

that define the (inter)dictions of the colonial phrase. If a postcolonial French language cannot simply be made from whole cloth, as Dubreuil rightly recognizes, then in what ways can the words that compose the deadly strictures of phraseology be reanimated into a living speech? Dubreuil traces the openings of a “rebellious francophonie” in imaginative and carefully qualified readings of figures including Toussaint l’Ouverture, René Maran, Bakary Diallo, and the entertainer Jamel Debbouze. These different, and often fraught, acts of speech are tied together by the concept of “speaking up,” a translation of the French *prendre la parole*, which means in everyday usage simply “‘to speak,’ or ‘to have the floor’” (translator’s note, 203). The emphasis on *taking* (*prendre*), here, captures the significance of speaking as an agential act within a contested sphere that would break with the prescriptions of speech or the injunction to be silent. Dubreuil cites Homi Bhabha’s work as an important influence, but whereas Bhabha ascribes the resistant power of any enunciation to the destabilizing nature of language itself, Dubreuil’s “speaking up” are politically infused and historically localized verbal performances, the full implications of which can be approached only by careful attention to textual and contextual specificity.

The strengths of this book’s readings are also symptoms of a theoretical schematization that sometimes appears too loose to add up to a persuasive account of the relationship between language and colonial power. The “phrase” especially, given that it is to be considered neither a discourse nor an actual phrase, seems a too malleable concept, and the readings that compose the first section of the book therefore appear as an idiosyncratic constellation of discrete analyses rather than a coherent (if internally differentiated) body. I also wonder whether Dubreuil’s implicit valuation of the disruptive and indisciplined powers of speech above its *sustaining* power requires further consideration. Dubreuil asserts more than once that one does not speak “once and for all,” but if the colonial phrase is defined by its staying power, might postcolonial speech not similarly aspire to compose a range of better and improvable, if always imperfect, phraseologies that would accrue a politically necessary durability?

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Voices of Negritude in Modernist Print: Aesthetic Subjectivity, Diaspora, and the Lyric Regime

By CARRIE NOLAND

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In the 1960s, the significance of Negritude was purportedly declared null and void. In the view of Wole Soyinka, the tiger does not proclaim his tigritude; he simply pounces. Other critics of Negritude, both before and after Soyinka, seemed to accept Negritude’s own proclamation that as an oppositional and anti-imperialist critique of francophone colonialism, its writers and its writing were the oral antithesis of Europe’s

scribal culture, the affective dimension of the human intellect. In *Voices of Negritude in Modernist Print: Aesthetic Subjectivity, Diaspora, and the Lyric Regime*, Carrie Noland executes a fine example of close reading, incorporating rather than eschewing historical and biographical contexts, to argue persuasively that the writers of Negritude were interpellated by the demands and challenges of print culture during the interwar period and, as such, were modernist interlocutors bound up in the engagements of high modernism even as they contorted aspects of that tradition to the import of their anti-imperialist stance.

Franco Moretti's claims for "distant reading" over and above close reading notwithstanding, Carrie Noland executes a studied and comprehensive analysis of the poets and the poetics of Negritude. In this work, she is concerned primarily with the poetry of Aime Cesaire and Leon-Gontran Damas. Her approach might be construed as intersectional in the sense that she examines the writerly imprint of a European high modernist tradition impressing itself upon the Negritude poets, even as they discover their artistic voices constrained by the yoke of a colonialist cultural oppression. In order to tease out the lineaments of Negritude's approach to the aesthetic and the subject, the orasphere and the typosphere, in Jacques Ranciere's phraseology, Carrie Noland draws upon the work of critics such as Adorno and, to a lesser extent, Giorgio Agamben and combines this aspect of her analysis with an equal engagement with the historical and political contexts within which the poets of Negritude were received and read.

Noland begins her analysis by taking issue with James Arnold's disregard of the importance of the initial publication of Cesaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* in the small modernist review, *Volontes*, in August 1939. Though comprehending the laudable political strategy of Arnold's move to locate the audience for the *Cahier* in the Caribbean, Noland argues that this initial print version in *Volontes* reveals Cesaire's investment in the expressive and print demands of an outlet associated with the avant-garde work of other modernists of stature. Engaging in a bit of literary historical sleuthing, Noland indicates that Henry Miller, who was a regular contributor to *Volontes*, was also a member of the editorial *equipe*, along with Eugene Jolas, who was a founding member. Jolas, she points out, created the English-language journal *transition* in 1927, and it was in *transition* that Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* first appeared. Noland's point is that the *Cahier* was as much influenced by, and an influence on, the print culture of high modernism in the 1920s and thirties as it was a political tour de force in the radical Anglo-Americas politics of the 1960s and seventies.

In demonstrating the interrelatedness of text and context as fundamental to the project of Negritude, Noland also engages some biographical and autobiographical work in order to comment on the reception of Negritude poetics during the period of radical "consciousness raising" in the Americas of the 1960s. She reveals her own initial exposure to an English translation of the *Cahier* with the title rendered as *Return to My Native Land* and recalls that it was in the preface to that edition, a preface written by South African poet Mazisi Kunene in which he compared Cesaire's poem to Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, that she saw poetry as almost unself-consciously associated with a radical emancipatory project.

Carrie Nolan's *Voices of Negritude in Modernist Print*, published in 2015, is part of the Modernist Latitudes series by Columbia University Press, and it is an example

of fine textual scholarship enriched and made whole by equal attention to literary history, biography, and anti-imperialist and anticolonial politics. Indeed, I can think of no preferable conclusion to this review than to let Noland's text speak here:

Scholars of African American studies, postcolonial theory, and francophone studies owe a huge debt to the figures of Negritude whose tireless participation in colloquia and other scholarly projects made possible the existence of the very academic venues in which Negritude's putative "universalism" is now regularly attacked. Negritude poetry—as "symbolic capital" but also as a troubling, thought-provoking poetic movement—was central to producing the institutional spaces in which the question of the relation between radical politics and cultural expression can now be discussed (240).

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