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Black France: Colonialism, Immigration and Transnationalism. By DOMINIC THOMAS. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. Pp. xv + 305. \$75 (ISBN 0-253-34821-8); \$27.95, paperback (ISBN 0-253-21881-0).

KEY WORDS: African Diaspora, colonialism, migration.

With *Black France*, Dominic Thomas offers a lucid exegesis of literature in French on African-French migration and its aftermaths. The reader visits Paris and its provinces in the company of gifted young writers like Fatou Diome (*Le ventre de l'Atlantique*) and Henriette Akofa (*Une esclave moderne*), mid-career authors like Alain Mabanckou (*Bleu-Blanc-Rouge*) and the creators of some of the classic works of Francophone African literature, such as Camara Laye (*L'enfant noir*), Bernard Dadié (*Un nègre à Paris*) and Ousmane Sembene (*Le docker noir*, and the film '*la Noire de ...*'), who comes in for particular criticism. Broadly comparative across time and space, but within the frame of *la francophonie*, *Black France* focuses on 'transnational constituencies that have emerged from colonialism and immigration ... and offer[s] new ways of thinking about the symbiotic dimension of relations and population flows between France and the francophone world' (p. 3). It does so in seven crisply paced chapters on Francocentrism, rhetorical reflections on slavery, African feminisms, 'textual ownership' and the Congolese sartorial sociability known as *la sape*. Thomas is acutely aware of the phenomenon labeled 'globalization', and he underscores the influence of African-American fiction on African writing – notably of Richard Wright's *Native Son* on Sembene's *Le docker noir*.

The methodological core of Thomas's technique is what he terms 'mediation', or reading alongside each other works from the colonial and postcolonial eras, or works written in France and others written in Africa. This means considering writers like Laye, Sembene and Dadié as immigrant writers – as *Black* writers before the term had entered French – and as the precursors to Mabanckou and to Diome's generation. This is the kind of mild historicism that readers of this journal may welcome. Those same readers might be less comfortable with the concept of transcolonialism, a term that does not appear in the title but is central to the book. What does it mean? For Thomas, it means to assimilate distinct historical moments by positing that they are much the same, so that the postcolonial 'now' mirrors a colonial 'then'. Methodologically, one might consider this tactic the logical counterpart of an investment in intertextuality. For the historian, *caveat lector*. Nonetheless, disciplinary differences aside, this is a keen and compelling work of contemporary scholarship.

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Democracy and Elections in Africa. By STEFAN I. LINDBERG. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. Pp. xiii + 227. £36.50 (ISBN 0-8018-8332-6); £16.50, paperback (ISBN 0-8018-8333-4).

KEY WORDS: democracy, governance, politics/political, political culture.

The re-emergence of multi-party elections in Africa has often not been taken seriously, especially by many area specialists (less so by scholars with a general political science background). 'Electoralism' is the derogatory term used to belittle the significance of multi-party elections in Africa in general and their meaning for