships in the literary field.

According to Richard Watts, the "gap between the discourse of the Union française and the realities of colonial life forms the thematic center of many of the paratexts of the postwar years" (75). While this disjuncture does not appear in the printed paratext of Damas' work, research in his publishers' archives draws out underlying tensions in the volume's hidden paratext. Archived correspondance gives some insight into the decision-making behind this anthologisation. For example, Paul Flamand encouraged Damas to include writers from North Africa:

Je me permets d'insister sur l'intérêt qu'il y aurait à ce que les écrivains de l'Afrique du Nord aient une place important dans cet ouvrage [...] Il y a un déséquilibre qui nuit grandement à la portée d'une œuvre qui n'a jamais été tentée et qui est, je crois, appelée à avoir un grand retentissement.

Ne serait-il vraiment pas possible d'aller si brièvement que ce soit vous documenter sur place et particulièrement en Algérie où se trouve l'annexe de la Bibliothèque Nationale avec Dépôt Légal? (Flamand, 1945)

Damas did not follow Flamand's advice. Together with Haitian writers, North Africa remains conspicuously absent from the anthology. Haitian writers would be included in Senghor's best-known anthology in 1948, prefaced by Jean-Paul Sartre. Senghor here defined a pan-African solidarity based on shared racial identity, rather than the common political situation of colonised populations in the Union française. Damas' anthology did not have its expected "grand retentissement" and was not reprinted. Sales peaked following its first publication in 1948 (642 copies) and again in the years following

decolonisation (259 copies in 1962). Though altogether 2869 copies were sold between 1948 and 1965, in 1949 Flamand wrote to Damas: “Voici le relevé de la vente de votre livre. Il n’est point aussi satisfaisant que je l’espérais. Escomptons un surcroît d’intérêt pour les problèmes que vous avez soulevés afin que cette édition connaisse tout le succès voulu” (Flamand, 1949a). The discrepancies in the anticipated level of recognition between the planned publication, its material realisation, and its reception can in part be attributed to the uneven and transitional nature of the national imaginary to which the volume might appeal.

The perceived need for a volume encompassing North Africa would be addressed by *Les plus beaux écrits de l’Union française et du Maghreb* (La Colombe, 1947), edited by Senghor, Mohammed el Kholti, Pierre Do Dinh, A. Rakoto Ratsimamanga and E. Ralajmihitra. This anthology brought together sections on Madagascan, North African, and sub-Saharan African literature edited by writers from each region. Its organisation into the regions of the new Union sought to present “a global view of the literary production of the colonies” (Watts, 2005: 79) by presenting a broad historical range of writing and extended introductions to each section. Watts highlights the “translational adaptation” performed by Senghor’s preface to the section on black Africa in the volume. His essay moves between ethnographic explication and literary commentary for an implied metropolitan readership, in turn “foreclosing [the] multiple cultural sources of the texts he is presenting” (Watts, 2005: 82). Senghor’s focus on the original purity of the poems in the “Afrique noire” section of the book “flattens the cultural and aesthetic specificity” of writers in order to create a new category in what Watts reads as an echo of colonial autographic preface writing:

The very hypertextuality to which colonized authors were subjected by metropolitan and colonial publishers and which the *Présence Africaine* project sought to escape is partially repeated by Senghor's prefaces. (85)

Watts' astute reworking of Genette's typology of paratext takes into account the inconsistent visibility of paratext. Covers and book spines are unavoidable, prefaces and introductions can be skipped and avant-propos barely glanced at, owing precisely to their paratextual status as secondary to the main text of the book. In his review of Damas' anthology in *Présence Africaine*, Caillens notes : "C'est un inventaire de textes, accompagné de notes biographiques ou analytiques, le tout parfaitement objectif en apparence (pour ceux qui négligent les préfaces et les introductions)" (Caillens, 1948b: 856). Damas' presentation of a literary Union française reveals its contingencies upon closer analysis of the preface (presented below) in the light of a fuller investigation of the publishing context at Le Seuil.

Founded in 1935 by Henri Sjöberg, in its early years Le Seuil produced titles for a mainly Catholic readership and for the scouting movement. According to Hervé Serry, the moral direction of Le Seuil's work in this period laid the foundations for the post-war positions of its editors and the development of its catalogue.⁹⁰ After a hiatus during the Occupation Le Seuil became active again in 1945 under the leadership of Jean Bardet and Paul Flamand. It was based at 27 rue Jacob in the 6th arrondissement: the central district for Parisian publishers. Le Seuil developed a reputation for commitment to the intellectual output of its authors, rather than commercial success. It cultivated an "image éthique" through its catalogue and manner of working, in contrast to the prestige and heredity-

⁹⁰ "L'engagement catholique des premiers pas est progressivement reconverti dans une posture éthique qui conduit Le Seuil à être un acteur, par ses publications notamment, de la reconstruction de la 'Nouvelle Allemagne' et de l'Europe ou de la décolonisation" (Serry, Herve, 2005: 81).

based hierarchy of Gallimard or Fasquelle, the popular appeal of Julliard or Robert Laffont, or the avant-gardism of Minuit or Seghers.⁹¹ *Présence Africaine* was published by Le Seuil between 1947 and 1949, when the journal's committee, led by Alioune Diop, founded its own publishing house. This neglected fact reinforces the significance of the relationship between the two organisations in the immediate post-war period, despite differences in their position and level of recognition in the field. Le Seuil's reputation as "le plus jeune des grands" (22) during the post-war period, was sustained by a staff that included Jean Cayrol, Luc Estang, Jean-Marie Domenach, Francis Jeanson, François Régis Bastide, Monique Nathan, Emmanuel Roblès, Michel Chodkiewicz and Chris Marker.

According to Serry:

Aux origines du Seuil, la nécessité de se forger une identité passe par un recrutement d'éditeurs issus de milieux sociaux et politiques divers. Les valeurs spiritualistes de l'amitié et de la fraternité sous-tendent cette cohabitation "fraternelle" comparable à une communauté; au détriment, parfois, de la clarté de la politique éditoriale de la maison. (2005: 85)

The community described here at Le Seuil depends on the diversity of its editors' *habitus*, together with a shared set of ethical values.

Though not part of the avant-garde led by Resistance publishers Vercors or Pierre Seghers, Le Seuil steadily accumulated symbolic capital. It attracted a new generation of young authors due to its association with a more secular, and neutral, form of humanism (Simonin, 1998: 55). Its editors were broadly sympathetic to the anti-colonial cause, but did not hold a single political stance on issues related to France's colonies.⁹² They

⁹¹ This expressed disregard for financial concerns characterises what Serry terms, after Bourdieu, "la volonté de valoriser le caractère désintéressé de leur investissement intellectuel" (82).

⁹² The "Méditerranée" collection was the most significant specialised outlet for North African writing at Le Seuil (though it also included Senghor's *Hosties noires*). Paul Flamand's interest in the region is apparent in

published across the debate in this period, refusing to shore up any fixed ideological position. This can be seen in the composition of their catalogue, which included Octave Mannoni's *Psychologie de la colonisation* (1950) and Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), despite divergences in these publications' discourses on racial psychology. Their rejection of literary manuscripts by Birago Diop, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Paul N'Gida and Malick Fall, which were subsequently published elsewhere, will be further explored in Chapter Four.

To analyse such decisions, it is necessary to understand more clearly the trajectories of individual literary producers.⁹³ Paul Flamand was the central figure in promoting African writing at Le Seuil, largely due to his association with Senghor, who was part of Flamand's small group of close friends. Senghor's poem "Éloge pour Jean-Marie" is a eulogy for Flamand's son, who died in Senegal in 1960, and their correspondence in Le Seuil's archive at IMEC reveals that they saw each other often whenever Senghor was in Paris throughout the period 1945 – 70. Born in 1909 in Aigre, Charente, into a provincial family of jewellers, Flamand did not follow the conventional educational trajectory of Parisian intellectuals. He became a "lettré-autodidacte" following a severe bout of tuberculosis as a child and spent an extended period in recuperative isolation, during which time his literary and spiritual development was guided by abbé Jean Plaquevent (an

a letter to the collection director, Emmanuel Roblès: "j'aimerais parler avec vous de ce qui pourrait être fait pour détecter et drainer les jeunes écrivains d'Afrique du Nord" (Serry: 44). Roblès introduced the series' humanist project in Le Seuil's news bulletin: "L'ambition de la collection *Méditerranée* est précisément de grouper des œuvres qui montrent, dans la diversité des décors espagnols, italiens, grecs ou nord-africains, la permanence d'une communauté humaine où l'on partage les mêmes misères les mêmes inquiétudes et les mêmes espoirs" (Roblès, Emmanuel, 1953: 1). The central role of Edmond Charlot as publisher in Alger and in Paris, and as mentor to Roblès, could usefully be explored further in this context. Charlot created his own collection, "*Méditerranéennes*" in 1936.

⁹³ Hervé Serry argues for the need to construct a sociology of editors as well as writers, in order to reflect on the relationship between the individual editor's habitus, the position of a publishing house, and structural transformations in the field.

early collaborator at Le Seuil). When he decided to commit himself fully to a career at Le Seuil, Flamand received no financial assistance from his family, a fact which distinguished him from other small literary publishers, such as Jérôme Lindon at Éditions de Minuit.⁹⁴ As a relative newcomer to the Parisian literary scene, Flamand's position in the field was different to that of more established editors, or to those who had inherited their symbolic and/or financial capital.

Flamand also maintained a close relationship with Emmanuel Mounier, editor of *Esprit*, whose offices were above Le Seuil at their premises in 27 rue Jacob. Mounier's moral philosophy of personalism informed Le Seuil's open and accommodating ethos. Flamand aligned himself with Mounier's personalism and maintained his Catholic faith, while his sympathetic, but moderate, views on France's overseas territories echoed those of Senghor. Mounier's *L'Eveil de l'Afrique noire* (1948) recounts the two months he spent visiting French West Africa with his host Alioune Diop, and is a fascinating example of editorial "littérature de témoignage". The postface to this book, "Lettre à un ami africain", was published in the first issue of *Présence Africaine*, despite A. Diop's disappointment at its paternalistic tone.⁹⁵ There is a telling contrast between Mounier's claims for ethnographic authority and the evidence his book provides of a gradual shift in the field of literary production towards an interest beyond the objectification that characterises earlier ethnographic writing. Flamand and Senghor meanwhile shared a moderate perspective on Franco-African "métissage" and neither advocated political or cultural independence in the post-war period. While both were committed to promoting literature on issues surrounding France's overseas territories, their criteria for publishing remained tied to certain ideas of the "literary" and the inherent value of the French language, partly

⁹⁴ Le Seuil was known for "son rapport ascétique à l'argent" (Serry: 81).

⁹⁵ Verdin suggests that relations between *Esprit* and *Présence Africaine* remained frosty until Jean-Marie Domenach's arrival as editor of *Esprit* in 1957 (Verdin, Philippe, 2010: 157). On Mounier's relationship with Alioune Diop, see also: Kelly, Michael, 2006.

determined by the demands of a metropolitan readership, as will be discussed in Chapter Four.

For Damas' anthology, as for Senghor's *Hosties noires*, Flamand again wrote to the Ministère des Colonies requesting the necessary two tonnes of paper. In this letter he insists on the importance of the manuscript: "un tel effort n'a jamais encore été tenté dans son ensemble et sans doute n'est-il pas nécessaire que j'insiste sur l'intérêt de cette occasion offerte à tant de jeunes écrivains ou intellectuels de l'Empire d'être publiés" (Flamand, 1946c). He also attached an anonymous reader's report to the letter that noted, "Cet ouvrage présenté dans la collection 'Pierres Vives' donne à de jeunes poètes de l'Empire – pour l'immense majorité inédits – l'occasion de s'exprimer dans une collection littéraire qui jouit d'une presse indiscutable en France" (Ibid). The growing symbolic capital of the collection and its encouragement of new writers were confronted by the basic lack of raw materials, as negotiated by the French colonial ministry's paper supplies. It was Senghor, now in the Assemblée Générale, who managed to obtain the required paper, following a negative response from the colonial ministry (Anon, 1946; Flamand, 1946b). Le Seuil was not yet an established publisher and Damas' book depended on Senghor's intervention at this pre-publication stage. The institutional conditions constituted by these informal relationships in response to State restrictions here do not correspond to a notion of the literary field based on competition and hierarchy between individual writers. The relationship between Flamand and Senghor, to be developed below, provides important clues to the positioning of the Union française in the catalogue of Le Seuil. We can now turn to Senghor's 1948 anthology, published in the "Colonies et

Empires” collection at Presses Universitaires de France (PUF) and prefaced by Jean-Paul Sartre, before developing the discussion of Damas’ preface to his anthology.

Senghor and Sartre at Presses Universitaires de France

Senghor’s selection and presentation of poets in his anthology, in particular his inclusion of four Haitian poets, show his will to awaken cultural solidarity based on racial unity, rather than the political boundaries of the Union française. Yet Senghor’s presentation of this unity was much more oblique than Sartre’s categorical prefatory statements (Vaillant, 1990: 248). In his own preface, which details the significance of the 1948 centenary of the Second Republic, Senghor explains his selection of poems and the role played by his editor at the Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), Charles-André Julien:

Je ne me défends pas d’avoir été partial. Mon excuse est que j’ai suivi les conseils du directeur de cette collection, qui voulait que je ne retinsse que les noms de quelques-uns parmi ceux qui affirmaient, avec leur talent, leur *négritude*. C’est lui également qui a voulu que des poèmes de l’auteur figurassent dans cette anthologie. (2).

The apologetic tone here and acknowledgement of the collection director’s role imply both a conventionally polite modesty and a distancing effect. Charles-André Julien (1891 – 1991) was a historian and editor of the *Revue historique*, who personified the new direction of the PUF catalogue in the 1940s (Tesnière, 2001). The collection “Colonies et Empires” became its second “collection phare”, after “Que sais-je?” (to which Julien contributed the fourth title). The success of the first two series meant the collection extended to a further two series, with its name changing in 1950 to the more politically correct, “Pays d’outre-mer”. The collection sought to redress a perceived historiographical gap, as explained in PUF’s newssheet:

Presque tous les ouvrages français étaient diminués par une tendance au panégyrique, à l'hagiographie et par des penchants "impérialistes" qui se concilient mal avec le respect des données de fait. Anglais, Américains, Australiens, au contraire, respectent davantage l'objectivité historique et, d'autre part, publient un nombre si considérable d'ouvrages qu'il est indispensable de connaître l'anglais pour se documenter sur la colonisation française. (Quoted in: Tesnière, 2001: 385)

The collection aspired to present a less biased view of colonial history in what was seen as the uneven, anglocentric historiography of Empire.⁹⁶ Among its monographs on leading French colonial figures, Dupleix, Faïdherbe and Gallieni, Senghor's anthology was something of an anomalous "témoignage" of "objective" historical value (Julien, 1948: viii). It stood out as a carefully mediated presentation of literary voices from sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar in a collection dedicated to the rigorously scientific reappraisal of French colonisation. Beyond the illustrious name of its *préfacier*, the book's publishing context bestowed further symbolic capital. Sartre's preface and PUF's promotion of the anthology in what was principally a non-literary collection also meant that the book reached a wider readership than that of Damas.

The critical weight given to Sartre's essay, "Orphée noir" and to his patronage of *Présence Africaine* may distort the marginal presence of sub-Saharan Africa in most intellectual debate on France's overseas territories in the post-war years.⁹⁷ In his speech on the responsibility of the writer at the opening of UNESCO in 1946, Sartre stated: "Opprimer les Nègres, ça n'est rien tant que quelqu'un n'a pas dit: les Nègres sont opprimés. Jusque-là, personne ne s'en aperçoit; peut-être même pas les Nègres eux-mêmes" (1998: 18). This assertion, rooted in Sartre's phenomenological philosophy, precedes his expanded analysis

⁹⁶ A related collection was launched in 1948, partly funded by the French State: "Collection du centenaire de la Révolution de 1848". This collection of twenty titles included the text of the ceremony commemorating the abolition of slavery and Gaston Martin's historical account of abolition.

⁹⁷ As Anna Boschetti has shown in her reconstruction of the field of journals in this period, North Africa dominated published intellectual discussion (Boschetti, Anna, 1985: 198).

of literary commitment in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* and resounding description of the reversal of the European gaze via the poetic “révolution” (Sartre, 1948: xii) of *négritude* in “Orphée Noir”. The broad sweep of Sartre’s argument centres on ideas of voice and visibility, of which literary production forms just one element. In the latter essay, Sartre argues that “C’est aux noirs que ces noirs [the poets of Senghor’s anthology] s’adressent et c’est pour leur parler des noirs” (Sartre, 1948: xi). For Sartre, Senghor’s volume marks the emergence, as a published presence, of black subjects as both writers and readers. The black “prise de conscience” which Sartre projects in his universalist model is manifested through the “géographie mystique” (xvi) of a “grande poésie collective” (xvii). As in his 1946 speech, Sartre does not detail the social position of the black subject/object beyond contexts that are wholly defined by race. Neither does he allude to historical precedents of literary movements in the 1920s and 30s nor to the immediate colonial context of the Union française, opting instead to remain at the level of abstraction. The discussion of class, for example, acts as a foil to that of race: “la notion de race ne se recoupe pas avec celle de classe: celle-là est concrète et particulière, celle-ci universelle et abstraite” (xli). The act of speaking out is valorised and balanced with the need to listen to protesting voices in a powerful theoretical model of dialectical progression that is not geographically bound. Indeed, Sartre’s preface plays principally a mediating role for the European reader to whom it is addressed.

Sartre’s abstract statements on race and *négritude* in this period were shaped by his interest in North American race relations. The content of *Les Temps modernes* and French writers’ enthusiasm for Richard Wright’s early novels suggest that in the immediate post-war period, metropolitan intellectuals were more readily concerned with questions of

racial oppression across the Atlantic than those of colonial domination at home (Städtler, 2002: 95).⁹⁸ This structural bias was symptomatic of a wider vogue for American culture. Boris Vian's bestseller *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes* (1946), for example, was packaged as a translation of an fictional African-American author, Vernon Sullivan (Vian, 1946). The novel tells the anguished story of a black man with white skin seeking futile revenge for his brother's lynching through voracious sexual conquest and murder in the small town of Buckston. Vian emulates the themes and psychological style of Wright's bestselling *Native Son* (1940; trad. Marcel Duhamel, *Un enfant du pays*, 1947) and Chester Himes' *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945; trad. Renée Vavasseur and Marcel Duhamel, *S'il braille, lâche-le*, 1948). As Tyler Stovall notes, after the war, "the Parisian Left now regarded black Americans as a symbol of ideological consciousness, not good times" (1996: 135). The black diasporic community in metropolitan France was a vital crucible for discussion, although the contact between transatlantic race debates and French-African anti-colonialism remained marked by the discrepancy between a reified pan-African identity and lived social realities and divisions. Sartre's statements show a limited engagement with specific issues in sub-Saharan Africa, and with those faced by the French-speaking Africans in France.⁹⁹

"Orphée Noir" was also published in abbreviated form in *Présence Africaine* and in *Les Temps modernes* and remains a canonical philosophical statement of *négritude*, often studied in isolation from Senghor's anthology. Mudimbe suggests, provocatively, that

⁹⁸ Michel Fabre and Tyler Stovall have explored the ways in which African Americans living in Paris sought to balance their "release from racism" (Stovall, Tyler, 1996: xv) in France with the increasing visibility of colonial violence in the metropole (Fabre, Michel, 1999).

⁹⁹ Sartre and Beauvoir first visited West Africa in 1950 (Beauvoir, Simone de, 1972: 283-308). Their hopes of meeting leaders of the newly formed Rassemblement Démocratique Africain met with disappointment (Städtler, Katharina, 1994). See also: Städtler, Katharina, 2002.

while Senghor “asked Sartre for a cloak to celebrate *négritude*; he was given a shroud” (Mudimbé, 1988: 85). He warns of the risks of seeing Sartre as the philosopher of *négritude*, recalling Fanon’s well-known critique of his instrumental articulation of blackness as the negative term in a Hegelian dialectic. Sartre promoted the unity of the poets in Senghor’s collection in politically charged terms: “De Haiti à Cayenne, une seule idée: *manifester l’âme noire*” (xv). His desire to make apparent the distinct position and motivation of an essentialised “black” poetry as part of a dialectical movement towards the universal is at odds with the goal of historical reassessment in the “Colonies et Empires” collection at PUF. This collection sought to revisit French colonisation from contemporary post-war perspectives, but largely without deeper reflection on the epistemological position of African subjects in that historiography. The prominent position of Senghor’s anthology in the literary field can be attributed in part to its location in relation to colonial historiography.

Damas’ (post)colonial imaginary

Damas’ preface to his anthology at Le Seuil contrasts with Sartre’s “Orphée Noir” and with Senghor’s prefaces to each of his anthologies. Damas’ preface also contradicts the editorial paratext of the book itself which presents the writers as performative evidence of the achievements of the French *mission civilisatrice*. Instead, Damas’ text sets out the mutually enriching aspects of the anthology and his belief in the potential importance of transcolonial exchange for writers themselves:

Le système colonial n’a pas encore permis des rapports normaux, non seulement de Métropole à Colonies, mais encore de Colonie à Colonie... Cela explique que la littérature européenne d’expression française soit plus répandue en France et aux colonies même que celle qui a pour auteurs des originaires d’Afrique blanche ou

noire, des Antilles, de Guyane, d'Indochine, de Madagascar ou de la Réunion. [...] Cela explique qu'aucune grande revue littéraire paraissant à Paris ne se soit jamais proposée de servir de lien entre les provinces françaises et les territoires d'outre-mer, et qu'il n'existe, par ailleurs, aucun échange valable d'un territoire à l'autre [...] Pour toutes ces raisons et pour d'autres encore, il n'est rien d'étonnant que la plupart des poètes groupés ici soient inconnus et s'ignorent. (Damas, 1947: 7)

He seeks to understand why no French journal has sought to build links between French territories, for reasons that are: “Une question de latitudes, de climat et d'affinités naturelles, pour ne pas dire raciales.” Damas proposes a prescient project which is not racially delimited, but integrated carefully into a humanistic project of minor transnational contact between individuals who have shared experience of cultural alienation.¹⁰⁰ He writes:

Les voilà donc réunis comme à un rendez-vous idéal et fraternel. Ils y viennent chacun avec leurs visions hallucinantes, leur fantaisie, leur amertume, leur note de simple et profonde émotion [9] humaine. Ce ne sont pas à précisément parler des poètes de salons ou cafés littéraires, mais des hommes qui ont vécu et vivent, qui ont souffert avec la diversité de leur tempérament et qui forment un bouquet d'originalités aux nuances riches. (8-9)

The first sentence here hints at the hopeful, and yet illusory, nature of the lived experience of communion in the French language. The poets are united *as if* at a fraternal gathering: they are in fact far from the literary rendez-vous of the Left Bank. The litany of visions confirms their many differences, and paradoxical disunity:

Bien qu'extrêmement différents entre eux, ils n'en ont pas moins en commun un grand désir d'individualisme. Car chacun d'eux manifeste sa personnalité avec indépendance, farouchement. (9)

In his preface, Damas addresses both readers, by suggesting ways to approach the diversity of the collection, and the poets themselves. He evokes a poetic community united

¹⁰⁰ Damas' statements anticipate core postcolonial debates regenerated by Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih's influential theoretical work in *Minor Transnationalism* (Lionnet, Françoise and Shu-mei Shi, 2005).

by a “fierce” desire for individual identity and by his plea for contemporary forms of poetic *engagement*: “aujourd’hui la poésie a une tâche à remplir, qu’elle doit de plus en plus être de son temps” (9). In the publishing context of Le Seuil’s prestigious “Pierres vives” collection, and in relation to Senghor’s publication at PUF, this call to poetic arms reveals more about the “working through” of post-war transnational French identity, than its longer-term marginalisation might imply.¹⁰¹

Throughout his life, Damas maintained a strong interest in oral literature and in the connections between Guyanese and West African folklore, developed through his friendships with African students and his studies at the Institut de l’Ethnologie. His collection, *Poèmes nègres sur des airs africains* (1948) was a slim volume of transcriptions of anonymous sung poems translated from Fanti, Bassouto, Toucouleur and Bambara. The book is divided into four sections: Chants d’amour, Chants de guerre, Chants funèbres, Chants satyriques illustrated with prints from South African and Saharan mythology. Unlike Cendrars’ or Roland Lebel’s earlier anthologies, this collection was not packaged as an ethnographic presentation of otherness. It bore few paratextual markers beyond a brief preface and a dedication to Senghor.

In contrast to Senghor’s 1948 anthologies at PUF and La Colombe, and Damas’ anthology at Le Seuil, this collection was published in a small run of 500 copies by the renowned

¹⁰¹ Damas published another anthology in 1966 as a special edition of *Présence Africaine*. This 574 page volume, *Nouvelle Somme de poésie du monde noir*, included 106 poets and ranged much more widely across black diasporic poetry than his earlier project. It contained poetry from Brazil, South Africa and the United Kingdom, confirming its editor’s reputation as the “commis voyageur” (Maximin, Daniel, 2009: 157) of black diasporic literature.

printer-publisher of poetry and literary translations, Guy Lévis Mano (GLM).¹⁰² Although he published Damas's *Poèmes nègres sur des airs africains* and had also published *Pigments* (1938), Lévis Mano clung to his autonomy as a producer of printed books based on his highly subjective criteria of aesthetic merit rather than any pervading political or moral design. GLM sent a letter in response to Caillens' request for an interview in preparation for the latter's articles on African literary publishing:

Si en tant qu'éditeur de Poésie, je me suis intéressé au recueil "*Poèmes Nègres*", je n'ai pas, par ailleurs, une activité spécialement consacrée à la littérature africaine et je n'ai dans ce sens aucun projet ni réalisation en vue. Aussi je ne pense pas qu'une rencontre entre nous vaille la peine d'être envisagée. (1948b: 856)

As an independent printer, publisher, poet and translator, GLM is an elusive and admired figure in the space of *édition engagée*, as defined in this period by its constituent tensions of *engagement* and aesthetic autonomy. In contrast, Paul Flamand and Alioune Diop, by virtue of their social and political habitus, and their outward looking, politically committed but moderate "postures", occupied this space in different ways.¹⁰³ GLM is described in the autobiography of another young *éditeur engagé*, François Maspero:

Il faisait tout, et seul. Ses éditions étaient des modèles de typographie, avec cette rare sobriété qui ne peut être que le fruit d'un long travail vers la perfection. Il était comme ses livres: réservé et amical. (Maspero, 2002: 177)

François Maspero's autobiographical books form, in part, an ode to artisan printing and to the aesthetic quality of independently produced books.¹⁰⁴ As will be seen in the next

¹⁰² See: <<http://www.guylevismano.com/>> [accessed 24 December 2012].

¹⁰³ According to Bourdieu: "Aux différentes *positions* (qui, dans un univers aussi peu institutionnalisé que le champ littéraire ou artistique, ne se laissent appréhender qu'à travers les propriétés de leurs occupants) correspondent des *prises de position* homologues, œuvres littéraires ou artistiques évidemment, mais aussi actes et discours politiques, manifestes ou polémiques – ce qui impose de récuser l'alternative entre la lecture interne de l'œuvre et l'explication par les conditions sociales de sa production ou de sa consommation (Bourdieu, Pierre, 1998: 379). An individual's *posture* reveals the nature of his or her position in a network of objective relationships between possible positions (Meizoz, Jérôme, 2007).

¹⁰⁴ Maspero's novel *Le Figuier* also features a printer, Felipe Gral, based on Lévis Mano. In this novel, "FG" is a reclusive, "authentic" artisan, dedicated to the presentation of his texts as much as to their content

chapter, this mode of production continued throughout the fifties, in parallel with the rapid growth in mass-produced paperbacks. For GLM, the material qualities of hand-printed books continued to be paramount to the publishing process. For others, including *Présence Africaine*, Seghers, and Maspero himself, political pragmatism and economic conditions meant that this quality of production, though aspired to, was not always realised. The publication of *Poèmes nègres sur des airs africains* by Guy Lévis Mano recast the ethnographic packaging in which a longer oral poetic tradition had previously been presented.

In his preface Damas emphasises the poems' intended mode of delivery: "la caractéristique essentielle réside dans le fait qu'improvisée elle n'est jamais déclamée ni dite, mais *chantée*" (Damas, 1948).¹⁰⁵ This distancing of the implied reader from the "authentic" mode of reception performs a second level of translation. Its effect nuances the poems' printed status, even given the symbolic capital of the book's covers marked "G.L.M.". Read against this publishing context, Damas' presentation of the text's reception resonates with Cheikh Anta Diop's calls for a renaissance of literature in African languages. The description of the poems' style and register challenges metropolitan conventions of literary reception:

Toute circonstance de la vie, tout événement qui excite l'attention du public est l'occasion d'un poème qui jamais ne différera du langage familier. C'est que l'Africain, qui est né poète et a vite fait d'improviser un chant, ne compose pas pour des savants. Il compose pour être écouté du peuple. Ce qui explique les moqueries, les calembours, les jeux de mots, la simplicité dans l'expression.
(Damas, 1948: Preface)

(Maspero, François, 1988). The description chimes with the colonial tropes of René Char's account: "L'oasis G.L.M. sur la carte de la Poésie, c'est l'oasis des méharistes de fond" (Char, René, 1996: 745).

¹⁰⁵ Musical accompaniment and movements are indicated elsewhere in Senghor's *Chants pour Naett* (1949) and Keita Fodeba's *Poèmes africains* (Seghers, 1950).

This emphasis on the “popular”, raised frequently in relation to literary publishing on and of sub-Saharan Africa in this period, implicitly addresses the legitimating mechanisms of the metropolitan literary field.

Damas’ collective project for a new poetic style is expressed in his preface to his anthology at Le Seuil: “C’est qu’aujourd’hui, il ne s’agit plus d’être consciencieux, de s’appliquer à ne pas violer les règles, de jouer au nombre de pieds qui se comptent, de travailler à des sonnets impeccables...” (Damas, 1947: 10). This appeal to disrupt consciously poetic forms and language characterises Damas’ paratextual address to both readers and writers. Its apparent modernist leaning can be understood less as a passive “annexation” (Casanova) to the metropolitan literary field than as an active negotiation of the ways in which new poetic voices could enter and potentially transform the literary field space. Such negotiations took place through the different prisms of Parisian literary institutions and in dialogue with the “border-guards” on their threshold.

The selection of poems in each of Damas’ anthologies and their paratextual presentation, delimit an imagined literary space according to criteria which, while limited in their long-term impact, signalled a shift of authority to new possibilities of trans-colonial literary collaboration. The promotion of individual poetic voices in *Latitudes françaises: Poètes d’expression française 1900 – 45* and the “Écrits français d’outre-mer” collection for Fasquelle, work through the new national imaginary of the Union française. Damas is less concerned with identifying or applauding the specificity of an African, “black”, or “Union française” aesthetic project, than with imagining and mapping possible connections between the political and aesthetic situations of writers in their paradoxical geographical

distance from the metropole. The actual role of Damas' anthologies in this ideological shift was minimal, for reasons pertaining to their position in the literary field. However, their overlapping publishing contexts form an important rejoinder to the critical focus on Senghorian *négritude* and its Sartrian interpretation in this period.

Conclusion

Exploring the relationships between writers and their publishers through available archival traces resists the simplistic application of colonial binaries to anthologies in the immediate post-war period. "Working through" the changing colonial relationship elicited an approach to literary production of the Union française that was in turn tentative and affirmative in its consolidation of the national imaginary. The positions of Flamand at Le Seuil and Guy Lévis Mano, presented above, together with those of Charles André-Julien at PUF and Charles Fasquelle set the scene for a field where literature of and on the colonies was increasingly in demand, though far from occupying a dominant position. These "cultural brokers" had different motivations: political commitment, commercial potential, academic interest, and aesthetic prestige. For the most part the publishers' paratextual prefaces, blurbs, and covers were aimed at a metropolitan readership. The paratextual contributions of Damas and Senghor indicate an ambivalent reflexivity regarding the relationship of printed African literature to its readership which continued to characterise critical responses in the fifties and sixties. As will be explored in the next chapter, Alioune Diop founded *Présence Africaine*, in part, to formalise a network of writers and readers who nonetheless continued to be published across the metropolitan literary field.

CHAPTER THREE

Publishing strategies at *Présence Africaine*

“A aucun moment il n’y a eu d’esthétique collective, à aucun moment cela n’a été une école.” (Maximin, 2009: 160)

This chapter will consider connections between *Présence Africaine* and other “young” publishers in the post-war literary field in France. According to existing commentaries, the lasting strength of *Présence Africaine* lay in its ability to bring together writers and intellectuals to exchange ideas concerning Africa, despite ideological differences, in a period defined by political movement.¹⁰⁶ The humanist, utopian principles on which the *Présence Africaine* project was founded developed into symbolic spaces during the period. Its journal, publishing catalogue, cultural conferences, and bookshop provide evidence of a contingent articulation of literary-political debates in France and in Africa that rarely aspired to autonomy from either place. Comparisons with the work of Éditions de Minuit and Éditions Maspero will here draw out the structures of the field occupied by all three publishers, and the differential strategies with which they negotiated these structures.

Bennetta Jules-Rosette remarks that *Présence Africaine* (“and the *négritude* movement more generally”) may be analysed “as simulacra of existing artistic and intellectual networks in mid-twentieth century Europe” (Jules-Rosette, 1992: 15). Jules-Rosette’s valuable sociological work in *Black Paris* develops the epistemological implications of

¹⁰⁶ Jules-Rosette identifies four themes that “support but also fragment the discourse of cultural reaffirmation” in the *Présence Africaine* journal. Her work frames the contradictory ideas of Africa put forward by the journal’s contributors: “as an ancestral source, a continent in turmoil, a beacon of hope for the future, and an object of scientific research” (Jules-Rosette, Bennetta, 1992: 31). On the journal’s re-orientation in 1955, see also: Hassan, Salah D., 1999.

that statement, by responding to the multiple directions in *Présence Africaine*'s work as "a source of cultural innovation and a vehicle of social and political mobility for members of the group" (14). Its catalogue, like its journal, displays a polyvocal exploration of political disjunctures and cultural re-evaluation, yoked to the promotion of new literary, historical, and scientific voices, and the paradox, albeit unavoidable, of its elitism. Existing accounts of *Présence Africaine* have focused on its activities in relative isolation or, as in Pascal Fouché's huge edited volume, *Histoire de l'édition en France depuis 1945*, mentioned them as a minor footnote to metropolitan publishing history.¹⁰⁷ Homages, exhibitions and anniversary events celebrating the first decades of its activity and the life of its founder, Alioune Diop, continue to accumulate, but remain marginalised in literary historiography of the "post-war" period.

Accusations of elitism, and the subsequent critiques of culturalist and nativist ideas in *négritude*, have similarly targeted the discursive work of *Présence Africaine*. One of the aims of this chapter is to consider, by contextualising *Présence Africaine*'s position in the literary field, the radical nature of its early publishing work. Guy Midiohouan provides a biting assessment of *Présence Africaine*, tied to his critique of cultural engagement:

"*Présence Africaine* n'était [...] nullement une revue d'avant-garde. Son orientation relevait d'un culturalisme inspiré par l'idéologie coloniale et qui datait des années 30"

¹⁰⁷ *Présence Africaine* was the subject of a collection of essays published to coincide with its fortieth anniversary and a monograph on its literary criticism in the period 1976 – 89 (Mudimbé, V. Y., 1992; Fenoglio, Micaela, 1998). Its work has been more fully examined in scholarship on "black Paris" (Stovall, Tyler, 1996; Jules-Rosette, Bennetta, 1998). Most recently *Présence Africaine* was the subject of a richly-illustrated special edition of *Gradhiva*, which provided the catalogue for the 2009/10 exhibition "*Présence Africaine: une tribune, un mouvement, un réseau*" held at the musée du quai Branly in Paris and at Dakar's Université Cheikh Anta Diop. There are two biographies of Alioune Diop (Grah Mel, Frédéric, 1995; Verdin, Philippe, 2010) and two collected volumes of homages, published by *Présence Africaine* (Collective, 1977; Collective, 2011). Mudimbe stresses that his edited collection is "not a naive canonization of *Présence Africaine* but a critical reading of its context, characteristics, and significance" (Mudimbé, V. Y., 1992: xviii).

(Midiohouan, 2002: 69). His argument depends on an implied generational distinction (“le discours culturaliste de la majorité des écrivains de la première génération relevait de l’idéologie coloniale” (81)) and claims, without substantiation, that *Présence Africaine* was an inadequate tribune for more radical political voices in this period (75). Elsewhere, Christopher Miller writes with provocative bluntness, that “without Paris, without the absence of Africa, there would be no *Présence Africaine*” (Miller, 1992: 427). This proposed dependency on an absent presence calls for some important qualifications, and points to the need to understand *Présence Africaine*’s symbolic work in relation to the post-war cultural and political ideology of the Union française.

As the present chapter will demonstrate, *Présence Africaine* changed fundamentally the “espace des possibles” for African writing in post-war France. With its journal from 1947, its publishing work from 1949, and its bookshop in Paris from 1962, *Présence Africaine* has maintained a dedicated location in and through which writers and readers have broached intellectual questions concerning Africa and its diaspora for the past sixty-five years.¹⁰⁸ Although the idea for the journal first came to fruition while Alioune Diop was in Dakar in 1946, the *Présence Africaine* headquarters has always remained in Paris. Encounters, contradictions, and ambiguities in the pages of its journal and publications testify to the “surreptitious” ways in which *Présence Africaine* mediated and generated a new set of discourses from its physical location in the Parisian Latin Quarter.¹⁰⁹ The emphasis here on *Présence Africaine*’s location in the metropolitan literary field does not

¹⁰⁸ Other landmark events in this history include the founding of the Société Africaine de Culture in 1956; the Congresses of Black Writers and Artists held in Paris in 1956 and in Rome 1959; and the 1966 Premier festival mondial des arts nègres in Dakar. The significance of these events has been discussed elsewhere and will therefore not be presented at length in my discussion of *Présence Africaine*’s publishing activity.

¹⁰⁹ The bookshop and offices of *Présence Africaine* are based at 25 bis rue des Écoles, Paris. It was first based at 16, rue Henri Barbusse, then 42 rue Descartes. All three addresses are in the fifth arrondissement.

aim to distract from or minimise its concrete objectives and achievements in Africa and in African diasporic spaces. Rather, I want to argue that only by re-inscribing its cultural significance for the post-war French national imaginary, that a balanced picture of *Présence Africaine*'s transnational work can be reached.

Richard Watts argues that *Présence Africaine* provided “a means of achieving independence from the colonial and metropolitan French literary institutions and their role as border guards, both in what they [*Présence Africaine*] chose not to publish and in the “identity papers” – that is, the paratext – they obliged texts to carry” (85-86). From the outset however *Présence Africaine* was a collaborative enterprise. As Guadeloupean poet and former literary director of *Présence Africaine* from 1980 – 89, Daniel Maximin notes, “On oublie souvent que *Présence* [sic] est un mouvement qui a commencé avec les chrétiens de gauche. Alioune Diop avait des liens étroits avec l'équipe du Seuil. Au début c'est d'ailleurs au Seuil qu'il était hébergé, 27 rue Jacob.” (2009: 158).

The current chapter has developed from my reconstruction of the *Présence Africaine* publishing catalogue.¹¹⁰ The critical focus on the *Présence Africaine* journal does not reflect the discrepancy in global access to its content. The majority of issues are now only available on fragile paper (a reminder of post-war French publishing penury) in university libraries. Despite valuable reprintings of the first issue and the special issue for the 1956 Congrès, funded by the Centre national du Livre, the journal has yet to be digitised.¹¹¹ The

¹¹⁰ As described in my introduction, the *Présence Africaine* archives will open in January 2013 and my conclusions here therefore remain necessarily open to further development.

¹¹¹ *Présence Africaine* is currently only available in paper form. Other journals, such as *Esprit*, Mongo Beti's *Peuples noirs, peuples africains* or Senghor's *Ethiopiennes*, have been fully digitised; the latter two are available online for open access [accessed January 2013].

long-term consecration of much of its publishing backlist, which includes the reprint of Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Cheikh Anta Diop's *Nations nègres et culture* and the reprint of Birago Diop's *Les Contes d'Amadou Koumba*, reflects continued sales in France and the French-speaking world.¹¹² I will begin by presenting the trajectory of Alioune Diop and the early directions of *Présence Africaine* before comparing this work to that of Éditions de Minuit. Founded as a clandestine publisher by Jean Bruller (Vercors) and Pierre de Lescure in 1941, Minuit continued to benefit from its symbolic association with the Resistance in the years following the war.¹¹³ Minuit published Samuel Beckett, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Marguerite Duras, together with a series of unprecedented exposés of the Algerian conflict in the late fifties (Simonin, 2012). Alioune Diop's negotiation of political and cultural pressures will then be considered in relation to changes in bookselling in the metropolitan literary marketplace in this period, comparing his work to that of the far left, anti-colonial publisher, François Maspero and his bookshop, *La Joie de Lire*.

Alioune Diop and *Présence Africaine*

Bernard Mouralis identifies three phases in the early history of *Présence Africaine*: firstly 1947 – 49, characterised by a cultural reaffirmation via ongoing links with anthropologists at the Musée de l'Homme, such as Michel Leiris; secondly 1950 – 54, marked by financial instability and irregular publication of the journal; and lastly 1955 onwards, marked by the new series of the journal and more consistent, more overtly politicised publication output.

¹¹² During a research trip to Senegal in 2010, I observed these books on sale at bookshops and markets in Dakar, Thiès and Saint Louis. They are also on sale through Amazon and <www.presenceafricaine.com> [accessed January 2013].

¹¹³ “Nous désirions surtout grouper autour des Éditions de Minuit le plus grand nombre possible d'écrivains français à réputation mondiale pour affirmer la résistance de l'esprit français à l'emprise nazie” (Jacques Débû-Bridel, quoted in: Simonin, Anne, 1994: 64).

This analysis is largely supported by the contents of the backlist of publications. Despite Alioune Diop's subscription to the binaries that subsequently provoked criticism of Senghorian *négritude*, the journal's content does not reflect a singular ideology or set of aesthetic or moral guidelines in its early years. Instead, it acted as a tribune for diverse positions on issues concerning Africa. One of the most important tasks of *Présence Africaine* was to provide a location for critical writing and foster a critical tradition among its collaborators. Its editorials, book reviews, and the debates created around particular titles contrasted with the apparent marginalisation of texts on and of sub-Saharan Africa in other metropolitan journals. From 1955 onwards, the journal proposed an anti-colonial library drawn from across the publishing field and offered a critical space within which that library could be debated.

V.Y. Mudimbe writes that: "Présence Africaine is a discourse in the ordinary sense of the word. Transsubjective, and centering on thematics about colonized spaces, it couldn't but be ambiguous from its own inhibitions, what it feared, or what it could threaten" (2010). Mudimbe's foundational work on the connections between representations of Africa and Western epistemology inform the ambiguity of his analysis of *Présence Africaine*'s polyphonic discourse. Mudimbe's letter reiterates his earlier Foucauldian reading of the journal's discourse, by considering the epistemic "conditions of possibility of *Présence Africaine*". In particular, he turns to the religious trajectory of Alioune Diop, his conversion from Islam to Catholicism in 1944 and his close relationship with Father Jean-Augustin Maydiou, editor of the influential Catholic journal, *La Vie intellectuelle*.¹¹⁴ Mudimbe gestures towards the tensions between Catholic, existentialist and Marxist forms

¹¹⁴ Alioune Diop's first publication, "Sur une phrase de Sartre", appeared in this journal (Verdin, 385).

of humanism in the immediate post-war period in France, that form an intellectual context for the development of *Présence Africaine* which further archival research may illuminate. An equally important context to consider is the attitudes of members of the *Présence Africaine* circle regarding the Parti Communiste Français in the 1950s.¹¹⁵ Daniel Maximin describes *Présence Africaine* in a recent interview:

C'était une véritable fraternité. C'est important de le préciser, car dans tout cela il n'y avait pas beaucoup d'idéologie à une époque où l'idéologie était pourtant omniprésente, avec le marxisme, le communisme, le socialisme, les thèses de Senghor, celles de Sékou Touré etc. (Gradhiva 2010, 156).

Against this tone of homage, as Mudimbe's writing suggests, there is a need for nuanced accounts of the publishing work of Alioune Diop, this highly influential, yet modest and elusive, "cultural broker". Such perspectives enable the concrete and symbolic achievements of *Présence Africaine* to be positioned more clearly in relation to those of other cultural producers in the literary field.

Alioune Diop was born in St Louis, Senegal in 1910. After receiving his baccalauréat in Dakar, he studied classical literature and philosophy at the University of Alger, Algeria. It was there that he first met Albert Camus and his teacher, Jean Grenier.¹¹⁶ Diop came to France in 1936 and continued his literary studies at the Sorbonne, staying at the Foyer des

¹¹⁵ A special "L'Afrique" issue of the Communist journal, *Europe*, appeared in May 1949 featuring poets that appeared in neither Senghor's, nor Damas' anthologies. Städtler suggest that "La politique culturelle du PCF et de l'Internationale communiste promulguèrent une certaine littérature militante (tout comme ils alimentaient des groupes d'études marxistes dans les colonies du continent noir)" (Städtler, Katharina, 1998).

¹¹⁶ Verdin's largely unreferenced hagiography is not always reliable, though he does present some new material (including early correspondence). He writes that: "En 1937, Jean Grenier publie chez Gallimard un essai critique contre le dirigisme inquisiteur du marxisme et du communisme dans le domaine de la pensée. Il montre la sclérose intellectuelle que représente l'idéologie dans son *Essai sur l'esprit orthodoxe* [sic]. Il est probable qu'Alioune a lu ces pages de son ancien professeur de philosophie à Alger" (Verdin, Philippe, 2010: 60). Grenier's *Essai sur l'esprit d'orthodoxie* (1938), which tackled the apparent contradiction of intellectual commitment to Marxist orthodoxy, was widely read following its publication (Garfitt, Toby, 2010).

étudiants africains by the Porte Dorée, site of the 1931 colonial exhibition. In Paris he formed a strong network with Jacques Rabemamanjara, Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and other African and Antillean students. This network was further extended during the war when Diop taught at lycées in Marseilles and Versailles, and in Paris from 1941 – 3, where he met Sartre, Emmanuel Mounier, Michel Leiris, Pablo Picasso and Georges Balandier through his friend and mentor, Père Maydiou. Maydiou extended Diop's intellectual network through his membership of the *Comité national des écrivains* alongside François Mauriac, Louis Aragon, Vercors and Georges Duhamel. Diop converted to Catholicism in December 1944, after following the catechism set out by Maydiou. His religious faith was central to his humanist project at *Présence Africaine*. In a letter to Marguerite Marteau dated October 1943, Diop writes:

L'Europe a le reste du monde à sa disposition. Plus de richesses qu'il ne lui faut pour vivre. Elle s'entre-déchire pourtant. Le vœu des plus sensés d'entre nous est que le message de paix vienne de ces enfants mineurs que sont les coloniaux de toutes les parties du monde. Mais ils doivent convenir qu'un message émis (quelle que soit la force de propulsion, si grande soit la ferveur des émetteurs) ne saurait être entendu si le destinataire n'est pas en état de l'entendre. Et c'est là pour moi que se voit le rôle de l'Église. Informer et former les indigènes? Bien. Mais aussi purifier la foi des Européens, en apaisant leur fièvre, en les gagnant un à un par l'exemple. Sont-ce là des rêves d'utopiste? Ai-je tort d'avoir cru depuis 1935 que le salut de l'Europe gît dans le christianisme? Mais je voudrais dépasser l'opposition Europe Afrique, et ne plus voir que des hommes. (Verdin, 2010: 96).

His dialectical reasoning here, which in some ways anticipates that of Sartre in "Orphée noir", is tied to a utopian humanist project rooted in Christianity. Diop continued to be involved in student communities by writing for the student newspaper, *L'Étudiant de la France d'outre-mer*. This publication was produced by a student foyer in the boulevard Saint Germain and financed by the colonial authorities; it featured several of Senghor's poems (Verdin, 2010: 92). In 1945 Diop married Christiane Yandé Diop, a cousin of Senghor who would go on to play a significant role at *Présence Africaine* in her own

right.¹¹⁷ Shortly after this he returned to Dakar on as private secretary for René Barthes, Governor General of l’Afrique Occidentale Française. It was during this period that plans for *Présence Africaine* were mobilised using Diop’s skill for local-level organisation. He returned to Paris to represent Senegal at the Senate from 1946 to 1948. This was part of a gradual increase in representation from the Colonies in the early years of the Fourth Republic, which brought new visibility to a small number of African representatives in the post-war metropolitan political and literary landscape (Städtler, 2001: 198).

In 1946, Diop wrote to Michel Leiris asking for his support in setting up a weekly seminar on Africa in Paris. His motivation was the perceived need to counter the francocentric education that most Africans in Paris had received by turning to European Africanists: “Au Musée de l’Homme, à l’École Coloniale et ailleurs nous pourrions trouver sans doute d’éminents africanistes susceptibles d’accepter d’apprendre aux Africains ce qu’est l’Afrique” (Diop, 1946). The desire for knowledge that would bolster the construction of a resilient “idea of Africa” in cultural terms underpinned this first period of activity. In the articles and editorials he would subsequently write for *Présence Africaine*, Diop maintained a pedagogical role and expressed his desire to counter the misleading bias of colonial history. In particular, the neglect of pre-colonial African history was to be corrected through supplementary forms of education. At Diop’s seminar, entitled “Rencontre avec l’Europe”, speakers included Sartre, Leiris, Camus and Simone de Beauvoir: the exchanges were far from being restricted to presentations by “eminent Africanists”. Diop’s letter to potential sources of financial and intellectual support for the journal set out his vision for the project:

¹¹⁷ From 1956 onwards Christiane Yandé Diop ran the publishing work at *Présence Africaine*, together with Thomas Diop and Iwiyé Kala-Lobé (Verdin, Philippe, 2010: 215). She became Director following Alioune Diop’s death in 1980, a position she retains today.

Nous sommes à Dakar un petit groupe d'amis Africains et Européens qui songeons à créer un organe de rapprochement entre les uns et les autres. Il ne s'agit pas, une fois de plus, d'une entreprise à caractère politique, mais d'une notion sur le plan culturel... l'Africain doit pouvoir parler en tant que représentant d'une civilisation originale. Il faut que l'Européen le connaisse mieux, et en même temps se fasse mieux connaître de lui.

Nous envisageons de créer une revue mensuelle "DÉCOUVERTES" qui, organisée à la manière des grandes revues françaises, servirait de lieu de rencontre à des Africains et à des Européens... Elle ne se rattacherait à aucune obédience littéraire ou philosophique." (Anon, Undated (1946?))

This letter outlines the early objectives, in particular the notion of mutually beneficial exchange, that would be developed into Diop's well-known editorial to the first issue of the journal, "Niam N'Goura ou les raisons d'être de Présence Africaine". The stated autonomy from political motives confirms an awareness that such motives could provoke suspicion in the post-war climate. The name "Découvertes" was eventually replaced by "Présence Africaine" on the suggestion of Sartre, reflecting the epistemic shift from a discourse of (mutual) discovery that, as James Clifford notes, marked ethnographic discourse before the war, to one describing African subjectivities that are present in their own right.

Paris-Dakar carried a legal notice on 11 January 1947 announcing the formation of a "Société à Responsabilité Limitée, 'La Société d'Éditions Africaines'", under the management of Alioune Diop.¹¹⁸ Their objectives were set out as follows:

1. la création d'une revue et l'exploitation, sous toutes formes: ouvrages, périodiques, disques, films, d'une maison d'édition;

¹¹⁸ The first eight publications from Placide Tempels' *La Philosophie bantoue* (1949) to Cheikh Anta Diop's *Nations nègres et culture* (1954) were published under the name "Éditions Africaines". The signatories of the agreement were: MM. Djimé Guibril NDiaye, Ibrahima GUEYE and El Hadji Hamed LIMA, all based in Dakar. The corresponding documents concerning the founding of *Présence Africaine* (making it an Association Loi de 1901; and registering at the Tribunal de Commerce de la Seine) were destroyed in a flood [email correspondence with Bernadette Jeannot, Préfecture de police, Paris, November 2011].

2. la gestion de toute entreprise de publications relatives à l’Afrique. (Annonce, 1947)

It seems from this evidence that the journal was envisaged as part of a more ambitious, far-reaching project – a monopoly even – that would provide an umbrella for all available media.¹¹⁹ My initial research in the Hachette archives shows the futility of the second objective, as Hachette retained its contracts for African school material following the independences.¹²⁰ The association “Les Amis de Présence Africaine” also founded in Dakar in 1947 was intended to create a human support to the printed text that would provide future material and financial and moral support. These early traces extend current understanding of the early aims of *Présence Africaine* in Senegal, and in French-speaking West Africa more widely.¹²¹

The cultural politics and political culture of Parisian Third Worldism

The first issues of *Présence Africaine* stated the provenance: “Paris – Dakar” on their covers, though the journal was printed in France from the outset.¹²² This fact placed it in line with earlier magazines from the 1930s, and differentiated its work from the subsequent growth of an anti-colonial political press and more popular magazines in

¹¹⁹ Alioune Diop was part of the committee behind *Les statues meurent aussi* (1953), an anti-colonial film made by Alain Resnais and Chris Marker which was censored until 1964, only appearing in its complete version in 1968. The film was the subject of an exhibition at the Monnaie de Paris in 2010 (Martínez-Jacquet, Elena, 2010).

¹²⁰ Christiane Yandé Diop confirms this imbalance: “Nous avons beau aller voir les responsables de l’éducation, nous ne sommes pas encore parvenus à avoir l’édition du manuel scolaire. Pourtant, c’est très rentable, le manuel scolaire; mais c’est un domaine réservé. Dans ce marché, nous ne sommes que des pourvoyeurs de textes pour la confection de certains manuels scolaires” (Interview with Christiane Yandé Diop in: Cévaër, Françoise, 1998: 197).

¹²¹ Two other journals based on the *Présence Africaine* model were published Paris in 1948-49: the Gabonese *La Voix du COGES*, later renamed *Réalités africaines*, and *Résonances*, from Afrique Équatoriale Française. According to Städtler, these journals “indiquaient cependant une lacune: apparemment, les habitants de l’Afrique Centrale et Equatoriale se voyaient mal représentés dans cette revue éditée par des Africains de l’Ouest qui ignoraient tout des autres parties du continent” (Städtler, Katharina, 1998).

¹²² It was planned to print 5000 copies of the journal in April 1947, but the first issue eventually came off the presses in November of that year.

Senegal, such as *Bingo* and *Awa*, or *Abbia* in Cameroon.¹²³ The journal's expressed aim in Alioune Diop's first editorial was to enable "la collaboration de tous les hommes de bonne volonté (blancs, jaunes ou noirs), susceptibles de nous aider à définir l'originalité africaine et de hâter son insertion dans le monde moderne" (A. Diop, 1947: 7). This first editorial indicates a clear "prise de position", opening the journal to all contributors and setting out a programme defining Africa in new terms, in support of a universal humanist project in this "phase héroïque de l'histoire". While Diop does not provide a more ample definition of this modernity, the presence advocated is not a passive annexation, but an active contribution. This relationship stemmed from the conviction that Africans could contribute to a new post-war humanism by asserting their subjective presence in political and cultural domains. As Diop wrote, "la littérature devient elle-même une institution aussi utile que le Parlement" (A. Diop, 1947: 12).

Christopher Miller's fine-grained reading of Diop's first editorial, "Niam N'goura ou les raisons d'être de Présence Africaine", suggests a covert ambivalence surrounding Diop's presentation of universalism. Diop writes: "Pour l'instant, l'universalisme prend la figure d'un temple où la perfection se lit sur la façade, mais où l'arrière-plan, jamais exposé au regard, à l'admiration ni à la critique, se trouve inachevé et absurde" (A. Diop, 1947: 13). Miller argues that Diop's metaphor of an absurdly incomplete temple to describe European modernity calls the premise of his universalist project into question: "Diop's rhetoric, while laboring to construct the temple of universalism, analyzed its weakness and

¹²³ *Bingo* was founded in 1953 by Senegalese writer, Ousmane Soce Diop. *Awa* was founded by journalist and poet, Annette Mbaye d'Erneville in 1963 with the support of printer, Abdoulaye Diop (see Chapter Six). In Cameroon, the cultural magazine *Abbia* was launched by Bernard Fonlon in 1963. There is much research to be done on these magazines and on ephemeral publications in francophone West Africa more widely. This work might also consider the role of father and son, Charles and Michel de Breteuil, who have owned the largest circulating francophone West African press titles since 1933 (Perret, Thierry, 2005).

anticipated its collapse” (Miller, 1992: 431). In line with Diop’s critical statements, Sartre gave a double-edged warning to metropolitan readers in his contribution to the first issue of *Présence Africaine*:

Je redoute surtout que, forts de nos mille ans de littérature, de nos Villon, de nos Racine, de nos Rimbaud, nous ne nous penchions sur les poèmes et les nouvelles de nos amis noirs avec cette indulgence charmée qu’ont les parents, au jour de leur fête, pour le compliment de leurs enfants. Gardons-nous de voir dans ces productions de l’esprit un hommage rendu à la culture française.” (Sartre, 1947: 29)

The instruction here concerns the mode of reception, between recognising ostensibly “universal” qualities in the work according to a francocentric literary genealogy and notion of universalism, and a paternalistic appreciation of what might, in some cases, be described as colonial mimicry. Such evidence undermines Pascale Casanova’s thesis of “Parisianisation” by showing how, from its very inception, *Présence Africaine* could critique francocentric notions of universalism. In these terms, the project did not provide an annexe to that “temple” but showed how different kinds of temple could co-exist in – and actively share – the same space.

Archival details further complicate the discursive power dynamic in Diop’s editorial. An unsigned letter from *Présence Africaine* to Leiris in October 1947 states : “Nous avons l’honneur de vous adresser ci-joint copie d’un article de Monsieur Alioune DIOP intitulé “NIAM NGOURA”, ou les raisons d’être de “Présence Africaine”. Nous vous serions obligés de bien vouloir nous indiquer par lettre ou par téléphone, ce qu’il y a lieu d’y ajouter ou d’y supprimer” (Secretary, 1947). Further traces testify to the editorial role Leiris played in the early days of the journal by managing book reviews, content, and

correcting proofs while Alioune Diop was on political business in Senegal.¹²⁴ In his foreword to the 1949 edition, Diop attributes readers' criticisms of the journal's apparent lack of unity in its first issues to an inconsistent editorial process. This is based on a lack of face-to-face communication: "les rédacteurs principaux ne s'étaient pas souvent rencontrés, n'avaient guère pu confronter leurs expériences, leurs spéculations sur des questions aussi étrangères aux préoccupations courantes de l'Europe" (1949b: 3). There is a willingness to identify the practical obstacles to sharing the same space here, and to confront these issues collectively.

Alioune Diop established a strong base for long-lasting legitimacy by drawing on his relationships with figures endowed with symbolic capital. The *comité de patronage* included writers, ethnologists, and distinguished academics: Sartre, André Gide, Richard Wright, Théodore Monod, Georges Balandier, Leiris, and Marcel Griaule, whose dominant positions in the intellectual field opened the journal to a wider range of readers and established its inclusive ethos. As Diop wrote:

J'estime que c'est lorsqu'on n'est pas du même avis qu'il est bon et fécond de discuter, et qu'un intellectuel, à mon sens, ne devrait pas fuir la libre discussion.

J'ajoute que s'il me fallait être d'accord – sur le plan de la vie privée – avec chacun des membres du Comité de Patronage, je serais bien à plaindre. (A. Diop, 1948b)

The composition of the *comité de patronage* can be interpreted less as a residual symptom of the colonial hierarchy of power, and tradition of literary patronage, than as a contingent

¹²⁴ Archival documents at the Musée du Quai Branly exhibition illustrated the roles of Jacques Howlett, Thomas Diop and Iwiyé Kala-Lobé. Diop confided responsibility for the second issue of the journal to Leiris (Diop, Alioune, 1948c).

negotiation of the post-war literary and political space.¹²⁵ It also included Paul Hazoumé, Abdoulaye Sadj, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, with whom Diop maintained a relationship of co-operation and mutual support. Despite this, there were occasional tensions. Senghor left the journal's *comité de patronage* in January 1948, citing "désaccord sur le plan moral" (Senghor, 1948b). This was the result of Senghor's break with Lamine Guèye in this period as a decisive move towards founding his own political party, the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais (Vaillant, 1990: 234; 370). Diop's response was to encourage Senghor to engage in dialogue, admitting in a letter to the *comité* that this break was due to a political fall-out in their party. He argued that: "tant que je serais chargé d'un mandat politique, je me considérerai [sic] comme libre vis-à-vis du Comité de Patronage dans mes activités politiques. De même, je refuse de faire de la revue un organe socialiste" (A. Diop, 1948a). This strategy of maintaining autonomy from party politics was pragmatic amid the proliferation of new post-war publications, most of which betrayed a clear political leaning, although it cost Diop the support of Senghor's party paper, *La Condition humaine*, which had advertised *Présence Africaine* since its inception (Vaillant, 1990: 370fn42).¹²⁶

From 1955 onwards, the journal's editorial confirmed a definite anti-colonial position, declaring:

¹²⁵ As Mudimbe notes: "If 'black' seems a transparent concept, 'African' might not be at all. Culturally, the anthropologist Marcel Griaule and the pacifist savant Théodore Monod, unconditional backers of the journal, are profoundly African" (Mudimbé, V. Y., 2010).

¹²⁶ The journal *Preuves* provided a broadly liberal platform for critics of communism, financed by the Congress for Cultural Freedom (Boschetti, Anna, 1985: 189; see also Chapter Seven). In comparison, the editorial policies of *Les Temps modernes* maintained "un rapport très étroit avec la 'ligne' politique de la revue et avec les travaux de ses collaborateurs" (Städtler, Katharina, 2002: 98). Boschetti's seminal study of Sartre's journal confirms the disparity in the intellectual and financial resources of the two journals in the field. Sartre's patronage of *Présence Africaine*, alongside a number of other prominent French intellectuals undoubtedly boosted the latter's chances of survival.

Tous les articles seront publiés sous réserve que leur tenue s’y prête, qu’ils concernent l’Afrique, ne trahissent ni notre volonté antiraciste, anticolonialiste, ni la solidarité des peuples colonisés [...] Notre tâche est d’encourager les cultures nationales et l’éveil des consciences, l’activité constructive des Africains et la libre circulation des idées, - de sonner l’alarme et de signaler le danger dans les domaines politiques, économiques, sociaux et culturels (Editors, 1955: 5-6).

The position of the journal is articulated here for the first time along explicitly anti-colonial lines. The editorial also admitted its response to the dilemma of readership, stating plainly that, “Nous écrivons surtout pour les responsables africains. Nous sommes mal placés en France pour prétendre agir directement sur les peuples” (Ibid). To return to Guy Midiohouan’s criticisms of *Présence Africaine*’s “culturalism”, his implied opposition between an elite (and impotent) notion of culture and the groundwork of political activism is nuanced by the self-reflexivity of this text, and the editors’ awareness of the limitations of *Présence Africaine*’s work within the metropolitan context of the mid-fifties.

Despite the professed independence of *Présence Africaine* from any single political current, Diop and his collaborators were structurally implicated in the currents of anti-colonial agitation, tiers-mondisme and Cold War tensions.¹²⁷ Pressure was exerted not just by a colonial “centre”, but also by the Soviet political “centre”. The Tashkent conference, held in Uzbekistan in 1958, brought together 170 writers from 50 countries over five days. Seen as a significant follow-up to the Bandung conference of non-aligned nations in 1955

¹²⁷ In 1955, an editorial in *Présence Africaine* declared: “Bandoeng ne fut pas, on l’a reconnu en Europe, une manifestation raciste. Trop longtemps, l’opinion européenne s’habitua à accepter que tout ce qui se fait sans l’Europe soit contre elle. Ce sentiment d’être rigoureusement indispensable, à tous les niveaux, aux initiatives humaines est à coup sûr, une disposition regrettable, et nuit à la paix. [...] C’est que le problème colonial, longtemps sous-estimé ou dissimulé comme un souci mineur ou honteux, a éclaté à la face du monde, et s’est révélé l’une des conditions essentielles de la paix sur notre planète.” (Anon, 1955: 3). Césaire’s earlier letter of resignation from the PCF had outlined the disjuncture between anti-colonialist sentiment and Communist Party politics in France, declaring, “Je ne m’enterre pas dans un particularisme étroit. Mais je ne veux pas non plus me perdre dans un universalisme décharné” (Césaire, Aimé, 1956: 14).

(and, looking further back, to the 1927 Brussels conference), it was covered with some attention by *Le Monde* (Féron, 1958; Tatu, 1958). According to archived files recently discussed by Constantin Katsakioris, Alioune Diop was keen for the conference to take place following on from Bandung, and the success of the 1956 Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Paris. Crucially, if somewhat naively, he asked that the Soviet representatives remain mute in discussions. In Paris Diop had similarly worked hard to ensure that the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists did not become solely a political forum (Maximin, 2009: 162). The proposal was rejected outright by the Union of Soviet writers, who accused *Présence Africaine* of being directed by “des nationalistes bourgeois” (Katsakioris, 2006: 22). As a result, the *Société Africaine de Culture* was excluded from the conference. In this international sphere, Alioune Diop’s attempt to assert African cultural autonomy through independent dialogue and exchange was limited by Cold War cultural politics.

Le Monde’s reporter concluded with some ambivalence:

On a voulu surtout, comme le constate avec orgueil la Pravda d’aujourd’hui, que “le nom ensoleillé de Tachkent devienne le symbole de la puissante solidarité des littérateurs d’Afrique et d’Asie, de même que les noms de Bandoeng et du Caire sont devenus les symboles de la cohésion des peuples afro-asiatiques qui ont levé l’étendard de l’anticolonialisme, de la liberté et de l’égalité des peuples, de la lutte contre les fauteurs d’une nouvelle guerre.” (Tatu, 1958)

This event at the intersection of *tiers-mondisme* and Cold War cultural politics was of direct interest to metropolitan readers. Following on from Bandung, the symbolic coordinates of Tashkent were supplemented by those of Makerere, Dakar, Havana, and Algeria in the subsequent decade to map a new “tiers-mondiste” project (Young, 2001; Prashad, 2008). Vijay Prashad’s claim that the “Third world was not a place, but a

project”, points to the need to think beyond concrete geographical locations, to the symbolic solidarities of third worldism as “internationalist nationalism” (2008: 12). The range of African “presences” in the post-war period that have remained absent from Parisian book history and literary historiography, perhaps because of the ways they explicitly reach beyond the Parisian space, can only thereby be located more fully in their transnational coordinates.

Présence Africaine as publisher

Of the many new publishers and journals founded in Paris during the Résistance or in the years following the Allied victory, only a handful survived. Created to fill the gap left by more established publishers or by journals such the *Nouvelle Revue Française* brought low by the *épuration* trials, most suffered from an “endemic” lack of financial capital and their relative isolation in an increasingly competitive field (Simonin, 1998: 36). The two key criteria for survival were the relationships that these publishers managed to secure with larger publishers and the successful juggling of short-term and long-term publishing strategies. Éditions Seghers and Éditions de Minuit, for example, could rely on the support of the most prestigious literary publisher, Gallimard. In terms of their catalogues, Seghers benefited from the surge in sales in poetry in the late forties, while Minuit successfully developed from exceptional sales of Vercors’ *La silence de la mer*, to an indelible association with the *nouveau roman* from the mid-fifties. As mentioned above, Présence Africaine benefited from close contact with Le Seuil and Emmanuel Mounier’s journal, *Esprit*. Its publishing catalogue can, in retrospect, be characterised by the long-term recognition of many of its titles, particularly those in history and in literature. Yet in the fifties its publishing programme was dominated by non-fiction titles, many reacting with

immediacy to the changing political situation, and which suggest a more radical direction in *Présence Africaine*'s work.

Building a catalogue

In Chris Marker's documentary, *Les Mots ont un sens* (1969), the radical publisher François Maspero describes the role of the publisher: "un éditeur, ça se définit par son catalogue" (Marker, 1969: 258). However, as Maspero goes on to say, the role is also defined by the books a publisher refuses, and the books published elsewhere on account of his existence (ibid, 258). At Minuit, Jérôme Lindon's prestige as an "auteur d'auteurs" stemmed from the long-term recognition of authors he published, rather than their immediate best-seller status. Anne Simonin has shown how this accrual of symbolic literary capital manifested in the distinction between short-term literary "succès" and long-term literary "gloire" (1994: 302-08). Vercors described Minuit's catalogue in these terms:

Nous ne sommes pas une maison ouverte à tous les vents, soucieuse seulement de trouver de bons livres vendables. Notre choix est plus strict, et tourne autour de l'idée déjà exprimée de l'homme nouveau qu'il faut aider à se découvrir et aussi à se faire lui-même [...] Cela ne veut pas dire non plus que nous nous enfermions dans une littérature 'dirigée', ni même engagée, selon le mot à la mode. (Quoted in: Simonin, 1994: 260)

Minuit resolved the question of political *engagement* by maintaining only one collection with a definite "prise de position". "Documents" contained all of Minuit's twenty-three texts on the Algerian war, of which ten were censored (Simonin, 2012: 58-60). As its name suggests, the collection proposed testimonies (including books by Henri Alleg, La Gangrène, and Djamila Boupacha) and opinion pieces, with only one fictional text, Maurienne's *Le Déserteur* (Simonin, 1994: 485). By 1960 Minuit was an avant-garde literary publisher par excellence, with the *nouveau romancier* Alain Robbe-Grillet as

literary editor. As Simonin writes, “promouvant un nouveau mode d’engagement, les Éditions de Minuit offrent aux écrivains un instrument qui ne les enrôle ni au service de la Patrie ni au service du Parti, mais les maintient au service de leur art” (Simonin, 1994: 43). This separation between fiction and politically committed books in the Minuit catalogue, and autonomy from the PCF and the state, was crucial to securing the publisher’s reputation. *Présence Africaine* similarly channelled its non-fiction writing into specialised collections, though its literary collections were more loosely defined by generic categories. *Présence Africaine*’s catalogue reveals some of the key ways in which its work paralleled, and at times diverged from, that of Minuit and other metropolitan publishers. Its editors negotiated political and aesthetic forces in the literary field while testing the definition of ostensibly autonomous literary stakes in that space. *Présence Africaine* mediated and encouraged literary writing that continued to appear directly alongside non-fiction writing in its journal and in the contact zone of its publishing catalogue.

From 1962, the year in which the bookshop opened, *Présence Africaine* produced catalogues in the form of short pamphlets which featured news of its publishing activities and other new publications on Africa appearing at other publishing houses. Their professed aim was to help readers to build up their “bibliothèque africaine” (Anon, 1963b), as seen in the 1962 issue, which listed three thousand titles in French and English, ranging across African and European writers. The catalogue encouraged readers to respond to the list: “C’est avec reconnaissance que nous accueillerons les critiques nous signalant lacunes et erreurs. Nous en tiendrons compte et grâce à la collaboration de tous, ce catalogue pourra devenir un instrument de travail vraiment complet et utile” (Anon,

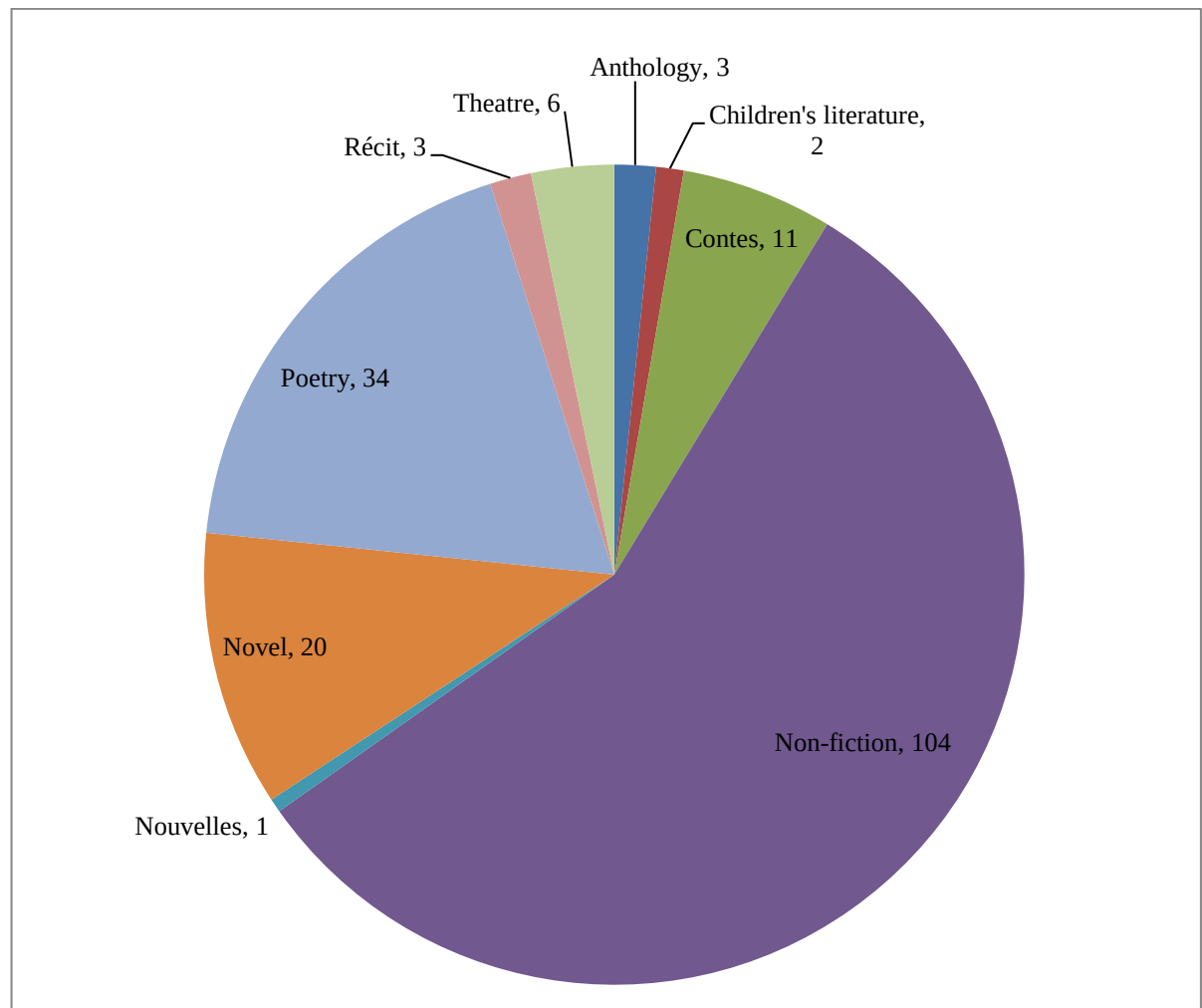
1962c: 2). Despite the anti-colonial editorial position of the journal and, arguably, the publishing house, these catalogues show the open nature of the opportunity they provided, including books ranging from medical textbooks to a bilingual anthology of contemporary Arabic literature, from H. Rider Haggard novels to works in political theory.

In the period 1949 – 67, *Présence Africaine* published 184 books.¹²⁸ Of these, over half were non-fiction publications, ranging from dense theses, such as Doudou Thiam's *La Portée de la citoyenneté française dans les territoires d'Outre-Mer* (1953) or Abdoulaye Ly's *La Compagnie du Sénégal* (1959), to conference proceedings from the Société Africaine de Culture and works aimed at a less specialised audience, such as Baba Ibrahima Kaké's general history, *Terre d'Afrique* (1966), published in the "Tribune des jeunes" collection. Several of the non-fiction texts, such as the "L'Afrique à l'O.N.U." (L'Organisation des Nations Unies) collection, were more ephemeral pamphlets of printed political speeches, a fact that should be taken into account during further analysis of the *Présence Africaine* catalogue. As shown in the following graph, poetry was the next largest sector of publications (12 percent), followed by novels (11 percent), and contes (6 percent):¹²⁹

¹²⁸ I have reconstructed the catalogue using the online catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and worldcat.org, cross-referenced with the available *Présence Africaine* printed catalogues for the period 1962 – 67.

¹²⁹ For statistical analysis of the subsequent rise of the novel in the 1980s and 1990s, in contrast to falling numbers of poetry publications by African writers published in France, see: Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 108-09.

Figure 1: Number of titles, by genre, in the *Présence Africaine* catalogue 1949 – 67



Although non-fiction publications do not constitute the principal concern of this thesis on the literary publishing space, their presence alongside literary works in the catalogue provides an immediate reminder of the politicised, anti-colonial basis of *Présence Africaine*'s publishing project. Its most voluminous publishing work was in the domains of history, political science and other social scientific texts documenting social and political change.¹³⁰ *Présence Africaine*'s position in the literary field cannot be straightforwardly extracted or rendered autonomous from that context without reducing the intertwining political and cultural aims of the catalogue. Daniel Maximin emphasises

¹³⁰ The journal reviews 19 novels, 99 short stories or récits, and over 300 poems while cultural and political topics are twice as frequent as creative works (Luce, Louise Fibert, 1986: 7).

that *Présence Africaine* “publiait toutes les paroles. A aucun moment il n’y a eu d’esthétique collective, à aucun moment cela n’a été une école” (Maximin, 2009: 160).

Figure 2: Chronological presentation of the *Présence Africaine* catalogue 1949 – 67.

Year	Contes	Non-fiction	Novel	Poetry	Total
1949	0	1	0	0	1
1953	0	2	0	0	2
1954	1	3	1	0	5
1955	1	1	0	1	3
1956	0	5	1	5	11
1957	2	5	0	0	7
1958	2	6	1	1	10
1959	0	14	1	1	16
1960	1	8	0	4	13
1961	0	5	1	2	8
1962	2	10	1	2	15
1963	1	9	3	2	15
1964	0	5	5	4	14
1965	0	9	3	0	12
1966	0	9	3	6	18
1967	1	12	0	6	19
Total	11	104	20	34	169

As shown in this table, the catalogue developed very gradually following the publication of *Présence Africaine*’s first book, a reprint of Father Placide Tempels’ *La Philosophie Bantoue* (1949). This book was originally published at Éditions Lovania in Elisabethville, before being suppressed by the Belgian clergy. Despite its growing reputation it became

difficult to find. In his original preface, Alioune Diop, deeply impressed by the book's observations, argued it should become "le livre de chevet de tous ceux qui se préoccupent de comprendre l'Africain et d'engager un dialogue vivant avec lui" (7). However it was subsequently condemned by Césaire, as providing justification for continued colonial presence in the Belgian Congo and has since provided grounds for several of key critiques of African philosophy and ethnophilosophy (Hountondji, 1983; Mudimbé, 1988: 136-42; Césaire, 2004; 1950: 44-46). 1956 appears to be a turning point, after which poetry and novels were published fairly regularly, with novels peaking in 1964 (five novels published) and poetry in 1966/67 (six collections published in each year). As noted in Chapter One, there was a very wide distribution of literary writing by Africans between different publishers in this period. Not much is known about the criteria of selection for publication. Though there was a *comité de lecture* that met regularly at *Présence Africaine* and informal networks of contacts appear to have been a vital means through which manuscripts arrived at that *comité*, there was not the same mobilisation of an author-editor's symbolic capital evident for example at Minuit in the development of Robbe-Grillet's collection, or in Chinua Achebe's African Writers Series at Heinemann. Similarly, the *comité*'s work did not parallel the role of Jérôme Lindon as an "auteur d'auteurs" at Minuit, crafting his authors' long-term reputation, nor the glitz of Bernard Grasset's or René Julliard's publicity junkets.

The first fictional text to be published (outside of the journal) was *Ville cruelle* (1954) by Eza Boto (pseudonym of Mongo Beti), an excerpt of which had appeared in the journal the previous year. After publishing his first novel at *Présence Africaine*, Mongo Beti subsequently moved to Robert Laffont to publish *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba* (1956), and

Buchet Chastel for *Mission Terminée* (1958). In interviews, he has accused Présence Africaine of unprofessionalism, delays and unsatisfactory results, in characteristically frank terms.¹³¹ Such criticisms can only be evaluated against a clearer understanding of Présence Africaine's position in a highly competitive post-war metropolitan publishing field. Authors' political solidarities were not necessarily allied to their strategic negotiation of the metropolitan literary field and increased understanding of the work of a professional literary author in this period. As the following table shows, of the total of 122 authors listed, 95 published only one title at Présence Africaine.

Figure 3: Number of titles published by authors at Présence Africaine 1949 – 67

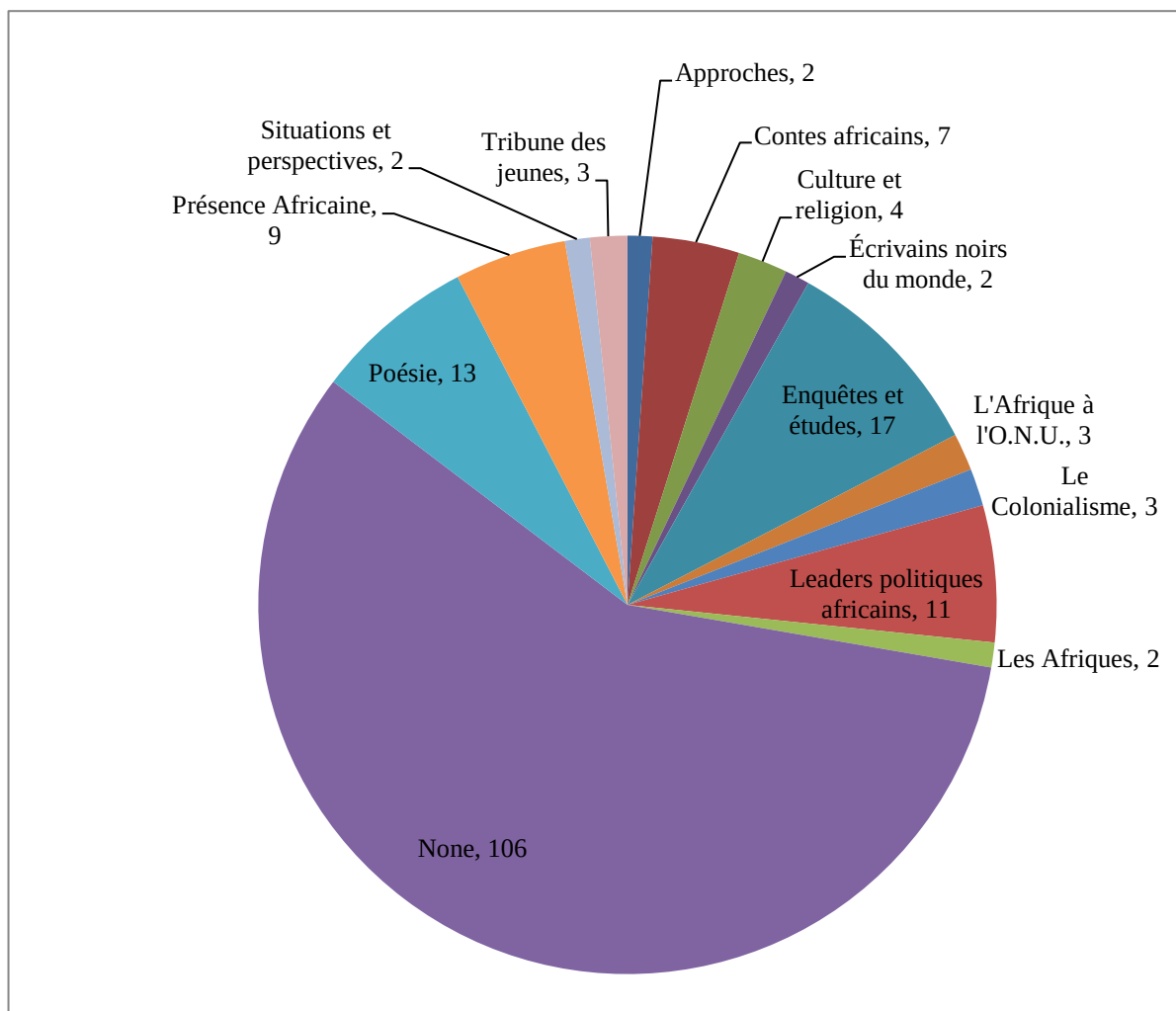
Number of titles published	Number of authors
1	95
2	15
3	4
4	3
5	2 (Léopold Sédar Senghor and Cheikh Anta Diop)
7	2 (Aimé Césaire and Jacques Rabemananjara)

¹³¹ “J’étais très mécontent de la façon dont ils avaient publié *Ville cruelle*. La première édition était pleine de fautes, pleine d’incorrections dont certaines étaient de mon fait, mais dont la plupart étaient le fait de la fabrication [...] je n’ai jamais corrigé les épreuves de *Ville cruelle* [...] En plus, ils m’avaient fait un contrat à 7 pour cent, alors que la norme, en France, c’est 10 pour cent [...] il y a eu très longtemps un conflit entre Laffont et Présence Africaine. Car j’avais un contrat avec Présence Africaine qui disait que je lui réservais les quatre romans suivants [...] Alioune Diop m’a donné l’idée d’aller chez un grand éditeur. Donc pour mon manuscrit suivant, *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba*, je l’ai envoyé à cinq éditeurs au moins. Le Seuil a refusé. Grasset et je ne sais plus quel autre ont refusé. Mais Laffont a accepté et Julliard aussi, mais plus tard que Laffont” (Beti, Mongo and Ambroise Kom, 2006: 124-25). Beti later returned to Présence Africaine to publish a second edition of *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba* in 1976, reflecting the waning recognition of African writers in the metropolitan field from the late sixties onwards, and the commercial contingency of Laffont’s original enthusiasm (Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 550).

Aimé Césaire and Jacques Rabemananjara published the most (seven titles each), followed by Léopold Sédar Senghor (non-fiction titles), and Cheikh Anta Diop (five titles each). The pattern of authors who began their career at *Présence Africaine* before moving to larger publishers with greater symbolic and financial capital has been remarked on elsewhere (Schifano, 2003: 73). Fuller evidence from the early period of its work, however, reflects the overall low number of publications by Africans in this period and the large number of authors producing just one or two titles, rather than *Présence Africaine*'s limited retention of authors. Further prosopographical work may indicate the social structures and cultural and political positions of authors that underpinned this pattern. It might be hypothesised that the publication of a book of poetry became a rite of passage among the new wave of African students in France in the post-war years. Many were inspired in such projects by Senghor and Césaire, as seen in the many dedications to these two figureheads.

There was a greater level of specialised paratextual categorisation surrounding non-fiction titles than literary titles in the *Présence Africaine* catalogue. Thirteen different collections were developed in the period 1949 – 67 (see Figure 4 and Appendix 1). Despite this, the majority of publications (106 out of 184) were not published in a named collection.

Figure 4: Number of titles in each named collection at *Présence Africaine* 1949 – 67



The literary collections were: “Contes africains” (seven titles), “Écrivains noirs du monde” (two titles), and “Poésie” (thirteen titles). Most novels appeared with the generic marker “Roman” printed on the front cover, though few were part of a named collection. Similarly, theatre and publications of récits and nouvelles did not appear in named collections.¹³² Of these collections, the largest was “Enquêtes et études” (seventeen titles), followed by “Leaders politiques africains” (eleven titles), which appears first in all of the catalogues available for consultation from the period. The latter contained core texts by Sekou Touré, Senghor, Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah, demonstrating Alioune

¹³² A theatre collection was founded in 1970 in line with the growth in published theatre around that time following the competitions run by the Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française.

Diop's ostensibly neutral role as "midwife" for different voices on Africa – from the convictions of Sekou Touré's Marxism, or the translation of George Padmore's *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, to Senghor's more moderate political speeches.¹³³ Reprints such as Tempels' book, or Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* and the *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* were an important source for Présence Africaine, as part of the declared ambition to inventory and promote textual production concerning the African continent. Césaire's texts have subsequently been two of the long-term best-selling titles in the catalogue, selling 265,236 and 403,280 copies respectively.¹³⁴ The backlist contained eighteen translations from and into English, showing the importance ascribed by its editors to building links with the anglophone world.¹³⁵ These included Constance Farrington's English translation of Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la terre* and the first French translation of W.E.B. Du Bois *The Souls of Black Folk*, by Jean-Jacques Fol. Fanon's text was subsequently reprinted elsewhere.¹³⁶ Following their collaboration with the publication of *Les Damnés de la terre*, Présence Africaine and Éditions Maspéro founded a joint collection: "Écrivains du monde noir". This appears to have been something of a false start, only producing two texts: *Les Grenouilles du Mont Kimbo*, by Paul Niger, and Léonard Sainville's *Au fond du bourg*, both published in 1964.¹³⁷

This presentation of the Présence Africaine catalogue shows the books it published, but not those it turned down, nor those published elsewhere because of the impact of its

¹³³ Guy Midiohouan makes the following, as yet unsubstantiated claim: "Les bureaux furent cambriolés et la rédaction reçut des lettres qui lui 'conseillaient' de se 'limiter à la publication de contes et fables africaines'" (Midiohouan, Guy Ossito, 2002: 67).

¹³⁴ Sales figures were calculated based on stock cards held at Présence Africaine for the period 1973 to April 2011 [consulted May 2011]. The best-selling book in this period, among those consulted, is Seydou Badian's novel *Sous l'orage*, first published by Les Presses universelles in 1957, and by Présence Africaine in 1963 in a volume accompanied by Badian's play 'La mort de Chaka'. It has sold 468,901 copies to date.

¹³⁵ The journal was also bilingual.

¹³⁶ Fanon's text, retitled *The Wretched of the Earth*, was reprinted in London by MacGibbon & Kee and in New York by Grove Press in 1965.

¹³⁷ The backcover of these books lists future titles in the collection, including: Gilbert Gratiant, *Fab' compè zicaque (poèmes traduits du créole)*; Joseph Zobel, *Le Journal de Samba Boy (roman)*; Sembène Ousmane, *Les Tambos (roman)* and René Maran, *Écrits posthumes (Nouvelles-roman)*.

presence on other publishers. Guy Midiohouan argues polemically that *Présence Africaine* “ne prit jamais le [70] risque de se placer à la pointe de l’évolution des idées. Son programme initial la condamnait à un opportunisme inquiet et, jusqu’en 1960, sa stratégie devait consister en la conservation d’un équilibre” (2002: 69-70). Like Mudimbe, he accuses *Présence Africaine* of conservatism, an accusation that is bound up with a more substantial critique of the apparent long-term ineffectiveness of anti-colonial cultural politics. In response I argue here that *Présence Africaine* responded contingently rather than opportunistically to the changing context of decolonisation. Collaborative work with Maspero and the transition of several of its authors to other more established publishing houses show how it was important both as an important entry point for new literary voices and as a conduit for “tiers-mondiste” writing concerning sub-Saharan Africa. *Présence Africaine* did not seek literary autonomy or prestige in the manner of Minuit. It adapted to the changing situation within the means at its disposal, and was not constrained by any “programme initial”, as shown by the shift in position from 1955 and the inclusion of opposed voices in its catalogue.

“L’édition [...] est une industrie, c’est-à-dire que le fric compte.” (Beti and Kom, 2006: 128)

“Il ne s’agit pas d’une entreprise commerciale, mais sociale avant tout. Hélas! Même une oeuvre morale a besoin d’argent.” (Diop, 1949a)

Anne Simonin employs a religious metaphor to describe the project of Éditions de Minuit:

“Moins vendeuses que gardiennes d’un temple où brûlerait l’esprit de la Résistance”

(189). The inverse relationship between commercial success and symbolic capital in the literary field is confirmed by Jérôme Lindon’s strategy of seeking long-term consecration for Minuit’s authors. Unlike Minuit, whose “temple” depended on the wealth of Lindon’s

bourgeois family, or Éditions Maspero, founded with money from Maspero's inheritance (Hage, 2009b: 106), *Présence Africaine* was dependent on external sources of funding during the first two decades of its existence.¹³⁸ Together with the subscriptions of its patrons and increasingly its readers in its early years, the journal and publishing house were also supported by a grant from the financial commission of the Grand Conseil de l'A.O.F. in 1950.¹³⁹ This was the body which met in Dakar, founded to bring together the five representatives of new assemblies formed in eight different African territories at the end of the war. According to a letter from Alioune Diop to the *comité de patronage*, after some debate the Grand Conseil agreed to allocate three million francs CFA (Colonies françaises d'Afrique) to fund the journal and twelve million francs CFA to fund the new publishing house (Diop, 1949a). Though this financing had been decided in Africa, Diop's letter advised dividing the *Présence Africaine* shares between members of the committee in France, given the unity of their Parisian location.¹⁴⁰ Diop's suggestion stems perhaps in part from his desire to maintain distance from political bickering between political leaders in Africa and reiterate *Présence Africaine*'s relative autonomy.

Given Mongo Beti's criticism of *Présence Africaine*'s treatment of its authors, the question of royalties remains a potentially sensitive area. Christiane Diop has stated that

¹³⁸ The early financial independence of *Présence Africaine* has been asserted in several places as an apparent corollary to its political and literary autonomy as a movement (Kesteloot, Lilyan, 1963: 254; Jules-Rosette, Bennetta, 1998: 76-77). This section provides a necessarily speculative account of the available evidence on this issue.

¹³⁹ Philippe Verdin writes that following the success of *La Peste* (1947), Camus "pourra donner un coup de main discret à la trésorerie toujours grevée de la revue [*Présence Africaine*]" (46). The editorial of issue 7 of *Présence Africaine* gave thanks "aux membres d'un certain nombre d'Assemblées territoriales de l'Afrique française – notamment aux grands conseillers de l'A.O.F." for their financial support in a period of limited means following the "pénibles et tyranniques" efforts of Alioune Diop (Anon, 1948).

¹⁴⁰ "Il est beaucoup plus commode et utile de céder ces parts au Comité de Patronage qu'à des Africains, le siège de notre société étant à Paris [...] l'indépendance morale qui caractérise les membres du Comité constitue pour nous la meilleure garantie de notre liberté de penser et de créer – donc de notre évolution, comme de notre réelle nécessité au reste de l'humanité" (Diop, Alioune, 1949a).

they did not practice “compte d’auteur” publishing, though this practice has its own trajectory within the history of publishing African literature in France and in Africa.¹⁴¹ As Ducournau argues, this often-stigmatised practice, which has reduced significantly over the past thirty years, can be seen as a significant strategy via which African authors have entered the metropolitan literary field, without necessarily compromising longer-term forms of recognition (Ducournau, 2012: 396-97; 407). “Compte d’auteur” also existed in more covert forms. At Minuit, for example, some books (such as those by Daniel Guérin and Le Thanh Koi) were published “grâce à une participation financière déguisée des auteurs, sous forme de souscriptions, de ventes germes de leurs ouvrages [...] cela n’est pas exceptionnel aux Éditions de Minuit dont la trésorerie reste fragile, et cela tend même à devenir la règle pour la plupart des ouvrages de la collection ‘Documents’” (Simonin, 1994: 321). A similar system is in place today at L’Harmattan – the largest French publisher based on number of titles, founded in 1975 – where it remains a source of both criticism and suspicion in the metropolitan literary community and of pragmatic enthusiasm elsewhere (Larson, 2001: 61, 76).¹⁴²

Further evidence of the system of royalties at Présence Africaine appears in Le Seuil’s archive. When Présence Africaine asked Paul Flamand for a fee to reproduce one of Senghor’s texts in *Liberté I*, Senghor sent a strongly worded letter to Alioune Diop in response:

¹⁴¹ La Pensée Universelle and Les Éditions Saint-Germain-des-Prés, both active in the period following that considered here, were the main publishers for compte d’auteur.

¹⁴² L’Harmattan director, Denis Pryen asserts the singularity of his publishing project in Africa since the mid 1970s: “un autre choix a toujours été de travailler justement sur un champ large. Ce n’est pas *un* auteur africain, quelle que soit sa réputation, qui fait la valeur de la littérature en Afrique. Or, la tendance, dans la *Francophonie*, et en France notamment, ça a toujours été de prendre un auteur, deux auteurs, trois auteurs, de les médiatiser et ces auteurs occupent le champ, sont invités, sont baladés partout, alors qu’il y a des dizaines d’auteurs qui font un travail en profondeur aussi, qui font des rencontres, des mini-groupes, des mini-réseaux, et que ça aussi, c’est une partie de la littérature” (Bush, Ruth, 2011e).

Tous les éditeurs consultés ont donné, aux éditions du Seuil, le droit d'utiliser, gratuitement, les textes qu'ils avaient déjà publiés. Sauf toi.

Je ne te cache pas que cela m'a beaucoup choqué. Je ne sache pas, en effet, que j'aie jamais signé un Contrat avec Présence Africaine. D'autre part, tu ne m'as jamais versé un sou, au titre de mes droits d'auteur. Enfin, tu sais que, depuis plusieurs années, je me suis toujours battu pour te faire obtenir une subvention du Gouvernement sénégalais. Tu sais, enfin, que j'ai décidé, depuis que j'ai pris le Gouvernement en main, de faire inscrire, chaque année, 30,000,000 CFA de subvention pour Présence Africaine. (Senghor, 1964a)

While plans for national publishing houses in Senegal that would materialise in the early seventies had yet to be realised, Senghor continued to provide strategic support for Présence Africaine. It is not yet known how far Présence Africaine benefited from the financial support of African states after 1960, nor in what ways such subventions may correspondingly have shaped its publishing activities. What is more significant here, is to consider the impact of Présence Africaine's limited financial resources on its distribution and therefore on the reception of its books.

“La culture n'est pas consommation. Elle est échange” (Maspero, 1964: 70)

In an early article, Mohamadou Kane describes the situation of African writers: “Notre littérature a ceci de singulier qu'elle aspire tout à la fois à combler l'attente du public européen, donc étranger, et celle du public africain” (Kane, 1966: 13). As in Cheikh Anta Diop's earlier article for *Le Musée vivant*, Kane argues for the need to assert indigenous formal techniques and build autochthonous critical traditions, while acknowledging the tensions between new forms of African nationalism and the transnational literary space. African writers published in Europe, in European languages, and often using literary forms derived from their education in European systems. The delicate balance between writers' desires and the reality of limited readership was manifested in several papers delivered at

the Congresses of Black Writers and Artists in 1956 and 1959, and fictionalised, for example, in Ousmane Sembene's *Le Docker noir* (see Chapter Five). It is also a familiar theme in work on more recent anglophone African publishing history.¹⁴³ The pressures created by the production of literature despite its relatively limited reception in Africa during this period, defined the temporal and spatial location of *Présence Africaine* as a publisher. Meanwhile, the symbolism of its bookshop was an integral part of the third worldist literary itinerary in Paris in the early sixties. The African literature critic Lilyan Kesteloot describes the space:

Présence Africaine était aussi un carrefour... et pas seulement *Présence Africaine*, mais le café qui se trouvait en face, le Celtique. A l'époque, les gens comme Cheikh Anta Diop, allait là-bas tenir la parole depuis 3h jusqu'à 11h du soir. Et les gens défilaient, défilaient, défilaient. C'était vraiment presque une salle de conférence adjointe à la boutique, parce qu'il n'y a pas beaucoup de place dans la boutique... il y avait des profs, il y avait des étudiants, il y avait des touristes, mais avec un seul point en commun: l'intérêt pour l'Afrique. (Bush, 2011d)

To be seen buying and reading books there, and at Maspero's *La Joie de Lire* gathered particular significance as intellectual and student communities mobilised around questions of decolonization in North and sub-Saharan Africa.

The day-to-day processes of browsing, selecting, and buying books, which constitute an essential element of what Alain Viala terms the "rhétorique du lecteur" (1985: 10), remain little understood in the context of colonial and postcolonial literature. What charge do these processes carry? How can their histories be traced? In the chain of literary production, from author to editor, proof-reader to printer, the final mediation from bookseller to reader is perhaps the most ephemeral and least studied link. In the

¹⁴³ Charles Larson's *The Ordeal of the African Writer* (2001) is the starkest recent example. Based on interviews and questionnaires sent to writers and publishers, Larson explores the paradoxical situation of contemporary African writers' reception in Africa and targets the "cultural naivety" of "western editors" (37).

metropolitan context, there were rapid changes in bookselling practices in the post-war period as French booksellers strove to overcome the competition from television and cinema (Hubert, 2008: 272). From the campaign for fixed book prices, to the development of *livres de poche*, book clubs,¹⁴⁴ bookshops where readers were free to browse, and new methods of *vente par correspondance*, these developments were articulated in the industry publication, *Le Bulletin des libraires*. One article asserted that:

L'attention du chaland – lecteur en puissance – est captée par les mille clins d'oeil d'une publicité quelquefois outrancière. A nous, Libraires, de savoir garder la mesure, mais aussi de lutter à armes égales, grâce à la lumière et à la décoration. Une vitrine bien faite, se plaçant dans le sens des préoccupations du public, peut être, doit être l'argument décisif, en manifestant ainsi une foi totale dans la vie et l'avenir du livre. (Lefebvre, 1959: 15)

Other articles expressed concern at the changing role of the profession, stressing the role of the bookseller as “intermédiaire spirituel” (Anon, 1959) or “missionnaire de la pensée” (Carlier, 1958: 158). Against this context, and at the tail end of the Algerian conflict, the *Présence Africaine* bookshop opened with the expressed aim of making “accessibles à tous TOUS les ouvrages actuellement disponibles concernant l’Afrique et le Monde Noir” (Anon, 1962b). It was a meeting place first and foremost, hosting speakers and the visiting writers and intellectuals whose photos were displayed around the bookshop until summer 2011, when it underwent significant renovation.

Though François Maspero’s bookshop, *La Joie de Lire*, was much larger, it occupied similar marginal position to *Présence Africaine* in the Parisian literary marketplace.¹⁴⁵ Set

¹⁴⁴ Inspired by the success of the American “Book-of-the-Month-club”, these clubs launched in the 1950s in France and were an important means of selling books via monthly subscription (Richaudeau, François, 1998). Further research remains to be done on the presence of African authors in the lists of non-specialist book clubs (see also Chapter Seven).

¹⁴⁵ François Maspero’s publishing house would publish 1300 books and 10 journals over the next 23 years. Authors included Paul Nizan, Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Che Guevara, James Baldwin, and Mongo

apart by their non-commercial, politicised aims in a period when the book industry was undergoing important changes driven by new techniques of bookselling and distribution, both bookshops offered literal windows onto the internationalist nationalism of the third world for the metropolitan readership and for readers passing through the city. In the post-war period, books were increasingly sold in non-specialist outlets, such as kiosks, *bureaux de tabac*, stationery shops, and Monoprix; a fact deplored by book industry publications.¹⁴⁶ In his autobiography, François Maspero describes his own strategies for window-dressing: “Je voulais qu’elles aient un sens, [...] il fallait constamment renouveler, un peu comme la première page d’un journal intelligent.” (176). Both *Présence Africaine* and *La Joie de Lire* upheld the ideal of the specialist bookseller as a dispenser of knowledge, rather than a point of purchase, in line with earlier booksellers, such as José Corti or Edmond Charlot (Hage, 2009b).

The phrase “post-war period” of course belies the evidence of ongoing wars of independence in the 1950s and early 1960s. Of these conflicts, the most visible to be played out on metropolitan soil was undoubtedly the Algerian war of independence from 1954 to 1962 – the so-called *guerre-sans-nom*. As the historical work of Benjamin Stora (1998), Jean-Luc Einaudi (2001), Jean-Paul Brunet (1999) and others has established, the violent confrontations of October 1961 together with attacks by the Organisation de l’Armée Secrète on pro-FLN bodies in Paris brought colonial violence to the city’s streets.

Beti. According to Kristin Ross, this publishing house “took up the task of representing the image of an exploded world where Europe is no longer the center” (Ross, Kristin, 2002: 82). The shop itself transposed the geography of third world struggles for independence onto the “lived geography and daily itineraries” of students and intellectuals in Paris in the early 1960s. As well as being a meeting place, *La Joie de Lire* served as a postal address for a panoply of leftwing political groups. It did not promote a single political ideology, unlike militant Maoist, Anarchist and Communist bookshops which would open throughout the 60s.

¹⁴⁶ See, for example, an article entitled “Drug-store... go home!” in the *Bulletin des Libraires* (Cayotte, Roger, 1960; Hubert, Nicolas, 2008).

Kristin Ross demonstrates the subtle ways in which these events worked more widely into the French cultural fabric, into modes of cultural consumption and expression, through discourses of hygiene, movement, and modernity (Ross, 1995). The work of *Présence Africaine* in this period was both a symptom and an expression of these reconfigurations taking place in the Parisian space.

Both bookshops were the victims of bomb attacks by the Organisation de l'Armée Secrète in 1962. *Présence Africaine* had expressed support for the Algerian independence struggle in its journal, and by publishing ten thousand copies of *Le Sang de Bandoeng*, a short book by the Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France expressing solidarity with Algerians in “notre terre commune” (Diouf et al., 1958: 10).¹⁴⁷ The collaborative work between the two publishers in distributing texts – such as *Les Damnés de la terre* – to France's other regions and to Africa is a reminder that their activities signalled a resistance to commercial forms of bookselling. The appropriation of modern technologies of production, in particular the *livre de poche*, were key to negotiating and to an extent transcending, the centripetal forces and dominant definitions of literary value in the literary field.

The *livre de poche*, which arrived first at Hachette in 1953, was soon adopted by other publishers, including Maspero and *Présence Africaine*. It led to a significant drop in the price of serious fiction and non-fiction and a parallel gradual shift in attitude to the status of the book as object, echoing longer-running debates on the relationship between mass

¹⁴⁷ The then-president of FEANF has since argued that the book was put together principally by a young Jacques Vergès using the FEANF as a convenient means of bolstering his pro-FLN argument (Dieng, Amady Aly, 2011: 48-49).

production and art. In an article published in 1964 in *Partisans*, Maspero set out the advantages of this more egalitarian and accessible format: “L’‘Homme qui n’osait pas acheter de livre’ peut maintenant aller dans une librairie, un drugstore, un prisunic ou un distributeur automatique, acquérir Lukàcs, Einstein, Heisenberg, Marx et Gobineau pour moins cher qu’une tournée de Ricard” (Maspero, 1964: 65). Despite this enthusiasm, he recognises a need for informed booksellers – citing the example of Lille’s groundbreaking *Le Furet du Nord* bookshop – and warns against neo-capitalist exploitation of literature.¹⁴⁸ He suggests that ease of access to high-level texts of literature and history does not necessarily translate into an increase in shared cultural knowledge and may increase apathy among readers by transforming and neutralising “literary culture” into a commodified, passively consumed product: “Le lecteur de livre de poche devient ainsi à la culture ce que le sportif téléspectateur est au sport réel” (69). He concludes shrewdly:

Il n’existe pas une “culture” idéale comme semblent le croire les consommateurs forcenés qui empilent les titres voyants dans leur “living room”. Il existe une activité culturelle, autrement plus complexe, qui réclame d’être vécue. La culture n’est pas consommation. Elle est *échange*. (70)

This reflection on the wider implications of applying methods of mass production to the book industry is grounded in Maspero’s political position as the leading publisher of the Far Left. Such comments formed part of a larger debate (and intellectual anxiety) in Western Europe regarding the impact of mass-produced cultural products on the masses.¹⁴⁹ In a wry aside, Maspero comments that to be seen buying the latest book on third world militancy often substituted actually reading the text. A more recent account recalls that “certes, on achetait plus de livres qu’on en lisait” (Hage et al., 2009: 47). For Maspero and *Présence Africaine*, as on a much larger scale, for the Heinemann African

¹⁴⁸ In an ironic twist, and despite this assertion, Maspero’s shop would be the victim of numerous thefts in the late sixties by students who accused him of profiting from the social revolution.

¹⁴⁹ More nuanced accounts of working class literary culture appeared with the rise of cultural studies in Britain in the 1960s and in France from the 1980s (Hoggart, Richard, 1957; Thiesse, Anne-Marie, 1984).

Writers Series in anglophone Africa, cheap paperback technology was a key catalyst to reaching a wider readership in Europe and in the “tiers-monde”.¹⁵⁰

Présence Africaine developed a distribution network in Africa and a base in Dakar from 1962, though it did not have the infrastructure to operate there on a large scale.¹⁵¹

Collaborative projects were designed to make the most of Présence Africaine’s distribution networks in the French-speaking world. Frantz Fanon, for example, was directly concerned with how the text of *Les Damnés de la terre* would reach its readers. In a letter to Maspero written a month before publication, he wrote “Je vous demande avec insistance de bien étudier la question de la diffusion. Entre autres en direction de l’Afrique et d’Amérique Latine” (Fanon, 1961). Présence Africaine had a long association with Fanon. Although he never contributed directly to the journal, he did make speeches at the conferences for black artists and writers held in 1956 in Paris and in 1959 in Rome. Following their meeting with Fanon in Conakry, Fanon asked Alioune Diop to assure a better distribution of the book in Africa by contacting Maspero.¹⁵² Their willingness to distribute this book in French and in its first English translation and the series of tributes published in the 1962 issue of *Présence Africaine*, reconfirm Fanon’s connections with the

¹⁵⁰ The African Writers Series was founded by Heinemann editor Alan Hill in 1962 following the success of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958; AWS 1962). At its height, the series produced 15 – 20 titles a year, with a minimum print-run of 10,000. Eighty percent of its books were sold in Africa (Currey, James, 2008; Bejjit, Nourdin, 2009; Bush, Ruth, 2013). Présence Africaine was founded with a clear goal of creating a hub for intellectual collaboration, firstly as a journal, then as an independent publishing house, while the AWS always had to justify its activities in commercial terms due to its attachment to Heinemann Educational Books.

¹⁵¹ Lilyan Kesteloot claims that the journal “fut victime, jusqu’en 1958 encore, de mesures de filtrage et d’une obstruction systématique encore voilée, de la part du gouvernement français: pression sur les libraires pour les empêcher d’accepter la revue, censure, retards postaux parfois considérables” (Kesteloot, Lilyan, 1963: 270).

¹⁵² “Je viens vous informer que le Docteur Frantz FANON que j’ai rencontré dernièrement à Conakry voudrait confier le manuscrit de son prochain livre afin d’en avoir une meilleure diffusion en Afrique. Il m’a prié de vous en parler. Je vous verrais volontiers à mon retour d’Afrique” (Diop, Alioune, 1960). Diop appears to be referring to the original edition of the book, rather than its English translation, published by Présence Africaine in 1963.

central literary institution of sub-Saharan Africa in Paris, despite his well-known criticisms of culturalism and *négritude* writing.¹⁵³

The January 1962 *Présence Africaine* catalogue announced the opening of a second bookshop, in the rue Thiong, Dakar, where readers would find “un vaste choix d’ouvrages en langue française et anglaise sur l’Afrique et le Monde Noir”. Christiane Diop explains that this shop was a modest “antenne” of the Parisian base rather than a full-sized shop [phone conversation, July 2011]. By 1966, the journal listed the following numbers of bookshops selling *Présence Africaine* publications:

Figure 6: Number of bookshops selling *Présence Africaine* publications in 1966

Location	Number of “dépositaires”
Paris	16
Province	21
Africa	19
North Africa	3
Madagascar	2
Antilles	9
Étranger	5

The African “dépositaires” included University bookshops in Ghana and Nigeria, though the majority, including all those listed in the Antilles, were in francophone countries.

¹⁵³ David Macey suggests that Fanon did not consider *Présence Africaine* as a possible publisher for *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Somewhat inaccurately, given the uneven and minimal nature of *Présence Africaine*’s publishing activity in the early 1950s, he argues that “*Peau noire, masques blancs* would have looked very out of place in *Présence Africaine*’s catalogue” (Macey, David, 2000: 154-55).

Though bookshops in Belgium and Switzerland are noted, it is interesting to note that there is no direct distribution outlet in North America, despite ongoing exchanges and collaboration with African American intellectuals. In France, the concentration of bookshops in Paris was not to the detriment of important regional centres, such as Lyon. While Christiane Diop describes Hachette's distribution of the *Présence Africaine* journal in Africa as a "fiasco" (Bush, 2011f), research-based understanding of the mechanisms of book distribution within sub-Saharan Africa in the years immediately following the independences remains limited.

Conclusion

Christopher Miller asks whether *Présence Africaine* in fact preserved a geography of marginality and centrality by its very attempts to publish certain writers and ideas. The various lines of connection between *Présence Africaine*, Le Seuil, Éditions de Minuit and Éditions Maspéro show how any response to this question must consider the everyday work of *Présence Africaine* more laterally within the structures of the metropolitan publishing field. This chapter has highlighted how different ideological currents and changing technologies of book production in France shaped and were shaped by *Présence Africaine*'s activism as a journal, publisher and cultural hub. Its promotion of radical and more moderate political and literary voices benefited from the patronage of established intellectual figures. Moreover, despite limited resources, it established a resilient textual and physical space of relative autonomy for critical reflection and debate. Positioned strategically within the field by its founder, *Présence Africaine* actively moved beyond a game of ethnocentric "annexation" played by metropolitan rules, while contributing to the literary and political social geography of the French capital.

The next chapter will consider the prize culture surrounding African literary production in the post-war period. The institution that awarded the most significant prizes, the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer, will therefore be presented in juxtaposition to *Présence Africaine*. The aim is to suggest how each negotiated the same political and aesthetic forces – namely the emerging tensions between France's national and transnational imaginary – and to identify the delicate points at which their separate projects both diverged and made contact.

CHAPTER FOUR

Literary prize culture and the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer

This chapter will consider the colonial heritage of the main literary prizes specific to African writing in French in the post-war period as an institutional history of contact and symbolic exchange between writers who, it might be assumed, occupy different areas of the metropolitan literary field. The awarding body, the Association Nationale des Écrivains de la Mer et de l'Outre-mer (ANEMOM) was first founded in 1924. As James English, and others, have shown, prize culture is a key area in which the struggles for recognition in the literary field can be seen at work.¹⁵⁴ A small number of non-specialised prizes were also awarded to African writers in the period of heightened interest during the independences, though these represented exceptions rather than any clear trend.¹⁵⁵ Now

¹⁵⁴ Bourdieu emphasises the importance of considering the larger system for conferring recognition: "Ce qui 'fait les réputations', ce n'est pas, comme le croient naïvement les Rastignacs de province, telle ou telle personne 'influente', telle ou telle institution, revue, hebdomadaire, académie, cénacle, marchand, éditeur, ce n'est même pas l'ensemble de ce que l'on appelle parfois 'les personnalités du monde des arts et des lettres', c'est le champ de production comme système des relations objectives entre ces agents ou ces institutions et lieu des luttes pour le monopole du pouvoir de consécration où s'engendrent continûment la valeur des oeuvres et la croyance dans cette valeur" (Bourdieu, Pierre, 1977: 7).

¹⁵⁵ Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir* was awarded the prix Charles Veillon in 1954 and Mongo Beti's *Mission Terminée* the prix Saint Beuve in 1958. The prix Goncourt was awarded to two novels by French writers which focused on sub-Saharan Africa: Romain Gary's *Les racines du ciel* (1956) and Georges Conchon's *L'état sauvage* (1963) (see Chapter Six). Another specialised prize: "Grand prix de la nouvelle créé par la revue PREUVES à l'intention des écrivains de langue française d'Afrique noire" was established in 1963. Its jury was led by Senghor, and comprised Mme Dominique Rollin, Louis Guilloux, Louis Martin-Chauffier and Jean Duvignaud. The winning nouvelle would be published in *Preuves* – a journal published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom (see Chapter Seven) – and at least two of their other journals published in Spain, Germany, Austria, India, and Brazil (Anon, 1963a). Another prize of this period, the Prix antiraciste, was founded in 1956 by Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'anti-sémitisme. It was awarded to "l'auteur du meilleur ouvrage d'inspiration antiraciste, destiné au grand public et susceptible de faire reculer les préjugés racistes et les luttes fratricides qu'ils engendrent." (Anon, 1958). The prize was awarded to René Cathala for *Rouge le soir* in 1957 (Anon, 1957). This ideologically oriented process of recognition can be contrasted with the ostensibly apolitical prix France-Afrique, founded in 1960 by the Cercle artistique et littéraire France-Antilles, which would be awarded to "l'auteur d'un roman n'exprimant aucune tendance confessionnelle ou politique, écrit en langue française par un écrivain originaire des pays d'expression française de l'Afrique noire" (Guide des prix littéraires, 1960: 662-63). A further Grand Prix National des Lettres was founded in 1967 by culture minister André Malraux and Pierre Moinot, who ran the Maisons de

known as the Grand Prix d’Afrique noire, and popularly referred to as the “Goncourt africain” or “Goncourt noir” (Cornevin, 1970; Cornevin, 1983), the prizes of the ANEMOM retain considerable symbolic value.¹⁵⁶ Books that have won these prizes invariably mention the fact on their covers in subsequent editions in French and in English. This is due both to the prestige of previous recipients and to the prizes’ longevity. Using new archival material, the aim here is to show how the ANEMOM gradually adapted to the changing political and cultural context of decolonisation by acting as a prism for colonial and anti-colonial discourse in Paris.¹⁵⁷ Gisèle Sapiro’s detailed analysis of the Académie Française and Académie Goncourt in the 1940s and early 50s considers the *habitus* of their members and respective prize juries, and thereby evokes strategies aimed at preserving the symbolic status quo in these quintessentially French literary institutions during this period (Sapiro, 1999). Prize cultures have served historically to build up a nation’s cultural capital, though, crucially, this argument should not overlook the more local forms of recognition which they also promote. By defining competitive criteria for literary value, literary prizes can either encourage new work, or seek to preserve an existing literary order. The latter is particularly true in postwar France, as Gisèle Sapiro and Herman Lebovics have shown, since the juries for the Prix Goncourt and prizes of the Académie Française tended to remain in situ for many years.¹⁵⁸ In the

la Culture and the national theatres. After some deliberation they decided to award the prize to Senghor, rather than the anti-Gaullist, Césaire (Lebovics, Herman, 1999: 189).

¹⁵⁶ The association exists today as the Association des Écrivains de Langue française (ADELF). In her research on the more recent history of its prizes, Ducournau concludes that the Association is now less powerful, both politically and symbolically than in the decades following the independences. Its financial support was boosted in the seventies by partnerships with the Organisation Internationale de la *Francophonie* (previously known as l’Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique), and the support of French and African political bodies. Such support has been in decline for some time and reflect a much wider decline in State support of cultural prizes (Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 195-240).

¹⁵⁷ Alec Hargreaves and Robert Cornevin have presented the early history of the association in articles published in ADEL’s own publications (Hargreaves, Alec G., 1984; Cornevin, Robert, 1986). There is no critical analysis of this organisation in the period 1948 – 1970 that assesses its structural and structuring position in the literary field of this period.

¹⁵⁸ In contrast, in an annual report, Cornevin acknowledged the publishing politics surrounding prize culture, arguing for the neutrality of ADEL’s own prizes: “Le 21 Novembre, était décerné le Grand Prix Littéraire

light of institutional networks mapped out in the previous chapters, this chapter will examine ways in which the ANEMOM sought to preserve certain symbolic aspects of France's colonial myth by consecrating what one report terms the "Empire de la langue française" (ANEMOM, 1959).¹⁵⁹ The work reinforces Herman Lebovics' portrayal of the strained relationship between the French language and French national culture in this period, despite Président de Gaulle's considerable investment in French cultural diplomacy.

The steep growth in literary prizes in the latter half of the twentieth century has been linked both to the increased commercialisation and mediatization of art (English, 2005; Dozo and Lacroix, 2010). Literary prizes have long been overlooked by literary critics: disdained for their ostensibly commercial motivations, or considered irrelevant to matters of critical theory. It is precisely the crux prizes occupy and the strategies they reveal, between structures of commerce, art, and politics, that make them such an important area of study. Localised sociological studies have shown ways in which specialised and mainstream prizes awarded to anglophone African authors, from the Nobel to the Caine Prize, confer and seek to preserve certain forms of symbolic capital.¹⁶⁰ Prizes operate an "economy of prestige" that is global in scope and calibrates the production of belief in the value of certain literary works. In one section of his wide-ranging survey, English discusses the French colonial context, showing the tensions surrounding the criteria used

de l'Afrique Noire, que l'on a surnommé le 'Goncourt africain' ce qui est peut-être faire beaucoup d'honneur au Jury Goncourt, dont les décisions sont toujours accueillies par des mouvements divers tenant à des querelles sordides et tribales qui opposeraient – dit-on – les lecteurs de certaines Maisons d'édition. Pour le Prix de l'Afrique Noire, ces querelles sont inconnues pour des raisons qui tiennent à la forme originale d'un Jury – mis en place par Jean d'Esme – où figurent, par roulement et tirage au sort, trois Ambassadeurs des Républiques d'Afrique Noire francophone" (Cornevin, Robert, 1970).

¹⁵⁹ This expression is also used on the current website of the Académie Française: "L'empire de la langue française dépasse largement (et c'est une constante) l'empire politique et économique de la France" <<http://www.academie-francaise.fr/la-langue-francaise/le-francais-aujourd'hui>> [accessed January 2013].

¹⁶⁰ See: Lindfors, Bernth, 1988; Huggan, Graham, 2001: 118-21; Pucherová, Dobrota, 2012.

by the Algerian Writers' Association to award prizes in the 1930s (English, 2005: 266-72). Writers were celebrated either for their adherence to Republican discourse, and the ways in which their writing, or the very fact of their writing, affirmed the colonial mission; or for a more resistant tone and less complicit attitude towards metropolitan aesthetic and political criteria. Reactions to the "canonized affront" of René Maran's earlier Prix Goncourt in 1921 typified this tension (Edwards, 2003: 84). The Grand Prix de littérature coloniale (founded by the Ministère des Colonies) was first created and awarded to Gaston Joseph's *Koffi: Roman vrai d'un noir* specifically to counter the waves created by Maran's Goncourt win (Hargreaves, 1984: 4; Edwards: 82).

In 1930 a prize was founded by the Institut international des langues et civilisations africaines, based in London, to encourage writing in African languages on educational grounds. The prize aimed to reward the best books "écrits par des Africains dans leur langue" according to criteria of length (between 40,000 and 60,000 words; subsequently reduced to 15,000 – 50,000) and subject matter, which should be "assez général pour intéresser de nombreux lecteurs et faciliter la vente" (Foutchantsé, 1968).¹⁶¹ Five languages were to be chosen for each year: in 1931, this included Mandinka, but the majority of languages were those spoken in anglophone regions of Africa. The prize ran until 1950, when it was replaced by the Margaret Wrong Prize, intended for writing in either English or French "by writers of African race resident in a part of Africa to be determined each year by the Trustees of the Fund" (Foutchantsé, 1968: 139).¹⁶² While

¹⁶¹ The guidelines quoted by Foutchantsé proposed certain genres: imaginative words; descriptions of indigenous life; presentation of facts from local history. Style should be "fresh, lively, interesting", and "only clear descriptions whose sense and plan is easily understood have any chance for a prize" (Foutchantsé, Vincent, 1968: 127).

¹⁶² For an account of the life of Margaret Wrong, the Secretary of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa who was instrumental in establishing the East African Literature Bureau, see: Brouwer,

from 1954 the Margaret Wrong Prize was joined by a second prize for works in “African languages” or Arabic, the shift in focus to European languages is striking when considered against the dismantling of the French and British Empires in this decade.¹⁶³

The growth of anti-colonial movements during the 1950s and particularly following the independences, was aligned with the politically motivated project of delineating national cultural traditions. Such state institutionalisation of cultural production was epitomised by the 1966 Festival des arts nègres in Dakar. This festival, organised in partnership between Alioune Diop at *Présence Africaine* and Léopold Sédar Senghor’s Senegalese government, hosted its own prizes and system of conferring recognition. The form, if not the content, of this pan-African economy of prestige was, to an extent, inherited from the colonial powers (English: 269-71). In the post-war period, however, most prizes continued to be administered from the French capital.¹⁶⁴

ANEMOM was refounded in 1948 to pursue its mission of representing the interests of writers whose texts concerned France’s overseas territories. The association established itself more firmly during the 1950s under the leadership of writer and journalist Jean d’Esme. The association’s earlier exclusive promotion of writing on France’s colonial possessions developed gradually after the Second World War to consecrate writing of

Ruth Compton, 2002. On Christian publishing in anglophone Africa, see also: Oduyoye, Modupe 1975; Hofmeyr, Isabel, 2004.

¹⁶³ For a fuller account of the debates surrounding these prizes and complete list of the laureates, see: Foutchantsé, Vincent, 1968. His article links these prizes to a broader argument for developing linguistic standardisation and education in African languages. Such work was, as Foutchantsé remarks, closely linked to missionary activity.

¹⁶⁴ More recent specialised literary prizes such as the *prix Noma* (founded in 1979 by a Japanese publisher) or *prix Ouest-France Étonnants Voyageurs* (founded in 2005 by the hugely successful *Étonnants Voyageurs* literary festival, based in Saint-Malo, with branches in Bamako, Port-au-Prince, and Brazzaville) suggest an opening out of prize culture beyond the Parisian centre (Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 234-37).

these regions by attributing literary prizes to autochthonous writers. Several of these laureates joined the association, together with other now-canonical African writers, such as Mongo Beti and Tchicaya U Tam'si.¹⁶⁵ The association also provided services for writers through its loans and bursaries and the opportunity for publicity provided by its well-attended book sales. However, the evidence that these schemes were tinged by colonial nostalgia and neo-colonial ideology problematises its philanthropic work and points to more complex relations between the literary and political fields. This chapter raises questions regarding the specific material and institutional conditions that acted to safeguard the universality of the French language during the period of the independences and govern the evolving relationship between language and French cultural hegemony. I will begin by tracing the history of the association and its stated aims before exploring the position of Jean d'Esme, president of ANEMOM from 1948 to 1964. I will then address the composition of membership and consider the annual book sale and literary prizes. Throughout, particular attention will be paid to the association's ideological proximity to and financial dependence on national political interests, despite its professed autonomy from that arena.

The shifting name and membership statutes of the association reflect the transitional status of France's overseas territories and former colonies and point to a compensatory focus on the universality of the French language. The many name changes of this association, as set out in the table below, give a clear indication of the unstable terms for this heterogeneous body of writers and show a shift from a focus on a national geographic space to that of an ostensibly untethered linguistic domain. These name changes illustrate the association's

¹⁶⁵ Tchicaya U'Tam'si was awarded the Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Afrique Équatoriale Française in 1957 for *Feu de brousse* (Caractères, 1957).

increasing efforts to link together writers of the French language, including many from countries not formerly colonised by France. The minutes of the Assemblée générale in March 1961 noted that the decision was made to refer to the French language in the association's name, “de lui donner l'appellation moins restrictive d'Association des Ecrivains d'Expression Française de la Mer et de l'Outre-Mer, qui lui confère un caractère international” (*Annuaire*, 1965: 4).¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ In this respect, the association's appeal to a shared linguistic community was a significant precursor of the Organisation de la *Francophonie*, founded in 1970 as the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique.

Figure 7. Name changes of ANEMOM, 1924 – 2012

Year	Name	Name(s) of President(s)
1924	Société des romanciers coloniaux	Marius-Ary Leblond (founders, then general secretaries)
1926 (Official declaration at the Préfecture de Police)	Société des romanciers et auteurs coloniaux français (SRACF) ¹⁶⁷	Louis Bertrand (1926 – 27); Pierre Mille (1927 – 1941) ; Louis Bertrand (1926 – 1928) ; Pierre Mille (1928 – 1936) Jean Ajalbert (1937-1939) ; Marius Leblond (1944-1948)
1948	Association nationale des écrivains coloniaux et maritimes	Jean d’Esme (1948 – 64)
1949	Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l’outre-mer (ANEMOM)	Jean d’Esme (1948 – 64)
1961	Association des écrivains de la mer et de l’outre-mer	Jean d’Esme (1948 – 64); Roger Coindreau (1964 –); Henri Queffelec (1964 – 69)
1967	Association des écrivains d’expression française de la mer et de l’outre-mer	Henri Queffelec (1964 – 69); Léonce Peillard (1969 – 71)
1968 – 2012	Association des écrivains de langue française (de la mer et de l’outre-mer) (ADELF)	Léonce Peillard (1969 – 71); Robert Cornevin (1971 – 1988); Edmond Jouve (1989 – 2002); Alain Guillaume (2003); Jacques Chévrier (2004 – present)

¹⁶⁷ Hargreaves notes that up to nine variations of this title exist in publications in the early years of the association (Hargreaves, Alec G., 1984: 5).

The Société des romanciers et auteurs coloniaux français (SRACF) was founded in 1924 by cousins Georges Athénas and Aimé Merlo, prolific writers born in Réunion and better known under their pen-name Marius-Ary Leblond.¹⁶⁸ Their interest in forms of literary consecration stemmed from their own renown as the first writers born in the French colonies to be awarded the Prix Goncourt (in 1909). The SRACF faced the widespread lack of interest or hostility among the metropolitan public during its early years and the sizable obstacle of communicating with writers scattered overseas across what was termed “la Plus Grande France” (Hargreaves, 1984: 3). Rival groups and prizes, notably the Association des Ecrivains Algériens founded by a group of Algerianist writers including leading French-Algerian novelist, Robert Randau, also impeded its development and the Leblonds’ desire to build deeper literary solidarity between colonial writers (English, 2005: 266-68). The SRACF’s early work was largely to promote colonial writing to publishers and the press in the face of the perceived indifference of the general public. In 1928, they introduced a lecture series on Littérature d’outre-mer at the École Coloniale and in 1931 they organised a successful Congrès de Littérature Coloniale as part of the Exposition Coloniale, in collaboration with the Institut Colonial. The latter event firmly established the society’s reputation and the financial patronage of the Ministère des Colonies (Hargreaves, 1984: 15). While most of the SRACF’s early activities remained in the metropole, they had established a branch in Réunion by 1938 and begun to create others in Mauritius, Indochina, Madagascar, and West Africa (Ibid). The legitimacy of this writing was promoted by demonstrating its close affiliation to the national, French, political project.

¹⁶⁸ “Les Leblond étaient sans doute favorisés par le fait que, bien que résidant en France, ils pouvaient tout de même se présenter comme d’authentiques coloniaux, puisqu’ils étaient nés outre-mer et y avaient passé leurs années formatives” (Hargreaves, Alec G., 1984: 10).

The society nominally united colonial writers in a period when colonial writing, whether ethnographic, adventure stories, or travel writing, was perceived as peripheral, in aesthetic and commercial terms. According to the inverted logic of the literary field, the association's increased dependency on the patronage of the Ministère des Colonies unavoidably undermined its claim to certain forms of recognition. The interwar marginalisation of colonial writing by publishers, journalists and critics in the metropolitan centre may suggest one reason why some early African writers joined the association, despite lack of autonomy in the literary field.

The SRACF reformed as the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer (ANEMOM) in 1948 under the leadership of writer, film-maker, and *homme de lettres* Jean d'Esme. It received its official "Reconnaissance d'utilité publique" on 19 July 1952.¹⁶⁹ This legal title signalled the further consecration of the association and recognition of its wider importance in the public eye, contrary to the relative indifference of the interwar years. Such official recognition of the public interest in overseas writing reflects the increase in literary publications of and on the Union française in this period, together with a national political agenda that sought to re-consolidate in different forms and with different means the idea of France and its overseas territories.

¹⁶⁹ The official approbation brought some legal advantages and conferred "une capacité plus étendue que celle qui est accordée aux associations simplement déclarées, c'est-à-dire le droit de recevoir des libéralités, sous réserve d'une autorisation du Préfet ou du Conseil d'État, et la capacité, en tant que personne morale, d'être en justice" (ANEMOM, 1954: 35).

The ANEMOM published news booklets erratically between 1948 and 1965, and a more substantial and regular journal from 1969, as set out below:¹⁷⁰

Figure 8. Publications of the association held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and at the offices of ADELFF 1949 – present.

Title of publication	Year
Bulletin annuaire ANEMOM	Jan 1949 – Spring 1954 (Issues 1 – 5, missing issue 4); 1959 (issue 6)
La vie du mois	Dec 1959 – Dec 1960 (seven issues)
Bulletin semestriel	Jan - Jun 1962 (Issue 1); Jul – Dec 1962 (Issue 2); Sep 1964 (Issue 3)
Bulletin annuel	1965 (Issue 4)
Annuaire	1965 (one issue)
Culture Française (joint publication with l'Association Culture Française)	1969 – 1983, 1952-1983 (annual publication)
Lettres et Cultures de Langue française	1984 – 2004 (Trimestrial; the website: www.adelf.org is now the main point of communication)

The ANEMOM manifesto, which prefaced several of these various bulletins throughout the fifties, set out its aims in unmistakably imperial rhetoric that affirmed the symbolic (and economic) value of its federating mission. It begins by declaring the confident position of overseas writing in the metropolitan field:

Tout le monde est aujourd'hui d'accord – et sans discussion: la littérature de la Mer et de l'Outre-Mer occupe, dans la cité littéraire française, une place telle qu'elle pourrait, sans crainte, se dispenser de préciser ses tendances et de faire connaître ses desseins. (ANEMOM, 1954: 3)

¹⁷⁰ This list is based on Robert Cornevin's article and incomplete collections in the BnF.

The manifesto reconfirms that its projects are “hors de toute opinion politique, hors de toute conception religieuse, hors de toute idée philosophique, hors de toute chapelle littéraire” (Ibid). A colonial humanistic ideal, of “hommes de bonne volonté [...] dispersés sur la vaste Terre, qui font la Grande Communauté” echoes precisely contemporaneous rhetoric of the Fourth Republic’s Union française as a new framework for French *grandeur*. The text’s patriotic ode to Enlightenment values concludes with a patriotic flourish: “nous désirons travailler, avec foi, au renouvellement du prestige de la France et au raffermissement de son éternelle grandeur” (Ibid). The idealised relationship is that of enriching exchange and solidarity. The tone of the text goes against Jean-Marc Moura’s analysis of colonial literature’s postwar demise and in fact suggests a renewed sense of purpose following the interwar slump (Moura, 1998: 198).

The stated aim realigns links between writers in French in order to cement a sense of community along the lines of the universalised values of a “fraternité intellectuelle”. Yet unlike the federating impulse in Damas’ anthology, for example, there is an ongoing association with the imperial centre here:

Nous voulons ardemment que rayonne, magnifique, la pensée de notre pays avec tout ce qu’elle apporte aux hommes de clarté et de raison. Dans l’éblouissant faisceau de lumière qu’elle projette, éloignés de toute lutte indigne de notre idéal, nous tenterons de faire naître, partout, le souffle de notre génie national dans sa plus grande noblesse et sa plus éclatante pureté.

The project of the reformed association is described with the familiar hyperbole of the reconfigured Union française and its reliance on an idealised relationship of enriching exchange and solidarity:

Les liens que nous voulons maintenir et renforcer, par d’incessants échanges spirituels, entre les représentants les plus variés de l’expression française, sous

quelques cieux qu'elle se manifeste, nous les rendrons si intimement puissants, que tous, avec leurs aspirations particulières, avec leur vie propre et leurs conceptions personnelles, pourront, enfin, se retrouver mains serrées, confiants et désormais solidaires, sur les routes de culture: ce sont les seules qui conduisent vers le merveilleux visage d'une commune patrie spirituelle.

The utopian cultural politics here chime with those of Senghorian métissage, though the complex co-ordinates of black cultural nationalism and other forms of anti-colonial cultural activity are not alluded to. There is little mention of specific literary or aesthetic aims in this inclusive rhetoric, as found for example in Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*, prefaced by Sartre's "Orphée noir", published the same year. Unsurprisingly, there is no allusion to the reality of social and economic inequalities in France, nor to the violent struggles taking place in France's overseas territories in Cameroon, Indochina, Algeria and Madagascar in this period. The professed autonomy from such political concerns is in fact consistently undermined by the association's economic, political, and social connections.

The manifesto appeared in the bulletin of the association until 1959, together with the official statutes which set out ANEMOM's aims in formal terms:

- 1) de donner à la propagande culturelle intéressant la Mer et l'Outre-Mer l'impulsion la plus large et le caractère le plus élevé, aussi bien dans la Métropole que dans l'Outre-Mer faisant partie de l'Union Française;
- 2) de grouper toutes les activités d'ordre intellectuel et social de la Métropole et d'Outre-Mer en vue de la défense et du rayonnement de la Civilisation et des traditions Françaises, de l'exaltation des beautés et des richesses artistiques et économiques d'Outre-Mer;
- 3) d'assurer la diffusion de la littérature de la Mer et de l'Outre-Mer en France et à l'Étranger, en même temps que de sauvegarder les intérêts moraux et matériels des écrivains appartenant à l'Association. (ANEMOM, 1954: 6)

Much of this vocabulary echoes the political and cultural post-war context described in the previous chapters, in its professed aim to consolidate the cultural capital of the newly formed Union française. Yet these aims were built on unstable ground. The third item regarding book distribution presents a more material goal, also expressed in the interwar period (Hargreaves, 1984: 13), though there is no evidence of ANEMOM's involvement in overseas distribution of books.

The quiet displacement of France as imperial centre in this period is in little evidence in the pages of ANEMOM's early publications. In 1959, the statutes were amended to include the following items:

- 3) Offrir aux écrivains autochtones un organisme capable de les aider à conquérir l'audience du public français en attirant son attention sur leurs œuvres [...]
- 5) Constituer une Société dont les membres, étroitement et fraternellement solidaires, s'entr'aident, grâce à une série de services sociaux chargés de les secourir, eux ou leurs familles, dans leurs difficultés morales ou matérielles. (ANEMOM, 1959)

The ANEMOM sought to build up the cultural and symbolic capital of “overseas” writing, in all its variety, through its literary and social activities. Rather than focusing only upon popular adventure stories or on more avant-garde forms, the association promoted a wide range of high, low, and middle-brow writing. In this sense, the mode of consecration did not work towards promoting the dominant (modernist) idea of literary legitimacy that Casanova suggests was defined by publishers in a Parisian centre. Indeed it might well be argued, in one sense, that the ANEMOM promoted overseas writing precisely by maintaining its distance from the universalising strategies of Parisian publishers and

avant-garde formalist concerns and setting out a distinct symbolic space for “overseas” literature.

We can now turn to the individuals behind the organisation, and the changing composition of membership in the 1950s and 1960s, in order to analyse in more detail the social composition of this “fraternal” organisation and the strategic symbolic capital of its activities and its prizes.

“Le chantre de l’épopée impériale” (Cornevin, 1967). Jean d’Esme at the helm of the ANEMOM

The Vicomte d’Esmenard, better known as Jean d’Esme (1894 – 1966), was a writer, journalist and film-maker who led ANEMOM from 1948 – 64. His creative works are informed by his personal and familial experience of France’s overseas territories and the aspirations of a mid-twentieth-century *homme de lettres*.¹⁷¹ Born in Shanghai, his family were civil servants who had been based in Réunion since 1850. D’Esme grew up in Indochina, pursuing secondary education in Paris before his acceptance at the École Coloniale in 1914. He deferred this place during the war, but by 1919 had decided to eschew the pathway to the colonial administration and embark instead on a career in journalism. He travelled widely in Central and Eastern Africa, visited Ethiopia, Madagascar and Indochina. As well as working for several different newspapers, his creative output included over twenty novels, travel-writing, plays and several films

¹⁷¹ D’Esme’s novel, *Épaves australes*, was reprinted in 2005 in L’Harmattan’s *Autrement mêmes* series.

inspired by his travels.¹⁷² He wrote biographies of military heroes Maréchal Leclerc, Henry de Bournazel, Joseph Gallieni and Charles de Gaulle. D'Esme's writing suggests an enduring nostalgia for France's imperial past. In 1959 he published *D'héroïsme et de gloire* (Hachette), a collection of récits of nineteenth-century colonial warfare and conquest, in which he asserted wistfully:

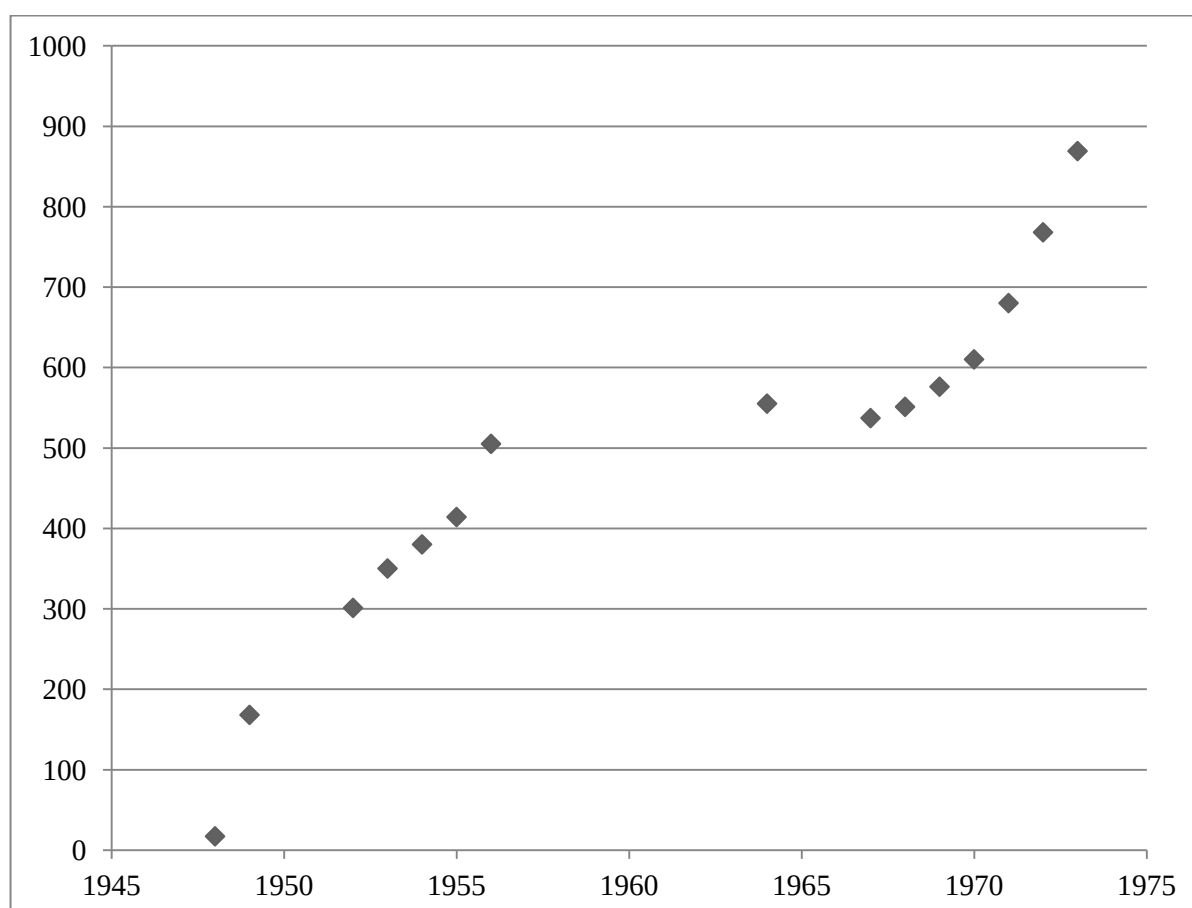
Ce ne sont, en aucune façon, des nouvelles où l'invention et l'imagination ont eu leur part. Chacun de ces récits est, au contraire, strictement vrai. J'entends par là que les événements et les personnages qu'on y trouve appartiennent à l'Histoire - et à l'Histoire seule. A l'histoire de ce rare accomplissement que fut 'l'Empire colonial français' - ainsi qu'on disait tout naturellement, naguère encore. (D'Esme, 1959: avant propos).

D'Esme was president of ANEMOM from 1948 until his retirement due to ill health in 1964. During this time he was also president of the Société des Gens de Lettres (1955 – 56). According to Robert Cornevin – himself a key figure in the subsequent history of the association – d'Esme was largely behind the refounding of ANEMOM in 1948. Cornevin writes that d'Esme “eut le mérite de comprendre très tôt le caractère inéluctable de la décolonisation, l'émergence des nouvelles nations et la nécessaire transformation de l'association” (Cornevin, 1967: 39). Following a long period based at offices in the rue de la Bienfaisance in the eighth arrondissement, ANEMOM moved to the headquarters of the Société des Gens de Lettres, the Hôtel de Massa in the 14th arrondissement of Paris, from 1966, following financial difficulties. This was not the first time the two organisations had collaborated. SRACF had been based at this same location in the 1930s, following the encouragement of Jean Vignaud, a loyal supporter of colonial writing and an earlier president of the Société des Gens de Lettres. This early connection was an important symbolic marker for the association and the links with this institution continued to lend prestige to ANEMOM within certain social milieux in the post-war period.

¹⁷² For a full bibliography, see: Cornevin, Robert, 1967; Cornevin, Robert, 1975: 224-5.

There is no record of membership figures during the interwar phase of the association. The early bulletins include administrative and financial reports from the annual general meetings as well as a directory of members. Members were either writers from overseas, those writing about French-speaking territories, or people who “had made important services to overseas literature” (ANEMOM, 1954: Statuts, article III). As this chart shows, membership gradually increased in the post-war period, from just 17 in 1948, to 869 in 1969:

Figure 9: Number of ANEMOM members according to available annual reports 1948 –74



The gap in the data for the period surrounding the independences themselves, followed by a slight dip in membership, is explained by both the financial and symbolic insecurity of

this period in the association's history. The steep increase from 1970 onwards may be attributable to the formation of the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, precursor of the Organisation de la *Francophonie* and a key source of funding for the renamed ADELFI.

The vast majority of members were resident in France. Analysis of the 1954 membership directory shows that over two thirds were based in the Île de France region surrounding Paris, with over a third of the total living in the wealthiest 7th, 8th, and 16th arrondissements. The dominant professions are either politics, the civil service or the military. There are several *hommes de lettres* with listed affiliations to the Académie Française, the Société des Gens de Lettres, or to the Académie des Sciences Coloniales, as well as marks of military distinction. The small number of members belies their sizable economic and political capital.

D'Esme's role was supported by the committee of the association and the support of its *comité d'honneur*. In 1954 this included Paul Claudel, Claude Farrère, Georges Duhamel, Maurice Bedel, Robert Delavignette, François Charles-Roux, Pierre Descaves and Pierre Mac-Orlan. The *haut-patron* of ANEMOM was Charles de Gaulle, and the *comité de patronage* included Belgian, Canadian and Luxembourg ambassadors as well as seven French ministers. From 1961, twelve presidents of the newly independent nations in Africa became patrons. The position of non-French members within the association remains somewhat ambiguous. Membership statutes of the association detailed:

Peuvent être adhérents, les écrivains français ou de langue française de la Métropole ou d'Outre-Mer, ayant écrit au moins un livre ou des articles

représentant au minimum trois mille lignes, ou des personnes qui, sans avoir écrit, ont rendu d'importants services à la littérature de la Mer et de l'Outre-Mer. (ANEMOM, 1954: Statuts, art.III)

In 1965, this article was amended with the addition of the following sentence: “Les membres étrangers ne pourront, en aucun cas, dépasser le quart de l'effectif total des membres” (ANEMOM, 1965: 14). The current statutes no longer include this amendment, but instead state that “Les membres étrangers pourront former des sections particulières régies par le règlement intérieur de l'ADELF”. The position of non-French members within the organisation remained ambiguous in the period of the independence. Such details reveal the unstable basis on which the association operated and its gradual adjustment to the changing position of the French language in the world.

A number of African and Caribbean writers joined the association in the late 1950s. Members listed in the bulletins include René Maran, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Joseph Zobel, Mongo Beti, Camara Laye, and Tchicaya U'Tamsi, among others. It is impossible to ascertain the exact circumstances of each of these writers' decision to join ANEMOM, though the presence of militant anti-colonialists such as Beti is surprising. The aims outlined above are certainly at odds with Beti's trenchant articles on Camara Laye and against received, exotic representations of Africa in the 1950s, to be explored further in the next chapter. Could his decision have been a result of the success of *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba*, which won the Prix Sainte-Beuve? Was he encouraged to join by his commercially-minded publishers at Julliard? While he was a member of the organisation, it seems probable that this was for reasons of commercial contingency rather than any ideological affiliation. There was, it seems, a certain pragmatic solidarity fostered by the marginal position of representations of sub-Saharan Africa in the Parisian literary scene.

Membership gave access to more potential readers and, at least in theory, a potentially larger network of diffusion and distribution beyond France.

In 1958, ANEMOM organised its first Colloque international des écrivains d'expression française, held in Liège from 30 September to 5 October. The event brought together writers of the French language from ten different countries, including Belgium, Canada, Greece, Israel, Vietnam and the "Union Française". A representative from each country gave a presentation and topics of discussion included, "L'écrivain et l'édition", "l'écrivain et les moyens d'expression moderne autres que le livre". Participants voted unanimously to create "une Fédération Internationale des Écrivains Francophones", whose first resolution was to abolish: "des droits de douane et les contingentements sur toutes les oeuvres littéraires de langue française publiées à l'étranger, en vue d'arriver à une libre circulation des dites oeuvres littéraires d'expression française dans toute la communauté de langue française" (ANEMOM, 1958: 55). The obstacle of tariffs on book imports/exports was ongoing in this period, despite the UN "Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials", agreed by France in 1957.¹⁷³

According to published proceedings of the event, the representative of the Union française was Mongo Beti. Beti's widow, Odile Tobner, has expressed considerable doubt about his participation in such an event. Leading Beti scholar Ambroise Kom suggests that he may have been automatically co-opted into the association, and claims that it was never

¹⁷³ <http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12074&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html> [accessed January 2013]. See also: Behrstock, Julien, 1965.

mentioned during their conversations.¹⁷⁴ This scepticism is corroborated by the tone of contributions to the conference proceedings. Auguste Joyau, president of the Association des Écrivains Antillais, contributes a report on literature from this region. Further to several glaring typographical errors, including the title of Beti's most recent novel, the tone of his text is distant from contemporary critical work in Beti's trenchant articles on Camara Laye's novels:

La littérature d'expression française de l'Afrique noire est particulièrement riche en romanciers et en conteurs. Cette terre d'Afrique, qui a inspiré à René Maran ses plus beaux livres, a vu s'épanouir, ces derniers temps, toute une génération d'écrivains de tendances et d'expression les plus diverses, mais tous d'une incontestable originalité. Outre Diop BIRAGO, dont les Contes d'Amadou Koumba ont reçu un accueil chaleureux, Ousman Sogé [sic] avec Karim, Camara LAYE avec L'enfant noir, Ferdinand OYNO [sic] avec Une vie de Boy se sont acquis une place de choix parmi les romanciers de leur époque. Abdoulaye SADJI ainsi que Mongo Beti avec Mission Impossible [sic], puis Le Roi Miraculé, ont connu un succès mérité [...] dans tous les domaines, les écrivains de l'outre-mer ont apporté leur pierre à l'édifice national. (ANEMOM, 1958: 48)

This list of African literary writing overlooks the concurrent emergence of a critical tradition in *Présence Africaine* and in student newspapers that distinguished between authors on grounds other than a nondescript "incontestable originalité", or their contribution to a national French paradigm.

The performance of colonial literature at the salons de vente-dédicace

In 1933, the president of SRACF, Pierre Mille, called for the creation of a regular Parisian salon at which socio-political and cultural affairs in the colonies could be discussed. He wrote "La cause coloniale ne serait gagnée que quand on aura pu constituer à Paris des salons coloniaux" (Hargreaves, 1984: 14). While this early initiative had only limited

¹⁷⁴ Email correspondence with Odile Tobner and Ambroise Kom [June 2011].

success, the annual salon de vente de livres introduced after the war by d'Esme and presided over by the Comtesse Henry de Bournazel, the widow of a colonial military hero, became a key social occasion for the members of ANEMOM and another deeply symbolic space in Parisian literary geography.

The book fairs and accompanying award ceremonies were important social occasions for a certain demographic in Paris, attended by 4000 people in 1952 and 8000 in 1959. They provided the opportunity to confer symbolic and political prestige. The glitzy opening was attended in its early years by the French President, Vincent Auriol, and subsequently by a Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁷⁵ The staging of colonial literature at these events was characterised by exoticising decor evident in descriptions of the event:

Chez nous, on vient pour retrouver – ou connaître – cette ambiance affectionnée des marins et des coloniaux, où tout parle de la mer et de l'outre-mer. La salle tout d'abord, artistiquement décorée par les services du Ministère de la rue Oudinot, avec de larges tentures qui rappellent ici Tananarive, là Bamako, là tel autre coin de la brousse tonkinoise ou de nos vieilles "Îles". (ANEMOM, 1954: 61)

In these surroundings, the economic and symbolic exchange takes place around the nexus of a community based on shared colonial experience, here reconstructed in microcosm at the former colonial ministry. Uniformed students of the Institut des Hautes Etudes d'Outre-Mer led the singing of the Marseillaise and guided visitors around the halls, while the books themselves became symbols of the colonial mission:

Voici des livres et des livres aux couvertures multicolores, qui à elles seules suffisent à faire rêver du grand soleil des tropiques, des sables, du désert, de toutes les brousses, des chevauchées à méhara, des longues descentes de fleuve en pirogue, des randonnées plus longues encore en auto ou en avion à travers les continents –

¹⁷⁵ In 1954, President Vincent Auriol donated 100,000 F to found a Grand Prix Littéraire du Président de l'Union Française, though there is no evidence that this prize was awarded in subsequent years.

et de toute cette humanité grouillante, si variée, si attirante de nos pays d’Outre-Mer. (Ibid)

The colonial experience is reduced to the uncharacteristically vibrant covers of the books on display. The sense of prestige and of social occasion scarcely conceal nostalgia for the so-called “grande épopée”, and the affiliations between the State ideology and the *mondanité* of the association’s social activities.

The events were held in high-status locations such as the Overseas Ministry (rue Oudinot), the UNESCO buildings, or the Aéro-Club de France. They gave writers and publishers the chance to promote new writing from the French-speaking world. As Général Jean Charbonneau stated in the 1954 annual report: “La presse parisienne, provinciale et d’outre-mer signale avec sympathie nos diverses manifestations, et notamment l’octroi des divers prix littéraires” (40). The success of the booksales was a further indication of the strategic consecration of “overseas literature” by the French State, reflected elsewhere in the government’s installation of cultural attachés in French embassies throughout the world in the post-war period (Lebovics, 1999: 186). The salons and award ceremonies were also a vital source of income for the association. In 1952, almost a million francs of funding came from the Ministry of French Overseas territories and the Navy, while book sales topped 0.8 million. By 1959, income from the book sale reached a new record at 3.4 million francs.¹⁷⁶ Despite ANEMOM professing a position of political disinterest in its manifesto, these occasions were closely linked to political bodies of the French State, both in their public parades, and in the columns of their account books.

¹⁷⁶ The financial report of 1952 indicates that from the total credit of 1.8 million francs, 0.9 million came from subventions, 0.8 million from the annual booksale, and 49,244 francs from membership fees. In 1953, the income from the booksale rose to 2.3 million, membership fees being 71,110, and subventions 475,000 ANEMOM, 1954: 27. In the 1959 budget, the book sale reached a new record at 3.4 million francs.

Prizing African literature in French

The first prizes to be founded were the Grand Prix Littéraire de la Mer et de l’Outre-Mer and the Grand Prix Littéraire de l’A.O.F. in 1949 and 1950, respectively (see Appendix 2 for complete list of laureates). While the former prize petered out in the 1960s, the latter has survived as the Grand Prix d’Afrique Noire, renamed in 1960. The prize was first awarded jointly to Ousmane Socé Diop and to Birago Diop in 1950, though subsequent awards in that decade were exclusively to metropolitan writers writing on Africa.¹⁷⁷

Winning books included fiction and non-fiction, ranging from travel writing, history, adventure novels to what might be termed “middle-brow” fiction.¹⁷⁸ There is little consistency in the genre or style of book awarded the prize in the 1950s, apart from the absence of any strongly anti-colonial voices, and near-absence of poetry.¹⁷⁹ According to jury member, René Charbonneau, writing in 1954, the jury sought to reward “la pureté et la vigueur du style, les qualités d’observation et sans exclure celles de l’originalité, s’il s’agit de romans” (Charbonneau, 1954). It is interesting to note the foregrounding of style here alongside more ethnographic qualities of observation, and an undefined notion of originality. The African qualities of the texts were defined at the level of content, as seen for example in the awarding of the prize to two texts published under African pseudonyms in the 1950s, including Christine Garnier’s *Va t’en avec les tiens!*, originally published under an African pseudonym as a publicity hoax by publisher Bernard Grasset (see next chapter). From 1960 onwards, according to the statutes still in place today, “l’ouvrage primé devra être celui d’un écrivain d’expression française originaire d’un des Etats de l’Afrique Noire” (ANEMOM, 1960: 3). The scope thus narrows to a list based on

¹⁷⁷ The prize was open to writers “d’expression française originaire de l’Union Française (autochtone ou métropolitain) et consacrée exclusivement à l’A.O.F.” (ANEMOM, 1954: 81).

¹⁷⁸ The definition and use of the terms “low-brow” and “middle-brow” remains vexed in academic discussion of postcolonial literature (Bongie, Chris, 2008; Moudileno, Lydie, 2008). For a pertinent discussion of the emergence of the “middle-brow” as a category of taste see: Radway, Janice A., 1997. See also: Bourdieu, Pierre, 1983; Bourdieu, Pierre, 1987: 178-84.

¹⁷⁹ In the past fifty years only three books of poetry have received the prize.

a notion of fixed geographical identity. From 1962 the jury included three representatives of the new African republics (ANEMOM, 1964), together with three members of ADELFI and a representative of the Ministry of Cooperation, set up to contribute to development of newly independent countries in 1960.

“La griserie de ‘l’Indépendance” (ANEMOM, 1960: 7). The changing literary landscape of decolonisation

1959 was a quiet year for ANEMOM. The main literary prizes were not awarded and it was noted that:

Cette année 1959 n’aura pas été celle des réalisations spectaculaires. A vrai dire, les circonstances s’y prêtaient mal. Dans l’instabilité organique de nos institutions, avec l’évolution continue de la Communauté, il n’apparaissait guère opportun de pousser la mise au point de nos projets. (ANEMOM, 1960: 3)

In his yearly report of June 1960, Roger Coindreau, a former naval captain who would replace Jean d’Esme as President of ANEMOM, and whose publications included books on North Africa and naval history, set out a decisive response to the changing horizon of the French national imaginary:

Il n’est en effet ni paradoxal, ni téméraire d’affirmer que notre rôle est appelé à grandir au fur et à mesure que, répudiant le vocable maudit de ‘colonialisme’, les pays de notre ancien Empire cèdent les uns après les autres à la griserie de ‘l’Indépendance’. Pendant de longues années nous avons été les tuteurs vigilants de ces pays. Nous les avons pétris de notre culture. Leurs habitants, en dehors des dialectes locaux, ne connaissent pour la plupart que le français. Ainsi se sont forgés entre nous des liens moins fragiles sans doute que des liens politiques. Ce sont ces liens culturels qu’il importe avant tout de maintenir et de renforcer. Dès lors nous apparaît avec une grandeur nouvelle la mission spirituelle de la France, patrie des Arts et des Lettres. Cette mission nous dicte à nous, écrivains de la Mer et de l’Outre-Mer, notre devoir celui de tout mettre en œuvre pour sauvegarder ‘l’imprégnation française’ hors de nos frontières et, singulièrement, dans ces territoires d’Outre-Mer qui furent nôtres et dont, moins que jamais, nous ne devons nous désintéresser. (ANEMOM, 1960: 7)

Coindreau's rhetoric reiterates the tone and the content of the association's manifesto in very general terms that reinforce the proposed link between language and culture. This generalisation enables him to diagnose a paternalistic role for members that rests on a (frankly inaccurate) dismissal of the relative position of indigenous languages ("des dialectes locaux"). He calls to secure cultural links despite the political independences that nonetheless maintain a dichotomy between European subject ("nous") and the Outre-Mer population ("leurs habitants"). "Nous" in this context refers firstly to the members of the association, but also to the imagined francophone community. The failure to acknowledge the changing composition of the association's membership, with several prominent overseas writers on its list, implies that the adaptation to new political realities was only partial.

Despite this colonial baggage, the prize has provided a rare window for specialist African publishers, faced with the centripetal force of larger Parisian publishing houses. After 1960, titles published by Présence Africaine received the prize, and increasingly books from newly formed publishing houses: Éditions CLE in Cameroon and Nouvelles Éditions Africaines in Senegal were rewarded. Of this list, however, only Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* has gone on to achieve long-term consecration. A quarter of all the 62 books awarded the prize since 1961 were published in Africa, yet attitudes towards the prize remain divided. Some respect the quality of previous laureates and the work of the association's members, while others see it as a sign of ghettoisation whose evaluative criteria are a barrier to ostensibly more universal modes of consecration.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ The 2007 "Manifeste pour une littérature-monde" argued that French-language writing from outside France was no longer marginalised by Parisian literary institutions since this writing has repeatedly been awarded the main French literary prizes in the 1990s and 2000s. The legitimacy of the specialised prizes of

Conclusion

This institutional history of prize culture provides a counterbalance to existing commentaries on anti-colonial literary writing and the cultural solidarities surrounding the *négritude* movement in the postwar period. The counterbalance rests on an often-shared dedication to the value of the French language, despite the divergent political valencies of that paradigmatic language-culture relationship within literary spaces of the French capital. In the 1950s, the Grand Prix littéraire de l'A.O.F. was a mode of legitimation that staked its autonomy on a non-reflexive appeal to the universality of the French language. Its awarding body continued to view its role as maintaining cultural links between France and French-speaking countries, without questioning the colonial matrix of this goal. The idea of African literature located in the work and publications of ANEMOM is always in relation to the idea of the Union française and, increasingly, to that of a transnational body of literature in French. The political weight of its *comité de patronage* and financial backing by the Ministère de l'Outre-mer and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, suggest that its goals and strategies for promoting literature of and on France's overseas territories are bound up with issues of French cultural hegemony. At a basic material level, ANEMOM was attentive to the needs of writers, providing financial assistance and a means of accessing new readers. While it did not directly shape literary production in the same way as publishers, the association's history does provide clear evidence of the uneven mechanisms of literary consecration in this period and their location within social and political structures. Overall, this case study shows the need for a longer history of prize culture in relation to African literary production, as part of the

ADELFF has dwindled as the ostensibly "universal" Parisian mechanisms of literary recognition have gradually opened up to international writing in French. For an interesting parallel with Huggan's withering critique of the Booker prize, see: Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 263.

larger project to understand more clearly the institutional settings and overlapping material conditions in which ideas of African literature have emerged.

The apparent contrasts drawn between militant anti-colonial writing, *négritude* rhetoric, and colonial exoticism, are here blurred by considering the location of “African” literature within a specific case of consecration in the literary field. The socio-political composition of colonial literary networks, the aesthetic, political and commercial biases, and responses to the reconfiguration of France’s overseas possessions revealed in their publications suggest a gradual, if highly contingent, response and adaptation to the dissolution of the French Empire. As Janos Riesz has suggested, locating “African” writing alongside the hypotext of colonial writing is an important reminder of the inescapable contextual realities of literary production (Riesz, 2001: 117). Considered in terms of the literary field, this institutional case study illustrates the structural impact of an incipient colonial nostalgia in a largely metropolitan readership endowed with considerable cultural, political and economic capital, the symbolic stability of which was no longer guaranteed.

There is tension and unevenness in the different kinds of prestige bestowed by ANEMOM in the post-war period. The ambivalent vaunting of “originality”, firstly as a quality of *all* overseas writing in French, and secondly as a criterion of evaluation for their literary prizes, appears to fall into reductive ideas of “authenticity”. This “authenticity” operates firstly at the level of content, yet is increasingly bound to authorial identity in the political and cultural context of decolonisation. In aspiration at least, ANEMOM seeks to move beyond its Parisian context by encouraging transnational, minor-to-minor contact between writers, and awarding prizes based on criteria that do not adhere to dominant ideas of

aesthetic universalism. Yet contrasts between *négritude* rhetoric, militant anti-colonial writing, and colonial exoticism, are blurred when considered in this specific institutional setting. Particular strategies and points of contact emerge that show how earlier colonial literary networks, and their aesthetic and political ideas, responded to the dissolution of the French Empire. Having considered how such forces operated through *Présence Africaine* and ANEMOM, I will now turn to qualitative individual case studies to consider in greater detail how ideas of the exotic, the colonial, and literary modernity operated within these publishing contexts.

The next chapter will broach the paradox of popularity addressed by Mongo Beti in the pages of *Présence Africaine*. The resulting interrogation of realism and exoticism as literary modes leads to a comparison with the publishing history of Christine Garnier's bestselling *Va t'en avec les tiens!* and the consideration of the ongoing dominance of colonial literary discourse in the post-war literary field. The juxtaposition of Garnier's middle-brow text with the explicitly anti-colonial work of *Présence Africaine* suggests specific ways in which this discourse was sustained by the institutions which selected, promoted, and distributed literary texts.

CHAPTER FIVE

Authenticity, authorship, and pseudonymity: the case of Christine Garnier

This chapter will consider the largely forgotten work of Christine Garnier, a journalist, travel writer, and best-selling novelist.¹⁸¹ Garnier published several novels and books on travel and ethnography in the postwar period based on her time spent in West Africa.¹⁸² I will here explore the link between Mongo Beti's cutting assessment of the French literary marketplace in his well-known article "Afrique Noire, littérature rose", published in *Présence Africaine* in 1955, and Garnier's bestseller *Va-t'en avec les tiens* (1951), published under an "African" pseudonym by Bernard Grasset. This linking resists racial, national or gender-based critical frameworks in order to unpick the commercial strategies of a prominent mainstream publisher in the metropolitan literary field. In the light of ongoing research into issues of plagiarism and textual ownership in francophone writing, the hoax surrounding authorial identity in Garnier's first novel strikes a dissonant chord.¹⁸³ Scholarly debate over misattributed authorship in Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir* (1953) and *Le Regard du roi* (1954) continues to rumble on in reaction to Adèle King's detailed study, which firmly establishes Laye's extensive collaboration with French authors.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ An earlier version of this chapter was published in the *Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies* (Bush, Ruth, 2011g).

¹⁸² Including: *Le Fétichisme en Afrique noire* (1950), *Va t'en avec les tiens* (1951), *Les Héros sont fatigués: Visages du Libéria* (1953), *La Fête des sacrifices* (1959), *Dakar* (1961).

¹⁸³ Thomas, Hargreaves and Hitchcott raise a series of key questions regarding textual ownership, arguing that "the formal ownership of francophone texts needs to be read in the context of a more complex tension between cultural dependency and autonomy" (Thomas, Dominic, Alec G. Hargreaves and Nicki Hitchcott, 2006: viii).

¹⁸⁴ According to King, authorial collaboration between Camara Laye, Francis Soulié and Robert Poulet at the publishing house Plon undermines any definitive identification of the author of either *L'Enfant noir* or *Le Regard du roi* King, Adele, 2003. These are not isolated examples of the use of pseudonyms in colonial and postcolonial writing. Other vexed cases of textual ownership in this period include the work of Mayotte Capécia (Arnold, A. James, 2003; Thomas, Dominic, Alec G. Hargreaves and Nicki Hitchcott, 2006).

Abiola Irele has written of the risks of compounding a Eurocentric notion of authorship and questions both the motives of King's project and the effect of undermining authorial integrity in postcolonial contexts. The example of Garnier's text – which also has clear intertextual resonance in Ousmane Sembene's 1956 novel of authorial expropriation, *Le Docker noir* – reinforces King's depiction of the publishing context of Camara Laye's texts. In the light of the institutional contexts of anti-colonialism, tiers-mondisme and colonial nostalgia presented in the previous chapters, Grasset's publishing strategy reinforces the metropolitan taste for exotic representations and for carefully staged performances of African authorship. This case-study illustrates the ways in which authenticity, or rather the illusion of authenticity, played out as a contested indicator of literary value in the post-war period.

Exoticism and colonial mythology

As the preceding chapter showed, the recognition of literary voices from the French colonies by the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer took place gradually, yet decisively from the late 1950s onwards. Commercially-minded publishers such as Grasset and Julliard continued to attract metropolitan readers with paratextual rhetoric of authenticity and *exotisme* – mainstays of interwar colonial literature that depended on tropes of cultural difference. Faced with political rhetoric of French "union" and Republican universalism, carefully negotiated by Le Seuil and Présence Africaine, this literary production depended on stereotypes – what Roland Barthes termed "le mythe petit-bourgeois du nègre" (1957: 70). It was similarly tied to an emphasis on the intrinsic value of the French language, epitomised by the criteria of the ANEMOM literary prizes.

Polemical reaction to Jack-Alain Léger's *Vivre me tue* (Balland, 1997), published under the name Paul Smail, suggests further ways in which these issues confront with his/her assumptions regarding biographical "authenticity" (Begag, Azouz and Alec G. Hargreaves, 2006).

In *Mythologies*, Barthes isolates the limited, dehumanizing portrayal of Africa as “un guignol un peu dangereux” (72) in the weekly glossy magazine, *Paris Match*. His example is the magazine’s serialised, semi-fictional account of Bichon, a white French baby who has been taken to a unspecified part of sub-Saharan Africa by his art-teacher parents. The huge readership (“un million et demi de lecteurs”) of the very limited representations of Africans in these articles and their parody of ethnographic veracity, provides evidence, for Barthes, of “une de nos servitudes majeures: le divorce accablant de la connaissance et de la mythologie” (72). He concludes with a transhistorical and transcolonial demystification of this “mythe”:

Voltaire n’écrit pas aujourd’hui les aventures de Bichon comme l’a fait *Match*: il imaginerait plutôt quelque Bichon cannibale (ou coréen) aux prises avec le “guignol” napalmisé de l’Occident. (73)

Such reductive myths remained integral to the post-war national imaginary as it underwent connected processes of modernisation and decolonisation. Anglophone and francophone postcolonial literary studies have enabled sustained critique of the exoticizing gaze and of colonial myth as discourse with ramifications beyond this disciplinary space. Textualist approaches that, to a certain extent, overlook how imperial rhetoric and colonial stereotypes were produced and participated unevenly in the metropolitan literary marketplace alongside resistant, anti-colonial voices can be usefully extended by reconstructing a fuller portrait of the literary field.¹⁸⁵

Jean-Marc Moura has described the post-war period as an “époque de silence, d’anomie [...] pour l’exotisme” (1998: 198) that began in Western Europe with the advent of

¹⁸⁵ In this respect, Fanon’s critique of the novels of Mayotte Capécia and Abdoulaye Sadjou may be seen to have delegitimised these texts. Chris Bongie argues that such hierarchies derive from a critical foregrounding of literary texts of resistance and perceived marginality (Bongie, Chris, 2008).

decolonisation. Nonetheless, other examples of the ongoing “mythologisation” of sub-Saharan Africa in the post-war years, further to Garnier’s novels, might include adventure stories in Henri Vernes’s *Bob Morane* series, or the *Signe de piste* collection, illustrated by Pierre Joubert. Both continued to stage Africa and Africans as a backdrop for narratives of European adventurers (Gout and Jamot, 2005). One text in the latter series, *Kel’lam fils d’Afrique* (Alsatia, 1958), by Catholic missionary Jean-Marie Carret, was also published under an African pseudonym, Kindengve N’Djok, though the publication does not appear to have provoked the same reaction, or sales, as Garnier’s text. Rehabilitating texts that continue to exert a certain discursive violence does not seek to redress the valuable work achieved by the focus of many postcolonial scholars on subaltern, under-represented voices. Instead, it locates contemporaneous arguments for authentically African literature found in the work of Beti, Senghor, or Cheikh Anta Diop, more clearly in relation to publishing strategies in the metropolitan literary field.¹⁸⁶

As established by several important studies, their complex histories mean that the terms “exotisme” and “exoticism” remain “sites of contested meanings” (Forsdick, 2005: 49), applied pejoratively to exclusionary discursive othering, the sedimentation of negative associations with stereotypical imagery.¹⁸⁷ Exoticist writing of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mediated the experience of modernity as part of a recuperative but ultimately impossible project – representing an idealised “authenticity” that has ““always already been lost and forgotten” in the imperial context (Bongie, 1991: 26). The decline of imperial power precipitated significant re-evaluations of exoticism in the

¹⁸⁶ A similar project, showing how an unusually broad range of post-war English novels provide a space for re-imagining the imperial nation in decline, is pursued in Bill Schwartz and Rachel Gilmour’s recent collected volume: *End of Empire and the English Novel Since 1945* (Manchester UP, 2011).

¹⁸⁷ See also: Todorov, Tzvetan, 1989; Yee, Jennifer, 2009.

twentieth century, notably in the work of Victor Segalen, who aimed to “le dépouiller de tous ses oripeaux: le palmier et le chameau; casque de colonial; peaux noires et soleil jaune” (Segalen, 1978; 1955: 22). Segalen placed all experience of racial, cultural, and gendered otherness within the remit of *exotisme* and argued that some individuals, “exotes”, were especially attuned to the aesthetic potential of these encounters. Thus *exotisme* became in his writing a universal system for apprehending otherness and rendering an “esthétique du divers” (Segalen, 1978; 1955).¹⁸⁸ Janos Riesz has argued for the need to consider early “African” literature of the 1920s and 1930s alongside contemporaneous “colonial” ‘hypotexte’ in order to map shared discourse and to refuse reductive readings of texts as products of a racially defined ontological essence (2001). Moura suggests that as a literary strategy, *exotisme* foundered in the 1940s and 50s:

L'étranger colonisé, l'homme dominé d'hier, semble à ce moment sortir du champ de visibilité de l'écrivain européen, à la fois trop proche dans son immédiate violence et trop éloigné des canons par lesquels il avait été défini pour [...] des centaines d'années. (1998: 198)

Charles Forsdick's subtle exegesis of the term locates this post-war redefinition less in terms of a disappearance than in terms of a conflation of aesthetic and political terminology: “By the 1960s, the equation of ‘exotic’ and ‘colonial’ [...] had become an orthodoxy” (Forsdick, 2005: 27). The changing names of the ANEMOM show where the constructed opposition of “colonial”, “exotic”, and “African” writing fissures and is reconfigured in this period. Tracing the familiar “colonial” themes and tropes in Garnier's novels (village life versus European modernity; the white colonial wife and black servant; mixed-race sexual union) in parallel to the novel's publishing history invites speculation

¹⁸⁸ *Exotisme* “n'est donc pas la compréhension parfaite d'un hors soi-même qu'on étreindrait en soi, mais la perception aigue et immédiate d'une incompréhension éternelle” (Segalen, Victor, 1978; 1955: 25). Forsdick maintains a distinction between *exotisme* and *exoticism*, arguing for the need to keep a plural notion of “exoticisms” (49).

on the lived connections between this mode of writing and parallel anti-colonial, anti-exoticist rhetoric.

Mongo Beti's anti-exotic manifesto and the anxiety of readership

In his essay “Afrique Noire, littérature rose”, Mongo Beti presents his case for developing committed African literature through a critique of exotic literary representations of the continent. He notes:

Il n'est guère, à notre connaissance, d'œuvre littéraire de qualité inspirée par l'Afrique Noire et écrite en langue française. Quand je dis œuvre de qualité, j'entends surtout une œuvre accueillie, connue, admise comme telle par le grand public. (Beti, 1955a: 133)

Beti's recourse to a quantitative definition of “qualité”—that is to say, “accueillie [...] par le grand public”—indicates a concern regarding reception and subsequent recognition common in the critical commentary of politically engaged writers in the period leading to decolonisation. His anti-colonial critique is not allied to an anti-commercial sentiment. Indeed, Beti's own publishing trajectory suggests he was keenly aware of the need for strategic negotiation of the metropolitan literary marketplace.¹⁸⁹ Beti's own fiction is couched in a defence of literary realism, although he admits that if a writer were to follow this strategy, “non seulement il ne risque guère d'être publié, mais même s'il y parvenait, la critique l'ignorerait, le public aussi” (139). He voices his fears that the tastes and political sensitivities of a European readership and, as a result, European publishers were shaping the output of African writers. He implies that the literary field in France indirectly

¹⁸⁹ Beti's novels were published by Présence Africaine, Robert Laffont, and Buchet Chastel in the 1950s. As his interviews with Ambroise Kom establish, Beti actively sought out a publisher who would secure larger circulation and greater publicity for his books (Steemers, Vivan, 2007: 45-48; Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 550).

censors representations of sub-Saharan Africa that hold a mirror up to France's colonial misdemeanours.¹⁹⁰

The urgent need for immediate success is rarely set out in such stark terms and contrasts with the kind of long-term recognition, or “gloire” (Simonin, 1994: 308), sought by editors at Éditions de Minuit (see Chapter Three). Rather than seeking long-term consecration within the legitimating structures of the metropolitan literary field by building up a canon of classic texts, Beti identifies short-term aims: “à quoi sert-il qu'un chef-d'oeuvre ait été écrit ou même publié en 1955 s'il ne sera connu, lu par le public qu'en l'an 2000?” (133). Beti's gesture towards short-term recognition reminds readers of the frustrations faced by politically engaged writers concerned with the “efficacité actuelle” of their work (Beti, 1955a: 134)

Beti's essay is best-known in conjunction with his barbed critiques of Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir* and *Le Regard du roi*. On *L'Enfant noir*, he writes, “Il n'y rien dans ce livre qu'un petit bourgeois européen n'ait déjà appris par la radio, un reportage de son quotidien habituel ou n'importe quel magazine de la chaîne ‘France-Soir’” (Beti, 1954: 420). *Le Regard du roi* is described as: “Une histoire à dormir debout, comme dirait l'autre. Séraïl, serpents, sorciers, eunuques, mendiants, naba, roitelet nègre, bracelets d'or massif, femmes-poissons, croupes exubérantes, seins généreux, sang-mêlés, café-au-lait, fêtes au village, vin de palme, rien n'y manque. Mais tout est gratuit” (Beti, 1955b: 143). These reviews illuminate tensions in the literary field in this period, marked by debate over who

¹⁹⁰ Related accusations of more direct forms of censorship are made by Jacques Rabemananjara (Jules-Rosette, Bennetta, 1998: 45). Plans to film Garnier's 1951 novel were shelved by French censorship authorities, suggesting that such forces in the wider cultural field did not only affect African writers (Anon, 1951b; Garnier, Christine, 1975: 97).

could write about Africa, and for which readers. Beti continues his attack on “pittoresque” representations of Africa by French *and* African writers, arguing that “écrire sur l’Afrique Noire, c’est prendre parti pour ou contre la colonisation. Impossible de sortir de là” (1955a: 138). For Beti, the negative effects of colonization were omnipresent in African societies, and therefore must be so in writing about Africa.¹⁹¹ His categorical binary – nuanced by his strategic membership of ANEMOM in this period – demands a political position-taking characteristic of the anti-colonial period. Naming Garnier’s novel among others, he suggests that the political and aesthetic demands of a largely European readership have led to an opposition between ‘pittoresque’ and realist literary discourses on sub-Saharan Africa that is perpetuated by European cultural producers. Garnier’s novel *Va-t’en avec les tiens* is cited as an example of the “livres réactionnaires et racistes auxquels les vitrines des librairies nous ont habitués” (Beti, 1955a: 138). Beti claims that the book, whose author is not named, was penned by the clerk of a bourgeois ‘colon’ seeking glorification of his work in the colonies in print (1955a: 138). Beti’s misidentification of Garnier belies the fact that her novels offer a rare example of writing by a woman in the decolonizing context. My historically situated account of the novel will evoke a more complex textual and paratextual parallel than Beti’s own, situated, dismissal permits.

Beti’s conviction that the tastes and political sensitivities of a European readership and, as a result, of European publishers, were shaping the output of African writers, is an important reminder of the material realities, frustrations, and anxieties of anti-colonial

¹⁹¹ This thesis is played out in his own novels, *Ville cruelle* (1954), *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba* (1956), and *Mission terminée* (1958).

authorship.¹⁹² What emerges, on further consideration, is a necessary re-engagement with authorial identity as an indicator of symbolic value in post-war popular, or “middlebrow” and “lowbrow” writing, in relation to publishing context. The political and cultural positioning of éditeurs engagés such as Alioune Diop, Pierre Seghers, or François Maspero can then be considered in relation to the pressures of such commercially minded publishing activity.

**Publishing Christine Garnier: ‘Lancer, aujourd’hui, c’est créer l’événement’
(Grasset, 1951: 11)**

Va-t’en avec les tiens! was released in Éditions Grasset’s prestigious “Cahiers verts” collection under a pseudonym: Doëllé. Founded in 1921, in the interwar period, the collection included works by François Mauriac, Jean Giraudoux, and André Malraux, among others. Éditions Grasset was founded in 1907 by Bernard Grasset, a publisher known as the “Napoléon de l’édition” owing to his audacity (Mollier, 2008: 56). Following his trial in 1948 for collaboration with the Occupying forces, Grasset was eager to restore the “Cahiers verts” and salvage his reputation (Simonin, 1998: 33; Baritaud, 2004). The calibre and success of the series faded after the war, but its distinctive plain green covers nonetheless differentiated Garnier’s book from the garish covers of popular romance and adventure fiction such as Alsatia’s “Signe de piste” collection. The book had an initial print-run of 1900 and went on to sell 135,000 copies in its first year. According to some accounts, it also won the Grand Prix Littéraire de l’A.O.F..¹⁹³ By way of

¹⁹² Bourdieusian analysis of mechanisms of literary reception in the work of Graham Huggan and Sarah Brouillette, focuses largely on the commodification of literature published after the historical events of decolonisation, seen as an effect of late-capitalist global commodity culture (Huggan, Graham, 2001: 33). My thesis locates earlier signs of such processes in the francophone context of the post-war period.

¹⁹³ <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,817006,00.html>> [accessed 21 February 2011]. According to several press articles, Christine Garnier was awarded the prize in 1951. There is no record of

comparison, Beti's *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba* sold 17,000 copies in its French edition between 1956 and 1970, while Françoise Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse* sold 500,000 copies in 1954 alone.¹⁹⁴ Sales figures are an indicator of commercial success, not of aesthetic or subjective 'literary' value, nor necessarily of readership. Yet they offer one important element of an empirical view of reception. Garnier's success, termed "phenomenal" in one review does seem significant in the light of Beti's exposition of a quantitatively defined "littérature de qualité".

Garnier's textual and paratextual play on an authentic first-person African narrator frames a narrative driven by themes of irreconcilable cultural and racial difference, clichés of black female desire, and descriptive focus on flora, fauna, climate, indigenous "irrationality" and animistic religion. The pseudonymous author/narrator, is introduced through her implied authorial preface. Doéllé, is a nurse in a maternity ward in the village of Manoho who recounts her divided and alienating experience of living between colonial and indigenous communities. The narrative is structured by a parallel between Doéllé's beauty and that of the European doctor's wife, Urgèle. When the latter arrives from France and beguiles the men of the local colonial administration, including Doéllé's lover, the magistrate, Doéllé's resulting jealousy leads to her attempt to poison her rival. Her action is checked by her realisation that this action would result in a return to the traditions, the "mailles d'un vieil idéal dépassé", which, as a self-declared "évoluée", she has renounced (1951: 8). Her desire to be accepted in the white colonial community, ideally through

this novel having won the prize in the ANEMOM bulletins, though Garnier was an active member of ANEMOM throughout the fifties. She notes in her autobiography that following the revelation of her actual identity, "des jurys littéraires m'avaient soudain rayée de leur tête de liste" (Garnier, Christine, 1975: 96).

¹⁹⁴ Statistics taken from Heinemann African Writers Series archive, Reading University. See also: Mollier, Jean-Yves, 2008: 239. Beti's novel has sold just over 25,000 copies since being reprinted in 1976 in the Poche collection at Présence Africaine [figures consulted May 2011].

partnership with a European man forms the central intrigue of the novel. Grasset's decision to place a black mask on a white author is thus reflected and reversed through Garnier's protagonist, who seeks, and ultimately fails, to assimilate herself with her white employers. Garnier's autobiography breathlessly describes Grasset's editorial control over the text: "Je m'émerveillais, chaque fois, de voir Grasset rétablir en quelques coups de crayon l'harmonie d'une phrase ou d'un passage. Il avait *toujours* raison" (Garnier, 1975: 86-90), raising further questions about the gendered roles of publishers and writers in this period.

Garnier's double (textual and paratextual) reversal of the colonial gaze promotes an authenticity which her pseudonymity reveals as deeply inauthentic. In the text's preface, Doëllé describes her grandfather, a slave trader of Portuguese origins, to whom she owes her "nez aristocratique", while her mother, "une mina d'Accra" is criticised for her flat toes, and her hair: "Ce n'est pas pour le plaisir que je me coiffe suivant la mode Abongo... Je préfère les coiffures européennes. Mais hélas! Mes cheveux sont trop crépus pour s'y prêter" (3). Fanon's critique of Martinican writer Mayotte Capécia's psychological complex of "lactification" (12) resonates with Garnier's description of Doëllé's sense of inferiorization as she searches for respect and love in the white community. The pessimism of Garnier's novel resonates with Fanon's contemporaneous diagnosis of interracial pathology in female desire, as developed in his readings of contemporaneous novels by Capécia and Abdoulaye Sadjì (1952; 1992: 33-50). Sadjì's *Nini*, which appeared in a special issue of *Présence Africaine* on "Les Ecrivains Noirs" alongside an extract from Beti's *Ville cruelle*, presents another problematic portrait of a "mulâtresse" yearning to "become" European. Sadjì's book remains in print today (Sadjì, Beti and Malonga,

1955).¹⁹⁵ Unlike Sadjì's *Nini*, which ends with the desperate protagonist packing her bags for France, Garnier's novel concludes with the departure of the European characters and Doéllé's hope that it will be her son instead who will go to France and develop "une attitude désinvolte [qui] sera pour moi celle d'un étranger" (302). Like Laye's novel, Mayotte Capécia's *Je suis Martiniquaise*, castigated by Fanon as an "ouvrage au rabais" (Fanon, 1951; 1992: 34), has been carefully revealed as a pseudonymous concoction by French publishers, based on the memories of Martiniquan Lucette Ceranus Combette and her lover, a French lieutenant. As A. J. Arnold concludes, "Il est temps de reconnaître que *Je suis Martiniquaise* est un roman français, conçu par des Français qui ont pillé les mémoires d'un autre Français, et qu'ils ont destiné au public français le plus large possible" (Arnold, 2003).¹⁹⁶ Grasset's editorial strategy was not an isolated case. Moreover, Arnold's reiterative defence of the "Frenchness" of Capécia's work invites a fuller elaboration of what such "Frenchness" meant in the post-war years. The publishing history of Capécia's text, as for Garnier's, illustrates the ways in which popular post-war representations of "outre-mer" were worked into the metropolitan literary marketplace by ventriloquising "authentic" voices.

As the narrating subject, Doéllé is placed in a notional position of power over Urgèle. Her narrative frequently lingers over descriptions of Urgèle's clothes and material possessions:

Des valises béaient à terre, lourdes de parfums inconnus. Des robes de soie et de velours étiraient leurs plis sur la cotonnade fanée des fauteuils [...] Parmi les ciselures du Dahomey, se lovaient, comme des serpents guindés, des colliers de Paris [...] je demeurais saisie de trouble. Car le monde qu'elle avait apporté dans ses bagages, je ne le connaîtrais jamais! (19)

¹⁹⁵ Sadjì's work will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

¹⁹⁶ See also: Makward, Christiane P., 1999. A new edition of Mayotte Capécia's novels that should stimulate more work on these texts was published as this thesis was reaching completion (Capécia, Mayotte, Myriam Cottias and Madeleine Dobie, 2012).

The exotic gaze is reversed here, to focus on the vivid details of Urgèle's metropolitan commodities in contrast to the faded cotton of her surroundings. Garnier maintains insurmountable barriers along racial and cultural lines between her characters. These barriers are reinforced by Garnier's appended glossary of terms. Such apparatus may be seen as a way of "*domesticating* the text, making it available for what might be euphemistically called 'general consumption'" (Huggan, 2001: 272) or – as Senghor put it – as a tool for "l'exotisme pour midinettes" (1949a). Garnier's narrative investigation of failed cross-cultural understanding between Doëlle and Urgèle is reflected by this manifestation of the implied reader's need to understand cultural difference by grasping anthropological facts. The text is precursor of the "anthropological exotic" (50) defined by Huggan as a postcolonial phenomenon. The function and construction of the exotic shifted during the post-war period of political upheaval and cultural reappraisal, in the structures that defined authenticity as both a commodifiable quality and a viable political identity in the literary marketplace.

Grasset's editorial intervention creates then, a thinly-veiled illusion of an authentic female African voice, eighteen years before the first novel in French by an African woman, Thérèse Kuoh-Moukoury's *Rencontres essentielles* (1969), was published.¹⁹⁷ At the time of its publication, sustaining a binary distinction between authentic and inauthentic authorship played a vital, albeit temporary, role in generating discourse about Garnier's first "African" novel.¹⁹⁸ Grasset's commercial strategy to create short-term buzz around the text suggests a perceived demand among the intended metropolitan readership to hear

¹⁹⁷ This book was written in the 1950s but failed to find a publisher until 1969 (Noakes, Beverley Ormerod and Jean-Marie Volet, 1994: 12; Kuoh-Moukoury, Thérèse and Cheryl Toman, 2002: x).

¹⁹⁸ Such "hype" has long been recognized as a key aspect of the functioning of the literary field since the mid-nineteenth century: "The production of discourse (critical, historical etc.) about the work of art is one of the conditions of production of the work" (Bourdieu, Pierre, 1993: 35).

testimonies through a guise of authenticity. Disputed in much postcolonial theory, as in some African philosophy and political theory, for its reductive bind to authorial biography and essentialised identity, authenticity is closely linked to notions of colonial and neo-colonial authority.¹⁹⁹ Both are touted in Garnier's numerous press reviews as positive (and apparently lucrative) paratextual attributes for the fictional representation of Africa. In the same year, Grasset wrote in his *Lettre à André Gillon* that:

Le talent n'est pas un fait, étant toujours discutable. Il y faut ajouter pour lancer une œuvre, une chose indiscutable, comme est sa publication dans une collection recherchée, le fait que l'auteur a seize ans, ou qu'il est sourd-muet, ou qu'il se trouve en constante dispute avec sa femme. (Grasset, 1951: 17)

Grasset's approach drew scorn in Parisian literary circles – though his renowned fondness for publicity stunts in an increasingly competitive marketplace would be emulated by other post-war publishers, such as René Julliard and Robert Laffont (Laffont, 1974: 237-39; Mollier, 2008: 239-43).²⁰⁰

A survey of press coverage in the Grasset archives establishes that Garnier's pseudonymous identity was soon uncovered.²⁰¹ This unmasking is seen in reviews of Garnier's novel as critics react to what Genette terms the "effet-pseudonyme", in other words, the effect of becoming aware of pseudonymity (Genette, 1987: 48). Some reviewers express frustration, even disappointment in discovering the true identity of the author. In *Le Monde*, established critic and writer, Emile Henriot claimed, "comme ce

¹⁹⁹ According to Deborah Root, authenticity is now a chimeric term which "does not exist in any absolute, pure form outside the endless debates of academics" (Root, Deborah, 1996: 78). See also: Hountondji, Paulin J., 1977.

²⁰⁰ Publisher Edmond Buchet remarked on the increasing spectacle of book launches in the early fifties: "Les éditeurs ne savent plus qu'inventer pour donner de l'attrait à leurs réceptions. L'un reçoit dans un cirque, à côté de la cage aux lions, pour un livre sur l'Afrique, un autre dans l'île du bois de Boulogne pour un livre sur la Polynésie, Julliard a mobilisé une vedette sur la Seine pour Françoise Sagan" (Mollier, Jean-Yves, 2008: 243).

²⁰¹ All press articles are taken from the Christine Garnier press file in the Grasset archive. Where page numbers are not cited full article details were not available.

qu'elle exprime n'est pas sans valeur, sous son apparence individuelle, romanesque et sentimentale, on aurait préféré savoir de l'auteur du livre lui-même ce qu'il comporte d'*authentique* ou d'interprète" (1951). In *Liberté de Normandie*, one of numerous regional newspapers represented in Grasset's press dossier, the reviewer François Raynal writes, "ce n'est pas une Noire qui a vue les Blancs, mais une Blanche qui fait parler—fort bien, trop bien—une Noire" (1951), suggesting a perceived qualitative linguistic disjuncture between the European narrative and the voice of its subaltern subject/object. Elsewhere, Garnier is compared to Boris Vian, pseudonymous "translator" of bestselling *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes* (1946), and to Claire de Duras, whose *Ourika* (1823) was hugely successful as the first text to ventriloquise a black female narrator (Kanters, 1951).²⁰² The intertextual references evoked by the "effet pseudonomique" position the verisimilitude of Garnier's narrative technique and implied authorial preface in relation to other performances of black authorial subjectivity in the literary field.

A brief anonymous review in *Le Canard enchaîné* complains, "on eût tellement préféré saluer en ce livre un nouveau Batouala!" (Anon, 1951a). René Maran himself reviewed Garnier's text in March 1951, in print and on the radio. He praises the "valeur exceptionnelle" of "ce très beau livre, discret, humain, tout plein de résonances nuancées et délicates, et qui pénètre au plus secret de l'âme et de la pensée nègres". In his radio script, he declared that the novel, "s'il n'est pas un attrape-nigaud, confirme de façon singulière, avec un talent nourri du savoir le plus sensible et de la plus sensible mesure, ce qu'une logique dénuée de tout parti pris racial permettait depuis longtemps de prévoir" (1951a). However, in an article published three months later, while commenting positively

²⁰² Roger Little describes Duras' short novel as a legitimate precursor of *négritude* writing. He argues that while conforming to conventions of the *roman sentimental*, it represents "une prise de conscience féminine annonciatrice de celle de la *négritude* comme du féminisme" (Duras, Claire de Durtfort and Roger Little, 1998: x).

on her style, he laments, “on ne voit pas très bien pourquoi son auteur a préféré signer ce roman du pseudonyme de Doëllé, alors qu’elle a fait paraître, il y a 3 mois sous [...] son vrai nom, *Le Fétichisme en Afrique Noire*, le savant ouvrage qu’elle a écrit en collaboration avec M. Jean Fralon” (1951b). Maran draws attention to Garnier’s qualification to write about Africa, inverting the reception his own novel, *Batouala* had received in 1921. His shift places the novel firmly in the line of “romans exotiques” as defined by their depiction of ethnic difference. He argues that its contents are opposed “avec une secrète mais ferme douceur à toute combinaison ethnique”. Maran here engages with the racist tensions in the novel, despite the new sense of ethnographic (as opposed to indigeneous) authority implied by its revised paratext.

The largely hostile reception of Christine Garnier’s writing in the pages of *Présence Africaine* testifies to the structural differences between Grasset’s publishing project and that of Alioune Diop.²⁰³ Garnier’s later novel, *La Fête des sacrifices* (Grasset, 1959), provides a rare example of popular writing from the metropole that responds to the project of cultural valorization associated with *négritude* writing during this period. In this novel, as with *Les Héros sont fatigués*, Garnier explores themes of interracial relationships and the tensions experienced by elites educated in Europe when they return to Africa. Written on the cusp of decolonisation, Garnier’s book is set in Belgium and Dakar. The protagonist Thierno is an expert in African masks, “ces témoins de notre passé” as he describes them, and works at the Institut français d’Afrique noire. He travels frequently to attend international conferences, translating African traditions for European and North

²⁰³ A young Abdoulaye Wade (President of Senegal 2000-12) wrote a review of Yves Ciampi’s film adaptation of Garnier’s second novel, *Les Héros sont fatigués* (1955), starring Yves Montand and Maria Félix. Wade criticised the “modern racism” of the film’s depiction of Liberia, referring dismissively to Garnier’s earlier work: “ce roman qui a défrayé la chronique ces dernières années” (Wade, Abdoulaye, 1956: 158-59).

American audiences. His partner, Awa, works as a secretary at the Dakar-Niger railway office and is also president of the women's Club de la Liberté. This urban association undertakes consciousness-raising missions to improve the situation of rural women. At a meeting described near the start of the book she argues in favour of African women's rights, declaring, "Vous, les hommes d'Afrique, vous n'avez qu'un mot aux lèvres: Indépendance. Nous, les femmes, opprimées, *colonisées* depuis des siècles, nous crions aussi: Indépendance! Mais pas à la France – à vous!" (48). Garnier's press interviews and autobiography suggest that her account is rooted in her observations (Diolé, 1959). Awa symbolises the force for progressive change in the fictional society of the novel. However, when Thierno meets Belgian redhead Irène, and moves her to Dakar to marry him, Awa is thrown into a position of uncertainty. Against her declared ideals, she decides to marry Iba, who already has three wives, and pays a dowry for her. The narrative develops through alternate chapters told from the perspective of each woman as their ideals and expectations are tested by their partners' behaviour, up to the melodramatic dénouement when they meet and Awa kills Iba. In the final chapter of the book, Thierno and Irène declare irreconcilable differences. Thierno decides to return to the rural villages of Senegal in an attempt to rescue "lost" traditions. Irène, meanwhile, will return to Belgium.

To a certain extent, this novel grafts metropolitan concerns about gender imbalance based on universalising notions of equality onto the Senegalese context.²⁰⁴ Such transpositions are far from straightforward. Both Awa and Irène seek similar levels of material and sexual fulfilment, which they seem only able to acquire through their relationships with men. The attention paid to the description of clothes and material belongings, houses and

²⁰⁴ For discussion of tensions between Euro-American and African feminisms see: Nnaemeka, Obioma, 1996; Oyewùmi, Oyèrónké, 1997.

cars evoke this materialism as a more neutral channel of intercultural contact. Both characters play out different sequences of domination. The supposedly oppressive African male characters are shown to be challenged by Irène's authority (she drives the car, she decides where to eat, when to make love) and by Awa's sense that African women are more oppressed by indigenous patriarchy than by colonial structures of power. Irène typifies the European belief in African "authenticity" in her view of Africa as a salve to the materialism of Europe. She adheres firmly to an essentialised binary division between Africans and Europeans : "Cet instinct qui vous unit si profondément aux forces de la nature. Tout ce que nous avons perdu, nous!... Le matérialisme dévore l'Occident" (1959: 196). Garnier's discussion of gender inequality, which was low on the agenda of African anti-colonial writers in this period seems anomalous in the discourse of the period.²⁰⁵

Despite its limited stylistic interest and problematic tropes, *La Fête des sacrifices* gestures more firmly to the possibility of working through issues of racial difference than *Va t'en avec les tiens*. In particular, the novel contains scattered references to the independence movement and to contemporary African writers and cultural producers. The conversations between Thierno's Senegalese colleagues, reported via Irène's narrative voice, provide a contrast to the stock "colonial" characters whom Irène abandons following their racist disapproval of her "mariage domino". The anonymous film maker, for example, declares:

"Ne croyez-vous pas que par le film nous pouvons aussi aider à l'émancipation, à l'élévation de notre peuple? Senghor, Birago Diop, Camara Laye, Ferdinand Ayono [sic], Sembène Ousmane, ont fait connaître, par leurs écrits, les souffrances et les élans de notre Afrique, mais ils ont touché une élite, non la masse. Il faut

²⁰⁵ Such issues did, however, become a common theme in writing by African female authors, including Mariama Ba, Aminata Sow Fall and Ken Bugul. See: Hitchcott, Nicki, 2000; Boehmer, Elleke, 2005b, 2009.

mettre cette littérature en image, la traduire dans tous les dialectes, utiliser le film pour éduquer les peuplades les plus lointaines.” (193)

This character, whose ideas seem to echo directly those of film-makers Ousmane Sembene and Paulin Vieyra in the same period, forces the reader to locate Garnier’s discourse explicitly alongside that of the African authors mentioned. Garnier’s character then criticises cinematic depictions of Africans, presuming that the reader might know these points of reference:

“C’est qu’on a projeté sur les écrans trop de films comme *Tam-Tam*, *La Reine noire*, *Mogambo*, *Safari*, et j’en passe. C’est que les films qui ont pour cadre l’Afrique sont presque toujours sans nuances, bourrés d’inexactitudes, oscillant entre la pornographie et le style music-hall. Pourtant j’en suis persuadé, il est l’heure pour nous, comme en Ghana, en Nigéria, en Lybie [sic], au Soudan, au Maroc, en Tunisie, il est l’heure de montrer le vrai visage de notre Afrique.” (194)

By fictionalising discussions between black intellectuals regarding the new wave of cultural production that must accompany independence, Garnier’s novel provides a commentary that is more aware of the changing politics underlying her own fictional stagings of Liberia and Senegal. Garnier’s novels provide a rare example of a metropolitan woman writer engaging with the politics of representing sub-Saharan Africa in the 1950s. The “middle-brow” nature of these texts should not distract from their prominent position as best-selling examples of a reformed exoticism.

Conclusion

Le Docker noir, a 1956 novel by Senegalese novelist and film-maker Ousmane Sembene, is constructed around a memorable trial scene. Sembene’s protagonist, Diaw Falla, is an immigrant dockyard worker and trade unionist in “le petit Harlem marseillais” of France’s Mediterranean port. Diaw is also a writer: a Gramscian organic intellectual whose novel is

plagiarised in its entirety by a white French woman, Ginette Tontisane, after she promises to act as *porteur* and find him a publisher in the capital. Diaw's novel, *Le Dernier Voyage du négrier Sirius*, is published under her name in Paris. It is an immediate success and wins a literary prize. In outrage, Diaw confronts Ginette, and during their argument, highly reminiscent of scenes of violence from Richard Wright's *Native Son*, he knocks her to the floor.²⁰⁶ She dies, possibly accidentally, and Diaw is a wanted man.

Diaw Fall's crime is subsequently reconfigured as rape by the French media in the novel, as racial stereotypes play out throughout his trial. Yet the most serious affront is that made to the French literary institution. As the prosecutor argues:

Le crime de Diaw Falla bafoue nos institutions. Ce monstre prétend être l'auteur du "Négrier Sirius"! Cette insulte à nos lettres est aussi un délit. Les lettres françaises ont éprouvé une grande perte [...] Nous devons réparations non seulement à la victime, mais à notre littérature, mais à notre civilisation. (69)

To accept Diaw's alibi, and therefore his rightful status as author of the novel, would be "a violation of France's political and cultural hegemony" (Murphy, 2000a: 477). Further to the resistant act of Diaw's writing in itself, Sembene's novel comments incisively on the institutional structures within which Diaw's act takes place. His act of writing is shown to be inescapably entangled with mechanisms of colonial power – in relation to those of class, race and gender – in both discursive and non-discursive forms:

J'ai appris une langue qui n'est pas la mienne... A l'école on m'a parlé de la bonté d'une Cité et quand je suis venu dans ce pays, pour vivre, il a fallu que je travaille [...] La nuit, j'écrivais. Pour faire publier ce livre, je remis tout à une femme, elle me vola, m'humilia ensuite. Avec mon oeuvre, elle se donnait un nom. [...] Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas essayé de voir ce qui a excité ma colère et occasionné ce crime que je me refuse à reconnaître? (213)

²⁰⁶ For a pertinent discussion of connections between these two novels, see: Thomas, Dominic, 2007: 82-113.

The predicament of Diaw Fall fictionalises the anxiety surrounding authorial authority in this period. As Adèle King's archaeology of Camara Laye's publishing trajectory confirms, when it came to best-selling representations of sub-Saharan Africa, the growing metropolitan interest in literature of and on sub-Saharan Africa continued to depend on a limited and limiting notion of authenticity. Garnier's "African" novels, in particular Grasset's staging of *Va t'en avec les tiens*, provide a compelling example of the ways in which exotic literary tropes continued to characterise popular representations of sub-Saharan Africa in the 1950s. Garnier's "popularity" was mediated by the disabusing role of her editor, "qui a *toujours* raison" (Garnier, 1975: 86-90), and his trajectory within the structures of the post-war literary field.

Ousmane Sembene powerfully shows that the process of publication – of selection, production and distribution – is far from neutral. Pascale Casanova constructs a model which criticises the ethnocentrism of the Parisian "centre" on the basis of its tendency to annex "marginal" literatures according to universalised criteria of value. The examples that follow in the next chapter suggest ways in which such criteria – what Casanova terms the "lois légitimes du centre" – actually worked into literary texts during the editing process. They question the embodied nature of such contingent and subjective criteria of legitimation, suggesting ways in which editors intervened in the written texture of these novels.

CHAPTER SIX

Editorial craft in the novels of Abdoulaye Sadj, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, and Malick Fall

According to the novelist and critic Pierre-Henri Simon, writing in 1964, the virtue of a Goncourt-winning novel was that although “agréable à manger, il doit tout de même nourrir” (1964). The laureate of the 1964 Prix Goncourt was Georges Conchon. His novel, *L’État sauvage*, published by Albin Michel, tells the story of a French bureaucrat sent to an anonymous, newly-independent, Central African city to work for UNESCO.²⁰⁷ Its realist portrayal of the first 24 hours of this visit depicts taut racism driven by a love triangle between the main protagonist, Avit, his estranged wife, Laurence, and her lover, Doumbé, an African minister in the new government. It is significant that this largely-forgotten text won France’s most prestigious literary prize in the early years of the independences, a prize which resulted in sales of over 200,000 copies in the first two months after it was awarded (Anon, 1968). The novel’s reception, documented in three thick press files in the Albin Michel archive, demonstrates particular tensions between aesthetic and ideological criteria of literary evaluation in this period. Some critics praised what they saw as Conchon’s “Celinian” pessimism (Bory, 1964), while others drew comparisons with Aldous Huxley and Graham Greene (Anon, 1964a; Vuilleumier, 1964). Among the many clippings there is no mention of Sembene, Beti, Oyono, or any other African writer. Several critics praised the novel’s formal properties: it was “bien bâti” (Anon, 1964a), “lucide” (Anon, 1964b), “modéré” (Burniaux, 1964), “solide” (Sion, 1964). Critics were similarly keen to mention the brief period Conchon had spent in

²⁰⁷ The historical situation depicted most closely correlates to that of the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Belgian Congo).

Central Africa as a journalist and reiterate the stability of his profession as a *fonctionnaire* in Paris. As *secrétaire des débats* at the French Senate, he was partly removed from the dominant milieu of literary debate in the city, but retained a certain authority to comment on political issues. By addressing issues of decolonisation and racism through a largely conventional literary style, Conchon's text and its reception provide a useful barometer for the post-independence literary field.²⁰⁸

In the sixties, writers' literary responses to current affairs in West and Central Africa in French began gradually to work against the realism that dominated the late fifties. Despite the diverse literary styles of Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Malick Fall, Yambo Ouologuem and Ahmadou Kourouma, the success of Conchon's novel suggests an ongoing dominant metropolitan taste for conventional realist form and style when it came to representations of sub-Saharan Africa. Several critics suggested that Conchon's novel was "courageux" (Estang, 1964) for raising the spectre of racism in post-independence Africa and adamantly maintained that this was not a *roman à thèse*. Perhaps in part due to resistance to the latter, there is a reluctance to identify or comment on the specificities of the novel's setting. One critic commented, "Sur un thème vieux comme le monde: le racisme, voici un roman entièrement neuf" (Anon, 1964b), though it is clear this "newness" does not refer to the novel's formal characteristics.

²⁰⁸ The novel was made into a successful film in 1978 after a long period of wrangling over where its satirical depiction of post-independence governance would be filmed. Filming eventually took place in Guyana, after refusals by the République Centrafricaine, Cameroon, Senegal and Mobutu's Zaïre, where it was felt the main black character, Doumbé bore an uncomfortably close resemblance to Patrice Lumumba (Fechner, Elisabeth, Undated).

The text's reception was not unanimous in its praise. Sociologist and anthropologist Georges Balandier (a close collaborator with *Présence Africaine*) criticised the “spectacle dérisoire et cruel” of Conchon's “jeu dangeureux”. He argued that: “Ses personnages aideront à préciser l'image d'une décolonisation ridicule et ratée, d'une Afrique parodique aidée à fonds perdus” (Balandier, 1964). Balandier's comments highlight the risk of popularising clichéd or reductive representations of Africa during this delicate period of political transition, but are again based on the text's content rather than its form. In his television programme, “Lectures pour tous”, author and influential critic Max-Pol Fouchet commented on Conchon's book:

Lorsque je lis tous les jours dans les quotidiens ce qui se passe au Congo ex-Belge, à Stanleyville, comment ne trouverais-je pas pâle ce qui m'est raconté dans ce livre?... Il est très difficile de publier ou d'écrire un livre quand l'actualité est si violente et si brûlante. (Fouchet, 1964)

Fouchet's criteria of evaluation suggest that, for him, the crucial contemporaneity of this portrayal of post-independence Africa overshadowed potential discussion of linked formal concerns. He is more interested in the ways in which writers might challenge or adapt their craft in response to this “actualité... si violente” (Ibid). The “difficulty” Fouchet notes in depicting the politics of post-independence Africa in literature implies an anticipated dependence on literary mimesis, as well as an acknowledgement of its inevitable shortfall. These historically situated responses indicate the different aesthetic and political valencies of Conchon's literary portrayal of Central Africa, given the immediate symbolic capital conferred by his Prix Goncourt. This chapter will consider how such valencies were forecast and constructed in the pre-publication phase, by focusing on the role of editors and publishers' readers.

As the present chapter will demonstrate, novels of and on sub-Saharan Africa that tested generic and stylistic norms were only gradually and unevenly accepted by publishers in the post-independence period. Christopher Miller's suggestion that publishers "were seeking universality in the 1950s", in contrast to the rise of national African literatures in the 1980s (Miller, 1986: 176), pertains to the mediation (in terms of production and reception) of the relationship between content and form. It leads to several related questions: what were publishers' criteria of selection and in what way might these criteria be considered "universal? How far were such criteria shaped by publishers' own socio-historical situation? In what ways did publishers intervene in the editorial process of overwriting and rewriting? This line of questioning of course problematises the very notion of universality. It is directly concerned with how universality as a marker of literary value constructed according to certain cultural, aesthetic, or linguistic norms manifests itself in the process of publishing, before a manuscript is printed and commodified as a book.²⁰⁹ The hidden processes of editorial mediation, partially revealed in publishers' archives, can and should be written into the history of post-colonial literature. These processes operate at the stage of selection and of editing by tempering political polemic, revising vocabulary and style, choosing a title, as well as in the later processes of packaging and distribution. Such treatment is not unique to African writing – indeed it is the very stuff of editorial work. The process of selection, via external readers and internal comités de lecture, reflects each publisher's commercial, political, and aesthetic interests, their position in the literary field, as well as the social situation of specific individuals

²⁰⁹ As such, the approach provides a productive site for engagement with long-running arguments for and against universalism as a basis for African literary criticism. Appiah's critique of nativist critics, for example, suggests that their defence of African particularism fails to engage fully with the European ideological basis for working categories of nation, culture, language and literature: "while the debate is couched in terms of the competing claims of particularism and universalism, the actual ideology of universalism is never interrogated, and, indeed, is even tacitly accepted. Ironically [...] the attack on something called "universalism" leads to the occlusion of genuine local difference" (Appiah, Kwame Anthony, 1992: 58).

involved.²¹⁰ I will here consider the rejection of manuscripts by African writers at Le Seuil.²¹¹

The mediation of style and content will be discussed here through three contrasting examples: Abdoulaye Sadjì's *Maïmouna* (1952) and Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'Aventure ambiguë* (1961), both of which were rejected for publication by Le Seuil, but achieved long-term consecration when published by Présence Africaine and Julliard respectively; and Malick Fall's *La Plaie* (1967), also rejected by Le Seuil before being published at Albin Michel.²¹² Despite its formal innovation, Fall's text did not achieve similar consecration to Sadjì's and Kane's texts either in the metropole, or in French-speaking

²¹⁰ For the fullest investigations to date on readers' reports in twentieth century French publishing, see: Simonin, Anne and Pascal Fouché, 1999. Elsewhere Simonin presents a lucid analysis of 650 readers' reports at Éditions de Minuit (Simonin, Anne, 1994: 440-59). Based on interviews and extensive archival work, Simonin and Fouché establish the social criteria on which manuscripts are selected, and emphasise the importance of personal connections and contacts in publishing houses. While they stress the importance of age as a criterion, gender and ethnic difference are not mentioned.

²¹¹ Comparisons can subsequently been made with Le Seuil's rejection of other texts, notably those of Samuel Beckett, made on an apparently ethical basis. In an interview, Paul Flamand admitted: "J'ai eu entre mes mains un des premiers livres de Beckett: j'ai les fiches de lecture, ses qualités ont été reconnues... personnellement, je n'ai pas voulu le prendre car ce noir absolu, je n'y crois pas. Cela m'a paru systématique... mais je n'en dénie pas la valeur..." (Quoted in: Simonin, Anne, 1994: 292). An anonymous 1947 reader's report commented categorically: "c'est une littérature odieuse, tout ce qu'il y a de plus à la mode, fait pour que se pâment d'aise les habitués des vendredis rue Sébastien-Bottin [Gallimard]. Un piège pour amateur de langage. Les obscénités ne sont pas le pire (quoique la première nouvelle [*L'Amour*] en soit imbuvable), mais la monotonie des je ne sais pas, j'ai oublié, je devrais savoir, pourquoi je dis ça, et tout le reste qui est système.

Je suis contre la publication, renonçant volontiers aux éloges à prévoir les pages littéraires, de *Combat*, *Les Temps modernes*, *Fontaine*, etc." (Quoted in: Serry, Hervé, 2012: 56). Hervé Serry's forthcoming sociological history of Le Seuil will provide the fullest picture of these decisions to date. I am grateful to him for his suggestions at an early stage of my research on Le Seuil.

²¹² Le Seuil also turned down Birago Diop's *contes*, finding that "il n'y avait pas assez de personnages" (Diop, Birago, 1963: 35). Flamand also rejected Paul Niger's poetry (Flamand, Paul, 1951) and was reluctant to take on Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma*. Correspondence and readers' reports show how comments on the manuscript sought to hone its promise without imposing a strict editorial line. Jean Cayrol wrote to Kateb Yacine to this effect :

"Si je vous ai demandé de retravailler votre texte, je vous assure que ce n'était pas pour vous mettre dans un 'moule' romanesque, dans une façon d'écrire et de sentir toute personnelle.

[...]

Il n'est pas dans nos habitudes d'imposer une ligne quelconque de travail à celui qui sait dans quel sens il doit aller.

[...]

Vous ne devez pas, à tout prix écrire pour nous faire plaisir... Je vous lirai toujours avec joie. Mais à conditions que vous vous sentiez totalement indépendant à mon égard. Vous n'avez aucune concession à me faire et à nous faire et j'espère que vous l'avez compris dès le début de nos rencontres" (Cayrol, Jean, 1953).

Africa. None of these three writers viewed writing as their main profession. Born in 1910, Sadjì was part of Senghor's generation, but spent nearly all of his life as a school teacher in the Four Communes of pre-independence Senegal, becoming a school inspector shortly before his death in 1961.²¹³ In contrast, Kane and Fall both held high-level administrative positions in independent Senegal at the time their books were published and had spent much of the previous decade in Paris. Archived correspondence reiterates the role of Léopold Sédar Senghor as literary *passeur* in all three cases, and the authors' apparent distance from the autonomous pole of the literary field as their work continued to be assessed according to criteria of "actualité" rather than formal or stylistic distinction.

The ethnocentrism ascribed to the Parisian "centre" by Casanova reflects normative criteria of value that, as she has subsequently emphasised, are socially conditioned and must therefore always be historicised.²¹⁴ The normative definitions of literary value and legitimacy explored in this chapter encompass specific instances of vocabulary, syntax, narrative voice, and structure. Such issues of language and style are not specific only to the reception of African manuscripts in France, but broach broader questions about the publication of avant-garde writing in this period. The development of the novel (at least in its "high-brow" form) in post-war France can be described as a gradual shift from Sartrean *engagement* and social realism to the avant-garde formal concerns of the *nouveau roman*

²¹³ Before 1960, the Four Communes were the regions centred around the oldest colonial towns in French West Africa (Saint Louis, Gorée, Rufisque, Dakar). Exceptionally among France's sub-Saharan African colonies, their inhabitants were considered French citizens and had full voting rights.

²¹⁴ "Le jugement de goût n'existe pas (ou pas seulement) comme simple expression subjective ou intersubjective: il y a des conditions sociales de production et d'expression du jugement de goût qui permettent (ou non) qu'il devienne légitime, c'est à dire qu'il soit doté d'une force telle qu'il ait (ou non) des effets objectifs et mesurables. L'évaluation exerce des effets en fonction du degré de légitimité de celui qui énonce ce jugement. C'est pourquoi la valeur littéraire est, en réalité, à la fois et inséparablement objective et subjective. On peut donc montrer qu'il y a une histoire de la (des) valeur(s) littéraire(s) sans faire de cette valeur un fait relatif et contingent et qu'il y a des mécanismes historiques qui concourent à créer la valeur des valeurs, c'est à dire l'universel. Mais il s'agit d'un universel historicisé (ce qui le rend encore plus miraculeux)" (Pradeau, Christophe and Tiphaine Samoyault, 2005: 142-43).

and the Tel Quel movement, imbricated in the revolutionary politics of the early sixties in France. The loosely defined school of the *nouveau roman* presented new modes of resistance by abandoning the ostensibly bourgeois constraints of realist writing and upholding a notion of literary autonomy (Robbe-Grillet, 1961; Britton, 1992).

The examples presented here confirm in more complex and multidirectional ways the mode of “annexation” Casanova levels at Paris as the ostensible “centre” of world literary time. The unmooring of authorial authority via the socio-historical reconstruction of the literary field may appear to destabilise some postcolonial critical projects by revealing other forms of agency (including the non-discursive). The approach can also, as I will argue, show the subtle ways in which authors confront and at times challenge the context in which their work is produced. While Sarah Brouillette has argued that, in the case of contemporary anglophone postcolonial writers in the global literary marketplace, such strategies are self-conscious, a Bourdieusian framework here emphasises the pre-reflexive forces that shape such interventions. The “pre-reflexive aspects of practice” (Sapiro, 2012: 37) – or Bourdieusian habitus – are never reducible entirely to the biography or consciousness of an individual subject, nor to their expression in discourse. In the context of literature on sub-Saharan Africa, this space was always already shaped by political, aesthetic, and commercial forces. The imposition of “standard” French language, for example, can be considered a legacy of colonial education, generated by the author’s habitus, as well as a potential area in which symbolic violence may be exerted by officious editors in Paris (Miller, 1986). Regarding Camara Laye, Miller hypothesises that:

Between rewriting and simple ‘stylistic’ editing, there is much room for ambiguity and adjustment. It would not be surprising if the prose of a young African factory worker had been retouched and ‘improved’ by benevolent editors mindful of their

duty to protect the French language against *barbarismes*, hoping to ensure the success of the novel. (Miller, 1986: 119)

By analysing readers' reports and editorial correspondence, this chapter will consider in what ways such "protection" of the French language as universal literary currency coincided with constraints in style and genre imposed by "benevolent editors".

Abdoulaye Sadjì: littérature coloniale or 'négritude vécue'?

Sadjì's *Maïmouna* was first published in Senegal. It was serialised in the newspaper, *L'AOF. Echo de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique* (December 1946 – January 1947) and subsequently printed and distributed in 1952 by the Imprimerie Abdoulaye Diop in Dakar, a forerunner of Senegal's first national publishing house.²¹⁵ *Maïmouna* was rejected by Le Seuil in Paris in the late 1940s, before being reprinted by Présence Africaine in 1958. Set in colonial Senegal, the novel's beautiful, proud, yet naive eponymous protagonist leaves her home town, Louga, to join her sister in Dakar. Her high expectations and love of material luxuries on offer in the city founder when she falls pregnant by her lover, Doudou Dieuf, shortly after her engagement to a different man, chosen by her brother-in-law. She is forced to return to Louga, her honour in tatters, despite Doudou's promise of marriage. In a sudden spiral of decline, Maïmouna contracts smallpox, leading to a traumatic still birth and permanent disfigurement. Eventually she resumes life working at the same market as her mother and accepts her humble fate in a final moralising twist: "elle l'acceptait d'emblée, avec son cortège de luttes, de souffrances, de misères et

²¹⁵ Sadjì's *récits*, *Tounka* and *Modou Fatim* were first serialised in the *Paris-Dakar* newspaper, before being printed by Abdoulaye Diop in 1952 and 1960 (respectively). The latter text remains out of print, while the former was reprinted by Présence Africaine in 1965. Sadjì's book of *contes* written with Senghor, *Leuk-le-lièvre* (Hachette, 1953; NEA, 1975), has received greater long-term recognition. Ephemeral literary publishing in the press – which has been researched more in anglophone contexts than the francophone – remains an important counter-example to the assumed centripetal force of the Parisian publishing space in this period (Lüsebrink, Hans-Jurgen, 2003).

d'humiliations. N'était-ce pas la meilleure façon d'en triompher?" (Sadj, 1958: 250).

Closer analysis of the material history of Sadj's text suggests that although its language and form were criticised by readers at Le Seuil, and the text's didactic message has been disdained by postcolonial critics, its long-term consecration is anchored in part to its status as one of the first literary texts published in francophone Africa; to an "authenticity" that has been conceived historically in both material and discursive terms.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Sadj's first novel, *Nini*, was a chief target for Fanon's critique of racial alienation in *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952). This story of a St Louis *signare* woman and her desperate attempts to become European by finding a white European husband is unpacked by Fanon as evidence of the psychological complex of racial alienation.²¹⁶ In years surrounding the independences, Sadj's lack of explicit political or anti-colonial *engagement* provoked criticism of his work among the younger generation of African writers and students, whose Marxist sympathies rejected this "roman sans perspectives révolutionnaires" (Dieng, 2009: 106). Such criticisms are symptomatic of the shifting aesthetic, political, and pedagogical stakes of different contexts of editorial evaluation in this period. They refine Mongo Beti's double-edged comments on the relative ease of finding a publisher for writers sympathetic to Senghor's cultural politics in comparison to the difficulty faced by more politically radical writers (Beti, 1981; Steemers, 2007: 32; 45-53). In later criticism, *Nini* and *Maïmouna* have been variously criticised for their clumsy plots, stereotyped characterisation, negative morality, and

²¹⁶ *Nini* was written in 1935 (Blair, Dorothy S., 1976: 189). It was serialised across the first three issues of *Présence Africaine*, before appearing alongside Beti's *Ville cruelle* and Jean Malonga's *Coeur d'aryenne* in the "Trois écrivains noirs" special issue (1953).

reductive portrayal of racial *métissage*.²¹⁷ One of the main criticisms of *Maïmouna* by readers at Le Seuil was its apparent failure to fit into a pre-conceived mould since it straddled generic definitions and conventions in literary style, language, and content. Neither stylistically avant-garde nor radically anti-colonial, the text remained marginalised in a field where writing of and on Africa was consistently subject to political and politicising criteria of evaluation.

In an essay published in an early issue of *Présence Africaine*, Abdoulaye Sadjì set out his view of the role literature could play in the colonial enterprise: “renseigner, guider, charmer ses lecteurs” (1949: 139). He praises canonical colonial writers such as Pierre Loti and the Tharaud brothers for setting out “le simple et le vrai” to inform the French people of the lived realities of black Africans. Following this he describes a positive and functional role for literature within the apparatus of the colonial administration: “une telle littérature, placée à l’avant-garde des déploiements de l’appareil administratif, peut guider le colonisateur en faisant mieux connaître le colonisé” (139). Yet Sadjì concludes that such work has fallen short of creating an ideal sense of shared humanity. Instead, post-WW1 colonial writing is marked by greater suspicion of racial difference, even a

²¹⁷ Mohamadou Kane writes, for example: “Une autre raison de l’absence de métamorphose profonde chez *Maïmouna* doit être imputée à la maîtrise insuffisante des techniques de création romanesque chez l’auteur qui résume l’action, la fait procéder par bonds. Certaines motivations demeurent dans l’ombre” (Kane, Mohamadou, 1982: 319). Dorothy Blair suggests that *Maïmouna* “fails as a psychological novel, because the configurations are not consistent throughout. Basically, Sadjì shows himself incapable of understanding the subtler motivations behind human conduct, or any but the crudest of human emotions” (Blair, Dorothy S., 1976: 191). She praises the realism of the depiction of Bouhouma’s house in Dakar and of the smallpox epidemic, but ultimately these too “are inadequate and not consistent enough to give the novel a unity of tone on the level of a document of social realism” (191). The criterion of narrative “unity”, as will be demonstrated in the current chapter, was important for publishers in this period, despite the currents in avant-garde, modernist writing that worked against such norms. Demonstrating in part a shift in critical criteria since the early 1980s, David Murphy describes *Nini* as: “a work that constantly veers towards racism and misogyny in its account of its heroine’s debauched and feckless life” (Murphy, David, 2000b: 132).

“répugnance réciproque” (140) based on misconceptions about Africa and Africans.²¹⁸

Writers now “se mirent à regarder l’Afrique et les Africains non avec les yeux du poète et de l’écrivain mais avec ceux du critique et du pamphlétaire” (141). For Sadjì then, the aesthetic lens of the artist writing on Africa has been tinted by that of politics; an idea that chimes with Victor Segalen’s definition of the “exote”’s visual sensibility. Having begun by praising “l’art pour l’art”, he concludes by setting out the universalised objective of “toute littérature” as a search for “le beau et le vrai”. This exposition of aesthetic purpose provides a useful benchmark against which to consider Sadjì’s own fictional writing and the ways in which publishers responded to his project in practice in Paris and in Dakar.

Sadjì remained distant from the social milieux of Parisian literary debate. He spent only a year in the city in 1948/49 while studying to become a school inspector at the ENS St Cloud. Born in 1910 to a marabout father and a mother of Sérère-Lébou heritage, Sadjì attended Koranic school until the age of eleven before transferring to the William Ponty school on Gorée where he trained as a teacher alongside the future President of the Côte d’Ivoire, Félix Houphouët-Boigny. He was one of the first Senegalese people to achieve the *baccalauréat*, and subsequently embarked on a teaching career in Ziguinchor, Thiès and Louga. Though he served on the editorial committee of the first issues of *Présence Africaine*, Sadjì’s milieu was different to that of writers who had been part of the literary scene in 1930s Paris and his relationship to *négritude* remained ambivalent. In 1982, Senghor wrote that “Abdoulaye Sadjì n’a pas beaucoup théorisé sur la *négritude*: il a fait mieux, il a agi par l’écriture. Il fut l’un des premiers jeunes Sénégalais, entre les deux guerres mondiales, à combattre la thèse de l’assimilation et la fausse élite des ‘évolués’”

²¹⁸ The writers he mentions specifically, including Henri Béraud and René Charbonneau who “élèvent le mensonge et la mystification en nouveaux dogmes littéraires” (141).

(Quoted in: Washington, 1997: 58). Sadjí's "action" is perhaps most evident in the didacticism of his texts, a trait seen as outmoded by editors at *Le Seuil*. According to his son and only biographer, whose hagiography is notable for the near-complete absence of discussion of its subject's literary output, Sadjí was also close to Senghor's first Prime Minister, Mamadou Dia. He attended the famous meeting in Bamako that marked the founding of the *Rassemblement Démocratique Africain* and Dia refers to their shared "négritude vécue" of the late 1930s in his memoirs (Washington, 1997: 52). In his efforts to provide an account of Sadjí's reputation in the political field, Washington stresses a differentiation between the "négritude du Quartier Latin" and Sadjí's "négritude d'intérieur" (58) while emphasising his lack of close affiliation with any single political or religious group (90; 160). Sadjí's literary work testifies to a range of internal and external pressures shaping the often over-simplified shift from colonial representations to more politically engaged literary writing on Africa.

Rejection in Paris: "un bon élève noir qui met beaucoup de bonne volonté à chanter sa race" (Anon, 1949)

In an early article published in *Le Seuil*'s monthly newssheet, Paul Flamand explains his selection of manuscripts:

Était-ce de la littérature engagée ou dégagée? J'ignore ce que cela veut dire. Ne sont valables que les œuvres qui tachent à assumer – sans tricherie et sans contrefaçon – tout ce qui est de l'homme; refusant au départ ces a priori qui font les romans à thèse, la "bonne littérature" de tout poil, et qui conduisent à la malhonnêteté intellectuelle. (Flamand, 1953)

The rejection of fixed political aims and a critical quest for intellectual honesty underpin Flamand's definition of literary value. He sets his humanistic choices apart from a programmatic or de facto form of *engagement*. The choice of a manuscript, he suggested,

“n’est pas d’abord un acte de commerce, ou bien un coup de dé; c’est d’abord un engagement personnel, l’acceptation d’une aventure commune”, motivated by reasons which are “toujours changeantes et toujours singulières” (Ibid). This nonchalant affirmation of his editorial autonomy refutes normative value judgements or any single set of criteria. However, in line with Bourdieu’s diagnosis of the autonomous pole of the literary field, this “disinterestedness” itself affirms certain norms, for example in Flamand’s rejection of “romans à thèse”. As shown in Chapter Two, the relative autonomy of *Le Seuil* in the literary field was not driven by commercial interests or a priori political motives, but depended on social and political positions of its staff, notably its core comité de lecture.

The manuscript of *Maïmouna* was sent to Paul Flamand in 1949 by Senghor. As discussed previously, Senghor and Flamand’s close relationship continued throughout the postwar period. Senghor continued to send manuscripts to *Le Seuil* until after the independences. In Sadjji’s case, he appended a handwritten note expressing his hope that it would be published.²¹⁹ He wrote of *Maïmouna*:

Sans doute ce roman n’est-il pas parfait, mais il est authentique et intéressera à ce titre, je l’espère, le public métropolitain comme il a intéressé le public africain. En le publiant, vous me rendrez un très grand service. (Senghor, 1949b)

Senghor here affirms the success of the text in Africa and his hope that this can translate to the metropolitan readership. His recourse to criteria of authenticity shows a clear awareness of this stake in the literary field as a marker of symbolic capital for metropolitan publishers, including those at the more progressive end of the political

²¹⁹ This evidence of his role as literary *passeur* extends Richard Watts’ portrait of Senghor’s mimicry of colonial literary preface-writing (Watts, Richard, 2005: 8).

spectrum such as *Le Seuil*.²²⁰ Finally, he appeals to Flamand's friendship and the crucial social capital of that connection.

The archived readers' reports at *Le Seuil* identify anthropological interest in *Maïmouna*'s realism but their judgement is based principally on literary qualities. They bypass the significance of Sadjì's strong moral message that had, according to Senghor's covering letter, had such success in Senegal. One anonymous early report describes the novel:

L'histoire est touchante, mais touchante aussi la candeur littéraire de notre auteur. Il fait de belles phrases et il croit faire de la poésie. Il encombre son récit de détails et il croit faire vrai. Pour nous ces détails sont intéressants, mais d'un intérêt extérieur à l'histoire. (Anon, 1949)

The judgement of this text points to an "espace des possibles" determined by a limited interest in local detail, in tension with the anticipated priority of the "récit" and its aesthetic qualities. The novel's contrast between wealthy Dakarois society and rural poverty does not echo the theme of racial conflict and potential resolution that characterised contemporaneous texts aimed at a white French readership, such as Garnier's *Va t'en avec les tiens!* or Sartre's dialectical exposition of *négritude* in "Orphée noir". As the report notes, the milieu described by Sadjì, which "n'est pas celui des blancs (j'insiste parce que l'auteur n'oppose en rien deux races, ou deux civilisations, même), est opposé à celui des noirs qui sont restés dans les villages nègres à vivre de peu" (Ibid). The portrayal of a black middle class in Senegal does not correspond to expectations regarding either anthropological or exotic interest. The reader's views on Sadjì's style and "belief" in that style and its "truth" dominate the remainder of his evaluation:

²²⁰ *Le Seuil* increasingly looked to North Africa through Emmanuel Roblès' "Méditerranées" collection, which included early works by Kateb Yacine and Mohammed Dib. The universalising aim of this collection was to group "des oeuvres qui montrent, dans la diversité des décors espagnols, italiens, grecs ou nord-africains, la permanence d'une communauté humaine où l'on partage les mêmes misères, les mêmes inquiétudes et les mêmes espoirs" (Roblès, Emmanuel, 1953).

C'est l'œuvre d'un bon élève noir qui met beaucoup de bonne volonté à chanter sa race à mesure qu'il la perd.

Encore un roman à refaire, si l'on juge, que, tout de même, ses qualités secondaires meritent qu'on le publie. (Ibid)

In turn demeaning and employing paternalistic expressions, the report patronises Sadjì as a “bon élève noir”, expressing only abstract curiosity for the novel’s “jolies petites choses” and ignoring Sadjì’s “*négritude vécue*” that would later be championed by Présence Africaine and Senghor. An evident disdain for the text’s style is expressed through explicit comments on Sadjì that establish a strong, albeit impotent, sense of authorship: the author is certainly not dead here. Yet the pending decision of whether to “refaire” positions the editor, rather than author, as active, creative subject. Such evidence reveals the illusion of creative autonomy in the metropolitan literary marketplace. At the more autonomous, yet politically neutral, pole occupied by Le Seuil, the primary interest of this text is its verisimilitude and picturesque naivety.²²¹

Flamand responded to Senghor, drawing heavily on the reader’s report: “Il y a là tout un côté bon élève et devoir appliqué qui est à la fois touchant et insuffisant” (Flamand, 1949b). Unlike Grasset, whose subsequent paratextual illusion of Doëllé’s “devoir appliqué” proved a lucrative risk, Flamand is reluctant to take on the “candeur littéraire”. His decision can be accounted for in part by the situation of Le Seuil in the late 1940s, as a publishing house that was gradually re-establishing itself as a rival to the literary prestige of Gallimard.

²²¹ On Le Seuil’s structurally “neutral” position in the literary field, see: Bourdieu, Pierre, 1977: 25

“Un imprimeur de chez nous éditant des auteurs de chez nous” (Sadj, 1952) :

***Maïmouna* and the Imprimerie Abdoulaye Diop**

Maïmouna was one of the earliest secular fictional texts to be produced in Senegal by an African-owned printer before appearing in France.²²² After being serialised, it was then printed by the Imprimerie Abdoulaye Diop in Dakar in 1952. This resolutely local edition was printed in three short illustrated volumes in a monthly “Lectures faciles” series, available by subscription.²²³ A band running along the top of the cover read “Le Livre Populaire Africain”. This venture stood in counterpoint to the production of pedagogical texts by Hachette and Nathan who dominated the market for school books in French in sub-Saharan Africa.²²⁴ Hachette published Sadj’s version of the well-known conte, *La belle histoire de Leuk-le-lièvre* in 1953, with grammatical exercises appended by Senghor. This edition of the *conte*, whose themes of pride and fall are transposed to realist settings in Sadj’s other writing, was hugely successful and remains in print today.

The Abdoulaye Diop edition of *Maïmouna*, printed eight years before independence, was subtitled “roman sénégalais”, a label replaced simply by “roman” in *Présence Africaine*’s 1958 edition. The precedent for such paratextual labelling was set by René Maran’s

²²² The Imprimerie d’Almeida in Ouidah, Togo printed Félix Couchoro’s *Amour de féticheuse* in 1941 (Ricard, Alain, 1987).

²²³ There is no evidence of other surviving texts from this series.

²²⁴ After 1960, Hachette expanded its dominant position in francophone Africa, as seen in archived contracts confirming terms of their distribution and the founding of the IPAM collective (IMEC: HACS5B5C201; HACS5B1C204). Jean Mistler, director of the Hachette literature department, wrote: “On a ouvert 150 nouveaux points de vente, kiosques fixes, postes mobiles, rayons aménagés pour la presse dans divers magasins; ces postes sont situés souvent dans des bourgades de la brousse où il n’y a point d’Européens. Ce programme, qui sera poursuivi, représente une oeuvre de longue haleine dont les résultats ne se feront sentir pleinement que dans plusieurs années, mais qui, en raison même de son implantation en profondeur, doit avoir des effets durables” (Mistler, Jean, 1964: 390). Larousse, Istra, Nathan and Hatier also made a sizable investment in these new markets. Hatier, for example, forged connections with African writers, such as Joseph Ki-Zerbo and Mahter M’Bow, setting up six specialised collections (Matins d’Afrique, Mon Cahier de Récitation, Livres du Soleil, Monde noir poche jeunesse, Lecture et Expression, Pages Africaines) (Ossété, Jacques, 1996: 144-47). For further discussion of school textbook publishing, focused on Congo-Brazzaville and Afrique Équatoriale Française, see: Bouche, Denise, 1968; Bouche, Denise, 1975; Hubscher, Françoise, 1978; Ossété, Jacques, 1996.

Batouala (1921), yet here is a prescient sign of the literary nationalism that Christopher Miller ascribes to writing published in the 1980s.²²⁵ The sub-title stresses the national status of Sadjì's text. Its front cover features three figures: a full-length portrait of a woman wearing pearls and holding up her *pagne*, and two male figures looming in the background.²²⁶ *Maïmouna* was paratextually positioned as a national pedagogical tool, in line with French-language primers, such as *Mamadou et Bineta*, produced in France by the Strasbourg-based printer, Istra, from the 1930s onwards.²²⁷ An advertisement at the back of the third volume of *Maïmouna* confirms this further: "Acheter 'Le Livre Populaire Africain' ce n'est pas enrichir quelqu'un. C'est soutenir un idéal que les meilleurs d'entre nous ont toujours eu: un imprimeur de chez nous éditant des auteurs de chez nous" (Sadjì, 1952). Both the writer's and the publisher's identity are here brought to the fore as the commercial impetus of existing (metropolitan) publishers is replaced by an idealised indigenous means of literary production.

Abdoulaye Sadjì was Abdoulaye Diop's teacher in Saint Louis.²²⁸ Diop's career represented a first important step towards the foundation of independent publishing houses in Senegal. The Nouvelles Éditions Africaines would be founded some time later under the initiative of Senghor.²²⁹ Though printing had long been present in West Africa,

²²⁵ The symbolic capital of authenticating racial labels can be seen in their redeployment by colonial writers, such as Gaston Joseph's *Koffi, roman d'un vrai noir* (Éditions du monde nouveau, 1922) or André Demaison's *Diato, roman de l'homme noir qui eut trois femmes et en mourut* (Albin Michel, 1923).

²²⁶ The front cover of Présence Africaine's 1958 edition also features an illustration of a woman's head with *moussor* (head wrap) in profile. Subsequent editions have used a photograph to maintain this external marker of the text's content. Further research remains to be done on how the production and reception of cover designs correspond to Présence Africaine's self-positioning in the local and global literary marketplaces.

²²⁷ These books were reprinted in the 1980s by Nouvelles Éditions Africaines and EDICEF (the partnership formed by Istra and Hachette in 1970).

²²⁸ As well as *Maïmouna*, Diop printed two further texts by Sadjì: *Modou Fatim* and *Education africaine et civilisation* (1964).

²²⁹ This was a multinational publishing house, founded in 1972 with the collaboration of Senegal, Ivory Coast and Togo, and five French publishers: "Armand Colin, Hachette (through its subsidiary EDICEF),

Abdoulaye Diop was the first African “Maître-Imprimeur”, printing books, magazines, as well as standard printed materials from 1948.²³⁰ He won several awards and became the first African member of the Société Internationale Gutenberg.²³¹ In a later interview, Diop set out the history of his business:

Il était difficile de penser tout de suite au livre, mais en réalité, j’avais la même vocation que mon grand maître Gutenberg, c’est-à-dire que j’avais pensé au livre assez tôt [...] J’avais quand même disposé de matériel moderne, puisque j’ai pu obtenir des machines allemandes (de la marque Heidelberg) qui m’ont permis de faire certains travaux. Mais ce n’était que bien plus tard que les Sénégalais ont commencé à s’apercevoir que l’imprimerie n’était pas faite seulement pour faire des carnets ou des cartes de visites, c’est-à-dire des travaux courants, mais qu’on pouvait, transcrire un manuscrit en caractères d’imprimerie et en sortir un ouvrage. (Prinz, 1988)

This interview gives some insight into the material status of the printed text in Senegal during the post-war period and the precocity of Abdoulaye Diop’s ambition. He suggests here that print was valued primarily for communicative purposes, rather than expressive potential, and that the gradual valorisation of the printed book remained dependant on imported European technologies and techniques, as well as social and cultural shifts.²³² This instance of book production by a local African-owned printing press remains an isolated example in this period.

Nathan, Présence Africaine and Editions du Seuil. 52 percent of shares belonged to the Senegalese government; the rest was shared among the five *marraines*... The European houses provided the initial capital, equipment and expertise, and were to be gradually bought out when circumstances allowed” (Small, Audrey, 2005: 45).

²³⁰ Printing presses had been in operation in Senegal since 1845. Diop’s competitors included the Grande Imprimerie Africaine and the Imprimerie Saint Paul. A thriving manuscript culture and oral literary tradition has continued in parallel. My analysis of print publishing does not imply any hierarchy between these forms.

²³¹ My thanks to Katrin Reissenberger at the Internationale Gutenberg-Gesellschaft for confirming that Diop’s name appears in a membership list from 1970 [email correspondence August 2012].

²³² A 1965 government report noted the limitations of the printing industry in Senegal: “Du fait même de l’exigüité du marché en matière de l’imprimerie, aucune tentative de spécialisation n’est effectuée. Il n’existe pas d’atelier axé particulièrement sur le tirage des journaux ou revues car le nombre des lecteurs est encore modeste. La simple édition de journaux et mensuels ne permettrait en aucun cas l’amortissement dans des délais normaux du matériel actuellement en usage” (*L’Économie du Sénégal*, 1965: 179).

Abdoulaye Diop links his task to a growing sense of national duty in the period following the independences, when he worked on government projects with the support of Senghor.²³³ His earlier publications were mainly political pamphlets, yet he stresses the disinterested role of his business:

Puisque je me trouvais être le premier [imprimeur], donc, je m'étais imposé un devoir national, c'est-à-dire d'aider tous ceux-là qui avaient, par leurs réflexions, quelque chose à apporter, qui voulaient apporter des suggestions à la façon de construire le pays. Alors, je me suis imposé ce devoir-là, en les acceptant tous dans notre petite maison. (Prinz, 1988)

The imagined community is to be consolidated through an open print culture, as Diop endows his work with a nation-building purpose. For the Festival mondial des arts nègres in 1966, he produced a deluxe edition of the second Senegalese constitution, reflecting the triumph of the African cultural showcase. As co-organiser, with Senghor, of the festival, Alioune Diop wrote a note thanking Abdoulaye Diop for his work, declaring that “il a prouvé qu'à partir d'éléments de l'art traditionnel négro-africain il est possible d'apporter la marque de la NEGRITUDE à l'Art Graphique universel” (Diop, 1966: 2bis). This is the only established example of collaborative work between *Présence Africaine* and Abdoulaye Diop. Abdoulaye Diop suggests of their beginnings that: “Parallèlement, notre frère et ami, Alioune Diop, avait démarré déjà. Il avait commencé aux environs de 1947, à Paris, à créer la société d'édition *Présence Africaine*, et nous avons eu des sentiments réciproques, de fraternité et d'amitié. Lui, il était en Europe, moi j'étais ici” (Prinz, 1988).

²³³ In the period surrounding the independences, Abdoulaye Diop played a pivotal role, printing *Le Mali*, the paper of the Mouvement de libération nationale, as well as *L'Unité africaine*, the newssheet of Senghor's party (Dieng, Amady Aly, 2009: 133-34) and *Awa*, the first women's magazine in francophone Africa, founded by poet Annette Mbaye d'Erneville in 1963 (Bush, Ruth, 2011a).

In 1966 Abdoulaye Diop also proposed the “Projet d’une Société Nationale d’Éditions et de Réalisations graphiques” from his position as Directeur Général of the Société Nationale d’Édition et de Publications. Though this project never saw light, its plan was to confirm the link between a cohesive indigenous printing and publishing industry and nation-building in post-independence Senegal. Diop’s proposal sets out to develop “la Culture Nationale” by encouraging domestic printing in French and Arabic. It was hoped that Senegal would also export “aussi bien des livres, journaux et revues, que les disques et cartes postales. Avec l’édition populaire, nous pourrions élargir les frontières de la culture pour reculer celles de l’ignorance et du sous-développement” (Diop, 1966: 2). By this point, Diop employed sixty people and hoped to expand to more than double that number with the new project, bringing together newspaper and periodical printing with book publishing and stationery production under one umbrella. Co-editions were planned with Hachette and Fernand Nathan, who both expressed their support of the project, albeit with careful qualification.²³⁴ Diop’s work in forming a local technological bases and skilled work force played a significant role in the book history of this period leading to the founding of the first publishing houses in francophone sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s and early 1970s.

²³⁴ A representative from Hachette wrote: “Nous sommes tout prêts [...] à vous confier sous forme de co-édition, d’impression ou de réimpression la production d’ouvrages de notre catalogue destinés aux Marchés d’Afrique Noire, dans la mesure où, bien entendu, vous disposez d’un équipement technique et d’un encadrement nous permettant d’obtenir des produits finis d’une qualité et d’un prix comparables à ce que nous assurent nos ateliers de fabrication ou nos confrères parisiens” (Mame-Sencier, R., 1966). Jean-Claude Poulain from Nathan wrote, “C’est avec plaisir que nous vous confirmons qu’au cas où la Société Nationale d’Éditions et de Réalisation Graphiques verrait le jour, que notre Société serait heureuse d’examiner avec vous ‘toute formule de coédition, pour la diffusion, l’impression ou la réimpression de titres destinés à l’Afrique Noire Francophone, et réalisée par notre maison. En ce qui concerne la formation professionnelle nous serons également d’accord pour envisager de vous octroyer toute aide technique qui vous permettrait notamment de faire former au sein de notre Société à Paris ou bien auprès des divers techniciens avec lesquels nous sommes amenés à travailler, toute personne que vous jugeriez apte à recevoir cette formation” (Poulain, Jean-Claude, 1966).

Maïmouna's publishing history illustrates the differential criteria of publishers in the immediate post-war period. While Abdoulaye Diop was happy to print the work of his former teacher given the open policy of his entrepreneurial, national project in Dakar and his ambition to print books, editors at Le Seuil placed different demands on the text, despite the different symbolic mode of the text's "authenticity".

***Maïmouna* at Présence Africaine**

Maïmouna provides a counterexample to any tendency to oversimplify the role of Présence Africaine in the metropolitan literary field. Despite its explicitly anti-colonial turn from 1955 onwards, the publication of Sadjí's novel confirms the broad aesthetic and political base of Présence Africaine's publishing strategies. A memorial piece in *Présence Africaine* in 1961 recalls Sadjí's anxiety regarding the publishing of *Maïmouna* in Paris:

This is Sadjí's major work; it evoked in him a feeling of jealous care, and we still remember the impassioned letters addressed to us from Senegal when he sent the manuscript to us at the embryo "Présence Africaine" in Paris. He did not want "his" child (*Maïmouna*) to be lost in France, and at each delay in printing his anxiety became akin to despair. (Anon, 1961) [published in English]

The appearance of Sadjí's text is here described metaphorically in terms of a dual birth: that of the novel and of the publishing house itself. Sadjí's anxiety suggests the novel may have been sent several years prior to its publication and testifies to the anxieties evoked by the transnational movement of manuscripts.

The text was published in 1958. Both the Abdoulaye Diop and Présence Africaine editions of *Maïmouna* include footnotes explaining Wolof terms. In Diop's case, this suggests an appeal to a wider readership than those familiar with the local language. The common

Senegalese term, *téranga*, is glossed somewhat inaccurately in this edition as “savoir-vivre”, and *tara* as “lit bas en feuilles de ronier” (Sadji, 1952: 20), *ronier* being a particular type of palm tree found in the Sahel region. In the later *Présence Africaine* edition, these footnotes are expanded to “savoir-vivre; art de recevoir quelqu’un” and “lit très bas en fibres végétales” (Sadji, 1958: 25), and thus made less specific, arguably more universal, for a larger potential readership.

Early reviews suggest that the text’s form and content were seen as outdated by some in the post-Bandung political context.²³⁵ The productive relationship Sadji had diagnosed between literature and colonial administration in his earlier article now seemed naive at best and reactionary at worst. *Présence Africaine* had published foundational non-fiction works by Aimé Césaire, Cheikh Anta Diop, and Albert Tevoedjre, together with fiction and poetry by Mongo Beti, David Diop and Castro Soromenho. Through the newly formed Société Africaine de Culture, their work focused on the journal and the Congresses of Black Writers and Artists which took place in Paris in 1956 and Rome in 1958. The hostile early reception of *Maïmouna* among a new generation of African students suggests that the text was published as the result of a longer-term relationship and collaboration with its author, rather than in response to the political zeitgeist.²³⁶ An early *Présence Africaine* catalogue commented of Sadji: “Compagnon des premiers jours de *Présence Africaine*, il fut un nationaliste africain irréductible. Psychologue d’une société cherchant sa voix, ses analyses non conformistes d’un milieu social complexé provoquèrent des réactions controversées et toujours passionnées” (Anon, 1962a). A perceived lack of anti-

²³⁵ A third edition was published in 1978 and the book has remained in print since. *Nini* has remained in print since its reprinting in 1988.

²³⁶ *Présence Africaine* published *Le Sang de Bandoeng*, the same year. This pamphlet was hastily assembled by Jacques Vergès and the FEANF in response to reports of torture of Algerians in Algeria (see Chapter Three).

colonial “resistance” in Sadjì’s text has subsequently affected its positioning and relative obfuscation by postcolonial critics.

Since its publication, *Maïmouna* has been criticised for its lack of verisimilitude, a dependency on heavy-handed stylistic devices and prosaic descriptions. The literature seminars of the FEANF (Fédération d’Étudiants d’Afrique Noire en France), which took place in 1961, included two papers on Sadjì’s novels. Both texts criticise Sadjì’s apparent lack of anti-colonial *engagement* in line with the criticisms Mongo Beti had made of Camara Laye’s “picturesque” novels. One student complains that: “Maïmouna relève plutôt du conte, parce qu’en dépit de tous ses efforts, l’auteur n’arrive pas à recréer un monde réel tel qu’il peut être senti dans les romans de Richard Wright” (Bal, 1961; 2009: 64). He suggests that Sadjì fails to give sufficient sociological or psychological depth to his characters. Going against a Lukácsian concept of the historical novel, Sadjì’s characters “ne sont jamais des êtres sociaux, mais des êtres biologiques, en dehors du mouvement de l’histoire” (Bal, 1961; 2009: 65).²³⁷ As such, the author is accused of not showing the potential for social and historical critique and change. My aim here is not to validate or invalidate these arguments, but to consider them as prisms for the structures of the field in which this text was produced, notably the relationship between political *engagement* and literary autonomy.

Bal targets Sadjì’s descriptive technique, “qui rappelle fâcheusement les compositions françaises du CM2” (66) – a comment that recalls the reader’s remarks at *Le Seuil*.

²³⁷ A similar point is raised by Mohamadou Kane, in his discussion of Sadjì’s idealised depiction of rural life: “il [...] n’insiste pas assez sur les motivations économiques de l’abandon de la vie traditionnelle [...] Aucun bucolisme ne saurait gommer la pression d’un monde en pleine mutation” (Kane, Mohamadou, 1982: 476).

Another FEANF member notes that this is “un roman sans perspectives révolutionnaires... L’auteur s’est chaque fois gardé de prendre position, ou d’aller au fond des choses, d’autant plus que ce sont des thèmes banals” (Ba, 1961; 2009: 106). In each case Sadjı is criticised for failing to address the contexts underlying the characters’ conflicts: the impact of urbanisation; lack of female education; the alienation of the elite (represented by Maïmouna’s brother-in-law). In an article published in *L’Étudiant sénégalais* in October 1964, the future playwright and novelist Cheikh Aliou Ndao tempered these assertions. He praises the novella *Modou Fatim* (Impr. Abdoulaye Diop, 1960) and Sadjı’s use of the theme of illusion across his writing.²³⁸ *Modou Fatim* is repositioned through an intertextual allusion: “Cette nouvelle pourrait sortir de la plume de Ousmane Sembène. Le lecteur est habitué à un Sadjı Abdoulaye plus détaché du sujet, plus impartial, alors que dans cette petite brochure, Modou, notre paysan, ne nous quitte pas une seconde” (Ndao, 1964; 2009: 139). These reviews foregrounds the critical and philosophical turn against Senghorian *négritude* that would emerge in the early 1970s.

Criteria of selection at both Le Seuil and Présence Africaine were shaped by crucial and long-standing personal relationships between author, *passeur*, and publisher. In its trajectory from rejection by Le Seuil to publication by Abdoulaye Diop and Présence Africaine, Sadjı’s text negotiated the tensions between local and transnational notions of *engagement*, *négritude*, pedagogical value and a picturesque exotic in local “detail”. An anonymous reader at Le Seuil rejected Sadjı’s text on the grounds of inconsistency with the standards of literary French this publisher prized in the post-war period – though imitations of such “authenticity” were successful elsewhere. Casanova’s definition of

²³⁸ This story of seasonal migration is long out of print.

Parisianisation as “universalisation through denial of difference” (154) must be considered against such evidence of the shifting political and symbolic valency of “difference” in the context of decolonisation.

Cheikh Hamidou Kane and *L’Aventure ambiguë*

While Sadjì’s text has been criticised for failing to provide a convincing and dynamic portrait of Senegalese society, Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s *L’Aventure ambiguë* has long been celebrated for its powerful portrayal of cultural alienation and its elevated style.²³⁹ The book’s sustained consecration can, in part, be attributed to its publication by Julliard in 1961, following which it won the ANEMOM’s newly renamed Grand Prix d’Afrique noire (see Chapter Four). It has remained in print as a *livre de poche* at Éditions 10/18 ever since and was translated and published in the Heinemann African Writers Series in 1973.²⁴⁰ Archived editorial correspondence dating from September 1960 to February 1961 gives a glimpse of the economic, political and aesthetic stakes that structured the early reception of Kane’s manuscript at Le Seuil. Like Sadjì, Kane depended on *passeur* figures, namely Léopold Sédar Senghor and the researcher Vincent Monteil, who first sent the manuscript to Senghor. He was not part of the *Présence Africaine* milieu in the late fifties and early sixties and *Présence Africaine* does not appear to have ever been considered as a potential publisher for the text. The correspondence points to ways in which the text’s eventual rejection by Le Seuil and publication at Julliard depended on historically-situated

²³⁹ Kane has defended his style as a homage to the classical tradition and his French education, and his command of French: “Pour pouvoir écrire et écrire en français ou en anglais, il faut s’astreindre à une discipline. Je ne suis pas de ceux qui pensent qu’on peut être un bon écrivain en ne maîtrisant pas la langue qu’on utilise” (Quoted in: Little, J.P., 2000b: 43).

²⁴⁰ See: Bush, Ruth, 2013. *L’Aventure ambiguë* was Kane’s first, and for a long time his only, novel; his second, *Les Gardiens du temple*, was published in 1995, though written in the 1960s, as a *roman à clef* describing the dispute between Senghor and Mamadou Dia. According to Kane, Aimé Césaire advised him not to publish the book at the time: <http://www.lvdps.info/Cinquantenaire-de-L-Aventure-ambigue-Cheikh-Hamidou-Kane-ecrivain-Le-film-tire-de-mon-livre-m-a-frustre_a1031.html> [accessed July 2012].

evaluations by publishers and their readers that overlooked the text's complexities. They suggest a contrasting regime of literary selection to that faced by *Maïmouna* in the late 1940s. In the light of the new avant-garde literary movements, Kane's literary style was subject to increased scrutiny.

According to Bourdieu, the literary field is structured by a constant struggle to assert the legitimate definition of literature, as led by the avant-garde. *Nouveau romancier* Alain Robbe-Grillet defined the avant-garde as instigators of constant renewal, held in suspicion by bourgeois literary institutions as a threat to the "tradition française" (Robbe-Grillet, 1961: 25). Bourdieu's term "lutte" implies an active and reactive tension in the field, though as this case will suggest, the positioning of Kane's text involved little action on his part. Kane did not consider becoming a professional author in the 1950s and was not directly engaged in a struggle for literary autonomy in the field.²⁴¹ Born in Senegal in 1910 to a Muslim Peul family of nobles, Kane attended Koranic school in Louga to the age of ten before learning French and studying for the *baccalauréat*. He then travelled to Paris to study at the École nationale de la France d'Outre-Mer, before returning to Senegal to take up a position as a civil servant. He became Governor of Thiès before developing a career in business. This biographical detail is a means to understand Kane's position in the literary and political fields and the ways in which it differed from that of the other authors considered in this chapter. *L'Aventure ambiguë* was based on the journal Kane wrote as a student in Paris. In interviews, he has stated that this journal was not written with the intention of seeking publication, nor in response to the demands of a European literary marketplace:

²⁴¹ "Le métier d'écrivain n'existait pas dans nos cultures [...] chez moi, ce qui existe, c'est la parole, c'est le conte, c'est la légende, c'est le proverbe, etc." (Little, J.P., 1999: 119).

Quand j'ai commencé à rédiger ce qui devait être *L'Aventure ambiguë*, je ne l'avais pas fait dans l'intention d'écrire une œuvre romanesque, ou même de rédiger mes mémoires. Je n'avais pas entrepris de le faire dans l'intention de répondre à l'un des genres littéraires qui étaient pratiqués en Europe. (Quoted in: Little, 2000b: 11)

This retrospective distancing from generic considerations is significant given the readers' comments on the manuscript, to be discussed below. Given the disinterestedness that characterises the pole of high autonomy in the metropolitan literary field as defined by Bourdieu, Kane's statements confirm the ways in which his "literariness" was in fact constructed by others. When considered against a fuller account of the literary field, they confirm the limitations of an author-centred understanding of that field.²⁴²

Kane's journal was first read by Vincent Monteil, a researcher on Islam in West Africa based at the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire (IFAN; renamed Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire in 1966), who showed the text to Senghor (Little, 1999; Bush, 2011b). Monteil trained in the military at Saint Cyr in 1935, serving in Morocco, Tunisia, Iran, Korea, and Indochina, before leaving to research Islam in 1959. He was based at IFAN until 1968, when he was appointed as a cultural advisor in Indonesia. He converted to Islam in 1977 after writing several books on aspects of Islam, including *Islam noir* (Le Seuil, 1964). Senghor subsequently sent the manuscript to Flamand with a note appended :

Vous me permettrez de vous recommander le manuscrit d'un roman écrit par un de mes anciens élèves, un Sénégalais, de l'ancienne Ecole nationale de la France d'Outre-Mer. Il s'agit de Monsieur Cheikh Kane, Gouverneur de la région de Thiès.

²⁴² Genetic criticism in France has worked against such an understanding by drawing attention to concrete traces of the process of writing. Genetic critics "privilege historical development and context in contrast to a conception of a synchronous or timelessly present text" (Deppman, Jed, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, 2004: 5).

J'ai lu le roman rapidement, mais il me semble bon. Je ne me place pas sur le plan de la technique romanesque. Le roman est bon en ce sens qu'il est authentique et qu'il est écrit avec élégance. (Senghor, 1960a)

As with Sadjji's novel, a decade earlier, authenticity is the first criterion identified and Senghor is reluctant to pass judgement on issues of form or technique. Above all he reiterates Kane's symbolic capital as his former student and a regional governor in the newly independent Senegal.

The two readers' reports on this text indicate that it received a more thorough consideration than Sadjji's manuscript. In his reply to Senghor, Flamand expresses Le Seuil's enthusiasm for the opening sections of the novel:

Je vous dirai très simplement que, dès le début et jusqu'à la page 70, notre adhésion a été complète: nous rencontrons là une littérature neuve. (Flamand, 1960)

The descriptions of Samba Diallo's Koranic education, his relationship with his teacher, his father, and aunt, "La Grande Royale", offer the sought-after novelty. The criticisms raised in the readers' reports lie in Kane's divergence from realist conventions in the central sections of his text. Flamand complains of the stalling effect of the philosophical discussions in the central sections of the text, "le contraire même d'un récit romanesque." The implication is that the resulting text : "un poème en prose, un essai philosophique et une réflexion générale" fails by not fulfilling anticipated generic conventions.²⁴³

Flamand's personal friendship with Senghor was not sufficient to guarantee Kane's publication at Le Seuil. In line with evident sympathies with Senghor's ideas (this was the

²⁴³ The eventual publisher, Julliard, added the label "récit" on the title, by implication distinguishing Kane's text from the novelistic tradition.

period in which Le Seuil was preparing to publish Senghor's collected essays in *Liberté I*), he laments that:

Ce qu'avait à nous apporter avant tout ce roman si bien commencé, c'était la description vivante de la noblesse de l'homme noir. Je dis bien qu'il aurait fallu la montrer vécue, plutôt que de nous la décrire même poétiquement. (Ibid)

Flamand seeks an explicit valorisation of the African characters, preferring narrative realism of their lived experience to the more abstract and metaphysically ambiguous aspects of this experience through which Kane's poetic text leads the reader.

Senghor responded in his role as cultural broker, writing in typically guarded language:

Encore que j'aie une prédilection de plus en plus forte pour les romans qui sont 'à la fois un poème en prose, un essai philosophique et une réflexion générale', je me range à votre avis de conseiller à CHK, de remanier son roman car, hélas, il faut respecter la technique romanesque de l'Europe, singulièrement de la France. C'est donc dans ce sens que je lui écris.

Je vous serais cependant reconnaissant de ne pas abandonner mon ami. C'est vraiment un homme d'une rare qualité et il a un talent certain d'écrivain. Mais, encore une fois, je suis d'accord avec vous, il faut respecter la 'sacro-sainte' distinction des genres. (Senghor, 1960b)

While reiterating his appreciation of the text, Senghor accepts with a hint of irony the need for Kane to respect European novelistic technique and "sacro-sainte" generic distinctions. He is clearly aware of the prismatic effect of the Parisian literary institution. There is little apparent attempt on the publisher's behalf to subvert these generic conventions by admitting Kane's text as it stands, and no connection is made to precisely contemporaneous innovations in the novelistic genre, namely the *nouveau roman*. We can here refer back to the readers' reports on *Nedjma* from the mid-fifties and editor Jean Cayrol's plaintive defence of the editor-writer relationship: "Il n'est pas dans nos

habitudes d'imposer une ligne quelconque de travail à celui qui sait dans quel sens il doit aller [...] Vous ne devez pas, à tout prix écrire pour nous faire plaisir..." (Cayrol, 1953).

Kane, a civil servant based in Senegal, occupied a different "espace des possibles" to that of writers engaged in avant-garde literary debates in Paris. Nonetheless, the debates taking place in Parisian literary milieux and their structural impact on legitimate ideas of the literary determined the way in which his manuscript was first received and evaluated.

The first reader's report, by Jean-Gérard Chauffeteau, criticises four aspects of the text: its "hollow" poetic and philosophical language; tangents from the "drame" of its protagonist, particularly in the middle section; the use of character types, exemplified by the original use of initials MG for protagonist Samba Diallo; and the negativity of the text's dénouement. Chauffeteau was a novelist and literary translator, who translated many books from English. His report begins with ambivalence:

Jusqu'à la page 70 environ, j'ai pensé que je ferais un bon rapport. Non pas que ce manuscrit m'ait paru casser les vitres, mais il me semblait plein d'un ensemble de qualités qui, sans être extraordinaire, apportaient quelque chose: un climat poétique, un dépaysement, une sorte de petite musique nostalgique. J'avais assez aimé la scène d'entrée, dure, étonnante; j'étais prêt, même, à oublier ce que le style un peu trop vieille France pour mon goût pouvait avoir de léché (ça pouvait, au fond, apporter un charme de plus).

The mitigated praise of the comments, despite associations of bourgeois constraint and pre-war "vieille France" formality, again returns to the notion of "charme" and "dépaysement". Alternatively sited readings of the text that might consider the religious imagery, calques from Kane's knowledge of the Pulaar language, or potential modernist intertexts are not considered here. By implication, a certain novel form is expected: a realist narrative with well-rounded characters; unity of time and space; and teleological

narrative progression. In Chauffeteau's view, the staged intellectual discussion that takes place while Samba Diallo is in Paris "dissolves" the novel, until it becomes "une sorte de poème en prose dialogué, dont la poésie, si parfois elle paraît authentique, donne souvent une impression d'appliqué, de recherché, d'un peu vieillot" (Ibid). As in Sadji's case, Kane's language is measured and found lacking against an elusive scale of "newness" and the subjective quality of "charm": two apparently opposed criteria which underlie the reception of both manuscripts.

A second report penned by Michel Chodkiewicz extends these comments on Kane's literary style, turning to the text's philosophical content:

Le roman se défait très tôt, [...]. Le langage des personnages est solennel plutôt que vraiment noble – et c'est pourtant, l'auteur l'a bien senti, cette noblesse des noirs (de certains noirs), trop méconnue, qu'il eut fallu rendre. Mais que de maladresse dans ces propos sur Pascal, sur les machines, sur les innombrables formes du conflit entre la tradition et le monde moderne! Il est caractéristique de la démarche de Cheikh Hamidou Kane – parti d'impressions poétiques, mais très vite sollicité par les problèmes généraux – que son héros ne soit désigné que par des initiales: MG n'est pas un homme, c'est un cas exemplaire, c'est un symbole.
(Chodkiewicz, 1960)

Kane's distancing use of initials, subsequently replaced by the name Samba Diallo, is a target for criticism, though interestingly there is no mention of the text's autobiographical elements. Chodkiewicz's comments resonate with Robbe-Grillet's attack on the conventions of realist characterisation and praise for Kafka in *Pour un nouveau roman*: "Quant au K. du Château, il se contente d'une initiale, il ne possède rien, il n'a pas de famille, pas de visage; probablement même n'est-il pas du tout arpenteur" (Robbe-Grillet, 1961: 27). Chodkiewicz praises the perceived need to portray the "noblesse des noirs (de certains noirs)" before pointing out apparent clumsiness in Kane's handling of certain

material, particularly the ideas of Pascal. Such criticism of a non-historicised reading of Pascal, i.e. one that does not pick up on the context of Jansenist debate, is common. Yet Chodkiewicz's emphatic dismissal seems surprising when we consider his position as a scholar of Islamic sufism. He subsequently became an authority on Islamic spirituality, translating the writing of Émir Abd el-Kader from Arabic and writing a book on the Sufi mystic, Ibn 'Arabī, among others.

As several critics have noted, *L'Aventure ambiguë* can be read as a comment on the loss of a certain mystical Islamic tradition in Senegal through the imposition of French education (Little, 2000b; Masterton, 2008). Samba Diallo's identity is divided between his sense or experience of knowledge during his Koranic education and the new forms of knowledge he encounters through reading philosophers such as Pascal, Descartes and Nietzsche during his time in Paris. Little and Masterton give further clarity to the Islamic intertexts of *L'Aventure ambiguë*, which are given scant consideration in Chodkiewicz's report. Masterton draws in detail on the intertext of twelfth century Persian philosopher, Shihab al-Din Yahya al-Suhrawardi and the Illuminationist school of Islamic philosophy, to which Kane refers in the article cited above. For Suhrawardi's Illuminationist school, the lands of the Occident are the realm of "matter", as opposed to the Sublime World (Transoxiana). Kane's text explores the tragedy of Samba's loss of ability to efface himself in God – a moment achieved during his prayers in the first part of the book expressed by the Sufi term "Fana" meaning "to die to oneself" (Little, 2000b: 32). Kane's contribution to a special issue of *Esprit* in 1961 outlined the ways in which the idea of Western spiritual exile that underlies much of Samba Diallo's narrative could play out in connected spheres of experience. His article describes technological challenges faced by

the “tiers monde”, stressing the need for a new relationship based on “réciprocité” rather than “assistance” or “solidarité” (Kane, 1961: 377).

L’aventure occidentale de l’homme c’est l’histoire d’une recherche du bonheur par le moyen d’une activité législatrice universelle.

Mais après le temps du triomphe vient celui de l’inquiétude. Ce n’est pas que l’âme occidentale eût jamais cessé d’être inquiète. Mais cette inquiétude qui saisit le voyageur loin de son point de départ, il faut véritablement s’être beaucoup éloigné pour la ressentir. C’est l’inquiétude de l’exil, de cet “exil occidental de l’âme” qu’avait pressenti Sohrawardi, et que Beckett, parmi nous, illustre présentement de ses récits hallucinés. (Kane, 1961: 378)

The “authenticity” Masterton identifies in Kane’s text is not that of *négritude*, which according to Sartre’s dialectic would assert itself in the face of white racism, but “an internal, human authenticity acknowledged and nurtured by the ethics and practices of an Islamic way of life” (28). Exile is not defined here by cultural or geographic spaces, but by a shift in inner spiritual understanding. Anti-racist or anti-colonial context is pushed to the background in such an interpretation of Kane’s craft. The themes are linked by Kane’s universalising rhetoric to Beckett’s literary expression of the absurd condition – “ce noir absolu”, as Flamand described it. These possible readings remained marginal for contemporary publisher-readers at Le Seuil who emphasised issues of style, language, and political pertinence contingent with the socio-historical situation of decolonisation.

Chodkiewicz’s limited engagement with Kane’s Sufism and Islamic intertexts suggests that these aspects were considered of only limited interest to the intended readership. In the view of Le Seuil’s two readers, the apparent tendency of this novel to “undo” itself, or “dissolve”, neither steps outside (the readers’) exotic stereotypes associated with African texts, nor accommodates new, non-realist, ideas of writing on Africa. It is still ordained, in

line with Senghorian *négritude*, that African writers should foreground the homogenised “noblesse” of Africans above all else.

“Les raisons de notre refus n’étaient nullement commerciales”: from Le Seuil to Julliard

Chodkiewicz’s rejection was categorical: “A mon avis, aucun espoir d’obtenir de l’auteur une version améliorée. Donc non” (Ibid). Meanwhile Chauffêteau concluded that the text would be worth reworking if made into “un récit linéaire entièrement centré sur le drame de MG, de son enfance à sa mort” (Ibid) – a more conventional bildungsroman, though again there is no reference to the autobiographical. Without manuscripts, it is difficult to assess the effect of these reports on the final text of *L’Aventure ambiguë* and whether editorial overwriting prompted extensive revisions. Kane’s text is an apt case for a genetic critical approach, since we already know that the manuscript was based on Kane’s own journal and went through a process of rewriting before being sent to editors in Paris.²⁴⁴ Yet as J.P. Little has established, neither the original journal nor later manuscripts were kept (Little, 2000a: 72). The readers’ reports and correspondence, together with Kane’s personal testimonies, are the only remaining traces of the process.

In his relaying of these comments, Flamand suggests the need for face-to-face discussion, highlighting the problems caused by physical distance and communication between France and Senegal (Flamand, 1960). He suggests that Kane rework the text and resubmit it for consideration but Kane’s physical distance from Paris prevented any further action on the

²⁴⁴ Kane has stated that he cannot remember whether he wrote his journal in the first or third person (Little, J.P., 2000a: 72).

manuscript at Le Seuil. Following Le Seuil's rejection, Vincent Monteil, who had first encouraged Kane to rework his journal for publication and would subsequently preface the book for Julliard, wrote to Chodkiewicz. Monteil's interest, informed by his research on Islam at IFAN, was guided by a clear awareness of the wider philosophical and religious context of Kane's writing and friendship with the author. His frustration is evident:

Une fois de plus, le Seuil m'a refusé un manuscrit. Une fois de plus, il paraît ailleurs. Je vous avais parlé d'un très beau livre de mon ami Cheikh Kane (sénégalais) [...]

Flamand n'en avait pas voulu, le jugeant peu rentable. Julliard, qui ne passe pas pour philanthrope, vient de l'accepter. Je regrette qu'une maison comme le Seuil, qu'est aussi un peu la mienne, soit si méfiante dès qu'il s'agit d'auteurs du 'Tiers-Monde'. C'est une erreur qui lui fera du tort. (Monteil, 1961)

Monteil's criticisms, reflecting the somewhat anomalous decision of Julliard to take on the book, do not fully justify his attack on Le Seuil's attitude towards "auteurs du 'Tiers-Monde'". Flamand's rejection was based less on the potential commercial viability of a topical book on sub-Saharan Africa than on a lack of belief in the manuscript's literary legitimacy. Monteil's jibe at Julliard also takes little account of Maurice Nadeau's role at this publishing house, which will be considered further below and may have been vital in bringing this text so quickly to publication in 1961.²⁴⁵

Michel Chodkiewicz replied to Monteil, appending Flamand's letter in a gesture aimed at revealing transparency in the process of selection and publication. He is anxious to assert the reasons for the refusal of the text :

Croyez-moi, les raisons de notre refus n'étaient nullement commerciales [...] Vous pouvez penser que nous avons eu mauvais goût, que nous avons manqué de

²⁴⁵ Julliard's archives are not open for consultation.

sensibilité littéraire. Vous ne devez pas croire que notre refus a été inspiré par des considérations purement mercantiles. Il me semble que le Seuil a prouvé, depuis ses débuts, qu'il n'hésitait jamais à publier une œuvre difficilement vendable chaque fois qu'elle lui paraissait importante. Il me semble aussi que le Seuil a témoigné de l'intérêt très vif qu'il portait – qu'il a porté longtemps avant tous les autres éditeurs – à tous les peuples du tiers monde. (Chodkiewicz, 1961)

He distances the decision from accusations of commercial motivation, in a gesture of commercial disinterestedness. As with Kateb Yacine and Sadjı to a lesser extent, both readers base their views on literary criteria, with limited reflection on how Kane's text might contribute to (re)defining "literariness" itself. Le Seuil's sympathy towards "third world" writing is expressed as a marker of its avant-garde position in the metropolitan field, yet they refused to publish in direct response to political trends of third-worldism, even at the height of anti-colonial activity:

Notre sympathie pour les peuples coloniaux ou ex-colonisés, notre attention à tout ce qui les concerne ne sont entachés d'aucune indulgence. Car l'indulgence, en l'occurrence, est un défaut. Je dirai même que c'est une insulte. Nous devons être exigeants envers tous nos auteurs, d'où qu'ils viennent. Il ne doit pas y avoir, dans notre catalogue, une catégorie à part d'auteurs de qualité inférieure, acceptés pour la seule raison qu'ils appartiennent à des pays "sous-développés". (Chodkiewicz, 1961)

Chodkiewicz here affirms Le Seuil's relative autonomy.²⁴⁶ His response to Monteil's barbed reference to Julliard, is an attack on "indulgence" and an argument for rigour, regardless of the author's background. While Senghor's earlier letter seems to suggest an awareness of the metropolitan bias of these norms, Chodkiewicz's letter indicates the tensions of a publisher with anti-colonial/third-worldist sympathies, simultaneously concerned with preserving its position in the struggle for literary legitimacy in the metropolitan literary marketplace. Maintaining autonomy or at least the appearance of autonomy in such circumstances remained a fraught ongoing struggle.

²⁴⁶ Éditions de Minuit published several books on Algeria that had been rejected by Le Seuil in this period (Simonin, Anne, 1994: 341).

***L'Aventure Ambiguë* at Julliard**

René Julliard was a commercially oriented publisher, described by Anne Simonin as the “héritier naturel” (Simonin, 1998: 48) of Bernard Grasset. Rather than gradually honing an author’s career, as exemplified by Gallimard, Julliard took risks, the paradigmatic example being his decision to publish the sixteen-year-old Françoise Sagan’s bestselling début, *Bonjour Tristesse*. By publishing in quantity and at speed, Julliard was part of what Simonin terms “une nouvelle espèce dans la République des lettres” (1998: 47). She suggests that Julliard “s’inspire du modèle Gallimard pour affermir sa légitimité mais réussit également à incarner une nouvelle figure de l’éditeur littéraire” (48). Like Grasset before him, Julliard pursued “une stratégie éditoriale mondaine” (48), hosting dinner parties and book launches and paying close attention to his business’s relationship with the press. This strategy, in part, led to newspaper reviews and numerous literary prizes.

L'Aventure ambiguë appears to have benefited from such press exposure. A review appeared in *Le Monde* by the novelist and critic Pierre-Henri Simon and there was a short announcement in the same newspaper the following year when the novel won the Grand Prix d’Afrique noire. The review was a first in the literary pages of *Le Monde*: none of the novels published by Mongo Beti, Ferdinand Oyono and Ousmane Sembene in the late 1950s were reviewed in this newspaper, the main organ of the French left-wing professional classes (Steemers, 2007: 60). Julliard’s awareness of literary prize culture may have contributed to the award of the Grand Prix d’Afrique noire to Kane’s novel in 1962. Indeed, the only reference made to Kane’s novel in Jean Claude Lamy’s biography of René Julliard notes that the latter’s hospitalisation prevented him from attending the award ceremony for this prize (1992: 288).

Julliard published a number of significant anti-colonial and “tiers-mondiste” texts in the period of decolonisation. For this short period, it appears that commercial publishing strategy was entirely compatible with politically engaged publishing.²⁴⁷ Following the success of Mongo Beti’s *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba* at Laffont, Julliard published Ferdinand Oyono’s *Chemin d’Europe* (1960) and *L’Aventure ambiguë* (1961). Julliard also published several texts opposing the Algerian war and maintained a collaborative relationship with Éditions de Minuit.²⁴⁸ A key figure in this period was Maurice Nadeau, the prominent writer, critic, and Julliard editor, and subsequently founder of *La Quinzaine littéraire* whose career spans the past sixty years of French publishing history. Mongo Beti describes Nadeau’s enthusiasm for African writing, after having narrowly lost out on the rights to *Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba* to Laffont and securing those to publish Ferdinand Oyono’s novels (Beti, 1981: 106). Nadeau was appointed as an editor at Julliard in 1953, after training as a primary school teacher and having worked as a journalist for *Combat* and as a militant Trotskyist. He had studied for a certificate in ethnology at the Musée de l’Homme alongside the Association populaire des amis des musées described in Chapter Two and his interest in the ethnographic work of Marcel Griaule, Michel Leiris and Georges Balandier was closely linked to the research on surrealism that inspired his best known publication, *Histoire du surréalisme* (Seuil, 1945). This interest was closely linked to Nadeau’s political activity:

Je pensais renouer ainsi avec mon souci politique. J’avais le désir d’apprendre à la fois l’économie, la sociologie; l’ethnologie aussi m’attirait à cause de mon intérêt pour le surréalisme... *L’Afrique fantôme* [by Leiris], où l’on sent toutes ses attaches au surréalisme, m’a alors beaucoup influencé. L’Afrique, c’était pour moi un

²⁴⁷ In 1963 Julliard created the bilingual “Classiques africains” series, featuring translations of oral literature in African languages. This was aimed at a specialist readership (Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 141).

²⁴⁸ “Peu de choses en commun *a priori* entre Les Éditions de Minuit et René Julliard. C’est toutefois par lui qu’arrivent aux Éditions de Minuit, *Pour Djamil Bouhired* [...] mais aussi *La Question*. C’est sous sa marque que sera saisi l’article fondamental de Sartre [Une Victoire] qui construit le refus de la torture sur une impossibilité historique” (Simonin, Anne, 2012: 25).

continent à découvrir... J'ai étudié ainsi pendant un an, et je suis content d'avoir ce certificat d'ethnologie, cela m'a fait sortir un peu de l'Europe. (Nadeau and Adler, 2011: 46)

Nadeau's radical political activism was bound up with his interest in this aesthetic movement. Nadeau was encouraged to found his own journal at Julliard, *Les Lettres nouvelles*, which ran until 1976, and as the director of a collection, he retained the freedom to select his own titles (Adler 100).²⁴⁹ Nadeau's role is a important reminder of individuals working across lines of commercial, aesthetic, and political interest at Julliard.

The trajectory of Kane's text from Le Seuil to Julliard, and the terms on which the manuscript was judged, reveal the narrowness of early readings. Arguably potentially "universal" implications of Kane's text were passed over, with little apparent attempt to engage with the spiritual or religious symbolism on which the text depends. This is particularly surprising given Michel Chodkiewicz's interest in Sufism. The contact between Kane and Le Seuil, then Julliard, was conditioned by political, aesthetic and commercial forces that also informed the early reception of the text in the year following the independences. Though more commercially oriented, Julliard did not look to writing by African writers in order to locate and commodify "African literature" as a discrete category in the marketplace. The changing "space of possibilities" in the literary marketplace in this period cannot be cleanly mapped according to political, aesthetic or commercial criteria of literary value. Despite this complexity, editors were reluctant to make connections, in terms of style or literary craft, to contemporary developments in the novel form, such as the *nouveau roman*. In this light, Sartre's famous attack on the

²⁴⁹ Kane did not appear in this collection, which according to Nadeau included "des auteurs qui, faute de lui [Julliard] faire gagner beaucoup d'argent, lui donnaient un peu d'aura intellectuelle" (Nadeau and Adler, 103). Nadeau also played a leading role in the *Manifeste des 121* alongside Maurice Blanchot and Francis Jeanson.

bourgeois pretensions of *nouveau romanciers* continues to use sub-Saharan Africa a site for experiencing or consuming, rather than generating the universal:

La faim du monde, la menace atomique, l'aliénation de l'homme, je m'étonne qu'elles ne teintent pas toute notre littérature. Croyez-vous que je puisse lire Robbe-Grillet dans un pays sous-développé? Il ne se sent pas mutilé. Je le tiens pour un bon écrivain, mais il s'adresse à la bourgeoisie confortable. Je voudrais qu'il se rende compte que la Guinée existe. En Guinée je pourrais lire Kafka. Je retrouve en lui mon malaise. (Piatier, 1964)

Editorial craft and the case of Malick Fall

The shifting relationship between questions of literary form and literary *engagement* structured the positioning of African literary voices in the metropolitan field. In direct contrast to Sartre, Robbe-Grillet wrote:

Il nous faut donc maintenant, une fois pour toutes, cesser de prendre au sérieux les accusations de gratuité, cesser de craindre "l'art pour l'art" comme le pire des maux, récuser tout cet appareil terroriste que l'on brandit devant nous sitôt que nous parlons d'autre chose que de la lutte des classes ou de la guerre anti-colonialiste." (Robbe-Grillet, 1961: 36)

While the novel form has been critiqued as a bourgeois form since the nineteenth century, the link to anti-colonialism – given equal weight by Robbe-Grillet – is less clear here.

Vivan Steemers argues that in the 1960s metropolitan institutions and processes of legitimation did not have the same reflex toward literary innovation from the "periphery" as towards that generated by consecrated writers of the "centre" (155). The reflex seems to be based rather on the relatively limited participation of writers of sub-Saharan origin in the vocal avant-garde literary debates taking place in this period. These debates purported to set a new agenda for the future of the novel, dependent on the aesthetic coordinates of a modernist canon articulated in universal terms. Against this context, I will now consider a

third example of a novel turned down by Le Seuil: Malick Fall's *La Plaie* (Albin Michel, 1967). In this case, readers' comments depended less on conservative protectionism of the French language or an exoticising taste for authenticity, than on assumptions regarding more experimental writing coming from Africa and the metropolitan bias of avant-garde literary debate.

La Plaie (1967) is one of the first novels of post-independence disillusionment in French-speaking Africa. The episodic structure and unstable, self-reflexive narrative voice and groundbreaking use of the metaphor of bodily decay in Fall's critically neglected text marks a departure from realist modes of African novels in the 1950s. It was singled out in Mohamadou Kane's reading for its "épaisseur psychologique" (Kane, 1982: 331) and described elsewhere as the first African "existentialist" novel. Despite this, Fall's work remains much less known than the celebrated innovation of Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les Soleils des indépendances* (1968) or Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence* (1968), both of which were also initially turned down by editors at Le Seuil.²⁵⁰ Like the genre-confounding blend of philosophy and mysticism of *L'Aventure ambiguë*, *La Plaie* did not occupy an obvious position in the literary field. The Bourdieusian "lieu naturel" (1992: 276) remained elusive for writing on sub-Saharan Africa that broke with realist conventions in the period of decolonisation.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Kourouma was published by Presses de l'Université de Montréal after being turned down by Présence Africaine and Le Seuil. This text contained considerable revisions, notably the omission of a thinly veiled portrait of Ivoirian president Houphouët-Boigny (Steemers, Vivan, 2007). Ouologuem's text underwent lengthy editorial wrangling, after being sent to Le Seuil in 1964. A reader's report on the novel praised its "liberté dans la manière de raconter en utilisant le mode caricatural ou le mode délirant" (Serry, Herve, 2008: 70). See also: Burnautzki, Sarah, 2012.

²⁵¹ For Bourdieu, the "choice" of a publisher should correspond to "un *lieu naturel* (déjà existant ou à créer) dans le champ de production", failing which books (or any cultural product) will be "plus ou moins condamnés à l'échec" (Bourdieu, Pierre, 1992: 276).

Set in St Louis, former capital of Senegal, at an unspecified point in the early to mid-twentieth century, *La Plaie* portrays a homeless protagonist, Magamou Seck, who refuses all treatment for a festering gash in his ankle. Magamou's refusal to treat his eponymous wound, sustained in an accident during his migration from his ancestral village, leads to his contemplation on the bounds of the individual's freedom in society. He is ostracised from the N'Dar market community in St Louis, driven to an individualistic existence eating scraps left over from the day's trade. He is arrested and detained as a lunatic in the text's opening pages. Despite the self-conscious lucidity made obvious by narrative contrasts of internal and external monologues in the opening chapters, Magamou colludes with this assessment of his condition, encouraged by the reaction of the caricatured European Doctor Bernardy and his interpreter, an important trickster figure in the narrative. Eventually set free from the asylum, Magamou seeks treatment for his wound and is completely cured. When he returns to the market, however, he struggles to adjust to his invisibility as a physically "new man". The novel ends as he deliberately gashes open his own ankle, seeking a return to the sense of belonging he found in his wounded state.

Relayed by Senghor, Fall's text was turned down by Le Seuil before being accepted by Albin Michel, publishers of the 1964 Goncourt laureate, Georges Conchon.²⁵² Readers' reports at Le Seuil show how editors sought to revise Fall's manuscript according to aesthetic norms of genre and style. Such criteria, as shown in readers' reports, were generated by struggles to define literary autonomy against political forces of anti-colonialism and tiers-mondisme in this period. Flamand's eventual rejection of Fall's novel was based less on the potential commercial viability of a topical book on sub-

²⁵² Albin Michel had published René Maran's *Batouala* in 1921 and Richard Wright's *Un enfant du pays* (1947). *La Plaie* was the first book they published by an African writer.

Saharan Africa, than on a lack of belief in the value of the manuscript as a literary text. Paul Flamand's and Senghor's correspondence with Malick Fall call him to give the text "greater unity"; to revise a perceived "lack of rigour"; and to "balance" an oscillation between "style littéraire" and "langue parlée". According to his letters, Fall significantly reworked his manuscript and removed "l'aspect violemment anti-colonial de l'oeuvre" (Fall, 1966a). This stylistic tempering (or tampering) shaped the text's exploration of themes of trauma, freedom and alienation.

Senghor sent the text to Flamand in March 1966, having received it via his *conseiller culturel*, André Terrisse. Fall sent a second, revised version of the manuscript directly to Le Seuil some weeks later. Terrisse wrote the following report accompanying the first version of the manuscript:

Sur les 250 pages de son roman, il suffirait d'en supprimer une trentaine et de réussir les transitions nécessaires pour que l'œuvre se place en tout premier plan, de la production africaine, mais sans doute également à un rang très honorable des écrits de langue française. En effet, le roman de MF est à la fois prenant, original, poétique et profondément africain. (Terrisse, 1966)

Terrisse's reserved enthusiasm for the novel is, as might be expected given his proximity to the architect of *négritude*, based on its perceived African specificity. He positions the text by alluding to its rank within "la production africaine", and then French language writing as a whole. Terrisse (1911 – 71) was a prominent Primary School inspector and author of school textbooks for the Antillean and African markets.²⁵³ As such his interests lay outside metropolitan literary debates, yet his report seeks, beyond its implied

²⁵³ He published six textbooks between 1951 and 1958, followed by *L'Afrique de l'ouest, berceau de l'art nègre* (1965), prefaced by Senghor and a collection *Contes et légendes du Sénégal* (1965).

essentialisms, to demonstrate how the text may respond to avant-garde currents in the metropolitan field:

Précisons que l'histoire n'est pas conduite comme un récit réaliste. Elle se passe pour ainsi dire 'dans la tête' de Magamou, témoin et chantre de ses malheurs. Racontant le présent, tout en butant sur ses souvenirs, sur ses rêves, Magamou donne au récit une dimension extraordinaire, et sous l'apparent désordre des faits, une cohérence interne, globale, coagule les idées en une pensée de forme et de conception nègre, absolument extraordinaire. Or cette globalisation, cette coagulation, se présente en même temps par moments, comme un contre-point de l'analyse chère au '*nouveau roman*'. Alliance imprévue des littératures archaïques et modernes. (Ibid)

The novel's "authenticity", set out in racialised terms according to its apparent formal distinction ("conception nègre"), is directly linked into contemporary literary debate.

Terrisse recognises the text's non-realist, dreamlike qualities, suggesting that there is an internal coherence that might be compared to the technique of the *nouveau roman*.

Without foreclosing or predetermining interpretations of the text, such material encourages us to ask how Fall's text might be linked to critiques of realism and provides an example of how archival material shapes critical questions, rather than vice versa.

Terrisse goes on to explain how Magamou's wound becomes "le personnage central", expressing "le probleme de la condition de l'homme, affronté à une vie qui le meurtrit" and recommends that the title be changed to "La Plaie". Only at one point in the text is an explicit reference made to the metaphoric potency of Magamou's wound as he refuses to recount the complexities of his life to Bernardy: "Ma vie est incroyable, incroyable. Une plaie; m'entends-tu, une plaie" (Fall, 1967: 229). The original title mentioned on the first reader's report is "Les frontières de la nuit". In a later letter Fall also suggests alternative titles : "Une vie marginale, L'Entaille, La répulsion, Prisons sans fin, Jusqu'au sang"

(Fall, 1966a). Fall's suggested titles avoid any particularising references. In an unpublished radio interview for "La Voix de l'Amérique", he gestured further to the universal, noting that his text "[pourrait] se situer dans n'importe quel pays du monde" (Quoted in: Kane, 1982: 530). Terrisse justifies his title suggestion by highlighting universal aspects of the text, albeit with reservation :

L'auteur a créé là un personnage vrai, dans une histoire originale, où l'on peut voir symbolisée une situation qui, pour profondément africaine qu'elle soit, outrepassa les limites d'un pays ou d'un continent et signifie pour tous les hommes.
(Terrisse, 1966)

He highlights a certain commodifiable "worldliness" of the text. The archival traces show how this text was positioned with reference to criteria of characterisation and narrative that resist dominant ideas of realist literary representation of sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite Terrisse's favorable reading, the manuscript met with a more muted response at Le Seuil. The first reader's report, by Jean-Gérard Chauffeteau, expresses indecision over the first version of the manuscript: "Mes sentiments sur ce livre sont un peu à l'image du livre lui-même et de son héros: ambigus, flottants, hésitants, partagés entre l'indulgence et la sévérité" (Chauffeteau, 1966). In light of Chodkiewicz's previous remarks on "indulgence", Chauffeteau shows an ambivalent openness towards the book. On the book's style, he comments:

En fait il me semble que ce manuscrit n'est qu'une perpétuelle oscillation, un perpétuel balancement entre deux genres (réaliste et transposition du réalisme), entre deux styles (réaliste et poétique), entre deux mondes (blanc et noir) entre deux langues (le français appliqué et le français quotidien), etc... (Ibid)

Aspects of the author's craft are set out in a series of binaries, juxtaposing language, genre, style, and race, without hierarchy within these binaries. His comments on the plot

are qualified by the awareness of “des scories”, suggesting that the text “reprend du tonus (avec quelques petites chutes) durant les cinquante dernières pages qui, souvent (surtout tout à fait à la fin), atteignent presque à la grandeur.” Nonetheless his reasons for rejection are set out clearly:

- 1) Parce que ces oscillations perpétuelles amollissent le dessein de l'œuvre (peut-être d'ailleurs l'auteur devrait-il revoir, resserrer sa composition);
- 2) Parce que du même coup, le personnage de Magamou *se dissout* en une succession “d'états mentaux” disons sociaux qui ne semblent *pas très cohérents*, et que par voie de conséquence, lui et sa plaie semblent devenir comme une sorte de symbole du Noir qui ne trouve sa personnalité que dans la souffrance;
- 3) Parce que la langue est *trop incertaine*, je pense, pour assurer à l'œuvre une unité de ton. [my emphases]

The negative evaluation of dissolution, uncertainty and oscillation in language and form suggest Chauffeteau was unwilling to risk Le Seuil's reputation on this new writer.

The report's comments on language – on the movement between applied and everyday French – focus on aspects of “correctness” and consistency:

L'allure correcte, trop correcte, trop appliquée de certaines pages du début (p3 par exemple) qui font un contraste peu admissible avec tout soudain une formule populaire (“Maniez vous!”) ou avec des dérapages de langue comme: “... le couscous qui dorlote depuis la veille... que le glébe avait tapi de boue encore molle...” etc. Il y a aussi de ces contrastes tout au long du récit: contraste entre un paragraphe assez beau, sans bavures, et puis tout soudain des phrases quelconques (notamment, je l'ai remarqué, dans les passages purement narratifs, c'est-à-dire dans les moments où nous ne sommes pas à l'intérieur de Magamou).²⁵⁴

Less serious departures from French grammar and spelling, such as the incorrect gender of “glébe”, are here placed alongside contrasts of “high” and “low” register (and the apparent

²⁵⁴ The phrase cited in the report is from a poetic passage of free indirect discourse that was revised in the published text. Magamou imagines being cured of his wound and returning to human companionship through storytelling and shared meals: “Reprendre sa place autour de la calebasse de couscous! Le couscous tiède sous des guirlandes de boyaux; le couscous de la veille sous sa tendre croûte! Une saveur sans nom! Le couscous!” (Fall, Malick, 1967: 86).

misuse of the verb “dorloter”) dismissed as “peu admissible”. The tendency to correct such “bavures”, while no longer framed in the language of a schoolmaster, nonetheless confirms the role of the metropolitan publisher as border guard and guarantor of the French language. Subjective value-judgements are integral to the work of an editor and an important, if often critically neglected, stage in textual production. The normativity of these judgements and the extent to which they stretch to accommodate new voices are shaped by larger structures in the literary field. As a less commercial publisher, Le Seuil was less focused on the commercial potential of this text than on its conformity to standards of literary style, as with *L'Aventure ambiguë* and its later initial refusal of Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de violence* and Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les Soleils des indépendances*.

The effect of the changing political field on the “espace des possibles” in literary production can be detected in a diluted form in this report. Magamou is described as a “symbole du Noir qui ne trouve sa personnalité que dans la souffrance”, in an interpretation that gives limited account of the text's narrative structure (Chauffeteau, 1966). Chauffeteau concludes that despite the praise of Terrisse, the novel is not worth publishing: “l'auteur a de grandes qualités, qu'au début j'ai cru (mais oui) retrouver un faible écho de Faulkner dans la manière de passer du subjectif à l'objectif” (Chauffeteau, 1966). Faulkner's modernist style was a key point of reference in the metropolitan literary marketplace, though it is only recently that Nicholas Brown has shown the critical potential of expanding on Faulknerian intertext in his reading of *L'Aventure ambiguë*.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ Faulkner is a key example in Casanova's argument for Paris's claim to be capital of the World Republic of Letters: “It was on account of his consecration by the most eminent French writers and critics of the day that Faulkner was able to enjoy worldwide recognition during his lifetime, from the late 1940s until his death in 1962” (131).

Brown argues that a renewed framework for reading canonical modernist writers and African literature together “hinges neither on ‘literary history’ nor abstract ‘universal history’ but on each text’s relation to history itself” (2005: 3). Despite its ironic tone, Chauffeteau’s allusion to Faulkner extends Terrisse’s comment on Fall’s shifts from objective to subjective narrative voice.

Chauffeteau suggests two ways of improving the manuscript:

1) Il faudrait resserrer le plan d’ensemble: toute la partie qui suit l’évasion de Magamou est trop délayée et il faudrait aussi intervenir avant. De plus, au contraire, il me semble que la partie traitant de Magamou guéri de sa blessure devrait être légèrement amplifiée. (Peut-être pourrait-on parvenir à ça en supprimant surtout une phrase sur deux ou trois, un paragraphe ici, un autre là ; afin de trouver un équilibre).

2) Il faudrait revoir toutes les phrases: pour enlever les expressions trop baroques, et surtout, les bavures, les mots inutiles ou déplacés, etc.....

Voilà ce que je pense. Mais naturellement, ce serait un gros travail, que l’auteur ne serait sans doute pas capable de faire. Et je ne peux pas affirmer que le résultat serait bon.

These comments reconfirm Chauffeteau’s sense that the text’s narrative technique and stylistic exuberance should be tempered, yet his report concludes by expressing doubt over the author’s capacity to do the necessary edits. The lack of confidence in Fall’s ability to undertake the required editorial work was balanced by Flamand’s suggestion of a meeting: “Quelque soin qu’on y mette, il n’est pas possible que des annotations suppléent une conversation, surtout lorsqu’il s’agit comme dans le cas présent de remarques à la fois générales et particulières” (Flamand, 1966b).

When sending his revised second version of the manuscript to Flamand, before receiving the editor's comments and readers' reports, Fall enclosed a note, accounting for his revisions:

La révision a comporté quelques suppressions, celles de pages qui n'ajoutent rien à l'intérêt du roman. Elle a consisté en un 'escamotage' de l'aspect violemment anti-colonial de l'oeuvre. Toutefois, je n'ai pas voulu nier les réalités coloniales d'alors; elles demeurent comme cadre secondaire de l'action. Les personnages épisodiques ou parasites ne figurent plus dans le manuscrit. (Fall, 1966a)

Without manuscripts, genetic criticism of the text is not possible, but Fall's retraction of overtly political content is striking, particularly as this content is not picked up in the readers' reports on the first version of the text. The self-conscious quotation marks in Fall's note highlight the term "escamotage" with its connotations of magic and (verbal) trickery. This implies the careful negotiation of material that is more explicitly combative than it would initially appear. The approach is clearly very different to the consecration of anti-colonial novels of the 1950s, and raises several questions. Has the critique of colonial realities really become secondary to the novel's symbolic interest, rather than its central crux or driving force? Or could Fall here be anticipating the comments of the metropolitan publisher, in an act verging on self-censorship?

Flamand wrote to Senghor, after having received both Chauffeteau's comments on the first version of the manuscript and Fall's letter with the second version. He suggested revisions:

L'auteur devrait se refuser tout cliché, toute expression 'toute faite'. Et surtout réduire, s'efforcer de ne rien dire de trop, de ne pas trop expliquer son personnage faisant suffisamment confiance à son propre talent pour que le lecteur soit pris et séduit et le propos entendu. Par exemple, il y a une abondance de qualificatifs,

épithètes, adjectifs, qui affaiblit la phrase, la boursouffle, gomme le trait net que l'on aperçoit au dessous. (Flamand, 1966a)

Reproducing parts of Chauffeteau's report, Flamand comments on the "oscillation" between "le style littéraire et la langue parlée" and perceived lack of narrative unity, owing to minor events and tangential dialogue. He suggests the preference for a face-to-face meeting : "En résumé, voilà un manuscrit dont on aimerait parler de vive voix à l'auteur, sur lequel on aimerait se pencher en sa compagnie pour indiquer, crayon en mains, ce qui – à notre jugement – le conduirait à son état dernier". At the time Fall was Senegalese ambassador to Ethiopia, and since he came to Paris rarely, he replied that he would be happy to edit by following the advice of André Terrisse and guidance on the annotated manuscript : "Vos critiques sont à la fois si pertinentes et si claires que je crois pouvoir, sur le vu du manuscrit annoté-tel que vous l'eussiez fait sous mes yeux – tenter de parfaire mon travail" (Fall, 1966b). There is no trace of these annotated manuscripts other than this sign pointing to their paths between Dakar, Addis Ababa and Paris. The final documents in the file are a telegram from Fall announcing a brief visit to Paris in September of 1966 and a response from Flamand's secretary informing him that Flamand will be away. In this case the author-editor editing process faltered, lacking the fine-tuning achieved in offices and cafes of the Left Bank. The novel was instead picked up by generalist publisher Albin Michel, following their Goncourt win with Conchon's *L'État sauvage*.

Rereading *La Plaie*

For readers at Le Seuil, perceived problems of literary style and form in Fall's novel could not be located comfortably either within existing ideas of African writing or within avant-garde literary debate in the metropolitan literary field. A reviewer in *Le Monde*

subsequently commented: “Ce livre touffu, semé de digressions, de retours en arrière, de monologues lyriques, ne peut laisser indifférent. Sans doute la préciosité du style nous dérouté-t-elle” (Rolin, 1967). Rereading Fall’s novel in light of publishers’ archival material suggests ways that editorial processes can inform our response to the texture of the novel. The material confirms that modes of literary invention or innovation did not enter or perform freely in the literary field. The aim of the following reading is to show how the theme of narrative construction as it is articulated in *La Plaie*, through the characters of Magamou and Cheikh Sarr, belies the negative charges of disunity and incoherent oscillation made by *Le Seuil*’s readers.

Magamou is an adept wordsmith whose narrative voice is integral to his characterisation as “un véritable feu follet [...] aussi changeant que le temps” (Fall, 1967: 105). The fragmented narrative of his arrival in N’dar, for example, is told retrospectively in free indirect discourse from his prison cell through reported dreams and passages of spoken monologue. The voice shifts from the third to first-person as its description is constructed through references to “le narrateur” (64), who “s’était engagé à raconter, sans parti pris” (67). The narrator admits “sa tendance à caricaturer” and queries the tale’s verisimilitude: “c’est à se demander si la version qu’il donnait de ses aventures correspondait vraiment aux faits qu’il avait vécus” (92). This narrative technique enables Fall to portray Magamou’s feigned madness in prison by maintaining a self-conscious narrative voice. For example, as Magamou struggles to describe his memory of the truck accident that first caused his wound:

Les images avaient perdu leur netteté. Dans un univers flou apparurent des scènes vagues avec des personnages inconsistants. Des figures de danse se succédaient, se superposaient, s’anéantissaient. Un écran quadrillé évoquait une

grille; la grille, une cage minuscule, au plafond très bas. Un oiseau énorme. Il était affublé d'un masque grimaçant. L'oiseau battait des ailes puis se noyait dans une lumière blafarde. Du sang souillait l'écran [...] Et toutes les images se remirent à se poursuivre, ténues, pâles. (48)

Several critics have argued that Fall's individualised narrator-protagonist makes this a more psychological novel than the social critique of earlier African texts which depend on realistic portrayal of African society. His individualistic worldview emerges following the truck accident, which strips him of an anticipated role in city life: "Le sentiment d'un homme diminué, infirme, objet de la vindicte publique commence à faire son chemin en moi" (41). As a beggar in the market, his community is replaced by a nocturnal horde of animals and the discarded debris of the day's trading: "Je rassemblais tous ces petits riens que des personnes avaient touchés, possédés, aimés. Ces objets devenaient des êtres, trait d'union entre les autres et moi-même" (51).

While the editorial correspondence directed Fall towards narrative unity and cohesion and reduced his linguistic range, the novel self-consciously performs different strategies of narration, pushing beyond the possibilities admitted by editors at *Le Seuil*. As Magamou struggles to recall the day of his arrest, a passage of descriptive clarity projects his thoughts onto the prison wall:

Non, non. Il ne se racontera rien du tout, pour le moment, du moins. En pensée, il noircira bel et bien les murs de croquis de son invention. Voici l'ovale d'une tête chauve, deux yeux ronds; voici deux oreilles, coquilles d'arachide ou pavillons de chauves-souris; un point d'interrogation renversé faisant office de nez, bref et sinueux; deux cotylédons entrouverts, les lèvres retroussées. (55)

Each stage of the outline drawing is qualified by a more poetic, potentially unfamiliar image, from bats' ears to cotyledon leaves as lips. The description crescendos as it galvanises Magamou's anti-colonial disgust into artistic form:

Voici surtout un sexe affreusement planté sur un nombril rond et démesuré. Ah!
Ce ventre de femme enceinte à terme; cet oeuf colonial, sac immonde, attribut
encombrant des princes du moment! Ah! Les singes! (55)

In this flourish, reinscribing the grotesque physical and sexual identity of the imagined forms gives Magamou a route into his lonely task of auto-narration: “Magamou renâcla, fier de sa création. Ainsi se vengait-il des offenses, celles qui l’avaient chagriné comme celles qui avaient écorché son peuple” (57). This narration without human interlocutor performs no structural role in the narrative other than representing a forlorn hope for self-knowledge. Such idiosyncratic storytelling confirms Magamou’s isolation, in opposition to the communal stories he recalls being told in his village home.

Cheikh Sar, the interpreter of Dr Bernardy, provides a comic contrast to the fulfilment Magamou eventually finds in the “ailes de sa mémoire” (91). As a griot and itinerant musician, Cheikh Sar furnishes his retirement “en traduisant aux Français la sagesse des Sénégalais” (82). His rusty knowledge of French leads to playful reflection on the role of different kinds of language:

Les paroles l’intéressaient moins que le langage mobile du visage, celui des gestes, des yeux; le signe à interpréter, pensait-il, est plus dans l’intonation, le rythme, l’émotion, que dans les mots eux-mêmes, souvent vidés de leur tréfonds (82).

The reference to modes of verbal and non-verbal communication foreground the text’s seam of humour revolving around the valency of the written word. In a darkly comedic dialogue that takes place in the prison, Dr Bernardy diagnoses Magamou as schizophrenic. Cheikh Sar acts as interpreter, testing the Doctor’s language and its status:

- Docteur, notre interlocuteur déclare qu’il est né hier. Rien que ça! Il prétend être ton frère. C’est la fin du monde. Comme tu dis, c’est l’abdomination et la... quoi encore?

- Ne t'occupe pas des mots savants. Le français petit-nègre te suffit. Où vas-tu chercher des abdomens et des nations? Moi, je dis textuellement: c'est l'abomination de la désolation. Tu vois? Et que je ne t'entende plus parler de nation. Je répète: l'abomination de la désolation.... (115)

The linguistic hierarchy implied here between “petit-nègre” and scientific and religious discourse is consistently undermined by the Doctor’s ineptitude. Cheikh Sar seizes and distorts the apocalyptic Biblical expression, “l’abomination de la désolation” to describe Magamou’s feigned madness. This misquoted expression comes from the description of the desecration of the Temple in Jerusalem in the Olivet discourse.²⁵⁶ Only by identifying this reference, as language and world disintegrate, can the reader grasp the anti-colonial thrust of the passage. Its connotations depend on the reader’s interpretive framework, but Bernardy’s move to reinstate the correct citation by cancelling out any reference to nation shows an anxiety to maintain his grasp on language as the colonial order crumbles around him.

Fall’s metalinguistic comments emerge elsewhere in the character of Dr Bernardy, a caricatural colonial doctor and alcoholic who struggles to articulate his position, as seen in the following skit:

- Schizophrénie! Ni facile à lire ni aisé à orthographier, s'emporta Bernardy courant vers un dictionnaire. Il ajouta, à l'intention de son subordonné: Nous ne sommes pas des rats de bibliothèque, nous. Des bosseurs, des pionniers! Vous avez raison, vous qui n'avez pas d'écriture. Une saleté.

- Wa... Waw! Admit Cheikh Sar. La langue française se complique de plus en plus. Il faut la simplifier, docteur, la simplifier. Pour moi l'illettré et... pour toi aussi. (116)

²⁵⁶ Daniel 12:11, Mark 13, Matthew 24, Luke 21.

The humour here is amplified in the light of the editorial comments considered above. The theme of narration as it weaves through oral, written, and imagined modes, is negotiated in this passage, as elsewhere in the book, by looking askance at metropolitan norms.

The second part of the novel is less tightly structured than the first part, an issue that raised concern among editors at Le Seuil. Magamou's prison cell with its Kafkaesque sense of injustice that precipitates his self-narration, is replaced by a sense of rootless wandering and self-interrogation. Magamou now struggles to locate a secure sense of self in N'Dar. The first scene following his escape sees him crouched behind a bale of dried fish, listening to locals narrate the prisoners' escape. He has lost the paradoxical power previously wielded over his narrative performances:

Comme les N'Dariens atténuent le parler vulgaire par l'emploi de proverbes hermétiques, souvent impropres, ce fut un véritable régal où les trouvailles audacieuses côtoyaient les adages les plus courants. L'évasion de Magamou une fois relatée, chaque narrateur concluait, selon son tempérament, la richesse de son vocabulaire ou son désir de stupéfier. (127)

As the object of narration, Magamou finds that his own story is prey to the diegetic whims of others according to the context of their narration. The nausea of his isolation is overwhelming: "Il avait la sensation de vivre dans une immense prison aux murs invisibles, mais atrocement réels" (137). His decision is to become a "man" again by seeking a cure for his wound; a humanising perspective in the face of other possibilities, including suicide: "Ma peur à moi, c'est de n'être que l'ombre d'un homme; de vous donner, à vous, l'impression d'un homme manqué, d'un avorton..." (142). The healing of the wound is not glorified in any way (Fall does not seem to have followed his editor's advice in this respect), but rather compressed into two brief pages. Magamou must then reintegrate into society by replacing his swift reproaches with a language of connection:

“Tout un code de vie était à déchiffrer. Magamou découvrit avec stupeur que son vocabulaire s’était réduit à une catégorie de mots vengeurs, pleins de hargne...” (162). The vocabulary of exile and exclusion is here opposed to that of human interaction and connection. Ultimately Magamou will fail in this attempt to connect, preferring his roving, lone existence as “l’emmerdeur public numéro 1” (172).

The novel’s self-conscious concern with language and narration continues in the closing sections. In a darkly humorous sketch following a failed attempt to write through the spiralling situation in his journal (reminiscent of colonial ethnographic tradition), Dr Bernardy descends to an attack on the constituent letters of the name Magamou:

En proie à une exaltation démoniaque, il s’en prit à la bibliothèque. A la loupe, il chassa les lettres exécrées. Des heures durant, il alimenta son feu de voyelles et de consonnes puis se mit à danser la rumba sur les cendres éparses... “demain au bureau... il y a ces sales lettres. Il y en a à la librairie Lagrange... Il y en a à la mairie, à l’imprimerie.” (237)

His impotent madness expresses itself in biblioclastic frenzy. Meanwhile Magamou undergoes a final stage of “liberation”. After two failed attempts to commit suicide by jumping from the Faidherbe bridge, he experiences a moment of transcendent self-recognition: “Tout était eau, air, soleil, amour... Magamou mordrait à pleines dents dans le couscous de la vie...” (250). His decisive action is to repuncture his wound with the first knife he comes across in the market. The final sentences of the novel perform a characteristic verbal ambiguity before the silent gaze of onlookers:

Avant de s’effondrer, Magamou avait prononcé quelques paroles confuses. C’est à peine si l’on avait pu discerner deux mots, l’un très doux: cher ou Cheikh; l’autre, en dents de scie: Bernardy; peut-être paradis. (252)

There are three possibilities: either Magamou pronounces the names of the other protagonists, suggesting the revenge motive of an earlier passage; “cher paradis”, in an uncharacteristic utterance of restored faith; or the paradoxical possibilities of, “cher Bernardy”/ “Cheikh paradis”. It is his manner of speaking – softly and then through clenched teeth – that provides the playful twist of Fall’s dénouement, leaving the task of narrating Magamou’s last words up to the reader.

Reading *La Plaie* through an increased knowledge of publishing context evokes new ways in which this text’s formal composition itself resists power structures of metropolitan literary institutions. Editorial correspondence directed Fall towards narrative unity and cohesion, yet on closer reading the novel self-consciously performs different strategies of narration, pushing beyond the space of possibilities partly set out by editors at Le Seuil.

Conclusion

My aim here has been to outline selected aspects of the pre-publication process based on available archival material. Editors shaped these writers’ craft in ways that are rarely considered since transcripts of discussions between editors and authors remain, for the most part, hidden and encoded in published texts. The rejection of these texts cannot be extrapolated to make generalised conclusions about Le Seuil’s publishing policies, yet the examples given above indicate some of the aesthetic and political criteria against which editorial evaluations were made during the period surrounding the independences of 1960. The reports reveal contingent and subjective criteria of legitimation at particular points in the history of Le Seuil.

There is a clear shift in the relative emphasis in the readers' reports and publishers' correspondence on "authenticity" and political actuality as criteria of symbolic value between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s. The perceived need to uphold the French language along the lines set down by the colonial education system and produce realist depictions of sub-Saharan Africa is gradually replaced by a growing, if still limited, awareness of how these novels respond and contribute to new ideas of literary writing. The three cases indicate key aspects of the gradually changing "espace des possibles" for writers of sub-Saharan Africa in the period, acknowledging some limited contact with metropolitan avant-garde literary debate. In his elaboration of the literary field as a methodological tool, Bourdieu suggests that the right choice of publisher leads to "consecration", owing to a homologous relationship with the appropriate readership (Bourdieu, 1992: 277). According to this model, there is a mutual process of selection between author and publisher in pursuit of a work's "lieu naturel" in the literary field. Such processes were never neutral: they were mediated unevenly by the tastes of individual editors and readers, even under the roof of a single publishing house. This model helps describe the relational nature of the process of finding a publisher by enabling a comparison of the terms in which the manuscripts of Beckett, Sadjı, Yacine, Kane, and Fall were evaluated.

Following available archival traces in the case of these three novels does not try to foreclose textual interpretations, but rather to locate more precisely the strategies of editors in the post-war literary field. Showing how authorial authority is constructed, with a shift of emphasis to literary mediators, may appear to destabilise central postcolonial critical projects concerned with questions of agency. However, with appropriate

methodological reflection, these traces in fact suggest authors' countervailing responses to the publishing context in which their work was produced. There were multiple centres and multiple peripheries already at work in the literary field in this period: a hypothesis that will be tested expanding the francophone paradigm to consider the publishing of anglophone African writing in translations in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Le Monde (francophone) s’effondre? Locating anglophone sub-Saharan Africa in the field of literary production

By unpicking the political, aesthetic, and commercial positions of three translated texts by anglophone African writers, this chapter extends the previous discussion surrounding language, authenticity and *négritude* which has been shaped by the irrevocable and idiosyncratic status of French for writers of France’s former colonies, into the anglophone terrain. Recent work on the British publishing history of African literature informs a comparison with Parisian publishing in this chapter (Davis, 2005; Currey, 2008; Bejjit, 2009; Low, 2011). To a certain extent, a francophone paradigm re-inscribes language-based criteria and a dominant colonial language/nation bind in the literary historiography of the post-war period. The institutional conditions giving rise to this paradigm will be now be considered comparatively in order to delineate further publishing conditions in the French capital. The transnational and transcolonial dimension of this chapter is, in part, a response to new critical pathways signalled by recent theorisations of world literature.²⁵⁷

An optic of “world literature” which foregrounds translation works against the perceived anglocentrism and ahistoricism of postcolonial studies.²⁵⁸ Translation is the key mechanism, dynamic, and metaphor in the theory and practice of world literature. David Damrosch argues that “world literature is writing that gains in translation”, stressing the

²⁵⁷ An earlier version of this chapter was published the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* (Bush, Ruth, 2012).

²⁵⁸ These criticisms are raised in the work of Richard Serrano and Jean-François Bayart, among others (Serrano, Richard, 2005; Bayart, Jean-François, 2010). For further analysis of the meeting of the “francophone” and the “postcolonial”, see: Forsdick, Charles and David Murphy, 2003; Forsdick, Charles and David Murphy, 2009.

need for scholars and students to engage with translations, regardless of their lack of knowledge of the source language, in pursuit of a “detached engagement with worlds beyond our own time and place” (Damrosch, 2003: 281). One condition for “world literature” as a reading practice and as a body of works is translatability. The institutional conditions that have shaped the uneven global production of translations remain little discussed in the context of African literatures in English and French. Casanova advocates a grounded understanding of translation as a product and a process depending on “the position of languages, but also on the positions of both translated authors and their translators [...] in both the national literary field and the global literary space” (103). Literary translation can act as another process of “annexation” or “littérisation” (136) by dominant languages and dominant literary forms, the legitimacy of which are defined at a putative centre. In the history of publishing representations of sub-Saharan Africa in Paris, translation’s idealised connotations of intercultural movement and exchange will here be reconsidered against the material realities of this mediating process.

Normative editorial criteria of language, style and content have been located in reference to the French colonial and anti-colonial context in previous chapters. These will now be further elucidated through three case-studies of novels translated from English to French: Amos Tutuola’s *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (trans. Raymond Queneau, 1953; 1952), Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (trans. Michel Ligny, 1966; 1958) and Peter Abrahams’ *A Wreath for Udomo* (trans. Pierre Singer, 1958; 1956), published respectively by Gallimard, Présence Africaine and Stock.²⁵⁹ The relationships between translator and publisher show how these representations of sub-Saharan Africa were mediated in

²⁵⁹ For a complete list of translations of these authors’ work into French, see Appendix 4.

response to wider political, aesthetic and commercial interests. Their contrasting levels of long-term recognition (only one remains in print in France) have been shaped by the relative symbolic and material capital of their translators and publishers. The rapturous, but disbelieving, mainstream reception of Raymond Queneau's stylistic appropriation of Tutuola's idiosyncratic text can be contrasted with Léopold Sédar Senghor's prefatory endorsement of Abrahams' prophetic novel of political emancipation. The subdued reception of Achebe's text in France in the late sixties, in contrast to its hyper-canonical status in the English-speaking world, is an apt reminder of the unstable relativism of a world literary canon. These writers' reputations, staked on the contingently defined value of their work, do not travel smoothly between English and French, whether across the channel or across the African continent.

Only one of Tutuola's texts was translated into French immediately after its publication, with a thirty-five year gap before the translation of his 1954 text, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*. Achebe's first four novels were translated after an average interval of twelve years, mostly in the 1970s, and none of his celebrated essay collections have been translated. South African writers achieved greater levels of recognition in the metropolitan literary field in the period 1945–67. Of the eleven texts Peter Abrahams wrote between 1942 and 1966, five were translated in this same period. As will be explored below, Abrahams' short-term relative success could be attributed to his distance from prickly questions of political decolonisation, and the increasing general interest in subjective accounts of the situation in South Africa. His paratextual labelling as the "Richard Wright" of African literature supports this argument, given that Wright's early novels portraying American race relations were far more popular in France than his later travel-

writing and anti-colonial texts. In the longer term, Tutuola's first book has been republished in four editions by Gallimard, most recently as the first title in their "Continents noirs" series in 2000 and 2006.²⁶⁰ Achebe's first novel has been published in four editions, with the most recent reprinting in 2006. It is currently out of print.²⁶¹ Abrahams' early books have been out of print in France for several decades.

This chapter responds to the following questions: How was the task of translating African literature addressed by translators during this period? How was the work of publishing these translations undertaken by publishers? How does the figure of the translator appear and recede from paratextual view and how did this visibility impact on the reception of the text? In each case different trajectories confirm the ways in which metropolitan publishing strategies for literary representations of sub-Saharan Africa responded to the relationship between the politics of decolonisation and independence and the aesthetics of literary form and content. I will first provide a selective overview of publishing contexts for anglophone African texts and their translations in the period and make some comparisons between conditions of publication in London and in Paris. The three case-studies which then follow draw on archival material and textual and paratextual analysis to extend my account of publishing sub-Saharan Africa in Paris.²⁶²

²⁶⁰ This collection's ethnocentric criteria of selection have been the object of repeated criticism (Ducournau, Claire, 2012: 163-68).

²⁶¹ Since transferring to the Wylie Agency in 2008, Achebe's French language rights have moved to Actes Sud. A new edition of *Le Monde s'effondre* will appear in 2013 [email correspondence with the Wylie Agency, December 2012].

²⁶² The comparison with anglophone publishing is developed in a forthcoming book chapter on the role of translations in the Heinemann African Writers Series: (Bush, Ruth, 2013).

African literary relations in English and in French

In the period 1945 – 67, only a handful of anglophone African writers were translated into French. This number increased during the late 1970s and 1980s, reflecting both the global increase in the number of texts being written, but also their increased foothold in the literary marketplace. Achebe's *Arrow of God* was the first African text to be included on the syllabus for the French teacher training certificate, the *agrégation*, in 1981, while Wole Soyinka's 1986 Nobel prize brought further attention to Nigerian writing and resulted in the translation of most of his works (Fabre, 1982; Conteh-Morgan, 1989). According to available statistics, of 165 "African" texts translated from English to French in the period 1945 – 1994, 111 were by South African authors, hence, in part, my reason for extending the scope of this chapter to include Peter Abrahams' novel (Richard, 2005).

Following Wole Soyinka's famous swipe at *négritude*, ideological differences between francophone and anglophone African writers, between *négritude* rhetoric and the African Personality movement, or between Senghor's vaunting of 'rhythm' and 'blackness' and the class-based contemporaneity advocated by Kwame Nkrumah and Es'kia Mphahlele, have often been mapped simplistically onto differences between French and British colonial policies (Melone, 1973: 19). Such polarised distinctions between origins and aims are not always helpful (Irele, 1981: 89-117). The opposition masks evident affinities between afro-centric discourses and the limited yet significant connections between cultural institutions across linguistic spaces in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁶³ Where translation did facilitate exchanges between French and English-speaking African intellectuals, this

²⁶³ Wole Soyinka, for example, remained closely linked to *Présence Africaine*. He became president of the *Société Africaine de Culture* after Alioune Diop's death in 1980.

was driven by a shared sense of the changing political and cultural landscape in the continent.

Using *Présence Africaine* as a model, the Mbari Writers and Artists Club in Ibadan was founded in 1961 as “a meeting point for what was then new and valuable in Nigerian art and literature” (Benson, 1986; Nwakanma, 2010: 167). Key members included young writers, poets, and intellectuals: Chinua Achebe, Es’kia Mphahlele, Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Christopher Okigbo and Ulli Beier. This intellectual community became the “Greenwich village or Paris of West Africa” (Nwakanma, 2010: 130). The Mbari Club’s publications, in particular the influential *Black Orpheus* journal, supported the idea of contemporary, situated “African personality” as opposed to *négritude*’s romanticised philosophy of an abstract African essence, perceived as “backward-looking”, but also as removed from material realities.²⁶⁴ Mphahlele set out this position:

An image of Africa that only glorifies our ancestors and celebrates our “purity” and “innocence” is an image of a continent lying in state [...] But we must remember that literature springs from an individual’s experience and in its effort to take in the whole man, it also tries to see far ahead to project a poetic vision such as the writer is capable of, based on contemporary experience. [...] If African literature is worth anything at all, it should not require myths to prop it up. (Mphahlele, 1967: 250-52)

More widespread anglophone engagement with *négritude* was largely predicated on its Senghorian definition and manifestation in Senegalese national politics, rather than the varying situations of contemporary francophone African writers, many of whom were yet to be translated. Mphahlele labelled *négritude* “an ivory-tower thing” (Mphahlele, 1963: 1), arguing that:

²⁶⁴ *Black Orpheus* was partly inspired by the success of *Présence Africaine* (Benson, Peter, 1986: 22; 25).

Présence Africaine has, to its credit, become more and more involved in the cultural dynamics of the black world through the printed word [...] It needs to stop organizing writers' conferences and concentrate on practical writers' workshops in various parts of Africa. (Mphahlele, 1962: 84)

These comments were clearly outlined in Mphahlele's confidential report to the Congress for Cultural Freedom on the conference on African literature in the university, held in Dakar in 1963. The Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) was an international advocacy group for American Liberalism and anti-Communism founded in 1950 and based in Paris. The CCF ran for seventeen years across 35 countries and at its height boasted 280 members of staff (Coleman, 1989: 9). It funded magazines in Nigeria (*Black Orpheus*), Uganda (*Transition*), France (*Preuves*), India and Germany, and organised conferences on African literature in Senegal and Sierra Leone. Its funding source was subsequently revealed to be the CIA; a situation unknown to most of the group's participants (Benson, 1986: 36).²⁶⁵ Mphahlele is critical of the dominance of *négritude* as an ideology at the Dakar conference and links it closely to an attack on the work of Présence Africaine:

I have sensed that Présence Africaine's ideological stand does not impress the youth in Paris or in Dakar generally, still less in African territories outside Senegal. Maybe they are still hammering away at this audience. Their study circle in Paris certainly never commands more than eight people [...] But there is a way in which, I suspect, the governing élite of Senegal pay lip-service to the idea of negritude and fold their arms. In this fashion they insulate themselves against any "foreign ideas" like ours, become smilingly unco-operative, but do nothing that visibly expresses negritude in terms of a dynamic culture. (Mphahlele, 1963: 2).

From his position as Director of the African Programme in the CCF, Mphahlele castigates the weaknesses of *négritude* and the lack of sympathy displayed for this overarching idea among several writers at the conference, including Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Ousmane Sembene, Tchicaya U Tam'si and Camara Laye. Yet he concludes that the CCF is

²⁶⁵ My thanks to Asha Rogers for stimulating conversations about the CCF and for generously sharing francophone material from the CCF archives gathered during her recent doctoral research in Chicago.

relatively powerless in the face of *négritude*'s dominant position among the political leaders in Senegal:

The governing elite are committed. And even if they do nothing about their attachment, they cannot permit an organization like ours to operate in an area which they know *Présence Africaine* claims as its province. (Mphahlele, 1963)

The rhetoric of power, ownership and control in this document voices a strong view concerning *Présence Africaine*'s work in Senegal in the post-independence period. The strategic connections to the political elite of that country, in particular Senghor, are articulated with a certain resignation. Such Cold War cultural politics form a key, still little-understood, context for publishing in Paris and in Dakar in this period.

In the absence of a rigorous study of textbook publishing and school and university syllabuses, current understanding of the contrasting relationships between literary and educational publishing in the English and French literary fields depends on a wide range of sources. After the independences, British publishers engaged in a 'scramble' for the rapidly expanding schools' market in anglophone Africa. Macmillan, Oxford University Press, Longman, Nelson and Heinemann competed with new indigenous publishers, opening offices in Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya, further to their central offices in England.²⁶⁶ Heinemann editor Keith Sambrook suggests this dispersal differed from French publishers' approach to the African literary marketplace:

In French colonies, the French publishers had mainstream courses for use in the francophone educational colonies, and this persisted after independence because there were [sic] no single large enough local publishing house to compete [...] they set up subsidiaries of their own although they were controlled much more from

²⁶⁶ The manager of Longman Publishing in Africa, Julian Rea, describes his experience of this situation (Rea, Julian, 1976: 100). Caroline Davis argues that in the case of OUP, investment in new writing from the continent was not a disinterested gesture. Dependence on expanding educational markets signalled "a direct continuation of the economic and cultural hegemony of colonialism" (Davis, Caroline, 2005: 242).

Paris than the branches of the British publishers were controlled from here (London, UK). I think we, on the whole, gave more control to our heads of local publishing houses than some of the French publishers did. (Quoted in: Bejjit, 2009: 213)

French educational publishers Hachette, Hatier and Fernand Nathan remained centralised in Paris in the sixties, in contrast to the partly devolved strategies of the groundbreaking Heinemann African Writers Series (AWS) in Africa (Barnett, 2005).

Bypassing the risk of self-mythology, Heinemann editor James Currey remains an astute observer of changes in the literary field.²⁶⁷ His description of the insularity of the British post-war literary marketplace contrasts the heady early days of the AWS with the publishing of *négritude* writing in Paris:

The difference in Paris I think was the idea of *négritude* so that both the Caribbean and the African publishing was interlocked. And so, as a result I think that brought on African writing in the 50s and got it published and noticed in a way that no British publisher was really doing. (Bush, 2011c)

Currey's view of *négritude* as a singular idea that acted as a catalyst to African publishing in French draws on the image of unity built up by *Présence Africaine* after 1947 for which there was no real anglophone equivalent. Currey's comments belie the significance of the material and symbolic disparity between *Présence Africaine* and Heinemann.²⁶⁸ *Présence Africaine* was founded with a clear goal of creating a hub for intellectual collaboration, firstly as a journal, then as a small independent publishing house, while the AWS always sought to justify its activities in commercial terms, as necessitated by its attachment to the

²⁶⁷ His book, *Africa Writes Back*, contrasts with the paternalistic tone of Alan Hill's autobiography highlighted by Lizarríbar and Huggan (Lizarríbar Buxó, Camille, 1998: 83-84; Huggan, Graham, 2001: 52).

²⁶⁸ The process of selection between hundreds of incoming manuscripts at Heinemann was consistently collaborative and transnational. In total 247 numbered orange and blue paperback novels and poetry anthologies were published between 1962 and 1987. Of these 27 were translations from French.

much larger business of Heinemann Educational Books. Length (and corresponding cost) was a key criterion for AWS editors.²⁶⁹

The past fifty years have shown a proportional increase in the number of literary translations into French (Sapiro, 2008). The internationalisation of the post-war literary field reflected France's changing position in the global political field as publishers sought new voices responding to this shift:

Si l'activité de traduction a connu un creux pendant la guerre en raison des contraintes politiques et de la pénurie de papier, elle reprend progressivement en 1945, pour s'intensifier et se diversifier dans les années 1960. Du point de vue de la littérature traduite en français, deux traits caractérisent cette nouvelle ère: d'une part, l'accession de la littérature américaine à une position dominante, de l'autre, l'élargissement de l'horizon géoculturel au-delà des frontières de l'Europe et du monde occidental. (Sapiro, 2011a: 132)

France's post-war fascination with American culture was expressed through a consumerist taste for mass culture, cinema, and a new wave of American authors. It is unsurprising that translations from American English dominated the literary field in this period, with a quarter of Gallimard's prestigious Collection Blanche comprising American authors, for example. In parallel, Roger Caillois's "Croix du Sud" collection founded in 1952 introduced a string of Latin American writers, including Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar and Pablo Neruda, while "Connaissance de l'Orient", founded in 1956 at Gallimard, brought a number of Arabic writers into French translations. The "Du monde entier" collection was launched in 1931, and included over two thousand titles, forty-two percent

²⁶⁹ In 1971 they opted to translate Sembene's short story *Le Mandat*, rather than the more lengthy *Le Vieux Nègre et la médaille* as a text for French A-level. For more detail see: Currey, James, 1970; Currey, James, 1971; Currey, James, 2008: 6. During the first three decades of the AWS, eighty percent of its books were sold in Africa while ten percent were sold in Britain and Europe and the remaining ten percent in North America (Bejjit, Nourdin, 2009: 6-7).

of which were American.²⁷⁰ Amos Tutuola's *L'Ivrogne dans la brousse* was the first African text to appear in this series, and the first example of sub-Saharan African writing in Gallimard's catalogue since Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka*, translated from Sesotho in 1940.²⁷¹ Peter Abrahams and fellow South African Alan Paton were also published by Gallimard in the early fifties. Casanova suggests that in contrast to post-war Latin American literary modernism, African writers' adherence to a realist mode may have excluded them from Gallimard's catalogue. A more detailed comparison between the publishing of Latin American writing and sub-Saharan African writing would extend this hypothesis to the different, yet related, structures of symbolic, political, and social capital that shaped this aspect of Parisian publishing history.

Early critical discourse in French on "African" literature is dominated by the paradigm of *négritude* (Jack, 1996). Except in specialist monographs, those critics who do discuss anglophone or lusophone African writing rarely problematise the process of translation. The "postcolonial turn" in translation studies has gathered momentum recently with the publication of Paul Bandia's *Translation as Reparation* (2008), and Kathryn Batchelor's *Decolonizing Translation* (2009). Both draw on aspects of translation theory, in particular the work of Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti and link to the work of Homi Bhabha

²⁷⁰ "Dans la collection 'Du monde entier', le nombre moyen de titres publiés annuellement augmente entre les années 1950 et 1960 de 15 à 37, une moyenne qui se maintiendra dans les deux décennies suivantes. Les langues se diversifient, passant de 14 à 24, le nombre de pays représentés de 23 à 38. L'anglais reste prépondérant mais voit sa part diminuer (de 60 pour cent à 42 pour cent) au profit des autres langues" (Sapiro, Gisèle, 2011a: 136).

²⁷¹ This translation's two prefaces and the translator's numerous footnotes indicate a certain apprehension regarding the reception of the text. The front cover notes not only the translator's name, but also his profession: "Traduit directement de la langue Souto par V. ELLENBERGER, ancien missionnaire au pays des Ba-Souto" (Mofolo, Thomas, 1940). The prefaces assured readers of Mofolo's literary credentials as a keen reader of H. Rider Haggard and Marie Corelli, and stressed the philosophical and moral qualities of the text as well as its "piquants détails de mœurs indigènes" (translator's preface). This translation was in fact based on the poor English edition by Lovedale press, which excised two chapters and transformed the text into a "Bunyanesque" narrative (Currey, James, 2008: 210). See also: Bejjit, Nourdin, 2009: 59.

and Gayatri Spivak on the ethics and erotics of the literary translation of “third world” texts. They foreground the overarching issue of language and the paradoxes this issue presents for African writers, as demonstrated in processes of relexification, strategies of domestication or foreignisation, and the development of a Bhabha’s “third space”. Other work on translations of African literature from English into French highlights issues of fidelity, linguistic inaccuracies, mistranslations, and the importance of anthropological knowledge of the culture of the source text (Zabus, 1991). Kathryn Batchelor concludes her comprehensive study of Francophone African literature in English translation by stating the need “to acknowledge the subjectivity of the translation task more explicitly” (2009: 260) and advocating the development of a “metonymic discourse of translation”, through translator’s prefaces, and other internal and external markers of the text’s status as translation. As she explains:

Rather than viewing a translation purely in relation to a source text (this would be a metaphoric view of translation), a metonymic conceptualization would stress the translation’s links to other elements to which it might be said to stand in syntagmatic relationship, such as the identity of the translator, the lists of the publishing house, or other texts in the target culture. (261)

The impressive theoretical scope of her wide-ranging study rarely mentions the names or socio-historical circumstances of individual translators, drawing instead on the translations themselves rather than the context of their production. In contrast, my concern throughout this thesis has been to locate the writer’s relationship to language within the political and aesthetic debates that mediated the published expression of that relationship.

The internationalising metropolitan literary marketplace was reflected in the period 1945 – 67 by a gradual increase in the commissioning of translations, including the first translations of a handful of books by anglophone African writers. The work of their

translators, as will be shown below, varied from aesthetic appreciation and politically sensitive rendering to more imperial forms of symbolic appropriation. According to Paul Bandia, “Translating African creative works is a double ‘transposition’ process” (Bandia, 1993: 61). Firstly, the text is transposed from “African thought” into a “European language”, and secondly, this thought is transferred between “European languages”, in this case from English into French. The transfer between two hegemonic languages pertains to a different dynamic than the power asymmetry between indigenous African languages and either English or French, both of which are of course also African languages.²⁷² Bandia argues that the translator of African texts has a certain responsibility vis-à-vis the source text which is specific to this writing. There is a required understanding of the cultural context of the work which demands an awareness of cultural difference. In the post-war period, such ideas of the translator’s task were linked to the shifting valency of cross-cultural knowledge in the process of decolonisation. Between the constitutive political unity of the Union française and a devolved sense of an international French-language community, lateral, translingual African literary exchange remained a minimal presence in French literary institutions.

Amos Tutuola in Paris

The Palm-wine Drinkard was published in English by Faber & Faber in 1952 and by the eminent Editions Gallimard the following year (Larson, 2001: 1-25; Low, 2011: 1-25). Tutuola’s first-person narrative, written in non-standard English, relates the story of the anonymous “drinkard” who lives indolently at his father’s expense, drinking 200 kegs of wine a day drawn from the palm trunks by his personal “palm-wine tapster”. Following

²⁷² On institutional support for the early translation of African languages see the discussion of the Margaret Wrong literary prizes in Chapter Four.

the tragic death of the palm-wine tapster and the narrator's father, which take place in the first two pages of the text, the narrator is forced to strike out alone in search of the ghost of his tapster, undergoing a series of other-worldly challenges and terrifying encounters with mythical creatures en route to the Deads' Town.

The book was an immediate success in Britain, praised by writers and critics including Dylan Thomas, who wrote in *The Observer* of his admiration for "this tall, devilish story" (Thomas, 1952). V.S. Pritchett, meanwhile, expressed a bemused appreciation for Tutuola's "violent, bizarre but quite simple talking manner" (Tutuola and Parrinder, 1954: Back cover). Some Nigerian critics, such as Babasola Johnson and Adeagbo Akinjogbin, objected to the metropolitan celebration of non-standardised English syntax in the novel and failure to recognise Tutuola's source: the Yoruba-language folk tales of D.O. Fagunwa (Lindfors, 1980: 19-32). Later championing by Soyinka and Achebe encouraged critics to consider seriously the philosophical and aesthetic significance of the text. As Achebe commented in his 1977 essay on this novel: "Tutuola is weaving more than a tall, devilish story. He is speaking strongly and directly to our times" (Achebe, 1989: 112). Nonetheless, its early critical reception, reproduced in the paratext of all subsequent editions in English, uses a critical vocabulary of difference that continues to present Tutuola as exotic object rather than speaking subject of his work.

In a fascinating chain of correspondence between Tutuola and his British publishers, the author suggests that:

I shall be very much grateful if you will correct my “WRONG ENGLISH” etc. and can alter the story itself if possible, of course, it is not necessary to tell you as you are an expert in this work [...]

I leave everything for you to do as you can in such a way that it will pay for both of us. (Quoted in: Lindfors, 1982: 96)

Such stark denial of authorial prerogative and utter faith in his publisher tests Casanova’s model of a “World Republic of Letters” whose development ostensibly depends on the struggles between authors for literary recognition as measured against a normative universal centre of “literary time” (2004: 89). Tutuola’s idea of authorship is here shaped more by economics than aesthetics or awareness of such rules of the game. An editor at Faber wrote the following response:

We agree that your English is not always conventional English as written in this country, but for that very reason we think it would be a great pity to make it conform to all the rules of grammar and spelling. Just as no one but a West African could have had such a strange tale to tell, so your manner of writing it has a charm of its own. (Quoted in: Lindfors, 1982: 96)

The rules by which Tutuola will enter the literary field, according to the symbolic value of his text’s “charm”, are conceived and defined by the European publisher.²⁷³

L’Ivrogne dans la brousse: a zero degree of writing?

Raymond Queneau’s translation, *L’Ivrogne dans la brousse*, was published in Gallimard’s prestigious “Du monde entier” collection alongside titles by Conrad, Kafka, and Tagore. By 1950, Queneau was an established writer and editor at Gallimard, directing a collection of anglophone translations. He had recently been elected to the elite jury of the Prix Goncourt, and was shortly to edit the *Pléiade* encyclopedia. His 1947 work, *Exercices de*

²⁷³ Another Faber editor, T. S. Eliot, noted in his reader’s report on Tutuola’s second novel, “will the author go on being interesting to anyone but students of social psychology, and, on a deeper level, students of Colonial Policy?” (Lindfors, Bernth, 1987: 89).

style, which tells the same story ninety-nine different ways, had been critically acclaimed, setting a precedent for his later experimental writing and studied use of popular language, in his best-known work, *Zazie dans le métro* (1959). Roland Barthes championed Queneau's "contamination parlée du discours écrit" (Barthes, 1953: 23) and his use of phonetic spelling, popular lexicon, and styles that worked towards what Barthes terms "la socialisation du langage littéraire" (Barthes, 1953: 64). These poetic tools are applied consistently to Tutuola's text. Though it is unlikely he was unaware of the politics of publishing marginalised oral language between the covers of a Gallimard book, it seems that Queneau's choice was primarily a stylistic exercise. Indeed, in an interview in *Le Figaro*, Queneau confirmed his unstable sense of the original text: "Je l'ai traduit sur épreuves et j'ai eu bien du mal à rester fidèle à l'auteur" (Mazars, 1953). Positioning Amos Tutuola's novel requires us to study the mediation of his text by a number of agents, not least his distinguished translator, since Tutuola was arguably engaged in neither a struggle for consecration at the "Greenwich meridian", nor an attempt to transgress and thus define himself against the aesthetic norms of such a centre. The project of his translator, however, could be construed as the opposite, partly accounting for the text's ongoing presence in the French literary field with Queneau's name on the cover or back cover of all subsequent editions. Tutuola's text was translated into a form of French that sought to restage Tutuola's literary "naivety" as part of Queneau's aesthetic project and fondness for the "jeu littéraire".

Queneau's translator's preface, which appears only in the first edition, is the clearest paratextual trace of his approach.²⁷⁴ He introduces the author before assuring the reader

²⁷⁴ The only available document in Queneau's archive is one of his six drafts of the translation, which shows numerous annotations and small corrections made to his hand-written manuscript. One of these manuscripts

that though Tutuola's "façon inhabituelle" of using English-language conjunctions "m'a donné bien du souci", he had had to resist "la tentation de rationaliser un récit dont les 'inconséquences' et les 'contradictions' se glissent parfois dans la structure même des phrases". Certain terms, such as "palm-wine tapster", presented a challenge. Queneau chose to use the Congolese term "malafoutier", from the Kituba word malàfu, in a lexical graft that owes something perhaps to his exchanges with the anthropologists acknowledged in his preface. The novel's opening lines give a brief example of Queneau's approach:

I was a palm-wine drinkard since I was a boy of ten years of age. I had no other work more than to drink palm-wine in my life. [...] My father got eight children and I was the eldest among them, all of the rest were hard workers, but I myself was an expert palm-wine drinkard. (7)

Je me soûlais au vin de palme depuis l'âge de dix ans. Je n'avais rien eu d'autre à faire dans la vie que de boire du vin de palme. [...] Mon père avait huit enfants et j'étais leur aîné, les autres travaillaient dur, moi, j'étais un recordman du vin de palme. (9)

The colloquial verb *soûler* and the false English sporting term "recordman" immediately give the sense of less formal language. Though grammatically Tutuola's sentences are smoothed to more standard French structures, the short clauses and emphatic repeated pronouns, "moi, j'étais un recordman" are characteristic of spoken syntax. As a recent critic remarks, "[Tutuola] succeeds somewhat naturally what Queneau has made it his objective to recreate" (Jullien, 2000).

There is no archival evidence of any correspondence between Queneau and Tutuola.

Tutuola's archive presents his brief correspondance with his French literary agent,

can be viewed at: <www.queneau.fr> [accessed 21 January 2011]. Queneau mentions the six drafts in an interview in *Le Figaro* (Mazars, Pierre, 1953).

together with the first statement of Tutuola's royalties from Gallimard.²⁷⁵ Tutuola wrote to his editor at Faber requesting an explanation of his agent's letter accompanying the royalty statement, since he did not understand why he was receiving this money. This appears to confirm that there was no prior consultation with Tutuola regarding the translation of his works. In March 1954, Tutuola's French agent, Odette Arnaud, wrote to him regarding his second text, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*:

We have been most anxious to get in personal contact with you but we did not like to make the first steps because it is against etiquette that literary [sic] agents make personal connexions with authors whose rights they have received from a foreign publisher. But now that you have come to us spontaneously we are glad to have the opportunity to tell you how much we appreciate handling the French rights of your works.

We have received your second book and it is actually under consideration with Editions Gallimard and we do hope that Editions Gallimard will take it and that M. Queneau will translate it also. You may not know that M. Raymond Queneau is one of our outstanding French authors and he is also the general literary manager of Editions Gallimard who have the best literary standard in Paris.

It is our strongest desire that the French rights on your future books remain in our hands as we are very proud to have such an interesting author. Each time you make a contract for some new book, will you kindly see that we get the French rights. (Arnaud, 1954)

Arnaud's letter seeks to inform Tutuola of his position in the French literary field by introducing him to his highly visible translator and informing him of the symbolic capital of Gallimard in Paris. As shown in the earlier letter to his British publisher, Tutuola was neither averse to the process of commodification nor aware of the strategies for entering the French literary marketplace. It would be misleading to present him as a disinterested aesthete or to suggest that there is any "self-conscious positioning" (Brouillette, 2007: 174) in his first book. Gallimard did not go as far as Faber, who in their endeavours to confirm the text's untampered "authenticity" printed a facsimile page from the original

²⁷⁵ He received 19,544 francs (equivalent of approx. £19) in advance royalties (Sautoy, Peter de, 1953).

manuscript “showing the publisher’s ‘corrections’ ” (Tutuola, 1961; 1952: 24). As Gail Low suggests, “Tutuola’s commodity value would surely be diminished if it were to be revealed, for example, that he was a sophisticate who, much like the European modernists of an earlier generation, staged their brand of primitivity for metropolitan consumption” (25). Despite the agent’s efforts, Queneau did not translate Tutuola’s second book, which only appeared 34 years later in French. The delay further confirms Tutuola’s status as a one-off curiosity for Queneau and for Gallimard.

The commercially motivated choices of his British and French publishers, combined with the aesthetic project of his translator, suggest a more complex positioning of the text than Casanova’s model – polarised between aesthetic autonomy and commercial heteronomy – permits.

Paratextual comparison: the value of “authenticity”

In his preface, partly reproduced on the back-cover blurb, Queneau describes Tutuola’s background as an orderly in the palace of the Governor of Lagos, affirming that “il a écrit directement en anglais”. However, a detailed six-page authorial postface that appeared in the American first edition describing Tutuola’s upbringing and education and how he came to write the novel is absent from the Gallimard edition. Instead, the French back cover emphasises the perceived “art brut” of a text which provides a “lueur singulière sur un monde qui demeure fermé à la plupart des Européens” written by “A black African free of any Western influence”. The French paratext decontextualises the work, suggesting its shifting value as both a novel “exotic” curiosity for the metropolitan readership and an

avant-garde text, as signified by Queneau's input as translator, but where the author's creative role is minimised.

In *Le Figaro* the book's reviewer pondered whether this "bizarre" book which is "tellement singulier, insolite et en même temps si proche des songeries de certains de nos poètes" could in fact be a hoax, along the lines of MacPherson's Ossian poet in the eighteenth century (Mazars, 1953). As shown in the case of Christine Garnier, constructing a binary distinction between authentic and inauthentic authorship played an important role in generating discourse about African novels in the French literary marketplace in the early fifties. The front page of *Arts* journal, meanwhile, referenced Sartre's famous essay on French-African writing, declaring that Raymond Queneau had discovered Black Orpheus. The reviewer Alexandre Vialatte, himself translator of Kafka, continued:

Les trois quarts du charme viennent du talent du traducteur [...]. Queneau l'a traduit comme un dieu, avec un inégalable fruité. Il ne traduit pas, il réinvente; il délire et il prophétise comme dans sa langue maternelle dans l'idiome d'un pays qui n'existe [sic] jamais. (Vialatte, 1953)

As in *Le Figaro*'s review, which doubts Tutuola's very existence, Vialatte's *éloge* to Queneau obscures Tutuola, showing relative indifference to either "authenticity" or the possible significance of its "non-existent" spaces. Casanova describes the "annexation" of "dominated" writers to the "dominant" literary space in her revisionist account of the "ethnocentric" post-war championing of (Vialatte's) Kafka in France (353-54). These reviewers display a striking effacement of Tutuola which seems to confirm that legitimating mechanisms for translated literature entail a form of domination.

In a longer review in *Présence Africaine*, the reviewer Nyunaï does not mention Queneau's role, but instead reflects on the novel's critical reception and its focus upon Tutuola's apparent divergence from a "Western aesthetic". The reviewer draws a line to Ancient Greek mythology, to Dante's *Inferno* and to the double bind of being presented as an African author then excluded for deviation from European aesthetic norms. While he points to structural faults in the novel's series of unconnected episodes, he admires "le bric-à-brac artiste de l'ensemble" (1955: 161) and stresses the philosophical threads running through the text. In terms of poetics, the reviewer praises Tutuola's descriptive exuberance and "besoin d'épater" as a welcome sign of his non-assimilation into "des sociétés dites civilisées". He suggests that in Tutuola's case "le mysticisme et le pouvoir de s'étonner encore font partie intégrante de son essence de nègre" (1955: 166). Through the discourse of Senghorian *négritude* the reviewer thus integrates Queneau's rendering of the novel into a more general, and therefore amenable, conception of black universalism. As the stakes in the literary field changed over the following decade, in structural response to the political independences, neither Achebe nor Abrahams would be so simply annexed to a French legitimating "centre".

This mixed reception appears to confirm the ethnocentrism of which Casanova accuses the Parisian "capital" of the world republic of letters, whereby the judgements and norms of those with authority in the literary meridian seek both to celebrate and to "annex" other literatures. She terms this phenomenon "Parisianization, or universalization through denial of difference." (154) However, such a reading should not overlook the Parisianism of *Présence Africaine*. The accusation of ethnocentrism levelled at Paris, which in turn tests the notion of universality as an indicator of literary merit, must take account of the

different sites and modes that gesture, if paradoxically, to alternative universalisms from within that capital. Tutuola's anomalous position in the French literary field can be understood through his role in the development of Queneau's literary craft, precisely as an example of the characteristically uneven ways in which anglophone *and* francophone representations of sub-Saharan Africa were positioned in the metropolitan literary field in this period.

Translating Chinua Achebe into French

Nyunai's appraisal of Tutuola's novel in terms of its author's "essence de nègre" is symptomatic of the approach criticised by some anglophone African writers, including Achebe, Mphahlele and others in the early 1960s. Achebe describes Tutuola as a "natural" artist, as opposed to his own "conscious" artistry (Achebe, 1975; 1965). Tutuola's silence on issues of colonialism and his distance from the Mbari community accounts partly for the smooth insertion of his work into the higher reaches of the Parisian world of letters. Achebe speaks in direct terms of how writers of former colonised nations can and should manipulate European languages:

The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. (Achebe, 1975; 1965: 61)

As he goes on to demonstrate, the writer can take ownership of the language while reshaping it to his or her ends. In his only article published in French in *Présence Africaine*, Achebe describes the "fardeau de l'écrivain noir" in the post-independence

period as that of a presumed political solidarity based on race, and speaks of the need to step outside this paradigm:

Nous devons rechercher la liberté d'exprimer nos pensées et nos sentiments, même contre nous-mêmes, sans être pris comme pièce à charge contre notre race. Nous nous sommes tenus trop longtemps dans le box des accusés suppliant et protestant devant des chenapans et des charlatans déguisés en juges désintéressés. (Achebe, 1966a: 146)

For Casanova this binding sense of political responsibility is characteristic of literature from “dominated” linguistic spaces, as played out in the legal lexicon of Achebe’s essay. As she argues, “Language is the major stake of struggles and rivalries, and also, as the only real material available to writers in search of innovation, the specific resource with – and against – which solutions to the problem of literary domination are invented” (254). Achebe alludes here to the specific agents who exert such literary and linguistic domination. The following discussion of Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* suspends consideration of the author-figure to consider the role of Achebe’s French-language translators and publishers against a wider understanding of the literary field.

Achebe’s position in the anglophone canon is unparalleled among African writers. His first novel has sold over eight million copies and is taught on English courses throughout the world. Following Alain Badiou’s definition, Nicholas Brown describes the “Achebe-event” (Brown, 2005: 104-08), while Simon Gikandi has repeatedly defended his claim that Achebe is the “inventor” of African literature as an institution:

The more I re-read the works of such figures as René Maran, Amos Tutuola, Paul Hazoumé, and Sol Plaatje, the more I am convinced of their significance in the foundation of an African tradition of letters. Still, none of these writers had the effect Achebe had on the establishment and reconfiguration of an African literary tradition; none of them were able to enter and interrupt the institutions of exegesis

and education the same way he did; none were able to establish the terms by which African literature was produced, circulated, and interpreted. (Gikandi, 1996: 5)

Achebe's insightful critical essays have certainly shaped the way in which his work and that of other anglophone African writers has been read in the academy. His work as a publisher, critic and educator supports the assessment of his defining contribution, but existing accounts remain largely confined to his role within the Nigerian national sphere and the anglophone global literary marketplace (Currey, 2008: 26-36).²⁷⁶

Achebe is the person who invented African culture as it is now circulated within the institutions of interpretation. It is my contention that his intervention in the already existing colonial and Pan-African libraries transformed the idea of Africa and that his project has indeed valorized the idea of culture in the thinking of African worlds. (Gikandi, ix)

For Gikandi, Achebe's work represents the first radical literary dissociation from eurocentric ideas about Africa. While he gestures towards Achebe's role in literary institutions, only recently have more empirical accounts of his position in the literary marketplace begun to emerge. The African Writers Series, for which Achebe acted as commissioning editor for fifteen years, has been widely praised, but has also attracted accusations of ghettoisation, paternalism, and commercial opportunism (Currey, 2008; Low, 2011: 65). Achebe's responsibility for the "rise of the African novel", which many critics place almost wholly on his shoulders, looks less monumental when we consider his location in the francophone literary field and the relationship between these spaces.

Things Fall Apart was translated by Michel Ligny and published by Présence Africaine in 1966, eight years after its publication by Heinemann, despite its rapid success among English-speaking readers. There is scant biographical information available about Ligny

²⁷⁶ For an insightful account of the Polish translations of Achebe, see: Goluch, Dorota, 2011.

himself. He translated five general fictional titles for Gallimard and Denoël and collaborated on the French translation of Basil Davidson's *African Awakening* (1955), published by Présence Africaine in 1957. He also reviewed many French and English language books in *Présence Africaine* from 1960 to 1972. This information gives only a limited impression of Achebe's French translator, as someone implicated in the Présence Africaine network and with more than a passing interest in African literature.

In a review of Mphahlele and Ellis Ayitey Komey's *Modern African Stories* (Faber, 1964), Ligny praised the geographic scope of this anthology, noting the themes and styles covered, and the book's material qualities:

Its presentation on lightly-toned paper (which bibliophiles call "ivory paper") is agreeable; its format is handy and its typography is faultless. Indeed, Faber and Faber is to British publishing what Gallimard is to Parisian publishing and these purely material considerations should not be taken lightly when the book involved is of the nature of the present one, a book worthy of a place in the libraries of all those interested in African literature. (Ligny, 1965: 164)

Further to its content, the visual appearance of a book is indicative of its objective position in the hierarchy of the literary field, as well as its own content. *Le Monde s'effondre* was published in a plain white cover with black and red typescript that emulated Gallimard's classic cover design. In his foreword to the translation, which appeared only in the first edition, Ligny outlines his approach to the text:

Présenter au public une oeuvre encore inconnue de lui est une lourde responsabilité pour le traducteur. La solution adoptée ici a été d'être le plus littéral possible, car les formes du langage sont modelées sur des croyances qu'il importe de ne jamais perdre de vue. Par ailleurs – mais ceci n'est qu'un détail – on a renoncé à franciser les noms Ibo. C'est ainsi que le e doit se lire é, le u ou, le g gue, comme dans les mots Ikemefuna et Ogene. Quant au nom de l'auteur, le ch s'y prononce tch. (Ligny, 1966)

This strategy of professed modesty in his acknowledgement of responsibility suggests an apparent sensitivity to the cultural specificity of the text. Ligny seeks to communicate “literally”, rather than literarily, the belief systems he perceives underlying Achebe’s linguistic forms.

In an article on the translation of Ferdinand Oyono’s *Une vie de boy*, provocatively titled “The Literary Translator: Messenger or Murderer”, Femi Ojo-Ade criticises uninformed translation, through a dissection of John Reed’s “mangled” translation of this classic text (Ojo-Ade, 1989: 155). The article launches a vitriolic attack on literary producers: “Masters old and new pat themselves on the back [...] for disseminating major texts like Oyono’s, through messengers that are murderers of the message while remaining faithful messengers of their masters” (162). While Ojo-Ade’s acerbic comments pay little attention to the lived realities of literary translators, the attack is an apt reminder of the highly charged stakes in play when translating and packaging African texts.²⁷⁷ The success of any translation as a literary work, measured against the aesthetic criteria of legitimating norms, rests partly on the translator’s capacity as writer – hence Queneau’s particular strength. Its parallel didactic or political role is in turn shaped by paratextual apparatus that arguably contributes to what Huggan terms an “anthropological exotic” (34).

Irène Assiba d’Almeida, poet, academic, and translator of Achebe’s third novel *Arrow of God*, has argued in favour of the need for African translators for African writers (d’Almeida, 1982). Other critics have avoided such particularisation, while stressing the

²⁷⁷ Ojo-Ade’s argument would benefit from engaging with the archival material surrounding this translation in the Heinemann African Writers Series archives.

need for specific understanding of cultural context, what Anthony Appiah has termed “thick translation” (Appiah, 1993). D’Almeida suggests the need for the translator to undergo a stage of “impersonation” of the author to enable him or her to speak through the translator:

When it is an African person who is translating an African writer, impersonation is somewhat easier and more effective because the African person is more familiar with the cultural background in which the actions occur and in which the characters are set. Religious rituals, festivals, customs and even day-to-day occurrences are seen from within because they are part of a shared experience. (d’Almeida, 1982: 287)

This argument can be linked to Christopher Miller’s argument for the necessary partnership between anthropological knowledge and the interpretation of African literature.

The *Présence Africaine* edition of *Le Monde s’effondre* omits the glossary that was appended to the Heinemann edition and does not include explanatory notes in the text. The “literal” translation, however, retains indigenous terms, which Achebe often defines himself in his text. Of the great number of culinary terms only “bitterleaf soup” is translated; replaced by “soupe de viande et de poisson”. It is not clear why Ligny may have translated this term, though the effect disrupts Achebe’s original accumulative list. The stripped-back *Présence Africaine* edition is a form of what might be termed “thin” translation, in response to Appiah’s concept of “thick translation”. The text is here presented in isolation, offering a reading that relies on the reader’s existing knowledge or ability to fill in any gaps in that knowledge. André Lefevere argues the need for contextual detail when translating “non-Western cultures” as a means of surmounting a dependence on analogy:

When we no longer translate Chinese T'ang poetry 'as if' it were Imagist black verse, which it manifestly is not, we shall be able to begin to understand T'ang poetry on its own terms. This means, however, that we shall have to tell the readers of our translations what T'ang poetry is really like, by means of introductions, the detailed analysis of selected texts, and such. We shall, therefore, have to learn to skip the leap we often call 'of the imagination' but which could be much more aptly called 'of imperialism'. (Lefevere, 1999: 78)

While this argument rests on the example of the translation of poetic form, its application to the current case-studies depends on a clear definition of readership: of the "we" in his example, and therefore of the context in which "we" read. Rather than an "anthropological exotic", Lefevere's presentation of contextual annotation is here intended to overcome an assumed universally perceptible value inherent in the text. *Présence Africaine's* removal of a contextual glossary in a sense universalises the text by assuming readers can read and appreciate the book without secondary information.

Bandia defines ethnocentric translation as that where the primary readership is considered to be African, but then deliberately undercuts his definition:

The content (or semantic interpretation) of the source text and the target text will be essentially African thought, and the European language of writing (the target language) will serve only as a medium for conveying African thought across ethnic boundaries in Africa. However, it is known that African writers produce their works with the intention of making them available to both African and non-African readers. (58)

Publishers also seek as wide a readership as possible for the texts they publish. Of Achebe's four novels, *Things Fall Apart* is perhaps that which presents the fewest linguistic challenges for the translator, and in turn for the French-speaking reader. Unlike *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God*, the novel contains little "pidgin" English and its use of classical tragedy is already recognizable to a French readership.

Returning to Achebe's comments on English as a world language, we can ask to what extent and according to what norms Ligny conveys Achebe's "peculiar experience" and "new English" (Achebe, 1975; 1965). From the start, the title *Le Monde s'effondre* transforms the scope of Achebe's calque from W.B. Yeats. It is unclear to which world he is referring: if its singular definite article refers to Okonkwo's "world" or an African world, then does this imply a hermetic sphere, or might it include Europe and reflect the wider postcolonial uncertainties of the moment of its translation? "Monde", like "world", can of course also mean "people" or "society" and suggest a more human-centred, collective conception of Achebe's fictional space. The generalised "things" of Achebe's title suggest a shared aberration pulled along by the ineluctable violence of the verb "fall apart", though a human subject is notably absent. "S'effondre" maintains this involuntary distance between subject and action, but is gentler in its tone and half-rhyme. The first lines of Yves Bonnefoy's translation of "The Second Coming" offer instead:

Tournant, tournant dans le gyre toujours plus large,
 Le faucon ne peut plus entendre le fauconnier.
 Tout se disloque. Le centre ne peut tenir.
 L'anarchie se déchaîne sur le monde (Yeats et al., 1989: 61)

Bonnefoy's all-encompassing "tout" and the sudden movement of "se disloque" come closer to capturing the broader implications of Achebe's title by refusing the domesticating tendency of Ligny's translation.

These tensions and imbrications between the ostensibly universal and resolutely particular play out in the second half of Achebe's book. Here the conversion of Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, to Christianity marks one step towards the disintegration of his father's known world. This gradual process of disrupting belief systems begins during a hymn sung by

missionaries that chimes with Nwoye's experience of the sacrifice of Ikemefuna and sense of betrayal by his father:

He felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. The words of the hymn were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry plate of the panting earth. Nwoye's callow mind was greatly puzzled. (104)

Il éprouva un soulagement intérieur pendant que l'hymne se répandait dans son âme assoiffée. Les paroles de l'hymne étaient comme les gouttes de pluie gelées fondant sur le palais sec de la terre pantelante. Le rude esprit de Nwoye était grandement étonné. (178)

The French here compromises the lyricism of Achebe's source text by lengthening the first sentence, replacing "poured" by the more general "se répandait", and replacing the gentle innocence of "callo" by the roughness of "rude". The delicate simile of the second sentence shifts from "plate" to "palais", restoring a typographical error in the first English edition. The hail that marks the first rains of the new season (as described in *Arrow of God*) signals a cycle of nourishment and new life. Such contextual information, which relies on local knowledge of West African weather patterns, undoubtedly informs the image, but is not key to a literal understanding or its poetic resonances. It is perhaps to this level of "local" understanding that Achebe alludes when speaking of "fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience" (Achebe, 1975; 1965: 61). In French, the language of Ligny's translation of Achebe's particularised literary universalism is not shaped by the aesthetic norms of a consecrating centre, but rather framed paratextually by its association with *Présence Africaine*.

This section is not intended to show the insufficiencies of the French translation of *Things Fall Apart* on the familiar tack of its "infidelity" to the source text. It demonstrates instead the spectrality of Ligny's presence at *Présence Africaine*, in contrast with Queneau's

transcending visibility as translator of Tutuola for Gallimard. The spiral of reproach surrounding translators and translations points to the need for a more productive account of the socio-historical conditions of the translation of African texts as they relate to the commodification of “African literature” in the literary marketplace. Achebe’s first novel has been published in four editions in French, with the most recent reprinting in 2006. It is currently out of print.²⁷⁸ Achebe remains thus a canonical figure in hiatus, suspended between the anglophone African literary space of which he is labelled the “inventor” and his fleeting presence in the francophone literary space. There were disparate levels of material resources (financial capital, publication technologies, distribution networks, etc.) between Gallimard and Présence Africaine in Paris and Faber and Heinemann’s African Writers Series in London in the period 1945 – 67. There were also considerable differences in the symbolic work of each publisher, and the varying importance attached to aesthetic, political, or commercial interest. These contrasting publishing histories bear out in the differential positioning of these translated texts in the literary marketplace over the past sixty years. We can now turn lastly to *Une couronne pour Udomo* by Peter Abrahams, a writer whose depictions of South Africa and of West African independence arguably reached a greater level of recognition in the metropolitan literary field in this period than the novels of either Tutuola or Achebe.

Peter Abrahams: politics and/or *négritude*?

Peter Abrahams’ distance from aesthetic criteria of the avant-garde and from a clearly situated commitment to anti-colonialism resulted in his eventual marginalisation after success in French translation during the 1950s and early 60s. His realist *roman à clef*, *A*

²⁷⁸ Checked on Présence Africaine website and Amazon [30 December 2012]. A new edition will be published in 2013 by Actes Sud.

Wreath for Udomo (1956) is a thinly veiled portrait of the active community of Pan-African nationalists surrounding George Padmore in London during the late 1940s. The translation's trajectory from a large, established publisher to the book clubs of the early 1960s suggests that its more middle-brow depiction of political activism, mixed race relationships and the rise and fall of a fictional West African republic had commercial appeal in France during the period of the independences. The melodramatic tone of the text does not fit clearly with struggles around literary universalism: it has neither a detached modernist aesthetic nor the tone of Senghorian *négritude*, despite Senghor's labelling of Abrahams as a *négritude* writer, a move common in his patronage of writers during this period. Instead Abrahams was tagged "le Richard Wright de l'Afrique Noire" (Abrahams, 1958: back cover) and packaged as an authentic, representative African voice. There is no acknowledgement of the very specific historical tensions at work in and around his novel. Further to the popularity of novels depicting black experience in the United States, South African apartheid was more comfortably distant than the simmering racial tensions within France and its former colonies. A relatively high number of South African novels were translated in this period, including six by Peter Abrahams in the period 1950 – 68, published by Stock and Gallimard. This case adds a rarely considered dimension to the history of institutional conditions for African literature circulating between the anglophone and francophone literary fields in this period.

Born in 1919, Peter Abrahams was brought up in Johannesburg and faced the existential struggles of life as a coloured citizen, a racial category placed above "negro" and below "white" in the hierarchy of South Africa's apartheid policy. The economic and cultural poverty of his upbringing is highlighted by his French publishers, Éditions Stock: "*L'Enfant noir* fit très vite l'expérience de la malédiction qui pèse sur sa race. Chef de

gang et contraint de voler avant de pouvoir apprendre à lire, il aura fait nombre de métiers”. Unlike the politically engaged writing of Mongo Beti or Ousmane Sembene, his work faced few institutional barriers in France. There was metropolitan enthusiasm for his multi-positionality as a South African writing about a non-particularised African setting. The back cover blurb claimed: “C’est à la suite d’un voyage dans son Afrique du Sud natale qu’il a écrit *Une Couronne pour Udomo*, reflet de la situation actuelle de l’Afrique et des problèmes qui s’y posent.” Despite the physical setting and the nature of the characters’ anti-colonial politics, both pointing to a West African setting, the blurb ascribes the novel’s interest to a generalised African authenticity. After beginning his writing career in the late 1930s and moving to Britain in 1941, Abrahams’ 1946 novel *Mine Boy*, set in South Africa, was his first literary success, followed by *Wild Conquest* (1950). The former was published by Faber & Faber, and then by Gallimard in a pattern that would be repeated by Tutuola’s first novel seven years later. In London, Abrahams frequented the circles of future leaders Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah, whom he also visited in Kenya and Ghana in 1952 and 1955 (Ogungbesan, 1979: 190), and who would be the basis for the characters of Michael Udomo and Mhendi in *A Wreath for Udomo*. Abrahams emigrated to Jamaica in the late 1960s, where he has lived ever since.

Abrahams’ critical heritage is significantly slimmer than that of Achebe and Tutuola.²⁷⁹ My decision to include his novel here relates to the need, as outlined in Laura Chrisman’s recent article and the theoretical work of Achille Mbembe and Alain Ricard, to give greater consideration to South African writers (and South Africa itself) when studying the

²⁷⁹ See: Wade, Michael, 1972; Ogungbesan, Kolawole, 1979; Ensor, Robert, 1992; Rathbone, Richard, 2000.

transnational history of black diasporic cultural and political work. Chrisman argues saliently against a utopian transnational theorisation:

Transnationalism effectively becomes its own context and its own end, blocking from view the existence of conditions that mediate or determine cross-national flows. To exclude consideration of the material institutions and political structures through and against which intellectuals such as Plaatje and Abrahams operated impairs our ability to grasp the meaning and significance of their transnationalism itself. (Chrisman, 2005: 255)

Chrisman argues that Abrahams' individualism stems from a "spatial imagination" that is "thoroughly racialized" and acted as a barrier between his own identity and that of a transnational diasporic community (Chrisman, 2005: 263). Her focus on his earlier work can be supplemented here with an analysis which takes into account linguistic boundaries as well as national border-crossing. Despite Abrahams' apparent distance from Left Bank communities and the African diaspora in France, the translation was subsequently lauded by Senghor, whose preface to the Club de Libraires edition declared the novel a "classique de la *négritude*".²⁸⁰

Une couronne pour Udomo is told through the shifting perspectives of its main characters, a group of black African male intellectuals who plan and carry out an anti-colonial revolution led by Udomo. The narrative begins in North London, where the revolutionaries plan their uprising around the central force of writer-in-exile Thomas Lanwood (based on George Padmore). Udomo, a young exile from Panafrica, becomes involved with their political activism through selling, stencilling and writing the newspaper, *The Liberator*, before returning to Africa to lead a peaceful revolution with the vital support of a network of African women. The Africa to which the novel refers

²⁸⁰ This diagnosis is echoed by Claude Wauthier in his critical study of *négritude* (Wauthier, Claude, 1964: 166).

comprises two fictional countries: “Panafrica” and “Pluralia”. A mixed-race love story between Udomo and Lois – a young white communist based in London – structures the narrative and is returned to regularly throughout the novel. Udomo’s public commitment to his country and its people and his private commitment to Lois is offset by the idealised indigenous marriage between Mhendi and Maria.²⁸¹ Much of the interest of the novel as a historical document derives from its detailed description of the practicalities of editing and printing radical press in London and in Panafrica, providing “a hole-in-the-wall at the newspaper office, where the relationships between editor, printer, and proprietor are intriguingly acted out” (Rathbone, 2000: 22). The remainder of the novel charts the challenges of political independence and the eventual downfall of Udomo, as he is led to betray a close friend to the European investors he must cultivate in order to secure the process of industrialisation and modernisation he has set in place in Panafrica. Udomo’s death at the hands of his former nationalist fighters suggests a bleak outlook for African independence.

Written in 1956, the text’s portrayal of post-independence Africa is overwhelmingly negative, mired in the ostensibly inescapable binds of traditional belief systems and economic and industrial under-development. It is an ironic satire of the power politics of anti-colonial activists, including figures who were much revered at the time of its publication such as Nkrumah and Padmore. Abrahams comments cynically on the practical challenges of appropriate leadership, the need for educated, trained elites to run the government, and the risks of bourgeois nationalism that Fanon would later critique. Economic dependence on trade agreements with surrounding countries for

²⁸¹ The French translation makes several cuts, including a long section set in the South of France which depicts the blossoming romantic relationship between Udomo and Maria.

industrialisation (in particular the European government of Pluralia) leads to Udomo's downfall at the hands of his own people, following his betrayal of Pluralia's prospective independence leader, Mhendi. The predicted conflict between "tribalism" and a means of government theorised and imported from Europe is exposed through the incongruity of the intellectual Thomas Lanwood's earnest speeches and his eventual desertion of Panafrica. The distance between printed nationalist rhetoric and the realities of securing and maintaining independence is painfully, albeit somewhat clumsily, exposed.

Abrahams' prophetic and divisive novel was immediately translated into French by Pierre Singer. Very little is known about the biography of Abrahams' translator other than his voluminous work for Gallimard and Stock. He translated two or three novels a year between 1950 and 1970, including American writers Robert Penn Warren, Thomas Wolfe and Joseph Heller, and the popular British writer, Nevil Shute. Unlike Ligny and Achebe, the content of Abrahams' novel does not appear to have had any particular political or aesthetic draw for Singer from what we can infer from his wide-ranging work as a literary translator. His French publisher, Éditions Stock, was founded in 1708 and remained in the family name until 1921, when it was bought by Jacques Boutelleau (*alias* Jacques Chardonne, the right-wing author and patron of the Hussard novelists). Following his trial for collaboration after the war, Chardonne distanced himself from the publishing house, which was subsequently managed by his son and stepson. Stock's catalogue is notable for its commitment to foreign fiction: it includes works by Leo Tolstoy, Virginia Woolf, Henry James, Erich-Maria Remarque and Stefan Zweig and a total of 22 laureates of the Nobel prizes for literature. Abrahams' inclusion in this catalogue, having previously been published by Gallimard, signals his relatively consecrated position in the literary field.

Though *Une couronne pour Udomo* ran to at least ten editions, correspondence between Stock and Abrahams' French agent reveals that sales dwindled and they considered pulping the remaining 3630 copies (Stock, 1962). The situation was rescued by the Club Bibliophile de France, which proposed to print 10,000 copies of the book in its Comédie Universelle series the following year, with a preface by Senghor. This was one of a number of bookclubs that sprang up in the post-war period in response to the success of the American book-of-the-month club, founded in 1926 (Radway, 1997). Such clubs, to which readers could subscribe on a monthly basis, were a new means for booksellers to maintain regular sales. In most cases readers were sent a regular selection of books chosen by the book club or bookseller. François Richaudeau describes this innovation in book-buying:

On est passé de l'acte conscient, volontariste d'un client d'acheter le livre qu'il a choisi, à celui assez souvent passif de la réception de ce livre comme conséquence semi-inconsciente d'une très bonne affaire, de l'acceptation d'un cadeau, de l'espoir de gagner un somptueux lot à la tombola, ou d'un oubli (système de l'option négative, avec envoi automatique de l'ouvrage qu'on a omis de refuser à l'avance). (Richaudeau, 1998: 119)

As a sales technique, book clubs had a positive effect on the account books of publishers, while also changing patterns of reading in post-war France. The editor at Stock wrote to Abrahams' agent regarding the Club Bibliophile opportunity: "Nous avons cru bon d'accepter ces conditions bien qu'elles soient assez faibles, parce que c'est un moyen d'attirer, à nouveau, l'attention sur cet ouvrage qui n'a pas eu le succès qu'il méritait" (Noel, 1963). Why was the book unsuccessful in Paris? Why might it have "deserved" success? The book had received a mixed critical response following its publication in English, a year before Ghanaian independence. Some showed enthusiasm for the authenticity of this fictionalised account of African independence struggles: "Insofar as his African characters represent the thinking of his race, Western readers should find them

instructive” (Quoted in: Ogungbesan, 1980: 191). The proximity of its protagonists to Nkrumah and George Padmore was immediately detected by other commentators.

Padmore’s early biographer rejected Abrahams’ portrayal as “a cruel travesty” (Hooker, 1967: 48). Ogungbesan writes of Abrahams’ interstitial position: “Not part of the African literary tradition his books have been largely neglected in Africa; there are, indeed, critics who consider Abrahams, the champion of western liberalism, as virtually an aberration on the African continent” (Ogungbesan, 1980: 188). These criticisms and sensitivities do not appear to have affected the positioning of the book in the French literary marketplace as part of an “African literary tradition”.

Richard Watts’ work on Senghor’s acts of “cultural translation” as a prolific preface-writer shows that he was instrumental in bringing African literature to greater recognition, due to his political reputation and literary contacts.²⁸² Rather than the “adaptive” or “ethnocentric” translation of preface-writers of the 1920s and 1930s, which eased the way for a metropolitan readership by “subordinating the text’s values to its own” (76), later preface writers performed more “ethical” acts of translation that accepted cultural difference. Yet Senghor’s profusion of prefaces “occupy the uncomfortable middle ground between the colonial and the postcolonial, in political and translational terms” (77) owing to his use of a discourse that remained embedded in colonial rhetoric. Senghor’s preface to Abrahams’ work is an interesting example in the light of Watts’ reading of the Senegalese leader’s ambiguous forms of literary patronage. His admiring preface to *Une couronne pour Udomo* could itself be read as “ethnocentric” in its attempt to incorporate Abrahams into Senghor’s vision of *négritude* as humanism. Furthermore, it is reluctant to engage

²⁸² Senghor wrote more than thirty prefaces over fifty years, mainly to works by African and Caribbean writers (Watts, 78).

with the specific realities underlying the book's critical political and historical questions.

Laura Chrisman positions Abrahams' work at some remove from essentialised racial identity:

For all the generality of the words *black* and *Negro*, it is clear that Abrahams's usage is exclusively diasporic and cannot contain African national or continental inflections. His usage is also exclusively modern; it leaves no room for a blackness connected to a precolonial existence. (267)

Senghor's notion of *métissage*, based on an original purity, does not allow for the complexities either of Abrahams' own racial identity as a "coloured" South African, nor the different political and intellectual weight of the characters' attachments to "Panafrica" in the novel. Senghor asserts instead that the text is "un *classique* qui emprunte moins à l'Europe qu'à l'Afrique", claiming that Abrahams "a retrouvé le *style* des contes anciens".²⁸³ Watts notes Senghor's tendency in the late 50s and early 60s, to "break the pact of the preface" by criticising the work and thereby asserting his role as "patron" of this literature. This move belies the sense of horizontal solidarity between himself and the writers he promotes, giving way instead to a vertical relationship and, finally, to an assertion of essentialised universal qualities, rather than the particular elements of a specific text (85). With hindsight, Senghor's endorsement of *Une couronne pour Udomo* and its satire of an individual's process of political change is itself, inadvertently, deeply ironic.

²⁸³ Such praise can also be contrasted with Lewis Nkosi's infamous indictment of fiction by black South Africans. Nkosi claimed that "black fiction has renounced African tradition without showing itself capable of benefiting from the accumulated example of modern European literature. To put it bluntly, nothing stands behind the fiction of black South Africans – no tradition, whether indigenous, such as energizes *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, or alien, such as is most significantly at work in the latest fiction by Camara Laye" (Nkosi, Lewis, 2005; 1966: 245).

The preface expresses Senghor's admiration of the novel's scope, as its 300 pages cover "tous les problèmes [...] avec lesquels sont confrontés l'Afrique contemporaine". After outlining the narrative, he warns readers:

En parcourant les premières pages du roman, plus d'un lecteur commencera par bâiller. 'Du whisky, du thé, des femmes, du verbalisme anticolonialiste à la sauce anglaise.' (Senghor, 1964b: 425)

This jibe could partly be a retort to the criticisms of French anti-colonialists that arise in the discussions between Lanwood, Udomo and their London cohort in the opening chapters. George Padmore's criticisms of French African "café intellectuals" are well known.²⁸⁴ There is a further gesture to more benign cultural differences, as Senghor relents: "Si l'on n'y prenait son thé, si l'on ne s'y soûlait facilement, on pourrait, tout aussi bien, se croire à Paris, dans un milieu d'intellectuels nègres!" (428). His wry approval of the novel's content – if not its form – masks more multi-layered contemporary debates between francophone and anglophone African intellectuals. There is no other mention in the preface of Abrahams' characters' commentary on French African activists. An allusion is made to the French situation in an early conversation between Udomo's compatriot Adebhoy, Thomas Lanwood (George Padmore) and Udomo as Adebhoy declares:

'Heard of you from one of those fellows who call themselves Frenchmen. Told me about the student strike you tried to lead.' The laughter lines near his eyes deepened. 'Said you didn't understand they were not oppressed colonials but Frenchmen enjoying all the rights of Frenchmen! Ha ha ha.'

Udomo smiled weakly.

'Those fellows let me down badly.'

'French imperialism's more cunning than the British brand,' Lanwood said. 'They buy off the leadership by giving them seats in their Assembly and marrying them off to their daughters...' (21)

²⁸⁴ In January 1957, Padmore wrote to Richard Wright (who was a friend of Peter Abrahams): "I can see them striving but Senghor and these boys can't help because they're too confused... We've already entered the 21st century and these boys are still in the Middle Ages, with their damn culture-drums and skulls" (Quoted in: Fabre, Michel, 1985: 212). For more on the relationship between Abrahams and Wright, see: Fabre, Michel, 1985: 195-97.

This final comment could be construed as a veiled reference to Senghor's own (recently failed) marriage to Ginette Éboué, daughter of Félix Éboué, the first black French colonial governor. As President, Senghor does not respond to this meeting of public and private spheres in Abrahams' novel.

Instead he expresses his sympathies with Abrahams' prescient depiction of independence and the tasks of post-independence political activism:

C'est si facile de mener, douillettement, en Métropole, une vie d'agitateur, avec meetings et cocktail parties... Autre chose est, comme notre Héros, de *construire une nation* : de bâtir écoles et hôpitaux, de moderniser l'agriculture, de créer une industrie de transformation. Il y faut des capitaux étrangers quand le Peuple vous demande de haïr l'Étranger. (426)

The analysis acknowledges some of the issues faced by newly-anointed African leaders, including Senghor himself. There is no acknowledgement of Abrahams' pessimistic vision of post-independence Panafrica in the novel's bloody dénouement. Senghor accommodates the trials faced by the characters as individuals, rather than any underlying structural causes:

Il n'y a qu'un problème qui n'aura pas trouvé sa solution. C'est celui de la solitude... Tous les chefs d'Etat africains le savent, qui ont senti, à un moment ou l'autre, qu'ils étaient en minorité dans leur propre parti. Parce qu'ils étaient en avance sur leur temps. C'est que *grandeur* et *solitude* sont inséparables. (427)

The preface becomes a commentary on leadership that eschews any sense of critical distance or perspective on issues of literary merit in favour of universalised human qualities. Senghor claims that Abrahams' strength as a "grand romancier" lies in his text's verisimilitude: the presentation of characters "tels qu'ils sont *réellement*: un tissu de contradictions."

He concludes the preface with a characteristic re-articulation of *négritude* as a form of humanism:

La *négritude*, pour s'exprimer, doit se dépasser, en dépassant le folklore et l'exotisme. Elle le fera en revenant aux sources mêmes de la *négritude*: à notre art ancien, qui est *art* parce que son objet est l'*Homme* et que le rythme, loin d'y être abondance, est *mesure*, celle-là même qui donne, à chaque chose, la juste place.
(430)

Senghor's adherence to human values, rather than the economic, material questions posed in the novel which he passes over cursorily, is indicative of the way in which he links this novel into his own rhetoric on black transnational subjectivity. For example, he insists on Abrahams' *négritude* in the description of Queenstown, capital of Panafrica, proclaiming "La *négritude*, c'est bien cela: par toute la *Nigritie*, les mêmes réactions devant les mêmes événements. A quoi on reconnaît une *race*." Similarly, it is the characters' *négritude* which binds them together, rather than the national, ethnic, or cultural affiliations and ideological differences that underlie the tangible conflicts in the novel.

Senghor makes no mention of the translator, Pierre Singer, nor of the fact that the text is a translation, attributing instead a natural "authenticity" to the dialogues between Mabi and the village elders (230). Abrahams' humour and in particular his dialogues are also cause for praise of his literary style:

Les dialogues négro-africains sont interminables, avec des redites qui les rythment. L'écrivain les *stylise*. Il les abrège en leur gardant leur authenticité: leur spontanéité et leur rythme.

Other responses to Abrahams' depiction of African people, traditions and landscape have been much more critical, suggesting Abrahams based his descriptions on stereotypes or two-dimensional vehicles for a particular political position, showing little interest in a "traditional African aesthetic" (Ogunbesan, 1980: 188). The portrayal of indigenous cultures can be hackneyed or melodramatic. The second half of the novel takes place in a generic West African country and some passages, for example Udomo's arrival in Panafrica and the bloody dénouement, rehearse exoticising descriptions of "tribal customs". Senghor praises the novel's ending, in particular its tam-tam refrain in the section describing Udomo's murder:

Everything was the throb of the drums, rising now to a mad frenzy.

The two men, gone mad, whirled about Udomo, leapt over him, played out the ritual dance of death. The drums urged them on.

Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!

The man who had been at the window shrieked, dipped, and hacked at Udomo's body. (Abrahams, 1956: 306)

Ulli Beier's review in *Black Orpheus* 4 was sceptical: "One fears that a European reader with little background knowledge of West Africa may be left with the impression that there are blood-thirsty 'tribalists' in West Africa hunting down politicians" (Beier, 1958).²⁸⁵ Senghor praises the author's "puissance de conviction" in superlative terms, accommodating the work generously within his state-endorsed discourse of *négritude*. Yet the French translation contains many cuts and prosaic renderings, including in the rhythmic prose of this section:

[Cut]

²⁸⁵ The novel had a further afterlife in Britain: a version was staged in 1961 at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith, as the first production of Pearl Connor's Negro Theatre Workshop.

Les deux hommes, tels des déments, tournoyaient autour d’Udomo, bondissaient au-dessus de lui, dansaient la danse rituelle du sang. Les tambours semblaient dire:

Tue! Tue! Tue! Tue!

L’un des hommes poussa un hurlement, se baissa et plongea son coutelas dans le corps d’Udomo. (Abrahams, 1958: 297)

Singer’s translation reduces the parodic insistence of Abrahams’ prose: cutting the first line; shifting the metaphoric “gone mad” to a simile; tempering the personification of the drums; and flattening the brutal monosyllabism of “shrieked, dipped and hacked”. The “rhythm” that Senghor praises, and which Abrahams’ pushes to paroxysm in this long section – arguably in response to the reified tenets of essentialised black identity – is not fully rendered by his French translator.

Singer’s translation was positively reviewed in *Présence Africaine*. The reviewer lamented the lack of such politicised novels among French African publications, suggesting that:

En France, d’une manière générale, la clientèle romanesque est hostile à la littérature dite politique. De ce fait, l’éditeur pour qui le livre est avant tout source de profit hésite toujours plutôt deux fois qu’une à courir le risque d’une mévente presque certaine [...] La conséquence plus claire de cette situation c’est que, s’il veut être publié, le romancier négro-africain – lui, dont cependant la condition relève en bloc de la politique – devra renoncer à lui-même, trahir sa mission et son peuple pour se plier à de certaines autres exigences. D’abord, il lui faudra fuir comme peste la littérature engagée.” (Mukrane, 1958: 238)

The reviewer here describes in familiar terms the alienating pressures on writers to publish according to metropolitan publishers’ aesthetic and commercial criteria. There is a clear contrast, however, with the criticism by anglophone critics more attuned to the novel’s satirical edge. For this reviewer (the same, incidentally, who would later review *Le Monde s’effondre* under his pseudonym, Nyunaï), the “brûlante actualité” of Abrahams’ novel,

“excellamment traduit de l’anglais par Pierre Singer”, is welcomed as a creative response to the ongoing situation in sub-Saharan Africa. Like Senghor in 1963, this positive review makes no reference to tensions between anglophone and francophone anti-colonial activism. Instead Abrahams’ novel is “une pièce d’importance qu’il faudrait assurément verser au dossier anticolonialiste” (239) and which legitimises the fictional depiction of political affairs and the value of literary *engagement* in reference to sub-Saharan Africa. The complexities of Abrahams’ “diasporic” identity as a coloured South African and the novel’s pessimistic ending appear to have had little impact on this early reader.

Abrahams’ middle-brow representation of sub-Saharan Africa achieved a limited range of contrasting forms of recognition in France during the period surrounding the independences. While in 1958 the translation was seen to have commercial potential, given the symbolic capital bestowed by the success of its author’s previous novels, it failed to sell well for Stock. It was subsequently re-located under the banner of *négritude* by Senghor’s preface, using the new method of book-selling through the Club des Bibliophiles. Initial interest soon faded, yet the novel’s depiction of transnational anti-colonial politics remains a significant example of the contingent positioning of more politicised representations of sub-Saharan Africa in the metropolitan literary field. In this case, such positioning depended less on the “inauthenticity” of the book’s author, given his limited first-hand experience of West Africa, than on underlying structures for evaluating such representations. In juxtaposition to Queneau’s virtual usurpation of Tutuola at Gallimard, and Ligny’s sensitive, if under-read, rendering of *Things Fall Apart* for Présence Africaine, the relative short-term success of Singer’s unadventurous translation of *A Wreath for Udomo* at Stock shows how the more commercial pole of the

metropolitan literary marketplace responded to political actuality and a constructed sense of racial solidarity in the years surrounding the independences.

Conclusion

This analysis provides a differential account of the position of anglophone representations of sub-Saharan Africa in the metropolitan literary marketplace. As the above case-studies show, the translator's visibility affected the recognition of each text, though to a lesser extent than the relative position of each publisher in the literary field. While Queneau's visibility and Gallimard's prestige secured success and long-term presence for *L'Ivrogne dans la brousse*, Achebe's and Abrahams' texts have had less certain trajectories in French translation. The short-term success of *Une couronne pour Udomo*, given Senghor's patronage, and despite its flawed portrayal of African independence, is indicative of the burst of metropolitan interest in anti-colonial politics in sub-Saharan Africa. Achebe's text, however, suffered from the commercial weakness of its publisher's position in the late sixties. We may also detect in these books' reception in France a certain reluctance to articulate the strained contacts between francophone and anglophone writers in greater depth at the height of Senghor's performance of *négritude* as political ideology.

Casanova's model of the World Republic of Letters cites a range of writers who, in her analysis, consciously aspired to reach the "Greenwich Meridian" of normative aesthetic universalism against the competitive hierarchies of the literary space. The appropriation of Tutuola by Queneau and by champions of *négritude*, and the differential positioning of Achebe in English and in French, were neither conscious nor author-centred processes. This selective account of publishing strategies surrounding early translations has sought to

transcend the potentially reiterative effect of a francophone postcolonial paradigm while accounting for the effects of French linguistic hegemony. The struggles that structured formative ideas of African literature in the period surrounding the political independences can be located rather in a historical framework that is necessarily translingual and transcolonial.

Conclusion

This thesis provides a new perspective on the cultural history of the period 1947 – 67 centred on literary institutions based in Paris. This perspective uses material from publishers' archives to historicise notions of literary value and reframe certain key critical postcolonial questions concerning this period. Literary representations of sub-Saharan Africa were written, published and read in this period in response to changing political and aesthetic ideas that extended between literary communities during the *épuration* trials of the late forties and the ongoing colonial wars in the fifties. Such ideas concerned both the legitimate definition of the literary – on a spectrum from art for art's sake to committed literature – and the changing epistemological as well as political relationship between France and Africa. As my case studies demonstrate, criteria of literary value and literary taste responded gradually but directly to shifts in colonial politics. Furthermore, the mediation of representations of Africa by publishers at the stages of selection, production and distribution shows how such structural political pressures worked their way into writers' choices of language, form, and content.

National reconstruction following the Occupation, together with the first moves towards decolonisation in France's colonies and in France itself, were the catalyst for new ways of imagining French culture in its Parisian, regional, national, and transnational forms. The tension between national and international imagining is seen in the state endorsement of the French language as international literary language, for example at the Association Nationale des Écrivains de la Mer et de l'Outre-mer. In the 1950s, the publishing work of *Présence Africaine*, beyond its connection with ideas of *négritude* and anti-colonial

politics, can be understood as a negotiation of these wider structures of the metropolitan literary field and the dynamic “espace des possibles” which they shaped and were shaped by. Restoring *Présence Africaine*’s history to the existing publishing history of this period also establishes the reciprocal effects of its publishing work in Paris. The material resources available in the metropole made it a “lieu naturel” for Alioune Diop to pursue his project. In turn, *Présence Africaine* contributed to the internationalism of Parisian literary geography.

The symbolism of Paris as literary capital of the World Republic of Letters is tied to the peculiar nature of the “politique culturelle française” and the centrality of major cultural institutions and cultural policy to the State since the seventeenth century. This Republican centralism has undergone a series of revisions and critiques since the Second World War in response to the politics of globalisation. It is not coincidental that de Gaulle’s newly instated *Ministre d’État chargé des Affaires culturelles*, André Malraux, founded the *Ministère des Affaires culturelles* in 1959, amid the disintegration of France’s Empire (Dubois, 1999; Lebovics, 1999).

In his inflammatory pamphlet, *Littérature à l’estomac* (1950), Julien Gracq wrote:

La France, qui s’est si longtemps méfiée du billet de banque, est en littérature le pays d’élection des valeurs fiduciaires. Le Français, qui se figure malaisément ses leaders politiques sous un autre aspect que la rangée de têtes d’un jeu de massacre, croit les yeux fermés, *sur parole*, à ses grands écrivains. Il les a peu lus. Mais on lui a dit qu’ils étaient tels, on le lui a enseigné à l’école [...] Lisant peu, il sait pourtant que son pays, de fondation, est grand par les ouvrages de l’esprit. Il sait qu’il a toujours eu de grands écrivains, et qu’il en aura toujours, comme il savait jusqu’à 1940 que l’armée française est invincible. (Gracq, 1950; 1961: 9)

The implication of the final sentence is that France's literary heritage – a key marker of “la Grandeur Française” – was no longer secure. Such instability is linked explicitly to the Occupation here, as Gracq sets out an abstract national imaginary sustained by the illusion of unity in a national literary tradition. Gracq's text predicted the decline of French cultural hegemony and, perhaps more significantly, of French belief in that hegemony. The publishing history of representations of sub-Saharan Africa provides a lens through which to consider in detail the material of these changes in the literary marketplace in Paris. In this period, the capital gradually, if unevenly, became a more heterogeneous, convivial, and productive site for multiple modes of literary evaluation, rather than an ethnocentric nexus for “universalization through denial of difference” (Casanova, 154).

New archival material, together with interdisciplinary research in history, sociology and literary criticism of this period, confirms the widespread presence of representations of sub-Saharan Africa in different areas of the literary field during this period.

Representations varied from the commercial stereotypes of the exotic to realist fiction that was “picturesque” or committed to depicting the colonial exploitation of African people and resources. On closer examination, modernist ideas of innovation were less crucial to defining ideas of African literature than gestures towards plural ideas of a universal that could respond to France's changing position in the world.

Anthologies provide a barometer for the changing responses to literary conceptualisations of the Union française. While novels dominate my case studies, poetry publishing was an important, arguably more accessible, medium for African writers given the large number of one-off poetry publications in this period. In my second chapter, the contrast between

Damas's two anthologies, in counterpoint to the Sartre-endorsed collection of Senghor, reinforces the value of both intellectual patronage and positioning within collections endowed with a certain symbolic capital, such as Charles André Julien's collection at PUF. Damas' striking performance of the Union française for Le Seuil signals a posture in line with official discourse of the period, despite the ambivalences betrayed by the content of his prefaces and the poems themselves. The key relationship between Léopold Sédar Senghor and Paul Flamand is explored in these pages for what may be the first time.

The early patronage of *Présence Africaine* complies with that strategy for gaining recognition amid a swathe of new post-war journals and publishing houses. The quantitative analysis of its publications by genre presented in my third chapter reconfirms *Présence Africaine*'s political positioning as a publisher in the late 1950s. Its volley of political pamphlets and non-fiction publications nuances the image of *Présence Africaine* as the mouthpiece of *négritude*, or, subsequently, of Senghorian nationalism (as seen in Es'kia Mphahlele's attacks on both, discussed in Chapter Seven). Similarly, traces of Alioune Diop's response to the cultural politics of the Cold War show the need to consider that essential transnational layer to African book history in this period. Changes in the technologies of book production and bookselling in the 1950s also shaped literary production, particularly for *éditeurs engagés*. Cheaply produced *livres de poche* were essential to the success of anti-colonial publishing at *Présence Africaine* and Maspero, which defined itself less by the external material signs of quality than by the growing symbolic capital of *tiers-mondisme* in the period of the independences in sub-Saharan Africa and Algeria.

My focus throughout the thesis has been on the strategies of publishers and textual mediators. I have deliberately worked across lines of race, nationality and, to a lesser extent, gender, and between literary registers, in order to consider the relationships across the literary field and extend Bourdieu's sociology of the production of symbolic value. This approach has often led back to the questions of authorial identity raised in my opening discussion of bibliographies and secondary criticism of African literature. Authorial identity itself was an important source of symbolic capital. The projected and at times entirely constructed "authenticity" of an African authorial identity – as seen in my study of Christine Garnier – can be located in the processes of publishing. My use of the notions of "espace des possibles" and "champ littéraire" demonstrates the usefulness of sociological approaches informed by book history to postcolonial literary history. These terms place strategies of literary mediators in dynamic relation to each other and to political and economic structures. As a result, this act of locating remains open to specific instances where authors and texts resist or overspill the categories in which they are conceived by institutional pressures, while providing a fuller account of how those categories came into being.

In his 1956 preface to Hubert Juin's book on Aimé Césaire, the writer and intellectual Claude Roy wrote:

Les descendants authentiques des Parisiens Villon, Voltaire, Diderot, Hugo, etc., ce ne sont pas les Parisiens à la Louis-Ferdinand Céline, ce sont plutôt ces nègres, qui écrivent, en employant, prolongeant, et réinventant le français de nos grands écrivains [...] ils n'ont absolument rien à voir avec la France des planteurs de misère, mais tout à voir avec la France des semeurs de justice. (Roy, 1956)

The rhetoric of this passage and its emphasis on French literary capital (excluding the disgraced Céline – barred for his anti-semitic pamphlets) is familiar from the discourse

surrounding the ANEMOM and the anthologies of the late 1940s. The inverse version of this pronouncement occurs performatively in *Le Docker noir* as Ousmane Sembène dramatises interracial plagiarism as a threat to literature as a national institution. For Roy, as for Garnier and others, the “annexation” of the work of sub-Saharan African authors is described as a salve to the “bourse des valeurs” of French literature, subsumed within an international francophone *patrimoine*. The literary marketplace responded to the economic and political situation in France, as well as to the position of France within a global symbolic and political economy shaped by *tiers-mondiste* and Cold War cultural politics. In the immediate post-war period, the French State continued to play an instrumental role in literary production of and on sub-Saharan Africa, for example by administering the paper required for literary publications and funding the ANEMOM.

Yet such arguments leave little space for signs of resistance to this apparent process of annexation. To what extent could writing by Africans be evaluated outside the paradigm of French culture and French values as set out by Roy and, in more nuanced and challenging terms, by Casanova? As the case studies in this second half of this thesis demonstrate, some writers, translators, and publishers in the early years of independence *responded* to their positioning in the literary field, offering countervailing responses to editorial interventions in text and paratext.

Editing is never neutral. Literary editors are also seen as gatekeepers; double figures whose literary interests are (unavoidably) yoked to their commercial stakes in the literary marketplace; border guards who police the world republic of letters. Following the discussion of the location of exoticism and authenticity within the changing political and

symbolic structure of this period, my final two chapters have considered six contrasting representations of sub-Saharan Africa against this institutional context. Firstly, the cases of Abdoulaye Sadj, Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Malick Fall show how editors and publishers' readers at Le Seuil evaluated these manuscripts according to normative criteria of vocabulary, syntax, narrative voice, and structure. Publishers' selection of texts is not a matter of abstract ideas of literary taste, but of complex social positioning, personal relationships, and the dialectic between publisher and reader in the literary marketplace. In the absence of the manuscripts themselves it is not possible to say, beyond my comments on their titles and Kane's original use of initials for Samba Diallo, how far readers' comments worked back into the published texture of their novels. Nonetheless, connections drawn to the *nouveau roman* and to other forms of international avant-garde writing suggest new points of contact that merit further investigation.

Secondly, my work on the translation of Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe and Peter Abrahams into French confronts the accusation of francocentrism that has been repeatedly levelled at Casanova's depiction of Paris in *La République mondiale des lettres*, particularly since the book's translation for Edward Said's "Convergences: Inventories of the Present" collection. The chapter brings together a growing body of work in anglophone postcolonial book history with recent research in France on the sociology of African literature, to which my own work contributes. Within the diagnostic framework of the thesis, the three novels confirm the uneven ways in which representations of sub-Saharan Africa were accommodated by publishers and translators in this period. Their publication is less an example of the aesthetic and political manoeuvres of a francocentric

bourse des valeurs, than an exposition of the much wider processes of literary evaluation and consecration between Paris, London, Dakar and Ibadan.

The historical focus of this project on literary institutions in Paris, 1945 – 67 and its interdisciplinary methodology demonstrate an approach that could be extended to other projects on publishing history and material history of culture. Such projects might consider earlier publishing work, focusing on individuals such as René Maran, Paul Hazoumé, or Ousmane Socé Diop, or other significant publishing houses such as Éditions Rieder and Nouvelles Éditions Latines. Due to constraints of time and space, I have not been able to develop much-needed research on the publishing of theatre in the period of the independences, notably the work of publisher P.J. Oswald in that direction. There is much work to be done on the links between early publishers in French-speaking Africa, Éditions CLE, Éditions Saint Paul and Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, and metropolitan French publishers in the sixties and early seventies.

The aim throughout has been to balance macro scale with micro detail, to nuance quantitative scope with qualitative analysis of available archival sources. Archived readers' reports and editorial correspondence establish some lived aspects of the publishing process that helpfully supplement postcolonial critical projects based primarily on published texts and paratext. The opening of the *Présence Africaine* archives in 2013 will provide a further essential source for this archival work. Building from the reconstruction of the *Présence Africaine* catalogue presented here, it will be possible to develop a prosopography of *Présence Africaine* authors and fuller understanding of the *Société Africaine de Culture*. This work will set out more clearly the social situation of

writers in this period and bring out in further detail the work of specific individuals such as Thomas Diop, Jacques Howlett and Christiane Yande Diop.

To date there has been relatively little work on African literature within genetic criticism or analytical bibliography, a fact that is attributable to the lack of archived sources, in particular manuscripts.²⁸⁶ Rather than trying to get to an originary meaning or set of meanings for a text, or to show endless deferral of meaning, genetic criticism works against the notion of semantic fixity by showing concrete, empirical traces of textual instability in the “avant-texte”. Such an approach establishes with more precision the extent of editorial revision and the ways in which the particular effects of the literary field in this period were crafted into published novels. Another key area for future research is educational publishing, as indicated in my sixth chapter. This work will undoubtedly benefit from a fuller comparison to anglophone publishing in sub-Saharan Africa. In this respect, the archives of Hachette, Fernand Nathan, Hatier and IPAM will be the basis for fascinating future research. Lastly, there is much more to be known and understood about the roles of radio, newspaper and magazines and television as more ephemeral, yet vital, media for literary production and recognition in the francophone paradigm of this period.²⁸⁷

Postcolonial theories of the past thirty years have been informed by a search for less monolithic narratives of identity and less co-optive possibilities of national, regional and

²⁸⁶ The ITEM (Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes) research group at the École Normale Supérieure is currently undertaking work on a genetic study of Ahmadou Kourouma’s manuscripts. The group’s members have already produced genetic editions of the work of Senghor and Malgache poet Jean-Joseph Rabéarivelo (Senghor, Léopold Sédar and Pierre Brunel, 2007; Rabéarivelo, Jean-Joseph, Serge Meitinger, Liliane Ramarosoa and Claire Riffard, 2010; Rabéarivelo, Jean-Joseph, 2012).

²⁸⁷ The archives of the ORTF in Paris and the Transcription Centre in London will be helpful in this respect.

local belonging than those that underpinned much of the evidence presented in this thesis. In practice, continued critical and public engagement with issues of immigration, race and nationalism in France suggests this search is ongoing at many levels. The archival traces presented here of well-known and much less familiar representations of sub-Saharan Africa offer a revised and renewed perspective on a formative period of French literary history. My conclusions emphasise that the relationships between ideas and their printed manifestations in post-war Paris were shaped by contact between individuals. The resulting processes of literary selection and production both reflect and constitute the characteristic and vital instability of literature's claim to be an autonomous space.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Collections published by Présence Africaine

Name of collection	Dates	Number of titles	Description of collection
Enquêtes et études	1956 – 72	16	“Le point des connaissances actuelles sur l’Afrique” (1964 Catalogue général).
Tribune des jeunes	1958 – 66	3	
Leaders politiques africains	1959 – 67	6	“Les hommes, les idées, qui font l’Afrique d’aujourd’hui” (Catalogue général 1964).
Approches	1962 – 91	7	“Les ouvrages de cette collection n’ont nullement pour but de rendre accessoire, voire inutile, l’irremplaçable effort de lecture personnelle des textes eux-mêmes; ils voudraient, tout au contraire, en rendre l’approche plus riche et plus urgente” (1967 Catalogue).
Poésie	1963 – 2003	40	
Culture et religion	1962 – 78	9	
Situations et perspectives	1968 – 99	10	“Le Monde noir dans ses manifestations culturelles, son histoire, son développement, tel est le domaine que les textes, d’origines diverses, de cette collection visent à éclairer. Une même exigence de réflexion s’y manifeste, d’allure non convenue, mais s’efforçant de dégager avec rigueur les termes d’un problème, les limites d’un champ d’investigation, les voies d’un devenir” (1967 Catalogue).
L’Afrique à l’O.N.U.	1961 – 62	3	“Dans cette collection, PRESENCE AFRICAINE présentera en français et en anglais les plus importants discours prononcés à l’O.N.U. par les différents chefs d’Etats africains. Une collection qui permettra de faire le point sur “l’Afrique en marche” (1964 catalogue).
Les Afriques	1958 – 60	2	“L’Afrique vue par les spécialistes étrangers” (1964 catalogue).

Appendix 2. Laureates of selected prizes awarded by the Association nationale des écrivains de la mer et de l'outre-mer 1949 – 60

Year	Grand Prix Littéraire de l'A.O.F.	Grand Prix Littéraire de l'A.E.F.	Grand Prix Littéraire de la Mer et de l'Outre-Mer
1949			Roger Vercel
1950	Birago Diop, <i>Les Contes d'Amadou Koumba</i> (Fasquelle); Ousmane Socé Diop, <i>Karim</i> (Nouvelles Éditions Latines)		René Maran
1951	Not awarded (N/A) ²⁸⁸	Étienne Tardif, <i>Dansons la Marin'ga</i> (Éditions du Dauphin)	Edouard Peisson
1952	Paul Pilotaz, <i>La Part de ciel</i> (Mercure de France)	Henri Ziéglé, <i>L'Afrique Equatoriale Française</i> . (Berger-Levrault)	Joseph Peyré
1953	N/A "Notre seul souci est de maintenir à un niveau élevé le prestige de nos prix littéraire" (Charbonneau, 1954: 38)	Madame Rougeoreille, <i>Le Likou N'doi</i> (Prize awarded to manuscript)	Albert T'serstevens
1954	Xavier Reppe, <i>Mirages et lumières</i> (Éditions de l'Union Française)	N/A	François Bonjean
1955	Guy le Rumeur, <i>Le Grand Méhariste</i> (Berger-Levrault)	N/A	Jean Feuga
1956	Christine Garnier, <i>Ce père avait deux âmes</i> (Fayard)	Martial Sinda, <i>Premier Chant du départ</i> (Seghers)	Georges G. Toudouze

²⁸⁸ According to press articles, Christine Garnier was awarded the prize in 1951 for her novel *Va t'en avec les tiens!*. There is no record of this novel having won the prize in the ANEMOM bulletins. Garnier notes in her autobiography that following the revelation of her actual identity, "des jurys littéraires m'avaient soudain rayée de leur tête de liste" (Garnier, Christine, 1975: 96).

1957	Gouverneur Siriex, <i>Une Nouvelle Afrique: AOF 1957</i> (Plon); René Charbonneau-Bauchar, <i>Blancs et Noirs au rendez-vous</i> (La Colombe; collection “Le Regard”)	Pierre Pellerin, <i>La Possession de l'équateur</i> (Ventadour); Félix Tchicaya, <i>Feu de brousse</i> (Caractères)	N/A
1958	Raymond Gauthereau, <i>Passage du feu</i> (Julliard)	Kindengye N'Djok (pseud. R.P. Carret), <i>Kel'Lam, fils d'Afrique</i> (Éditions Alsatia)	N/A
1959	N/A	N/A	N/A
1960	“Prix en réorganisation” (librairie, 1960: 209)	N/A	N/A

Appendix 3. Laureates of the Grand Prix d'Afrique Noire 1961 – 74

Year	Laureate (s)
1961	Cheikh Hamidou Kane, <i>L'Aventure ambiguë</i> (Julliard)
1962	Aké Loba, <i>Kocoumbo l'étudiant noir</i> (Flammarion).
1963	Jean Ikelle Matiba, <i>Cette Afrique-là</i> (Présence Africaine)
1964	Birago Diop, <i>Contes et lavanes</i> (Présence Africaine)
1965	Bernard Dadié, <i>Patron de New York</i> (Présence Africaine); Seydou Badian, <i>Les dirigeants africains face à leurs peuples</i> (Maspero)
1966	Olympe Bhely-Quenum, <i>Le chant du lac</i> (Présence Africaine)
1967	François-Borgia Evembe, <i>Sur la terre en passant</i> (Présence Africaine); Jean Pliya, <i>Kondo le requin</i> (Éditions du Bénin)
1968	Francis Bebey, <i>Le Fils d'Agatha Moudio</i> (CLE, Yaoundé)
1969	Guy Menga, <i>La Palabre stérile</i> (1968, CLE, Yaoundé)
1970	Boubou Hama, <i>Kotia Nima: Rencontre avec l'Europe</i> (Présence Africaine)
1971	Massa Makan Diabaté, <i>Janion</i> (Présence Africaine); Abbé Mviena, <i>L'Univers</i>

culturel et religieux du peuple Bété (Librairie Saint Paul, Yaoundé)

1972 Henri Lopes, *Tribaliques* (CLE, Yaoundé)

1973 Alioum Fantouré, *Le Cercle des tropiques* (Présence Africaine)

1974 Amadou Hampâté Ba, *L'Étrange Destin de Wangrin* (Editions 10/18)

Appendix 4. Publications by Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe and Peter Abrahams in French translation

Author name	English Title	Date	Publisher	French Title	Name of translator	Date	Publisher
Amos Tutuola	<i>The Palm Wine Drinkard</i>	1952	Faber	<i>L'Ivrogne dans la brousse</i>	Raymond Queneau	1953; 1990 ; 2000 ; 2006	Gallimard
	<i>My Life in the Bush of Ghosts</i>	1954	Faber	<i>Ma vie dans la brousse des fantômes</i>	Michèle Laforest	1988	P. Belfond
	<i>Simbi and the Satyr of the Dark Jungle</i>	1955	Faber	<i>Simbi et le satyre de la jungle noire</i>	Marie-Claude Peugeot	1994	Belfond
	<i>The Brave African Huntress</i>	1958	Faber	Not translated			
	<i>Feather Woman of the Jungle</i>	1962	Faber	<i>La Femme plume</i>		2000	Éditions Dapper
	<i>Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty</i>	1967	Faber	Not translated			
Peter Abrahams	<i>Dark Testament</i>	1942	Unwin & Unwin	Not translated			
	<i>Song of the City</i>	1943	D Crisp	Not translated			
	<i>Mine Boy</i>	1946	D Crisp then Faber from 1954 and Heinemann in 1963	<i>Rouge est le sang des noirs</i>	Denise Shaw-Mantoux	1960	Castermann
	<i>Wild Conquest</i>	1951	Faber	Not translated			
	<i>The Path of Thunder</i>	1952	Faber	<i>Le Sentier du tonnerre</i>	Amélie Audiberti	1950	Gallimard (La méridienne)
	<i>Return to Goli</i>	1953	Faber	Not translated			
	<i>Tell Freedom</i>	1954	Faber	<i>Je ne suis pas un homme</i>	M. Klopper and D. Shaw-Mantoux	1956	Castermann

				<i>libre</i>			
	<i>A Wreath for Udomo</i>	1956	Faber	<i>Une couronne pour Udomo</i>	Pierre Singer	1958	Stock
	<i>Jamaica: an Island Mosaic</i>	1957	HM Stationery Office	Not translated			
	<i>A Night of their Own</i>	1965	Faber	<i>Une nuit sans pareille</i>	Denise Shaw-Mantoux	1966	Castermann
	<i>This Island Now</i>	1966	Faber	Not translated			
Chinua Achebe	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	1958	Heinemann (1962 AWS)	<i>Le Monde s'effondre</i>	Michel Ligny	1966 ; 1972 ; 1975 ; 2000	Présence Africaine; Actes Sud (from 2013)
	<i>No Longer At Ease</i>	1960	Heinemann (1963 AWS)	<i>Le Malaise</i>	Jocelyn Robert Duclos	1974	Présence Africaine
	<i>Arrow of God</i>	1964	Heinemann (1964 AWS)	<i>La Flèche de Dieu</i>	Irène Assiba d'Almeida and Olga Mahougbé Simpson	1978	Présence Africaine
	<i>A Man of the People</i>	1966	Heinemann (1966 AWS)	<i>Le Démagogue</i>	A. Diop	1977	Nouvelles Éditions Africaines
	<i>Girls at War and Other Stories</i>	1972	Heinemann	<i>Femmes en guerre et autres nouvelles</i>	Jean de Grandsaigne	1981	Hatier
	<i>Morning Yet on Creation Day</i>	1975	Heinemann	Not translated			
	<i>Anthills of the Savannah</i>	1987	Heinemann	<i>Les Termitières de la savane</i>	Étienne Galle	1990	P. Belfond
	<i>Hopes and Impediments</i>	1988	Heinemann	Not translated			

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