

Introduction

Productive Intersections

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This collection of original essays takes a comparative approach to the discrete but intersecting fields of postcolonial theory and francophone studies, and maps the productive cross-fertilization that emerges from this doubling of discourses. Indeed, as Farid Laroussi and Christopher L. Miller point out in their introduction to a recent issue of *Yale French Studies* that analyzes various aspects of the francophone literature phenomenon, the inclusion of francophone studies in French departments has engendered “the most significant change in the field of French Studies since the theoretical and feminist revolutions of the 1970s . . . and . . . the necessity of reappraising the discipline as a whole” (1). Along these lines, *Postcolonial Theory and Francophone Literary Studies* offers postcolonial reformulations of francophone studies and francophone reformulations of postcolonial studies. It evaluates the contributions of postcolonial theory to francophone studies, as well as the impact of francophone theory and literature on postcolonial studies.

In recent years, both areas of study have risen to prominence in the U.S. academy, mostly in departments of English and French literature respectively. Both fields focus on similar issues, such as: diaspora and hybridity, nationalism and transnationalism, gender and race, multilingualism, opposition and ambivalence, and the need to rewrite colonial history. Both areas of study follow parallel tracks to develop similar trajectories and analogous theoretical frameworks. The works of early francophone thinkers such as Aimé Césaire and especially Frantz Fanon have shaped postcolonial theory to a significant degree, an endeavor that, as Ronnie Scharfman puts it, “challenged from the margins the authority, institutions and ideology of the French metropolitan center in an effort to decolonize the mind” (“Before” 10). In spite of all this, specific and exact points of intersection between the two

fields are fewer than one might expect. Rather, what we often see in both fields is a growing appropriation of specific discursive sites, a continual expansion of boundaries that seeks to fix francophone and postcolonial studies as fields of inquiry that share certain attributes. *Postcolonial Theory and Francophone Literary Studies* fills the need to broaden the dialogue between postcolonial theory and francophone studies. Although several chapters engage literary texts, this book is not primarily literary criticism. Rather, it makes a theoretical contribution to both postcolonial and francophone studies.

We define postcolonial studies as an interdisciplinary field of scholarship that developed out of Commonwealth studies in the 1980s and 1990s in the United Kingdom and out of the revelations of “orientalism” in the United States. Postcolonial theorists, many of whom are Indian, British, and Australian scholars working in Anglo-Saxon universities, proposed a reinterpretation of literature and history that would account for the colonial experience while insisting on its centrality. The field of postcolonial studies tends to focus largely on anglophone literature and contexts and to be heavily indebted to French poststructuralist theory; further, as Celia Britton and Michael Syrotinski point out in their introduction to a special issue of *Paragraph* on “Francophone Texts and Postcolonial Theory,” “there has until recently been a marked resistance to reading francophone writing in conjunction with the texts and concepts that have become common theoretical currency in anglophone studies” (1). As a result of this double bind, only a few scholars not writing in English have made an impact on the field of postcolonial studies, and their works are usually taken out of context and read only in English translation, a process that can sometimes foster misinterpretations. An excellent analysis of this phenomenon is provided by E. Anthony Hurley in this volume, when he points out that the English translation of Fanon’s central chapter in *Black Skin, White Masks*, “L’Expérience vécue du Noir” [The lived experience of the black person] has long been mistranslated as “The Fact of Blackness.” Replacing *experience* with *fact* and *black person* with *blackness* moves the reader away from the subjective experience of black individuals. It connotes a unitary conception of what it means to be black and makes Fanon appear more rigidly essentialist than he in fact is. We are not arguing against the use of works in translation here. Later in this introduction, we actually make the opposite claim. As Spivak has often stated, we are simply indicating that when academics are not familiar with a particular language and are working from a translation, they should remain aware of the provisional nature of their analysis and should make an effort to seek out secondary sources written by scholars working from the original text to clarify nuances and ambiguities.

Francophone studies has progressively drawn on postcolonial studies as a field of knowledge. However, as Michael Dash cogently suggests, even the early Caribbean context of what would become *francophonie* functioned through a “transnational perspective . . . [that] firmly established as a new literary project, what could previously have been seen as merely an adjunct to writing in French” (“Caraĩbe” 94). The field as a whole has built upon and enlarged this tradition, such that francophone studies is currently understood specifically to be the study of French-language literature, film, and culture from regions and countries outside mainland France. We focus particularly on the problematics of cultural production and the articulation of cultural identity in former French colonies and by immigrants from these sites living in France. Francophone studies may be said to be generally more textually based than postcolonial studies and tends to refer primarily to the inflections and transformations of a French and francophone theoretical and literary tradition.

An emergent field within French departments since the 1980s, francophone studies has now become a central part of French studies in the U.S. academy, helping to curb dwindling enrollments in French through its varying cultural and geopolitical foci. Until fairly recently, only a limited number of scholars (such as Françoise Lionnet and Robert Young) worked specifically at the intersection of the postcolonial and francophone fields. While the increased overlapping and centrality of these areas of study—owing in part to a renewed focus on multicultural perspectives in the U.S. academy—have, on the one hand, produced “some institutional and individual sense of confusion, gain, and loss,” as Mireille Rosello claims (128), it has on the other also provoked drastic changes in scholarship, syllabi, and the structure of academic French departments. Indeed, Françoise Lionnet goes so far as to say that “francophone studies has presided over what might be called the ‘becoming-transnational’ of French studies” (“Introduction” 784). The present volume inscribes itself in the current push to retheorize and reframe French and francophone studies (see also Le Hir and Strand).

Francophone studies, then, represents a rapidly burgeoning academic field that came into its own in the 1990s and now encompasses the literary and cultural output of, inter alia, the geographical areas of the Caribbean, the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa, and Quebec. With the literatures of many of these regions coming into their own either in tandem with or in opposition to overt political domination by the colonial *métropole*, it is increasingly clear that the creative fragmentation and pluralism that ground them, the result of their varying ethnic and colonial histories, cultures, and political realities—ranging from independence to departmentalization, from Berbers to Creoles—produce a variety of different readings of the term *francophonie*.

In its turn, postcolonial studies, a field often accused of adopting a monolithic, totalizing, and undifferentiated attitude toward the subjects of its discourses, collapsing histories, political structures, and ethnic formations into a single, homogenized whole, has been unequivocally and unalterably shaped by this abundance of francophone voices. The goal of this book, then, is to reassess the varied impact and scope of these reformulations, to examine the range of subsets of postcolonialism informed by *francophonie*, and to define new boundaries and future parameters of study for those regions where both fields intersect (see, for example, Brière on Quebec and Larrier on Haiti in this volume; see also, in works cited, Dash's "Postcolonial Thought," on Haiti).

Both postcolonial and francophone studies are marked by considerable debates that attach to their nomenclature. For example, postcolonial criticism is largely seen as having a homogenizing effect on its subjects; as Bart Moore-Gilbert puts it in his book *Postcolonial Theory*, it has "significantly altered . . . modes of analysis" and "has helped to undermine the traditional conception of disciplinary boundaries." In fact, it might not be going too far to claim, as some have, that postcolonial criticism "is now itself betraying a tendency to 'colonize' an evergrowing number of historical periods, geographical locations and disciplinary fields" (Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory* 8–9). Even the very scope of the term *postcolonial* is itself at issue, since, as Moore-Gilbert, Stanton, and Maley point out, "postcolonialism remains an elusive and contested term. It designates at one and the same time a chronological moment, a political movement, and an intellectual activity, and it is this multiple status that makes exact definition difficult" (1). Following these lines of argument to their logical conclusion, Quayson and Goldberg conclude, in the introduction to their collection, *Relocating Postcolonialism*, that "a crucial question for Postcolonial Studies concerns how to shape itself from the standpoint of its imagined future irrelevance" (xiii).

Francophone studies, on the other hand, finds itself riven by debates over location, exclusion, creolization, *métropole*/periphery, French universalism, and the French relationship to the rest of the French-speaking world, as well as related issues of ethnicity, nation, migration, and ethnic and cultural stereotyping. Recent essays by David Murphy and Gabrielle Parker, as well as chapters by Eloise Brière and by Coursil and Perret in this volume, highlight the politically problematic aspects of *francophonie* as an institution with a colonial history and clear neocolonial potential today, in part because of its continuing reliance on a center-periphery model. A more generous reading of the resonances of *francophonie* would be inclusive of many of the issues mentioned above in a nonhierarchical way, "foregrounding," as Françoise Lionnet puts it, "the liberating potential of counternarratives" (*Postcolonial*

Representations 20). For example, in this volume, Michel Laronde deconstructs the French versus francophone binary opposition by proposing that we include “Franco-French” literature and cultural production, together with postcolonial work in French, under the label *francophone*. Similarly, David Murphy uses “the term ‘Francophone postcolonial studies’ to refer to the study of postcolonial issues in *all* literature (as well as other cultural forms) in French, not just texts by non-French writers” (185, n. 56). In particular, he calls for a reassessment of French history and literature through the prism of postcolonial studies (178).

While aware of these paradoxes and potential pitfalls, we have chosen to keep the terms that are currently used to refer to each area of study, not because we do not agree with the critiques of the terms, but because we are seeking to make an intervention into both fields as they are constituted today and to make a case for increased cross-pollination between the two. It should be clear that we are arguing for transnational intersections among fields that have a natural affinity but are still too often separated by disciplinary and linguistic barriers.

Influential theorists writing in languages other than English have radically reshaped concepts of *francophonie* and its relationship with postcolonialism. French poststructuralist theorists have had an influence in both areas of study. Chapters by Erickson and Scharfman in this volume testify to the productive intellectual intersections between poststructuralism and postcolonialism in the francophone context. Indeed, the decentralization of the subject and of its agency in poststructuralism appears to find uncanny echoes in the deconstruction of assumptions of metropolitan mastery in both *francophonie* and postcolonialism, confronting and subverting, as Ronnie Scharfman claims, “tensions and resistances that still challenge the traditional hexagonal curriculum organized by century or genre” (“Before” 9). One might also mention the discursive and intellectual connections between Derrida and Spivak, Khatibi and Derrida, and the psychoanalytical triad Lacan/Fanon/Bhabha. Further, the francophone Caribbean theorist of decolonization Frantz Fanon has emerged as a leading precursor of postcolonial studies. Other important voices are the francophone Caribbean poet-theorist Aimé Césaire, Portuguese political theorist Amílcar Cabral, and Spanish Caribbean scholar Antonio Benítez-Rojo. Additionally, the analytical writings of Martinique’s Édouard Glissant, the Caribbean *créolistes* Bernabé, Chamoiseau, and Confiant, Morocco’s Abdelkebir Khatibi, and the work of French anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle on such subjects as cultural creolization, ethnic pluralism, and immigration in a wider postcolonial French-speaking world have assumed increasing importance. Yet, except for work by scholars such as Robert Young and John McLeod, recent postcolonial criticism has

made little more than a few basic references to any structural or perspectival role played by such contributions from French and francophone studies.

This is all the more surprising as postcolonial studies, at its inception, was a comparative endeavor that did include the French-speaking world. Edward Said in the ur-text of postcolonial studies, *Orientalism*, as well as Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak in their 1980s and early 1990s work, based their theories on comparisons of the anglophone and francophone spheres, from French orientalist scholars to Baudelaire, Fanon, and the Algerian writer Assia Djebar. Not surprisingly, the postcolonial scholars who have been most influential in highlighting connections between francophone and anglophone contributions to postcolonial studies have been academics with comparative training that included the francophone sphere (such as Spivak, Lionnet, and Young).

Reasons for postcolonial studies' current lack of engagement with the francophone space are many and varied, and while theorists in Britain, Canada, and Australia certainly have their own reasons for (non)engagement with French studies, this phenomenon may be related to the convergence of two paradoxical tendencies in U.S. academia: the loss of interest in multilingual competency (except for Spanish, which is now the de facto second national language) and an increased commitment to internationalizing the curriculum (see Thomas in this volume). This paradox is due in part to the fact that efforts toward internationalizing curricula are generally envisioned in the context of a homogenized global economy in which the lingua franca is expected to be English. To these two tendencies, one might add the loss of economic and political power of Europe in general, which militates in favor of the loss of postcolonial theory's comparative edge outside of the field circumscribed by the English language.

International political power determines to a certain extent which languages will be accorded prominence, as Coursil and Perret argue in this volume. In this respect, it is interesting to note that cultural production in indigenous postcolonial languages is even more absent from postcolonial theory's concerns than works in other former colonial languages such as French or Spanish. If postcolonial studies does not want to become a major avenue through which the dominance of English as a U.S.-based imperializing and globalizing technology of power reinvents and reestablishes itself, it will need to go back to its comparative roots and expand its areas of study, including not only work done in other European languages but also cultural production performed in national and ethnic languages. This is the reason Gayatri Spivak argues that postcolonial studies is more accurately positioned in an interdisciplinary and/or cross-disciplinary framework than solely in English,

and that the graduate curriculum should include the in-depth study of at least one language indigenous to the postcolonial world in order to contravene “the very *imperium* of English” (“Scattered Speculations” 277). This is equally true for francophone studies, and it resonates with Thomas’s call for the need to pay more attention to African theorists in the development of postcolonial theory.

In this context, the role of translation emerges as central to bringing into focus the work of theorists writing in languages other than English (see Apter, “On Translation”). For example, one of the reasons for the fact that Edouard Glissant’s work has had relatively more influence on the anglophone field of study than Khatibi’s is that his major works have been translated into English, which is not the case for Khatibi’s central 1983 study, *Maghreb pluriel*. Similarly, the recent availability in English of Achille Mbembe’s *On the Postcolony* signals perhaps the first time in a decade that a francophone theorist’s intervention is influencing postcolonial theory (Thomas). In turn, the perceived need for translation is often linked to the presence of particular scholars such as Maryse Condé, V. Y. Mudimbe, Edouard Glissant, Achille Mbembe, and Assia Djebar in the U.S. academy. Once again, theorists such as Abdelkebir Khatibi are marginalized in this context. It can only be hoped that some of his works, such as *Maghreb pluriel* and *Penser le Maghreb*, will be translated soon.

Just as contemporary postcolonial theory has a tendency toward linguistic parochialism, one of the factors that have made it difficult for francophone studies specialists in France to take the insights of anglophone postcolonial theory into account has been the fact that few of these texts have found their way into French translation (Murphy 174). Furthermore, too many francophone studies practitioners (even in the United States) have failed to incorporate the insights of scholars such as Gayatri Spivak, even though she is a comparatist whose work in French is crucial, if undervalued. Indeed, it seems that in French studies—except for Young’s work—Spivak is primarily of interest for her translation of Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*. The contrast between anglophone and francophone studies in this regard is striking. In anglophone postcolonial studies, Spivak has been enshrined as part of what some might humorously refer to as the “holy trinity” of Said, Bhabha, Spivak (see Varadharajan; Young, *White Mythologies*; Moore-Gilbert, “Spivak and Bhabha”). A reassessment of the centrality of Spivak’s insights for French and francophone studies is clearly needed (see Donadey, “Francophone”). Such a reassessment might reorient Spivak’s readings of transnationalism and postcolonial culture to address the complexities and ambiguities of the French imperial presence and its aftermath through an analysis of the perva-

sive paradoxes in postcolonial writing in French: a task arguably begun with the chapters by Brière, Larrier, and Coursil and Perret included in this volume.

In France, there is a general reluctance to consider the relevance of postcoloniality to French studies (Thomas, chapter 14; Apter, “French”; Murphy). However, as Eloise Brière’s chapter in this volume makes clear, this perception is beginning to change slowly.¹ Outside of France, most works of criticism published on francophone literary and cultural production continue to inscribe themselves in the “francophone studies” model of close reading of texts with references to primarily French and francophone sources. Yet critics analyzing the works of francophone women writers often rely on a variety of feminist frameworks with regard to the analysis of specific texts. Particularly appropriate theories that are cited with some frequency include the intersectional theories of U.S. feminists of color such as Patricia Hill Collins and Mae Henderson, postcolonial feminist texts such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s and Trinh Minh-ha’s, and French/francophone feminist works such as those of Hélène Cixous (born in Algeria) and Luce Irigaray (born in Belgium). The impact of feminist theory on francophone studies has generally been greater than that of postcolonial theory to date. In other words, the point of entry of postcolonial theory into francophone studies has been primarily through postcolonial feminist theory. In the 1990s, few francophone studies scholars took up the term *postcolonial*, and when they did, it was often simply as a temporal marker in which *colonial* and *postcolonial* were used to refer to the periods before and after formal independence, respectively (see Sherzer 19, n. 29). For example, Green et al.’s *Postcolonial Subjects* uses the term *postcolonial* but not the theoretical apparatus it implies.

Only recently (with the exception of notable work by Françoise Lionnet and Robert Young) have scholars tried to bring together the insights of both fields. Chris Bongie’s *Islands and Exiles*, for example, examines patterns of cultural identity and cultural mixing, using the work of several postcolonial theorists on hybridity, *métissage*, and transnationalism to show the extent of the imbrication of the colonial and the postcolonial worlds, centering on a “shifting middle ground of divergence and convergence” that he terms the “‘creole continuum’ of post/colonial identity politics” (52). On the other hand, Celia Britton’s thoroughgoing engagement with the work of Martinican theorist and novelist Edouard Glissant provides a long-overdue extended analysis of the complex contribution made by this important contemporary thinker. In her *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory*, Britton juxtaposes anglophone and Glissantian theory to better elucidate the latter’s principle of the *contrepoétique* [counterpoetics] that necessarily emerges from an analysis of the Martinican conundrum based on its status as a French

département, that is, as part and parcel of the French territory. Similar in form and scope to the notion of counterdiscourse, Glissant's *contrepoétique* enables the elaboration of subversive strategies of language and resistance through techniques of narrative representation (on Glissant, see also Dash, "Postcolonial Thought," as well as Prabhu and Quayson in this volume). Similarly, in their coedited collection, *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*, Laura Chrisman and Benita Parry contest the tendency to derive postcolonial conceptualizations from antinomial argumentation; indeed, they argue strongly for "more dialectical as well as relational approaches" and specifically engage Bhabha's concept of hybridity for its "inflexibility and partiality" (x). Britton and Syrotinski also address the need for less entrenched approaches and positions in this area, suggesting that "[p]ostcolonialism's longstanding concern with hybridity needs, perhaps, to become more reflexive" (3). Along similar theoretical lines, Anne Donadey's recent *Recasting Postcolonialism* engages and theorizes a number of power structures that imbricate Algerian women's writing and the postcolonial paradigm. More specifically, issues such as oppositionality and agency are problematized and critiqued from a multiplicity of perspectives whose very pluralism aims to subvert the hegemonic hold of theory. Adlai Murdoch's *Creole Identity in the French Caribbean Novel* uses a variety of theoretical approaches to exploit the creative ambiguities of departmentalism inscribed in a number of French Caribbean novels. Finally, Forsdick and Murphy's superb edited volume, *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, proposes to "decolonize" the term *francophone* through a dialogue with postcolonial studies ("The Case" 7). The volume provides a welcome historical emphasis, discusses linguistic issues, "tensions between nation and globalization," and specific regional considerations ("The Case" 4).

Like Forsdick and Murphy's volume, *Postcolonial Theory and Francophone Literary Studies* is necessarily a comparative and interdisciplinary venture. It goes beyond entrenched boundaries, be they linguistic and national (French versus English) or artificially induced political and temporal categories (anglophone versus francophone, pre- and postcolonial writing). Because both postcolonial and francophone studies rely on interdisciplinary models, this volume brings together insights and methods taken from literary criticism and theory, history (Mudimbe-Boyi, Harrow), film studies (Harrow, Woodhull), philosophy and linguistics (Coursil and Perret). Through conceptual, theoretical, and procedural revision, the range of discourses and approaches engendered by this conjunction of categories gains a new analytical footing.

This book is grouped thematically into four sections, each of which draws together a subcategory of francophone interests usefully illuminated and in-

terrogated by postcolonial critique. The first, “Rethinking Theoretical Beginnings,” looks back beyond the appearance of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978 to displace and disprove the centrality of the metropolitan French context. Here, emphasis is placed on the tensions and teleologies of the early decolonization period, demonstrating the imbrication of the colonial presence not only with Fanon but with structuralism and the specter of Haiti as well, so important as we recognize the 200th anniversary of its independence in 2004. The first essay, E. Anthony Hurley’s reading of Fanon, titled “Power, Purpose, the Presumptuousness of Postcoloniality, and Frantz Fanon’s *Peau noire, masques blancs*,” proposes to challenge the framework of the present volume by asserting that the “postcolonial” contains connotations that paradoxically match the ideologies of colonization; as a result, he argues, the effective subtext of postcoloniality is aimed at determining who will have power in postcolonial studies. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi’s “Unfathomable Toussaint” claims that the apparent ambiguities and contradictions in Toussaint Louverture’s persona are in fact nodal points on an evolutionary arc that counts on its subject’s inscrutability. Alec G. Hargreaves’s “A Neglected Precursor” analyzes the tensions and limitations of Roland Barthes’s work on semiology and its theoretical contribution to postcoloniality. As Chela Sandoval suggests, “There is a permeable boundary . . . between Fanon’s work and that of Barthes” (130). Her work traces both the similarities and the differences between these two theorists’ contributions to a methodology of emancipation. Read together, Hurley’s and Hargreaves’s chapters point to the differences between Fanon’s and Barthes’s contributions. Whereas Hargreaves argues for Barthes’s inclusion in the postcolonial field as a precursor, Hurley provocatively contends that to place Fanon under the rubric of the postcolonial is to dull the revolutionary edge of his writings.

The essays in Part II, grouped under the rubric “Postcolonialism, Modernity, and French Identities,” engage and revise many commonly held assumptions regarding French identity. For example, in “Nomadic Thought, Postcolonialism, and Maghrebian Writing,” John D. Erickson explores key aspects of Maghrebian literature in French through the concept of nomadic thought and its impact on notions of nationalism and pluralism in a postcolonial context. In “Narratives of Internal Exile,” Ronnie Scharfman examines the challenge posed by an Algerian background for such “French” writers as Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, the impossibility of autobiography for dispossessed subjects, and the resulting role of what she terms “privileged difference” in taking a stand against various forms of oppression. In “*Mémoires d’Immigrés*,” Kenneth W. Harrow engages the role of film in assessing the impact of postwar Algerian immigration into France and the resulting transformation of the HLMs [subsidized housing] of the *banlieues* [poor sub-

urbs] by male immigrants and their families. In “French Interwar Cinema,” Winifred Woodhull analyzes French film of the period as a form of “vernacular modernism” that drew on the transnational flows of capital, labor, commodities, gendered ideologies, and culture to breach the boundaries of the French imperial project. The continually shifting definitions of postcolonialism and identity in the francophone world are thus shown to be increasingly applicable both to France and to its former colonies, as patterns of ethnicity, culture, and visual and narrative representation remain in constant flux.

Part III, “Displacing *Francophonie*: Migration and Transcultural Identities,” examines the scope of postwar demographic shifts and their consequences. In “Quebec and France,” Eloise A. Brière analyzes the paradoxes of Québécois exceptionalism, the extent to which it is (not) a distinct society, different from the rest of Canada and from France, and the resulting revision of issues of center and periphery. In “Displaced Discourses,” Michel Laronde deconstructs the complex intersection of literatures of immigration, the francophone diaspora, and postcoloniality; the simultaneous presence of such myriad influences in contemporary France demands a redefinition and reconception of these initiatory categories. And in their survey of “The Francophone Postcolonial Field,” Jacques Coursil and Delphine Perret revisit key historical moments to look more closely at such terms as *colonization*, *decolonization*, and *globalization*; since postcolonial theory stresses forms of language use, the conflicted intersection of theoretical concepts and historical tropes becomes a key issue. The in-depth interrogations of the term *francophonie* undertaken here, then, expose the trenchant ambiguities that stymie most attempts at definition and complicate the relationship to the *métropole*. Ultimately, the impossibility of fixing any of these terms is firmly foregrounded.

Finally, in Part IV, “Theorizing the Black Atlantic,” the historico-cultural roles and relationships that link Haiti, Guadeloupe and Martinique, and Africa to France are redefined along new lines that move us away from a French center-periphery model. In “Borders, Books, and *Points de Repère*,” Renée Larrier examines issues of border crossing involving Haitian writers and the broader questions of identity, language production, location, and transnationalism that Haitian literature raises. In “Francophone Studies/ Postcolonial Studies,” Anjali Prabhu and Ato Quayson reconsider a number of theoretical questions arising out of hybridity’s central role in postcolonial theory. Through close readings of Homi K. Bhabha and Edouard Glissant, they posit the former’s notion of hybridity as a discursive space giving rise to the possibility of figuring difference, over against Glissant’s more radical notion of the other of thought, generating an explicative encounter that marks a key move toward the larger project of postcolonializing. And in

“Intersections and Trajectories,” Dominic Thomas invites us to reconsider our understanding of postcoloniality by underscoring the importance of African theoretical models, by interrogating France’s long and complicated history with Africa, and by foregrounding African concepts of and contributions to francophone studies. Through these broadly ranging discussions of language use in “French” literary history, assumptions of uniformity, unidirectionality, hierarchy, and the purity or porousness of cultural practices are subverted and ultimately thrown into disarray. New paradigms for the postcolonial and its related linguistic expression are established through the exploration of alternative geographical and cultural axes. Finally, in her afterword, Françoise Lionnet uses the prism of gender to highlight the ways in which difference, in its several guises, compounds the shape and substance of the francophone postcolonial field. She argues that feminist theory, in particular, should be a central element in the new configuration of the field.

The future of francophone as well as postcolonial studies is thus clearly both interdisciplinary and comparative. Some have questioned whether francophone studies belongs primarily to French departments, or if it may find a more ideal home elsewhere. Larrier in this volume as well as Réda Bensmaïa, Leslie Rabine, and Nelly Furman agree that the academic division of departments based on national literatures no longer reflects geopolitical realities because of transnational and global circuits of exchange (Bensmaïa 275; Rabine 296; Furman 69). Francophone studies scholars have been interdisciplinary from the beginning, whether working on anthropological approaches to African literature or placing literature in its multiple historical and cultural contexts. Indeed, Bensmaïa’s description of the postcolonial writer as “simultaneous translator” and “professional foreigner,” seems a fitting designation for the francophone studies scholar as well (305–06). The most exciting and insightful scholarship, both in postcolonial and in francophone studies, has been interdisciplinary and comparative (Spivak, Lionnet). In particular, several critics are now moving toward a conceptualization of transnational/transcolonial studies that better represents the current geopolitical situation, avoids the political pitfalls of terms such as *postcolonial* and *francophone*, and allows critics to bypass arbitrary disciplinary and linguistic divisions (see Larrier, Brière, and Thomas in this volume; in works cited, Gilroy, Lionnet “Transnationalism”).

As this book makes clear, both postcolonial theory and francophone studies will benefit from developing a sustained comparative engagement with each other, “by demonstrat[ing],” as Britton and Syrotinski put it, “the potential gain to be had from acknowledging postcolonial theory’s internal tensions and contradictions, and from opening its frontiers to greater cross-border activity between postcolonialism and other theories” (5). For ex-

ample, postcolonial studies may be reminded of the importance of attending closely to the specificities of text and context of production. It can learn to pay more attention to the mediation provided by translations of texts into English in order to avoid misinterpretations by taking into account the interpretations of scholars working with the original texts. In this way, it will reach a better understanding of decolonization through a reassessment of precursors to postcolonial theory such as Fanon, Barthes, and Sartre (see Hurley and Hargreaves in this volume; in works cited, Haddour, Williams). In particular, the poststructuralist bent of much postcolonial theory may have prevented it from taking into account the anticolonial work of the Marxist Sartre (Williams) or of the structuralist early Barthes (Hargreaves in this volume). Finally, new transnational paradigms make a knowledge of the francophone context necessary for scholars interested in writers living in English-speaking countries and writing in English but hailing from (at least partly) francophone areas of the world, such as the Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat (see Larrier in this volume).

Similarly, francophone studies will benefit from the mature theoretical and ethical constructs of thinkers such as Spivak and Bhabha. A sustained engagement with the concerns of postcolonial theory could help France work through its colonial history and revisit its ideology of universalism and assimilation (Thomas in this volume; Apter, "French" 171–72; Murphy 178–79). Finally, such an engagement will help question naturalized and homogenized views of Frenchness that were created historically in opposition to France's constructed "others" and that still enjoy wide currency today (Brière in this volume).

Postcolonial theory is now beginning to take into account the insights of U.S. ethnic studies, and important advancements in knowledge are evident in the work of scholars such as Singh and Schmidt, Jenny Sharpe, and Christine MacLeod, who are addressing the growing parallels, connections, and mergings, as well as the points of divergence, between multicultural and postcolonial studies. Similar productive intersections are called for between postcolonial theory and francophone studies, and the call is fortunately beginning to be heeded. The field of francophone studies is currently evolving so quickly that it is not an exaggeration to say that it is at a new juncture in its history. An increasing number of researchers in the United Kingdom, the United States, and France are now bridging the gap between francophone and postcolonial studies. They are theorizing "francophone postcolonial studies" (Murphy 185) and are thus reconfiguring the field. To take the year 2003 only as an example, a new journal, *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, has been launched; special issues of *Yale French Studies* and of *MLN* as well as two edited book collections, *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical*