Much of the time Dutourd is grim and ironic. But he can achieve lyrical moments when he describes the narrator's solitary walk in the purifying rain, the virtues of Mme Poinsot, and the laughter of her children. It is at those moments that he comes closest to the idyllic life of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and the faith of the Vicaire Savoyard.

San Diego State University Hilda Nelson

GLISSANT, EDOUARD. *Malemort*. Paris: Seuil, 1975. Pp. 237.

Glissant's third novel may be viewed as a polymorphous narrative as well as a compendium of the author's aesthetic and ideological tenets. Like most of his writing, *Malemort* deals with the condition of Glissant's homeland, Martinique, and therewith ramifies into a multidirectional search for a definition of Antillanité, a concept that Glissant wants to substitute for the much exalted and maligned Négritude. Among other things, Antillanité is predicated on the recognition of a collective consciousness of the Caribbean peoples, still to be distilled and instilled. If, by and large, Glissant's Renaudot-prize-winning first novel, *La Lézarde*, can be considered as an exploration of Martinican space in its dichotomous opposites of mountain/plain, sea/land, country/city, his second novel, *Le Quatrième Siècle*, is laid out on a predominantly temporal matrix, evoking "une vision prophétique du passé," the past which has been lost and is to be reconstituted from folkloric legends and recollections by means of historic research and creative sublimation. *Malemort* attempts a further integration of Martinican space and time, which are intricately enmeshed in the experience and consciousness of the Martinican people. Thus, there is no chronological plot line as the narrative scans back and forth between 1788 and 1974. 1788 is the year when a slave ship brought over from Africa Glissant's ancestors and the first rebels fled to the hills to become *marrons*. The fictional locus likewise encompasses a whole range of Martinican *paysages* that offer startling contrasts of geographic features, a lush rain forest, an arid salt plain, a volcanic landscape, fertile agricultural fields, etc., that Glissant's descriptions render vibrant: authenticated by his intimate knowledge of the island's fauna and flora; infused with his love for that "Eden potentiel" endowed with natural splendors and plagued with human miseries; impassioned with his anguish to see the island being destroyed by developers and promoters of tourism. A trinity of characters, Dlan, Médellus, Silacier, intermittently contoured in their physical and mental features, take turns in figuring in the various causally disconnected incidents, most frequently comic with tragic underpinnings. On occasion, they fuse into a singular presence, as if representing a collectivity in search of its identity and ethnic consciousness. Personages from previous works reappear or are alluded to, such as the last *quimboiseur*, papa Longoué, the medicine man of ancient lore, the last representative in the lineage of the original *marron*, the Négateur, who preferred the precarious existence in the hills to the protection of the plantation slave. Throughout Martinican history there has always been this race of proud, uncompromising "naysayers" who, hunted down and executed, have always risen from dust and death to continue the defiant non-acceptance of the colonizer's ideology and morality. These legendary figures are projected in a myth-like vision to apotheosize their eternal *Malemort*, their pitiful and glorious destiny as "tombés-levés." But next to the intransigent Négateur, there are also the collaborator policeman, the corrupt local politician who parrots freely the clichés about liberty, equality, and fraternity and rigs elections with cynical ingenuity. They exemplify the success of the colonizer and represent the lineage that started with the plantation slave and the black executioner whom the early conquistador commissioned for the beheading of the captured Indian prince. Along many facets, the novel, though imbedded in a very specific locale, dealing with endemic problems, transcends its topicality to reach a level of universal significance. The novel's stylistic and structural forms are disconcertingly complex, its language being couched in a very idiosyncratic idiom that occasionally flaunts grammatical improprieties and borrows from creole. The author resignedly recognizes the limited range of his readership. For the "lecteurs

d'*ailleurs* . . . qui veulent tout comprendre," the author compliantly offers a glossary. "Les lecteurs d'*ici* sont futurs."

Carnegie-Mellon University Juris Silenieks

MARCEAU, FELICIEN. *Le Corps de mon ennemi.* Paris: Gallimard, 1975. Pp. 207.

Félicien Marceau juxtaposes humor and seriousness, action and contemplation, compassion and brutality, good and evil to create a novel with an intriguing story and a fascinating technique. The first-person narrator, released from prison at the very beginning of the text after having served a long term for a crime he did not commit, sets out in search of the person responsible for his false accusation. During the days following his liberation, he travels through the streets of his city in an effort to reorient himself as well as to identify the actual criminal. Immediately, however, he finds the city to be a confusing maze in which he recognizes no distinguishable paths: "ce n'est plus ou ce n'est pas encore ma ville, c'est un magma confus, un amas de murs, de balcons, de fenêtres, de pierres et de briques, de verre et d'acier, un puzzle défait, une jungle de béton dont je n'aperçois même pas le dessin, où je n'entrevois aucun sentier, une futaie hostile, et même pas hostile, fermée" (p. 103). Through a relentless search, he traces down the guilty party and carries out his revenge.

In fact, the time the narrator spent in prison, time during which he remained silent, actually sharpened his senses and his ability to reason; consequently, he is ready to decipher what was formerly opacity and confusion. As he progresses on his picaresque journey through the city toward a comprehension of how and why he was manipulated, he also moves toward an understanding of his values; hence, the disorientation he experiences in his initial contact with the city reflects the disorder among his early thoughts. In contact with the places he visited as a child and an adolescent, he is transported back to those periods of his life. The distinction between past and present is eliminated as he is again surrounded by his former acquaintances and involved in previous incidents. His geographical and mental journeys permit the narrator to articulate his dislike for those sectors of society which have financial and political control. He voices particular contempt for families in the textile industry as well as for promoters who have destroyed his city.

Throughout the novel, the narrator evokes the atmosphere of the brothel he ran before his imprisonment. Gradually, he passes from the more lurid aspects of his former life to the existential questions which trouble him since his release from prison. "L'adultère" becomes "l'adulte ère," a lack of direction he would like to eliminate. Finally, the jail from which he emerges in the opening pages of the novel comes to pervade the entire work: the narrator feels imprisoned by his activities, his choices, and his social obligations. If his journey through *Le Corps de mon ennemi* does not free him entirely from this prison, it does afford him an acute awareness of the human condition.

Rutgers University Elsa Vineberg

MENGA, GUY. *Les Indiscrétions du vagabond.* Sherbrooke: Naaman, 1974. Pp. 90. $3.

There is a class of authors who delight in spinning out tales devoid of metaphysical and moral pretentions, yet showing genuine understanding and sympathy for life. To such a class belongs Guy Menga. His latest work, *Les Indiscrétions du vagabond: contes et récits du Congo,* is substantial entertainment. It ranges from the animal to the human kingdom, focussing on specific situations from which emerge effortlessly some very astute observations on how people act or relate to one another.

The unifying force of all these tales is the narrator, or "vagabond" himself, whose many "indiscrétions" are greeted with rapturous enthusiasm by the people of the congolese village in whose midst he remains for six nights. He is, in a sense, the hero of the whole book, for it is his spellbinding power as a story teller that animates the various characters, and arouses our interest