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Editors' Introduction

Taking Stock – II: Literature and alternative knowledge

Il appelle Tout-monde notre univers tel qu'il change et perdure en échangent et, en même temps, le "vision" que nous en avons. La totalité-monde dans sa diversité physique et dans les représentations qu'elle nous inspire : que nous ne saurions plus chanter, dire ni travailler à souffrance à partir de notre seul lieu, sans plonger l'imaginaire de cette totalité.

Édouard Glissant, Traité du Tout-monde

It is fitting that a substantial part of this second issue of CFé-FS devoted to the theme of "Taking Stock," of how and "when literature produces knowledge" in the French speaking world—but not restricted to that world—should be organized around the impressive body of work produced by Édouard Glissant. To delimit the extent of Glissant's influence would go against the grain of what lies at the very core of his oeuvre, and has been variously named—a poetics of relation, of the rhizome, créolité, métissage, of the multiplicity inherent in the notion of the "Tout-monde" as defined by Glissant in the epigraph above.

For those who knew Édouard Glissant during his tenure as Director of LSU's Center for French and Francophone Studies (1987–1994), as did Alexandre Leupin, organizer of the plenary session devoted to Glissant, the homage paid to the author of the Traité du Tout-monde is particularly understandable and well beyond the personal. Glissant's spirit and the memories of exchanges in the house he shared with Sylvie Sémavoin-Glissant (the painter Sylvie Sema), and their young son Mathieu, are ever present in Baton Rouge. The cover of this issue reproduces Sylvie and Édouard Glissant's collaboration for the Utopia Station installation exhibited at the 2003 Venice Biennale. The poem, an integral part of the painting, reproduced on the back cover of the volume, was later published in La Cabine du Lamentin. In that text Glissant embraces upheaval and oscillation, a "pensée du tremblement" with its promise of a discovery far exceeding that of systematic thought.

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Unfortunately, the painting was stolen during the Biennale; all that remains of it is this reproduction, which, hopefully, may lead to its restitution.

In the preface to Les Entretiens de Baton Rouge, Alexandre Leupin underlines the importance of Glissant's capacity to sustain and contribute to others' thoughts and projects. Leupin identifies the topics they shared in the 1990–1991 recorded dialogues that became the basis for their volume. The plenary panel Leupin organized could be considered a continuation of Les Entretiens de Baton Rouge, confirming the role of Glissant's enduring presence even in his absence. The issues highlighted by Leupin in his exchanges with Glissant reflect some of the major concerns expressed in the literary texts analyzed in this volume:

**Sur le fretement mondial des langues, des peuples et des cultures, sur l'émergence des États-nations, sur les décolonisations, sur la question de l'identité, voici les états de sa pensée, fondés sur un coup de génie inaugural : s'approprier poétiquement les symboles de l'inextricable et l'œuvre de l'actuelle mondialisation, pour en extraire les figures de la cristallisation lyrique.**

**(EBR 10)**

In "L'étranger dans la mondialité" published in Rue Descartes, François Noudelmann provides insights into Glissant's substitution of an ontology based on relation for conventional ontologies based on identity. Noudelmann characterizes this relation-based ontology as such:

"(...) ne cherche plus à définir en soi des sujets, des corps du politique, mais elle se porte sur le changement d'identification, sur une notion de mondialité n'ayant pas défini une totalité mais dégénère l'infinie prolixité des rencontres imprédictibles. Aussi la relation y est-elle affranchie de toute morale et surtout de toute nécessité. Elle se décline en processus, en fusions, en dissolutions, en réifications à l'œuvre dans le chaos-monde. (Noudelmann 5)

Leupin also, Glissant's writing goes beyond conventional definitions of the literary object and can be contained by none of the traditional theoretical categories: neither "Belles Lettres" nor "littérature engagée" in the Sartrian vein, neither "francophone" nor "postcolonial" or "poststructuralist." Leupin gave his three panels the task of describing this new literary object while taking into account Glissant's notions of the "transhistorique, transgénéraire, et transrétorique."

For Glissant, as for Michel Deguy—whose own work was highlighted in the previous issue—poetry and philosophy are two constant and intertwined preoccupations. The "pensée du tremblement" developed in the poem transcribed in Sylvie Sema's painting, along with Noudelmann's "le changement de l'échange" serve as leitmotifs for the essays devoted to Glissant here. Glissant's thought, marked simultaneously by upheaval and uncertainty, calls into question the usefulness of reducing thought to systems, or the very advisability of attempting to resolve the irresolvable. Catherine Delpech-
2002 the Association of the European Communities in Brussels, the European Council in Brussels, the European Commission in Brussels, the European Parliament in Brussels, the European Central Bank in Frankfurt, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, the UN Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC, the World Bank in Washington DC, the International Labour Organization in Geneva, the World Trade Organization in Geneva, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London, and the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg.

The European Union (EU) is a supranational organization that was created in 1993 as a successor to the European Communities: the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Atomic Energy Community, and the European Economic Community. The EU is composed of 27 member states located in Western Europe and Eastern Europe, with a total population of around 510 million people. The EU's primary institutions include the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, and the European Council.

The European Commission is the executive branch of the EU, responsible for proposing legislation, drafting reports, and ensuring that EU laws and regulations are implemented correctly. The European Parliament is the legislative body of the EU, with 751 members elected for five-year terms. The Council of the European Union is the decision-making body of the EU, made up of the heads of government or ministers from each member state. The European Council is the main political authority of the EU, consisting of the presidents of the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament.

The EU is a significant player in international politics, as it has become a major economic and political force in the world. The EU has played a key role in the development of the single market, which allows for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor within the bloc. The EU also has significant influence in areas such as trade, foreign policy, and security. The EU has a number of partnerships with other regions and countries, including African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, as well as the former Soviet Union and the United States.

The EU is governed by a series of treaties, including the Treaty of Maastricht, the Treaty of Amsterdam, and the Treaty of Lisbon. These treaties outline the EU's goals, objectives, and powers, and also establish a framework for future development. The EU has a strong commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and is actively involved in the promotion of these values around the world.
Marcel Proust in her poetic response to Proust and more specifically to the figure of Albertine in *The Albertine Workout* (2014). Famed critic Jacques Druo us always considered Albertine to be a character that resists standard modes of analysis, but in her deftly concealed poetic critical appraisal, Carson has undertaken "working through" Albertine to surmount the resistances that the figure presented to Proust's narrator. The volume concludes with Nathalie Dupont's essay "Savoir déroger. Pierre Senges, éduit égarant" in which she explores how Senges' quest for acquired knowledge drawn from literary sources and erudition leads to the invention of new forms. Senges seems to be intoxicated by this encyclopedic search for new and old nomenclatures and categories. Acquired knowledge in Senges' books becomes the point of departure for the creation of knowledge and of new forms.

Édouard Glissant believed in the perpetuity of literature. As each of the articles in this volume demonstrates, literature is resilient and always in the process of evaluating and integrating all the forms of knowledge it encounters. One of the chapter titles of *Les Entretiens de Baton Rouge* can serve as a conclusion, "L'écrivain d'aujourd'hui est toujours un écrivain futur" (EBR 116). At the end of his introduction to his anthology *La Terre, le feu, l'eau et les vents: Une Anthologie de la poésie du Tout-monde*, Glissant assumes this role personally when he states: "Ce que je suis est dérivé, sans fatalisme aucun, de ce que je sais. Le poème lui aussi est toujours à venir" (ANT 19).

Adelaide M. Russ, Dominique Viart, Guest Co-Editors/Roger Cézélin, Elaee Dalmolin, Editors

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Dominique Viart is an essayist and critic, member of the Institut Universitaire de France, and Professor at the Université Paris-Ouest. He is the editor of the *Revue des Sciences Humaines*. Viart has authored essays on Jacques Dupin, Claude Simon, Pierre Michon, François Bon, Eric Chevillard, the twentieth-century novel, modern poetry, contemporary literature (*La littérature française au présent*, with B. Vecier-


Roger Cézélin is a Professor of French and Comparative Literature and co-chair of French and Francophone Studies at the University of Connecticut. He has written on travel literature, detective fiction, film, and translation, among other topics. He is the author of *From Cannibals to Radicals. Figures and Limits of Exoticism* (U of Minnesota, 1996), co-editor (with Isabelle de Courtron and Elaee Dalmolin) of *Beyond French Feminisms: Debates on Women, Politics, and Culture in France*, 1980–2001 (Palgrave/St. Martin's, 2002), and co-author (with Elaee Dalmolin) of *France From 1851 to the Present: Universalism in Crisis* (Palgrave, 2007).

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Works Cited


La pensée du tremblement

Édouard Glissant and Sylvie Séma-Glissant

La pensée du tremblement
décrite partout avec les musiques et
les formes enfantées par les peuples.
Elle nous préserve des paroles de systèmes de pensée et des systèmes de pensée.
Elle ne porte pas les stigmates de
la peur ou de l’irrationalité, elle s’étend
infiniment comme un oiseau
innombrable dont les ailes sont
semées du sélénite de la terre.
Elle nous réunit dans l’absolu
diversité, en un tourbillon de rencontres :
elle est l’Utopie qui
Jamais ne s’arrête et qui ouvre
demain comme un fruit partagé.

Collaboration entre Sylvie et Édouard Glissant présentée à Utopia Station,
Le texte d’Édouard Glissant fut repris en partie dans son essai La Cohée du
Lamentin où une des principales perspectives est celle du tremblement.
Le dessin de Sylvie Séma-Glissant fait partie d’une série exécutée sur de la
toile à voile de bateau et sur papier, intitulée : Querelle de la Transparence et
de la Maîtrise.

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