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Literary History has changed its objectives during the last decades. In theory as well as in literary analysis a worldwide perspective has taken the place of strictly demarcated approaches. The openness to the world and the ongoing dialogue with the other resonates in recent French Literature. Academic critique can accompany and guide these evolutions.

Every historiographer at some point encounters the double-bind situation whereby exhaustivity on the one hand and the necessity to provide a good narrative on the other enter into competition with one another. Since completeness is a utopian wish, encyclopaedic formats, for one, at least try to give as much information as possible without claiming to establish a coherent narrative². In France, the recent publication of all kinds of *dictionnaires* demonstrates a clear demand for this category of books. A well-organized system of links between the different entries can indeed guide the reader, as I experienced while collaborating in the writing of the French Beckett Dictionary directed by Marie-Claude Hubert (Champion, 2011³). Using the dictionary format, we could in fact outline the evolution of Beckett's writing during the seventies and eighties. The *Dictionnaire des littératures de langue française*, directed by Jean-Pierre de Beaumarchais, is one of the most popular publications of this kind, in which the entries about genres, literary movements and periods are the most useful. These dictionaries aim to provide a more objective overview than traditional histories, but the necessity to make choices and to organize the materials always persists as a limitation.

Another attempt to escape from pre-established, ideologically-motivated frameworks can be discovered in the *New History of French Literature* edited by Denis Hollier. First published in English by Harvard University Press (1989), a French translation (Bordas, 1995) curiously changed this title into *De la littérature française*.⁴ Explicitly the work addresses a public that is not only composed of students but of “all those that read with passion and for their pleasure and who want to go beyond the literary works themselves to discover the conditions of literary creation” (cover text). Though the volume follows a chronological order, the relationship with other cultural, historical or political movements has been privileged. “Without wanting to be exhaustive, this history claims to be dynamic, informative and modern” (*quatrième de couverture* of the French edition). “Modern” (like “New”, one may presume) is meant as a synonym for the combination of three major characteristics, namely: the fragmentary, mosaic composition that supposedly provides a more objective image of historical reality; the network of references embedding literature in a variegated social and artistic context; the freedom to graze given to the “passionate”⁵ reader.

While the first group (the *Dictionaries*) shows a profound nostalgia for completeness, the second category, of which Hollier is the most prominent representative, figures as a witness of the post-68 sense of freedom and liberation for the carefree spectator of the ongoing parade of culture. As in many other social domains, at the beginning of the 21st century we observe a return to firm criteria and reassuring order. The post-zappers crave lullabies and fairy tales. The more serious literary histories once again embrace the narrative formula, but this cannot be done any more without taking into account the diverse critical contributions of the preceding decades.

In France the principles of the two large literary histories of the seventies were reinterpreted and reformulated as a consequence of post-68 insights. *La Littérature française*, published by Arthaud in the seventies, was a collection of sixteen large volumes directed by the most famous French academics of that moment, with a tripartite organization : starting with an exposé of the historical and cultural context, each volume proceeded by giving the chronological history of literature followed by a section devoted to major authors and a sort of dictionary for all minor writers. The other major history was published from 1974 on, in ten volumes, by the Editions Sociales (under the direction of René Desné and Pierre Abraham), and concentrated on the cohesion between a Marxist vision of history and literary production. This last option has re-emerged in the recent two-volume edition *La littérature française du 20e siècle* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009) by Michèle Touret. Nowadays the

socio-political background that is considered in literary historiography is much more varied and open to discussion, while the interaction between social life and artistic creations is seen as dynamic and mutual. The influence of *cultural studies* is of course very important for this evolution.

In Dominique Viart's *La littérature française au présent* (Bordas, 2005) the evolution of genres and the impact of intertextuality are major starting points as well as the practical aspects considered in discussing writing and publishing. Mireille Calle-Gruber, for her part, stresses in the presentation of her *Histoire de la littérature française du XXe siècle* (Champion, 2001) that literature cannot be conceived today as depending on pre-established rules, but she argues instead that literary work is a constant 'becoming' and that it accepts the infinite possibilities of language without any preference for a so called 'langue littéraire'⁶. So we see that various kinds of narratives may be written, always conscious of historical developments and of the critical contributions of the past and present. As a more general trait of these diverse openings and reorientations, historians nowadays increasingly feel the need – within the ever-growing experience of worldwide cultural influences – to abandon the narcissistic view of autochthonous national perspectives only, and to focus instead on the notion of the Other – the other as societal or political reality; the other as cultural comparison and confrontation; the other as a component of the global hybridization of identities and individualities where the major gain of the Western Enlightenment, i.e. Western-style subjectivity, enters into a most fascinating encounter with the world at large. This enlarged perspective naturally expands the historical scene and leads to a reinterpretation of cultural positions adopted in the past.⁷

The presence – or the absence – of others (of the other) in literature (and in literary studies as well as in the history or histories of literature) seems to me a valuable approach, the more so as this appears to be the key notion within a psychoanalytical view of literature, as well as a literary insight in psychoanalysis itself. Sociological, psychological, ideological and even epistemological evaluations of (literary) history all meet in this context.

My intention is not to develop in detail how this relation between literature and psychoanalysis could or should be envisaged today. Let us just argue that it might be present in our practice of reflecting on literary history, in one way or another, aside from any specific sociological, epistemological, historical or other arguments. To illustrate this position we might refer to the key distinction Jacques Lacan made in his *Écrits* between the other (small o) and the Other (with a capital). The first notion refers to the imaginary stage of the psy-

che when illusions and fascination build up an image of the other as an object of desire; the second concept takes place in the symbolic order, in which the others participate and where the subject depends of a field of communication, of language, of taking distance. The rupture as well as the link between the two realms is a tragic moment of abandoning and of abandonment (or of castration, if we prefer).

My suggestion would be that in the dynamic reality of literary history, a constant to-and-fro movement is active, leading from fascination and appropriation on the one side to cohabitation with the other and its assimilation on the other. To drop one more name in this context: I think it can be fruitful to take into account the theory of Donald Winnicott, in which the transitional object is a central notion that permits to leave the other (be it temporarily) and to enter into the universe of the others. Literature in one way or another can be, and has been, a sublime transitional object.

We can add to this that in French literary history psychoanalysis (alongside with philosophy) has played an important role during the twentieth century, from Marie Bonaparte through Charles Mauron to Jean Bellemin-Noël and Pierre Bayard. Or to take it from another side or parallel perspective: the major reference (and fascination) for the construction of literary norms and standards in France has been for centuries, and continues to be in a certain sense, the classical paradigm of the seventeenth century (of course this standard is present elsewhere too, but the situation in France seems to me to be symptomatic). The initial question is, then, to what extent an author is following or respecting the classical standards, be it in a positive or in a negative way (*La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* is a recurrent phenomenon). From Voltaire (who wrote the first modern literary history in France with his *Le Siècle de Louis Quatorze*) up to today, the criteria that support this perspective stay active and this polarization most of the time depends on the notion of the 'absolute': there is an absolute other that dominates the entire field of comparison and competition. This other is timeless (positioned out of the influence of death and decay) and by its existence implies that all others in their temporariness are witnesses to incompleteness.

Let me give two examples of the way literary history in France constantly reinvests this classical standard in handling innovative creations.

In French literary history Céline is always looked at from the vantage-point of *Voyage au bout de la nuit* and as the author who introduced popular language into literary discourse. Céline often tried to change this perspective: for him the texts coming after *Voyage*, i.e. *Mort à Crédit* and the novels of the forties and the fifties, starting with *Guignol's band*, were more evidently the

manifestation of a new subjectivity (whereas *Voyage au bout de la nuit* was a kind of adieu to the 'Old world'). He also tried to explain in the *Dialogues with the so-called professor Y* (1955) that his aim was not to enter into competition with the classical standard, but to create a new mode of being in relation to the other – the reader in this case – by way of a dialogue between the voices that resonate in his head (and it was on this impulse that Beckett and other new authors would continue to work).

A second example can be found in the so called 'littérature blanche', a concept created by Roland Barthes and exploited after him to indicate a neutral voice distancing itself from literary conventions in the presentation of factual reality. Originating in Camus's *L'Étranger*, for example, and illustrated in a particular way by Georges Perec, it culminated in the last decades of the twentieth century in the works of Marguerite Duras, Annie Ernaux and François Bon. What can be interpreted as a refusal of style (as Bernard Vouilloux defined it in *Écritures Blanches* – a collection of papers stemming from a symposium that was held at the Collège de France in 2007 – Publications de l'Université de Saint Étienne, 2009, dir. Dominique Rabaté et Dominique Viart) is often presented as a return to classical sobriety and purity.

This perdurability of the classical paradigm as a norm and as a continuing horizon of verification does not preclude other perspectives from arising and entering into competition with it (leading often, by the way, to obfuscation and a more unconscious influence of the absolute criteria).

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment, often considered as the period when French influence was most important throughout the world, was an age of major confrontations between the classical standard and the rise of subjectivity. The final episode, the major confrontation of ideologies at the time of the French Revolution, was an outburst of freedom so radical and fearful that a reaction in the other direction was inevitable. By the way, the reflection on the parallelism between historical events and cultural evolution has been described exemplarily by Béatrice Didier in *Littérature Française* ⁸:

La Révolution tout entière apparaît comme un orgasme national. Cette lutte contre le père, ce sacrilège, ils permettent l'affirmation, la libération du moi collectif qu'est désormais la nation française. Mais on regrette le père que l'on a sacrifié. [...] Napoléon sera donc le surhomme, la sublimation du mythe de ce père.

And she shows how the major authors in nineteenth-century France had to cope with this situation, be it Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, Hugo or Zola. But before that evolution took place eighteenth-century literature offered an illustra-

tion of a splendid overture and a joyful dynamism justifying its privileged position in the History of Literature as an epoch of invention and renewal.

The combination of subjectivism, materialism, empiricism and community spirit, those major components of Enlightenment, gave rise to a very diverse literary discourse where authors intensely sought to situate the other, from Diderot (above all in his dialogues like *Le Neveu de Rameau* but also in his work for the *Encyclopédie*) to Sade as the most radical writer, from Voltaire as a leading epistolary author to Rousseau and his *Confessions*.

The nineteenth century showed a profound tendency to obliterate the eighteenth-century dynamism as well as its openings to the other, as it withdrew into an internalized literary discourse. Pierre Bourdieu has given a detailed analysis of this evolution, leading to an increasing autonomization, in his *Les Règles de l'Art*, where Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* constitutes the principal example (Seuil, 1992).

La Langue littéraire, recently published by Gilles Philippe and Julien Piat (Fayard, 2009) offers a fine overview of the different stages of this literary discourse, that despite its changing diegetic contents increasingly distanced itself from the language of the other(s). A poetic idiom, the use of the *passé simple* and the *subjonctif du passé* are typical ingredients of traditional literary discourse; the *discours indirect libre* constitutes its principal narratological trait. Christelle Reggiani indicates in her contribution that it is only after 1980 that a significant change took place. At that moment, the distinction between discourse and *récit* disappeared : the literary text fully assumed its subjectivity and a pluralism of voices, in a dynamic encounter with languages coming from all kinds of social contexts and of course with messages relayed by the media. The *discours indirect libre* together with traditional 'romanesque' traits (the major constituents of the classical novelistic 'doxa') vanished as a consequence. All this is an accepted situation now, but what I want to stress here and what is specific to the French context (even if this transformation took place following British examples) is a fertilizing interaction between books written in French from all over the world. The Caribbean situation is exemplary for these interconnections with writers such as Edouard Glissant (*Tout monde*), Maryse Condé (*Ségou*) et Patrick Chamoiseau (*Texaco*). The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze accompanied this rhizomatic expansion where traditional hierarchies make way to a multiple fanning out .

In 2008 a conference organized by the SELF (Société d'Étude de la littérature française) took place in Paris on the reception and the teaching of French literature throughout the world⁹. One of the leading notions that was proposed

was the prefix 'trans' to define and situate modern French literature and its reception. Different kind of 'trans' that dominate present-day literary discourse were discussed. It was argued that a vertical transcendental paradigm has been followed in modern times by horizontal transitions, at first dominated by a few central protagonists, but nowadays increasingly appearing as a mosaic, fragmentary and poly-systematic ensemble. The absolute other was succeeded by prominent others and these are followed now by all sorts of others – *tout monde*. The notion of *transference* claims to move beyond the conflict between cultures in its desire to witness their mutual fertilization and to second and accompany these phenomena of transculturality. Literary creations, philosophy and literary criticism should proceed hand in hand.

A signal in France each autumn is the Prix Décembre – a literary prize that is meant as a reaction to the Goncourt establishment (privileging Houellebecq's *La Carte et le territoire* – Flammarion – in 2010 and *L'art français de la guerre* – Gallimard – by Alexis Jenny in 2011) and which has been awarded these past years to the most original texts published in France (last year, *La vérité sur Marie* by Jean-Philippe Toussaint - Minuit) and that went in 2010 to Frédéric Schiffter for his essay *Philosophie sentimentale* (Flammarion). It is a sentimental journey in which the reader encounters "Schopenhauer, but also Nietzsche, Pessoa, Proust, the Ecclesiast, Chamfort, Montaigne, Freud, Rosset, Ortega y Gasset", and the author goes on to write : "Un philosophe peut m'instruire ou m'éclairer, mais son œuvre n'exerce sur moi aucun charme si en filigrane de ses concepts, de ses thèses, de ses arguments, je ne perçois pas le récit d'un chagrin personnel". A specific subjectivity is founding here an original discourse dialoguing between different levels, transitioning from an emotive to a cognitive language, from concepts to affects and vice versa. This transitional use of text welcomes the other and does not stay in the realm of what Schiffter calls the bla-bla, the mono-directional discourse of institutional philosophers and *auteurs de métier*. Glissant's *poétique de la relation* certainly rejoins these objectives.

These considerations about transference and trans-culturality can be completed by the notions of trans-mediality and of trans-hierarchical practices. In his essay *Peindre l'Orient* (Zulma, 2003), the leading Algerian author Rachid Boudjedra shows how the fascination for the Orient has marked European painters, but he demonstrates also with finesse and conviction how artistic exchanges between East and West may enrich art and create real masterpieces. The Lebanese writer Amin Malouf explains in various books the multiplicity of contacts and relationships between the cultures of the Mediterranean in the

present as well as in the past (*Le périple de Baldassare*, Grasset, 2000; *Origines*, Grasset, 2004).

The combination of different media should certainly be mentioned as a virtual access to the other, not only, for instance, as regards illustrations and images but also as linked to music and to cinema. Comics, graphic novels, *telenovelle*, video-art, computer and internet creations play a role of ever-growing importance. Many of these examples may be better understood if we retrace their (literary) origins or their predecessors as well as their ideological and psychological embedding. As instances of trans-hierarchical thinking we could also mention the renewed attention to different kinds of text that were considered as being of minor importance in the past and that open the horizon to other voices : oral literature, fairy tales, women's literature, popular genres, and so forth.

However, another concept has been forged by the French linguist Renée Balibar that seems to me very important in this framework where contacts with the other, and the reactions that are their results, feature as a main orientation for a new history of literature, and that is capable of establishing the necessary theoretical background. This is the notion of co-linguism. Renée Balibar wrote an alternative history of French literature, in only a hundred pages or so, which foregrounds as leading principles for an alternative history of literature the different mutual influences between two or more languages (and their attached cultures) that are present simultaneously. As a starting point she indicates the *Serment de Strasbourg*, the 'first' text in French, which however presents itself in a narrow and necessary combination with the same text in German. We can see in this way that there is no unique origin and that from the beginning culture is a melting-pot (it is but a small stretch from here to applaud the French football team for the World Cup championship of 1998).

Balibar successively points to the colinguism with Latin that, after a long period of constant cohabitation and legalization (the vernacular *Chanson de Roland* for example makes claims to dignity by calling Charlemagne *magnes* in its first verse), became a more latent factor of influence for theatre and poetry, more specifically. She proceeds by writing : "Rivales mais constamment partenaires, la langue française et la langue anglaise n'existent que par un exercice mutuel. Il est impossible de présenter leur histoire sans mettre en lumière l'alternance de leurs influences en Europe. Le rapport à la langue et à la littérature italienne aux 13^e et 14^e siècles n'est pas moins éclairant."¹⁰ By the way, colinguism can also mean for Balibar the cohabitation of different layers of one national language (so for instance, elevated and cultured language and popular vocabulary in Rimbaud's poetry). This method may constitute a major

guide for framing and analysing the role of the other in literary history from Rabelais to Beckett and from Michel de Montaigne to Pascal Quignard.

The case of William Beckford, an English author of the last decades of the eighteenth century, known for his travel journals and above all for his novel *Vathek an Arabian Tale* [1786], offers us another example stemming from this period when modern Europe was born. Beckford achieves an original combination of major influences originating from different regions of the world : the sense of curiosity and discovery, the seductions of the Orient, the fantasy that has its roots in the Gothic tradition and the *frisson* that testifies to the major collapse of orthodox beliefs. Ann Radcliffe (*The Mysteries of Udolpho* [1794]) and Mathew Lewis (*The Monk* [1795]) were important writers who were inspired by Beckford. But one of the major reasons of the importance of this novel consists in the fact that Beckford wrote his book in French and that it was published as such (albeit in 1787, after the publication of its translation in English – by Samuel Henley). Why did Beckford write his novel in French? Was it the need to take some distance from his mother language for a matter like this (as it would be the case for Samuel Beckett, according to himself)? In any case Mallarmé, who practised English himself as a professor, was fascinated by this procedure and wrote a substantial preface for a new edition at the end of the nineteenth century, written entirely in a *style mallarméen*. His conclusion reads as follows :

Tout coule de source, avec une limpidité vive, avec un ondolement large de périodes ; et l'éclat tend à se fondre dans la pureté totale du cours, qui charrie maintes richesses de diction inaperçues d'abord : cas naturel avec un étranger inquiet que quelque expression trop audacieuse ne le trahisse en arrêtant le regard.

So Beckford could come to the simplicity most adapted to the kind of fairy tale he had in mind. But there are at least two other arguments that might be mentioned.

First there is this assertion of Balibar concluding her section on *L'Europe des Lumières* (69) :

Et parmi les langues nationales à la fin du 18e siècle, la langue française occupait une position avancée de porte-parole d'un rationalisme laïque universaliste. Position davantage conquise par rayonnement intellectuel que par pression économique ou militaire (en cela bien distincte d'un *leadership*).

We recognize in *Vathek* an ambiguous balance between the childish belief in esoteric phenomena and the urge to throw a critical eye on this other world of superstition and ghosts. Writing in French allowed for this double position, of belief as for the content, and criticism in form – this is the major position of the fetishist, formulated as : “I know very well that, but nevertheless...” (and as regards fetishism, Beckford with his famous tower building at Fountain Hill displays other characteristics as well)¹¹.

Nevertheless we should perhaps expand our scope. This leads us to an article of Françoise Morcillo “L’exotisme littéraire: relecture du conte de *Vathek* de William Beckford” (*Anales de Filología Francesa*, n.º 15, 2007, p. 197 sqq.), in which she writes : “Is it possible to include this short story within a genre that includes the marvellous, the fantastic, the allegorical, the philosophical?” Her answer will be positive and she concludes that in France the fantastic and the oriental had experienced a complex evolution throughout the eighteenth century, starting with Galland’s translation of the *Mille et une Nuits*, that Beckford wanted to rejoin this tradition and to conquer an original place in it (in France, until Mallarmé at least, he would not be recognized as belonging to it). I think Morcillo could have mentioned another example to support her assertion : the Polish count Potocki who wrote in French his famous *Manuscript of Saragossa*.¹²

All this merits a more precise analysis and I think that these cases of bilingualism and of colinguisism offer a precious opening for an approach of the other as a main element for a contemporary view of literary history. Some other explorations of this orientation might address (for the French situation) the presence of linguistic confrontations in African literature (so as for Kourouma’s *Les soleils des indépendances*, Flammarion, 1968 – and *Allah n’est pas obligé*, Flammarion, 2000) or in the works of authors from the Maghreb (the discussion on the status of French by Kateb Yacine or Rachid Boudjedra). This rejoins the Deleuze’s reflections on the role of minor languages (whose examples include Kafka, Melville and Artaud, for instance). In nineteenth-century France attention could further be paid to Jules Verne, who explored language and the universe as parallels and who showed a curious amalgam of colonialism and cosmopolitanism. In Alexandre Dumas, as the major bestseller writer of the century, some of the same characteristics appear.

Increasingly in the course of the twentieth century, multiple forms of encounters between different cultural traditions, between specific generic formulas, combinations of fictional, autobiographical, historical, philosophical and scientific materials seem to constitute the core matter of literature. In France the novel is exemplary for this evolution, leading from Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*¹³ and Gide’s *Les Faux Monnayeurs*¹⁴ through Malraux

and Céline to “new novelists” such as Butor and Simon and, after those, to the generation of Nobel Prize-winner J.M.G. Le Clézio, as a real cosmopolitan and universal author. Theatre as a major location for intermediality shows how text can be interpreted and imbedded in numerous ways and this attitude permits to enlarge its critical function. Beckett, Genet and Ionesco are the most important instigators in this field (in close cooperation with their respective theatre directors) and they were followed by Duras and her lyrical theatre, and Koltès and his dramatic vision of borderline people. More recently Ariane Mnouchkine and her Théâtre du Soleil have shown how a politically-motivated attitude and a personal revision of various traditions (Greek ones as well as, for instance, Japanese No theatre) can be harmonized. Valère Novarina, in his own way, transforms theatre into a cradle for innumerable linguistic and formal creations incarnated by an immense host of characters.

Poetry even more than other genres figures as a playing field and a terrain for adventure and exploration. That was already a reality during the first decades of the twentieth century with Guillaume Apollinaire’s *Alcools* and the *Cahiers* of Paul Valéry. René Char provided the most intense combination of metaphysical background, political engagement and poetical sensitivity, while Francis Ponge worked most concretely on the versatile and sponge-like material of language. The universalist aims of Yves Bonnefoy, the philosophical profoundness of Michel Deguy and the experimental eagerness of Jacques Roubaud are only a few examples of the rich palette of present-day poetry in France¹⁵.

The openness to the world and the ongoing dialogue with the other so often forced back by contemporary history finds its guiding voice in living poetry as it is sung and declaimed, used as an emblematic sign for uniqueness and freedom, prophetizing the strength of literature. Let us end with a quotation by the Antillean poet and novelist Edouard Glissant, the first part of his poem “Acclamation” :

Prenez-moi au brasier de boues de tôles de manguiers
Que tarisse le mot limpide et finisse l’aridité
Où fut la paille et toute chose non cernée
Il est temps d’arrêter l’errance immense et il est temps
D’armer le champ aux continents
Qui passent nous hélant au large de midi
O souci, sel d’écumes sur la mort posées, mon noir pays.
Prenez-moi dans l’été qui n’a pas de printemps, ô cri¹⁶.

NOTES

1. I am very grateful to Alicia Montoya for her assistance and her suggestions.
2. By the way : my considerations in this article about French Literary History aspire to be exemplary for literary history in a more general sense.
3. There also exists an English *Companion* to Beckett (directed by Chris Ackerley and Stan Gontarski,- Grove Press 2004) .
4. This was an explicit reference to Mme de Staël's work, as Hollier himself explained
5. "Tous ceux qui lisent par passion et pour leur plaisir" (*quatrième de couverture*).
6. See : Gilles Philippe and Julien Piat, *La langue littéraire*, Fayard, 2009.
7. It should be mentioned that notwithstanding recent evolutions this way of thinking about (French) literature and culture is still more present in the United States than in France. The continuing interest for Hollier's *History* is symptomatic as is the role played by Duras' *Ourika*. In this context has been published in 2010 *French Global*, edited by Christie McDonald and Susan Rubin Suleiman (Columbia University Press). The presentation of the book in the catalogue reads as follows: "Recasting French literary history in terms of the cultures and peoples that interacted within and outside of France's national boundaries, this volume offers a new way of looking at the history of a national literature, along with a truly global and contemporary understanding of language, literature, and culture. The relationship between France's national territory and other regions of the world where French is spoken and written (most of them former colonies) has long been central to discussions of "Francophonie." Boldly expanding such discussions to the whole range of French literature, the essays in this volume explore spaces, mobilities, and multiplicities from the Middle Ages to today. They rethink literary history not in terms of national boundaries, as traditional literary histories have done, but in terms of a global paradigm that emphasizes border crossings and encounters with "others." Contributors offer new ways of reading canonical texts and considering other texts that are not part of the traditional canon. By emphasizing diverse conceptions of language, text, space, and nation, these essays establish a model approach that remains sensitive to the specificities of time and place and to the theoretical concerns informing the study of national literatures in the twenty-first century".
8. Arthaud, 1976, vol. 11, p. 8.
9. *La littérature française du 20^e siècle lue de l'étranger*, Dominique Viart (éd.), Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2011.
10. Renée Balibar, *Histoire de la littérature française*, PUF (Que sais-je ?), 1991, p. 29.
11. Fetishism is a major indication of the changing ideological frame (paradigm) at the end of the eighteenth century: having lost the firm belief in an absolute Other, be it God or his terrestrial representative, not having found a horizontal relationship that replaces it, the errant, craving mind (and body) recurs to simulacra and stand-ins, *godemichés* and female attributes (as in the women's shoes adored by Restif de la Bretonne).
12. See : *Jean Potocki à nouveau*, études réunies et présentées par Émilie Klene, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2010.
13. See : Vincent Descombes, *Proust - philosophie du roman*, Minuit, 1987.
14. See: Pierre Lepape, *Gide le messenger*, Seuil, 1997.
- 15 See: Michael Bishop, *Contemporary French Poetics*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2002.

¹⁶ In *Le sel noir* (1960). This final poem of the collection invites us, passing over the Carribean isle, to listen to the voices of the continents, to combine the geographical ensembles and their respective histories.