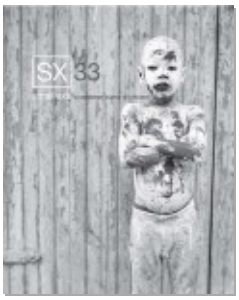
# World Literature in French: A Caribbean Design?

Keithley Woolward

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In autumn of 2007, five of the year's seven major literary prizes in France were awarded to foreign-born, French-speaking writers, including the New York–born novelist Jonathan Littel, Alan Mabanckou from Congo, Nancy Houston from Canada, and Léonora Miano from Cameroon. Seizing on this historic moment, the manifesto "Pour une littérature-monde en français" triumphantly declared that "le monde revient" (the world returns) via the literary endeavors of authors from the four corners of the earth who contribute to the invigoration of French literature, who put it in direct resonance with the current world of cultural hybridization across fluid and porous boundaries:

> The center heretofore, although less and less, had had this power of absorption which forced authors hailing from abroad to strip themselves of all their baggage before integrating the crucible of language and its national history: the center, as the autumn literary prizes tell us, is now everywhere, across the four corners of the world. The end of la Francophonie. And the birth of a world literature in French.[1]

Most striking in this declaration is how seamlessly the national becomes the international and how deceptively the question of empire (inscribed in *la francophonie*) is erased from the formation of the French nation, its culture, and identity. In fact, encounters between the "Old World" and the "New World" are remapped via the skillful integration of the non-France and

1 Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud, "Pour une 'littérature-monde' en français," *Le Monde*, 16 March 2007. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

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the non-French into what appears to be a vast global network of international relations within which France and Frenchness can situate themselves as exceptional entities transcending history while claiming unimpeachable universality: "The center relegated to the midst of other centers, it is the formation of a constellation that we witness, where language, released from its *exclusive pact with the nation*, free, from now on of all its powers other than those of poetry and of imagination, will have as its only borders those of the spirit."[2]

By addressing the specific question of what *le monde* (the world) is or might be in the "world literature in French" project, this essay will show that the world literature system is both a broadening and yet limiting force, reinforcing the "center" while at the same time resisting it. Hailing from the Caribbean region (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Haiti) but now living and working in Western metropolitan centers (New York, Montreal, Paris), Maryse Condé, Edouard Glissant, Dany Laferrière, Lyonel Trouillot, and Gary Victor all straddle and travel the *spaces* of contact between margins and centers, mediating the continual flow of movement between and among cultures of the world. Given the creolized, hybrid forms of geopolitical and discursive belonging occupied by the francophone Caribbean participants of this project, I suggest that they are more attentive—more attentive, that is, than Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud, the proponents of the original manifesto—to the legacies of erasure and exclusion, as well as to the interpenetrations, accommodations, and negotiations of the material and of the symbolic realms that constitute the *monde*. I also look more closely at the essays by the Caribbean signatories (Condé, Glissant, Trouillot, Laferrière, and Victor) as perhaps a preferred starting point for a redesigned, more nuanced manifesto or program that meets the intended objectives of the *littérature-monde* project.

## Reworlding French Literature

In both the manifesto "Pour une 'littérature-monde' en français" ("For a 'World Literature' in French") and the follow-up collection of essays by the same title (but without the "en français"), Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud insist on the fact that French literature, locked up within the material and symbolic boundaries of metropolitan France, runs the risk of not being able to speak to the complex and shifting political, economic, social, and literary realities of the world. Le Bris and Rouaud propose a world literature in French as a means of rescuing literature in general and French literature in particular from its own "narrow conception" reduced to nothing more than a simulacra, "[a rite] of passage by which certain coteries recognize and perpetuate themselves."[3] The birth of a world literature in French participates in the present moment of modern globalization, whose guiding principle assumes that the explicit processes of opening

2 Ibid. (emphasis mine).
3 Michel Le Bris, "Pour une littérature-monde en français," in Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud, eds., *Pour une littérature-monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), 29. All references to individual essays are hereafter cited in the text. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

borders will lead to the disappearance of differentiation, to an all-leveling homogenization of the world.

As Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih argue, modern globalization (and by extension the littérature-monde project) assumes that "ethnic particularity and minoritized perspectives [can be] contained within and easily assimilated into the dominant forms of transnationalism . . . within the space of increasing global integration brought on by globalizing forces in communication, migration and capital flow, within the circulation of global cultures, ideas, and capital."[4] Lionnet and Shih's articulation of modern globalization recalls Gayatri Spivak's earlier formulation of the "worlding" processes underpinning Western imperial projects. Spivak understands *worlding* to be those processes that obscure the workings of and which therefore naturalize and legitimate Western imperial dominance over the Third World, particularly the "role of literature in the production of cultural representation" in the domain of narrative history. World literature, in this formulation, deploys a Eurocentric imperial inscription of the world outside of the West as a terra incognita of "distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation." The easy assimilation of the "Third World" in Western literary spheres, according to Spivak, "allows us to forget [this process of] 'worlding' even as it expands the empire of the literary discipline."[5]

In calling for openness to the world in the French literary sphere, littérature-monde inadvertently obscures, and thereby naturalizes and legitimates, the cultural, political, economic, and social processes that bring France into the world and the world into France. In other words, according to the manifesto, the only way for the French nation and its culture, supposedly on the brink of disintegration, to regenerate is for France to *reworld* itself, that is, to recover a place of pride within the "New Global World" of cultural hybridization across fluid and porous boundaries by *re*integrating into its fold (this former Old World power) the rich, "authentic," and relatively intact distant cultures of what was formerly considered the New World. Literature, but most especially French literature, will again have novel propositions and interpretations of the world to offer, "viewed from Africa, from Asia, or the Caribbean, from China, or Iran, North America, or from Vietnam" (29).

The manifesto and the subsequent collection of essays in effect collapse the complex set of shifting geopolitical interactions, cross-cultural encounters, and transcontinental commerce of commodities and ideas of *le monde actuel* (the current world) into a world community characterized by the erasure of national, ethnic, and cultural origins. By positing the inherently postnational, immigrant, and exilic principle of abstract transnational, transcultural world interactions, the manifesto foregoes any thoroughgoing analysis of the economic, political, and cultural processes that its very existence has set in motion, on the one hand, or of the historical specificity of the contributors, their locus of enunciation, and the existing relations

4 Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, *Minor Transnationalisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 6–7.

5 Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," in "'Race,' Writing, and Difference," ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr., special issue, *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 243.

of power that form the backdrop of this world literature in French project, on the other. More precisely, the desire of the world literature in French project to express a collectivity does not adequately attend to the double risk of converting the putative failure of French literature to engage the world into a theoretically suspect form of *diversity* or reducing inequalities into an abstract notion of *difference*. Literature that accounts for and engages with a world in which the nation-state, its traditional core, and its borders have been rendered unrecognizable through hitherto unknown forms of transnational exchange and interaction remains, as laid out in the manifesto, more a promise than a reality.

## Literature and the *Tout-monde*

In "Solitaire et solidaire," an interview originally published in *Terrain* in 2003 and included in *Pour une littérature-monde*, Edouard Glissant goes to the heart of the theoretical impasse opened up by the manifesto: "Today, there are no more poets or novelists, there are only poetics. We can summarize things in this way: for me, the highest degree is world-totality . . . for if our explorations of terrestrial and marine relations are over, the exploration of the relations of cultures in the world are not" (83–84). Littérature-monde written in French must confront its competing desires to (1) create a literary space that is not bound by the old binaries of the local/global, North/South, colonizer/colonized; and (2) elaborate a literature written in local, national, or global spaces across different and multiple spatialities and temporalities.

The answer is to be found in the *Tout-monde*, or world-totality, a rearticulation of Relation, a central concept in Glissant's thought. Relation is the key to overcoming the rupture and brutal dislocation caused by the Atlantic slave trade in the Caribbean collective consciousness:

> Our historical consciousness could not be deposited gradually and continually like sediment . . . but came together in the context of shock, contraction, painful negation and explosive forces. This dislocation of the continuum, and the inability of the collective consciousness to absorb it all, characterize what I call non-history."[6]

As a result of this brutal wrenching from the historical continuum, Glissant argues in his *Poetics of Relation* against the vertical "totalitarian drive of a single, unique root" (the singular History which fueled colonial conquest), favoring instead a transversal, rhizomatic principle of connectivity (multiple histories), the embeddedness of roots with other root formations, and the dependencies of roots on other roots. The explosive forces that came together in the Caribbean region were "not merely an encounter, a shock (in Segalen's sense), a *métissage*, but a new and original dimension allowing each person to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open, lost in the mountains and free beneath the sea, in harmony and errantry."[7]

6 Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, trans. J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989), 61–62. Originally published in French as *Le discours antillais* (Paris: Seuil, 1981).
7 Edouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 34, 14.

Glissant initially saw Relation as part of colonized peoples' struggle for liberation; "Now, however," Celia Britton points out, "Relation has become a global *reality*," the *Tout-monde*.[8] The Tout-monde is not synthesis; it is a dynamic process, the natural result of the processual, always negotiated interactions in the complex "encounter of heterogeneous elements that in a given location [interweave] to yield an unprecedented outcome."[9] The commitment in *Pour une littérature-monde* to explore the wide diversity of quite different social, economic, political, cultural, and linguistic forces of production in a transnational, transcultural world must be made in full recognition of the always already hybrid and creolized nature of culture(s), with allowances made for the chaotic unpredictability of individuality and difference without entirely foreclosing legibility and communication all together.

In "Solitaire et solidaire" (the title is borrowed from Albert Camus) Glissant is able to take his contribution to the littérature-monde project even further by directly addressing the question of the poet's relationship to and entanglement with and in the world:

> I believe I have always obeyed an instinct which leads me to consider that the highest object of poetry is the world: the world in progress, the world such as it jostles us about, the world such as it is obscure to us, the world such as we would like to enter it. (77)

In direct intertextual dialogue with Albert Camus,[10] Glissant rejects (1) the paralysis of the poet who, in the face of the "absurdity" of the world, at best seeks refuge in a conception of art for art and/or is condemned to silence, and (2) the alternate extreme of submitting the work of art to the ideological demands and activist commitments of sectarian politics. To be more precise, if we substitute the word *poet* for *island* in the relational processes of the Tout-monde, "the [poet] is a floating symbol for that zone of anxiety where individual consciousness enters history, a secretive marker with an undecipherable sea of global change."[11] In Glissant's model of related rootedness, the poet is the point of departure for a new imaginative space that reconnects the multitude of contingent political possibilities elaborated in multiple and differing local contexts (*solitaire*) and the possibility for these different and multiple spatialities and temporalities to communicate with each other (*solidaire*) in the complexity of world-totality (*Tout-monde*) (82–83).

8 Celia Britton, "Globalization and Political Action in the Work of Edouard Glissant," *Small Axe*, no. 30 (November 2009): 2 (italics in original).

9 Edouard Glissant, "The French Language in the Face of Creolization," in Tyler Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele, eds., *French Civilization and Its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race* (New York: Lexington, 2003), 109.

10 Glissant refers to the short story "Jonas, or The Artist at Work," in which Camus takes up the question of the relationship between the artist and the society. Jonas, the young painter, facing the empty canvas, must resolve the conflict between his interior world (*solitaire*) and his need for solidarity in the world (*solidaire*). With no clear and rational solution available to him, Jonas is condemned to the absurdity of the world, which paralyzes all artistic expression. See Albert Camus, "Jonas, ou l'artiste au travail," in *L'exil et le royaume* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 103–42.

11 J. Michael Dash, "Postcolonial Thought and the Francophone Caribbean," in Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, eds., *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction* (London: Arnold, 2003), 234.

## Caribbean Literature / World Literature

As the site for more than four hundred years of several European empires' and nations' intense competition for control of people, land, and resources, the Caribbean archipelago is today an especially complex geopolitical and discursive terrain.[12] Given the multiple and often violent cultural, economic, political, and social interactions, and the legacies of internal and intercontinental exchange that mark the region's history, the Caribbean provides a compelling example of the interpenetrations, accommodations, and negotiations inherent in the multiple heterogeneous encounters the *solitaire* (opacity) and the *solidaire* (relation) in the Tout-monde. In this section, I will look more closely at how, in practice, the Caribbean contributors to the essay collection *Pour une littérature-monde* offer a potential bridge across the fundamental theoretical impasse opened up by the manifesto.

"Liaison dangereuse," the very evocatively titled Maryse Condé essay, opens with a declaration: "I love to repeat that I write neither in French nor Creole. But in Maryse Condé" (205). Condé's own struggle to forge a path between French (the language of the colonizer) and Creole (inextricably linked to the history of slavery) traces the continued effects of the macrostructures of society within the daily lived experiences of Antillean peoples. Particularly attentive to the ways colonial violence and alienation have been internalized in the Caribbean, the French and Creole languages serve here as a metaphor for the tensions and the pain of the Antillean Self that is torn and split. Condé's essay suggests, however, that the interaction between these two languages is not always charged with violence and can at times be a "dangerous liaison," at once sensual and flirtatious. The only Antillean girl in her kindergarten class in the seventh arrondissement in Paris, Condé recalls her teacher continually praising her spoken French while showering her with kisses: "'Elle parle si bien!' répétait la maîtresse en me couvrant de baisers" (207). The author's assertion that she writes "Maryse Condé" demonstrates how an individual, inhabited by any number of cultural, racial, linguistic, gender, and sexual differences, can move among and communicate all of them.

Condé's own association with the littérature-monde project—which carries within its very formulations the risk of collapsing difference, location, and particularity into a uniform sameness—is itself a "dangerous liaison." Condé's essay voices the urgent need to conceive littérature-monde as a community of differences, negotiated and tested in the midst of often intransigent conflicts and power differences. The highly complex, syncretic nature of the Caribbean cultural space, forged in the universe of the plantation, is a case in point:

12 The body of work reflecting on and theorizing this complex Caribbean cultural terrain is extensive. Besides Edouard Glissant, see Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, trans. James E. Maraniss (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992); J. Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998); Wilson Harris, *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1983); and Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), and *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean* (Mona: Savacou, 1974).

> One can but only admire the power of the spirit of the slave who contradicts the negative assertions constantly recited against him. The slave transforms this space of incarceration, created for the production of barrels of sugar and the material enrichment of the white masters, into a laboratory in which to work out a religion, music, a language that would transport a rich oral literature, still very much alive. (206)

Condé underscores the continuities and adaptations of the binaries of colonizer/colonized, opacity/relation, the dangerous liaisons that mark the struggle to articulate a specifically Caribbean cultural identity. And Condé makes clear, here, that it is in the realm of the everyday lived experience that Caribbean people can, and are often able to, piece together the broken fragments of Antillean history and identity, consciously negotiating the restraints of fixed roles and boundaries.

But perhaps the most insightful aspect of Condé's essay is her awareness of the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the binaries that structured the European colonial project and that have simultaneously both survived and been folded into the cultural fabric of the Caribbean archipelago. Often competing imperatives and paradoxical loyalties emerge from the imposition of and the continued domination by the language and culture of the colonizer, on the one hand, and, on the other, the outright rejection of this colonial past in favor of singular Caribbean history championed by the movement in praise of creoleness. Rather than privileging one position over the other, "Liaison dangereuse" demonstrates how, in practice, Caribbean cultural practitioners have had to improvise and fashion new cultural practices (drawing in the stock of legends, manners, idioms, style, and history of local folk cultures) and frameworks (such as magical realist writing) for rendering the unpredictable, chaotic nature of the Caribbean archipelago. Condé's essay issues a warning to Caribbean cultural artisans and intellectuals (and to those of the world literature in French project) who run the risk of, and must come to terms with, the imposition of their own share of epistemic violence on the Caribbean region and its inhabitants by employing poetic and critical models that are not able to account for the complex interpenetrations of Caribbean creolization that defy systematization or holistic explanations.

In intertextual dialogue with Condé, Dany Laferrière's "Je voyage en français" ("I Travel in French") offers a playful rejoinder to the continuing power struggles of the French Caribbean, where language choice is surrounded by ambiguity and torn loyalties. In his essay Laferrière shows how he quite literally participates in the opposing spheres of both the metropolitan and the subaltern. Laferrière does not however see this as a poetic dilemma but rather as a natural consequence of the often playful pragmatism, the accommodations and negotiations that occur across the seemingly insurmountable linguistic and cultural divides of the Caribbean:

> I have wasted too much time commenting the fact that I write in French. And debating the fact that it is not my native tongue. Finally, all this appears to me today rather theoretical, and even a bit ridiculous. This French language has infiltrated my neurons and its melody is the rhythm of my blood. I would be able to recognize its cadence in an obscure Borneo back-alley. In the

> past, I would never have admitted such a truth for fear of discovering the colonized in me. But the colonized, I can say it, is he who does not see nor understand himself. (87)

Moving beyond the specific power struggles of the French Caribbean, Lafferière puts pressure on the manifesto's critique of literature's exclusive "pact with the nation." Lafferière takes as given that the French language's own "entanglement" in and with the world is already a decentering of metropolitan France and its domination of those at the margins. More important, Laferrière offers his specific, localized experience of the world from and in the Caribbean as an example of the multiple spaces of participation, exchange, and negotiation where culture can be and is produced and performed without the necessary mediation of the metropolitan center (in Laferrière's case, those centers include Montreal, New York, and Miami for the Haitian diaspora, and Paris for francophone Caribbean-Haitian writers). In fact, France, the French language, and even Québec's own struggle for political and linguistic autonomy in Canada are as much "anchored" in and "entangled" with and in the very processes of exchange and interaction that occur across the linguistic, national, and transnational boundaries of the world (89).

Frustrated by the persistently recurring question in literary circles particularly in Canada and France—"Êtes-vous un écrivain haïtien, caribéen ou francophone?" (Are you a Haitian, Caribbean, or francophone writer?)—Lafferière responds with his controversial 2008 novel *Je suis un écrivain japonais* (*I Am a Japanese Writer*).[13] In it, Laferrière reflects on and ultimately dismisses all literary and cultural nationalisms as limitations of the writers imaginary. Lafferière's travels, both actual and literary, are transnational not because they *transcend* nation, language, and culture but because these geopolitical, discursive spaces are always already "anchored" in and "entangled" with and in the intermingled, hybrid, creolized *translocal* spaces that make up the world. Therefore Laferrière can and continues to commit to and invest in his own unprecedented, unpredictable, idiosyncratic Haitian-Caribbean history, moving about in the company of the French language without having to adopt a theoretical, abstract principle to accommodate the multiple local contexts (opacities) of the world in which he travels.

One of the motivations of Michel Le Bris and Jean Rouaud, the proponents of the "Pour une littérature-monde en français" manifesto, was to make the case that the vague, often problematic, neocolonial, and arguably racist notion of *francophonie* had outlived its usefulness. Littérature-monde's postnationalist, antiessentialist inclusiveness, they contend, champions the novel imaginative interpretations of the world brought to French literature by authors "d'outre-mer." Gary Victor and Lyonel Trouillot address, albeit in different ways, the fact that the contributors to the essay collection never fully account for their differing and often divergent relationships to the French language, to France, and with French republican universalism and the lingering legacies of colonial conquest. Gary Victor's and Lyonel Trouillot's essays reflect directly on the persistent and continued epistemic violence that metropolitan

13 Dany Laferrière, *Je suis un écrivain japonais* (Paris: Grasset, 2008).

centers continue to inflict on marginalized regions and groups, particularly in this new form: *littérature-monde en français*.

"Littérature-monde ou liberté d'être," Gary Victor's contribution to the collection, goes to the heart of the problem: "The concept of world literature is important, if not to say essential. But how do we overcome the power of the North which was built at once on its economic supremacy, and on its appropriation of all the tools of communication, the principle result of which is precisely the cultural alienation of the periphery, which is only able to function according to the demands and the watchful eye of the center?" (317–18). Victor goes even further when he asks, "How do we overcome globalization, which is nothing more than, in effect, the stranglehold of a center on the world, thus the marginalization of authenticities, if not their destruction?" (318). The essay is an internal injunction to the project's somewhat hasty endorsement of postnationalist, globalized forms of cultural expression. Victor's concern is that the movement's stance does not sufficiently consider the continuing political, social, cultural, economic, and aesthetic domination exerted by metropolitan France and therefore obfuscates the neocolonial, gender, and class inequalities that a world literature in French is intended to correct.

Lyonel Trouillot's "Langues, voyages et archipels" develops on and extends Victor's formulation that literature is "a space of absolute liberty, a place where every experience, every fantasy, every folly is possible. A place where the human being can constantly create and rediscover him- or herself" (316). For Trouillot, "human beings are in the world without accepting to be reduced to its immediate, perishable condition, and writing is precisely one of those places for the discovery and the expression of this refusal" (202). Trouillot rejects the universalizing tendencies of littérature-monde and proposes instead *écriture-monde*: "The idea of a world-writing in French can only claim it's subversive power in the principle of transcribing and interpolating the multiple realities, the multiple dreams of human beings, such as they are molded by history, and in revolt against history. And in the plurality of genres and forms" (ibid.).

Trouillot's écriture-monde acknowledges that the multiple particularities and adaptive transformations of the components that make up the current cultural mix of the Caribbean islands "molded by history and in revolt against history" are no less universal than those emanating from metropolitan France. "All literatures," says Trouillot, "only can speak to the parcels of the world, its fragmentation" (201). Trouillot shows how all forms of artistic expression, but particularly in the Caribbean, have had to accept that *readers* use knowledge of their own local histories, the fracturing of their own specific material and symbolic realms, when they *read* their neighbors, suspecting historical processes similar to the ones they know. "In the Caribbean . . . we understood," Victor makes clear, "that creative inspiration did not have boundaries and that above and beyond languages, above and beyond nationalities, only beauty and the search for truth mattered" (317). The implications of the cultural diversity, syncretism, and instability at work in the Caribbean advocated by Victor and Trouillot is seen as essential by cultural critics of the region, such as J. Michael Dash, who argues that the

Caribbean islands have at once a "shared heritage, parallel sensibilities, and commonality of interests that link them across the region, beyond nation, race and language" while occupying an important geopolitical position in the vast cultural, economic, political, and social networks of the globalized world.[14]

Read together, Condé, Glissant, Trouillot, Laferrière, and Victor each demonstrate the processual nature, the repeated rehearsals and negotiations in the quest to articulate a separate, coherent subjectivity, pierced by the multiple wounds and the fragmented histories of the Caribbean region. Moving both outward and inward between private interiority (opacity) and heteroglossic, heterogeneous exteriority (relation), these writers propose a methodological model for "dismantling notions of nation, ground, authenticity, and history"[15] by focusing on the dialectic of local and global forces that characterize the Caribbean. This critical practice of exploring the cultural diversity, syncretism, and instability of the local *translocally* offers a compelling model of literature that speaks to the complex and shifting political, economic, social, and literary realties of both the Caribbean and the world.

The desire of the littérature-monde project to engage with and to give voice to a global collectivity represents a necessary broadening of the literary sphere, fostering new, dynamic interactions and exchange across transnational and transcultural boundaries. But as I have shown, world literature in French as a form of cultural expression must yield to and render visible a world in a state of perennial flux, where the localized ideas of nation, culture, and identity are being revised and improvised in new, unprecedented, and unpredictable encounters. It is these dynamic processes of creolization and relation that keep nations, cultures, and identities in motion and prevent their crystallization into reified objects or their theorization into overly abstract entities. By paying attention to the processes of exchange and interaction that occur across the linguistic, cultural, and transnational boundaries of the Caribbean context, the francophone Caribbean contributors to the littérature-monde project help to develop our understanding of what it means to articulate the contours of the world, in a world literature in French.

14 J. Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 3.
15 Ibid.