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Family History as a Transcultural Paradigm. A Postmigrant Approach to "*Ajar-Paris*" and "*Là où les chiens aboient par la queue*"

Abstract

This article opens a dialogue between postmigration studies and transcultural studies. After briefly outlining the postmigration turn, it applies this perspective to the Francophone novels *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue* by Estelle-Sarah Bulle and *Ajar-Paris* by Fanta Dramé. It argues that narrating family histories fosters the emergence of a transcultural counter-imaginary of France, reshaped by immigration. After having identified the "migrantology" that these novels challenge, the analysis shows how the protagonists generate knots of memory linking France's history to multiple places and cultures. On this basis, it contends that the families depicted in the novels offer a transcultural paradigm for imagining a fluid sense of belonging to France, grounded in partial connections across diverse cultures.

Keywords

Postmigration; *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue*; *Ajar-Paris*; family history; cultural connections

As developed in German-speaking sociology and cultural studies, the postmigrant paradigm clearly embraces a transcultural perspective. Aiming to move beyond the binary of migrants and non-migrants,¹ it calls for abandoning approaches that preserve divisions between the cultures brought into contact through migration. Instead, it positions migrants and their descendants at the center of European societies, which, in turn,

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¹ Anne Ring Petersen and Moritz Schramm, '(Post-)Migration in the Age of Globalisation: New Challenges to Imagination and Representation', *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, 9.2 (2017), 1–12.

come to regard migration as an intrinsic part of their history and cultural landscape.²

More specifically, as a polysemic concept, postmigration explores the issues of cultural diversity in Europe on several levels. In its first and most limited sense, it refers to a specific generation: individuals who are descendants of migrants but have not themselves experienced migration. On the one hand, these individuals are marked by the systemic racism they face; on the other hand, their hybridity allows them to develop new forms of belonging within the European space.³ The second sense of postmigration extends to society as a whole. A postmigrant society is thus defined as one transformed by postcolonial and guest-workers immigration. Following Foroutan's foundational theses, such a society takes shape through five major dynamics—recognition, negotiations, ambivalences and ambiguities, alliances, and antagonisms.⁴ Finally, in its third sense, postmigration functions as an analytical perspective that can be applied to literary and artistic works. It seeks to capture how these works represent and question the various negotiations—identity-based, political, historical, memorial, and cultural—set in motion by migration, both on individual and collective levels.⁵

To date, contemporary Francophone literatures have received relatively little attention from the conceptual and analytical frameworks of postmigration. Despite the pioneering work of Geiser,⁶ which focuses exclusively on authors descended from migrants, substantial critical reflection remains necessary to develop a postmigrant approach to Francophone literary works. This article aims to contribute to that reflection through a comparative analysis of *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue* by Estelle-Sarah Bulle and *Ajar-Paris* by Fanta Dramé.

² Regina Römhild, 'Postmigrant Europe: Discoveries beyond Ethnic, National and Colonial Boundaries', in *Postmigration: Art, Culture, and Politics in Contemporary Europe*, ed. by Anna Meera Gaonkar and others (Bielefeld: transcript, 2021), pp. 45–56.

³ Erol Yildiz and Marc Hill, 'In-between as Resistance: The Post-Migrant Generation between Discrimination and Transnationalization', *Transnational Social Review*, 7.3 (2017), 273–86; Florian Ohnmacht and Erol Yildiz, 'The Postmigrant Generation between Racial Discrimination and New Orientation: From Hegemony to Convivial Everyday Practice', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44.16 (2021), 149–69.

⁴ Naika Foroutan, 'The Post-migrant Paradigm', in *Refugees Welcome? Difference and Diversity in a Changing Germany*, ed. by Jan-Jonathan Bock and Sharon MacDonald (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019), pp. 142–67.

⁵ Sten Pultz Moslund and Anne Ring Petersen, 'Introduction: Towards a Postmigrant Frame of Reading', in *Reframing Migration, Diversity and the Arts: The Postmigrant Condition*, ed. by Moritz Schramm and others (New York; London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 67–74.

⁶ See, for instance, Myriam Geiser, *Der Ort transkultureller Literatur in Deutschland und in Frankreich: Deutsch-türkische und frankomaghrebinische Literatur der Postmigration* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015).

Drawing on the first definition of postmigration, it concentrates on two novels written by postmigrant women authors featuring postmigrant characters. Building on reflections on postmigrant society and perspective, it seeks to demonstrate how these novels cultivate a fluid imaginary that transcends national boundaries. It argues that, by representing the ways in which the postmigrant generation narrates its family history, the novels of Dramé and Bulle operate as counter-discourses that aim to rethink France in light of the cultural diversity introduced by immigration.

To support this hypothesis, the analysis will first demonstrate how the two novels draw on specific events from family history to evoke the dominant discourse they seek to deconstruct—one that excludes migrant and postmigrant minorities from France's imagined community. The comparative study will then show that, in contrast to the dominant discourse they critique, the works of Dramé and Bulle construct a transcultural history embodied in family memory connecting France to numerous other places. Finally, it will be argued that, while depicting a transcultural memory, the family offers a model for understanding a fluid sense of belonging in France, grounded in a network of partial connections between cultural systems.

The Persistence of Migrantology

In *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue* and *Ajar-Paris*, postmigrant individuals appear as characters engaged in collecting and writing the history of their immigrant parents. In Dramé's novel, the narrator—sharing the author's name—traces the life of her father, who migrated from Mauritania to France. Bulle's work is explicitly characterized as a polyphonic narrative crafted by a woman who gathers the testimonies of her Guadeloupean father and aunts settled in metropolitan France. In both cases, the postmigrant protagonists take up the task of writing their family history because they possess only a postmemory of migration. Following Hirsch's theories, they possess merely an indirect and fragmented memory of the event from which they descend—an event whose trace is inscribed in their very existence.⁷ In other words, they rely on earlier generations to access a narrative of migration they have never personally experienced. The protagonists become aware of the imminent disappearance of these earlier generations. They therefore decide to record their parents' memories in writing, ensuring that these stories do not vanish

⁷ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

with them. Writing thus becomes an act aimed at preserving and transmitting the migration narrative within the family history.

The act of transmission, however, is not confined to the private sphere. In a reflexive gesture, the novels of Dramé and Bulle present themselves as texts authored by the postmigrant women they depict. Within the fictional universe, these texts carry a clear appeal to be published and circulated in French society. In other words, they are inseparable from a desire for recognition, aiming to illuminate the history of migrants and their descendants—a history that remains largely invisible in France. In this respect, through several significant scenes, both novels underscore the process of invisibilization and exclusion affecting those connected to immigration. They occasionally make audible the dominant discourse that reduces France's imagined community⁸ to a White majority, in which migrants and postmigrants have no place.⁹ As articulated in the works of Bulle and Dramé, this dominant discourse draws on what Römhild terms “migrantology”.¹⁰ By confining the characters to their status as migrants or postmigrants, it renders them perpetually foreign in the country they inhabit. It continues to position them in opposition to the national community, which, through the binary division between migrants and non-migrants, maintains its purported cultural homogeneity.

In *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue*, migrantology is particularly evident because it operates through a form of paradox. As Aunt Antoine points out, Guadeloupeans, of whom she is one, hold French nationality and should therefore not be categorized as immigrants: “Mais ce sont tous des étrangers, alors que moi, je suis aussi française que ces Blancs qui me prennent pour une Africaine”.¹¹ Yet, as this excerpt immediately demonstrates, Guadeloupeans are “migrantized” because of the color of their skin. Like all postcolonial immigrants to whom they are assimilated, they are excluded from France's White majority. This exclusion is reflected in the racism from which the postmigrant protagonist, like her father and aunts, cannot escape. She recalls that, after being attacked by a dog, she was confronted for the first time with contempt for her skin color: the animal's owner remarked that, since the victim was Black, he should have no problem. In doing so, he explicitly asserts a hierarchy between himself and the Antillean minority. Such a hierarchy inevitably entails the invisibilization of the dominated group. At this point, bringing together

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

⁹ On “White France”, see François Durpaire, *France blanche, colère noire* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006).

¹⁰ Römhild, p. 46.

¹¹ Estelle-Sarah Bulle, *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue* (Paris: Liana Levi, 2018), p. 11.

colonial history and the history of migration, the novel denounces the absence of Antillean figures in the French landscape. Completely erased from the national narrative, these figures are also absent in contemporary French society. As the postmigrant narrator explains, Antilleans are underrepresented in higher education and occupy no prestigious positions in metropolitan France. For the Guadeloupean minority settled in Europe, there is, therefore, no model of success. Recognition and equality appear to remain an impossible horizon:

La France se renvoyait à elle-même l'image d'un peuple lisse, sans spécificités ethniques. [...] la notion d'égalité des chances commençait sérieusement à perdre de sa force, notamment face aux réalités vécues par les premières générations d'enfants d'immigrés, nés en France, diplômés, chômeurs.¹²

As this excerpt clearly illustrates, discrimination ultimately reflects the absence of a place for Guadeloupeans living in metropolitan France. They confront a vision of France that refuses to embrace the cultural diversity brought about by population movements.

In *Ajar-Paris*, the narrator likewise underscores migrantology. Throughout her narrative, she offers a thoughtful reflection on terminology:

On a souvent tendance à décrire les gens qui partent par le résultat de leur exil, plutôt que par le point de départ, des immigrés plutôt que des émigrants, avec tout ce que le premier terme véhicule de péjoratif [...]. On les qualifie en fonction de ce qu'ils sont en arrivant, et non pas de ce qu'ils étaient en partant. Cela permet sûrement de leur rappeler qu'ils ne sont pas d'ici, qu'ils ne le seront probablement jamais.¹³

The protagonist explicitly critiques the power relations embedded in migrantology. She points out that the label “immigré” is far from a neutral descriptor; rather, it functions as a discursive device aimed at excluding individuals from France’s national community. This exclusion manifests in everyday experiences. An emblematic scene occurs at the prefecture, where the narrator’s father goes to renew his identity card. Personifying the racism entrenched within state institutions, the administrative officer deems it impossible that, given his skin color and his boubou, he could possess French nationality. As the protagonist observes, the migrant is subjected to a perpetually renewed process of othering: “Même après trente ans, il était toujours perçu comme un étranger”.¹⁴ This process results in a profound lack of recognition for the father: he repeatedly

¹² Bulle, p. 95.

¹³ Fanta Dramé, *Ajar-Paris* (Paris: HarperCollins, 2023), p. 66.

¹⁴ Dramé, p. 168.

encounters people and discourses that question his belonging to France, despite his longstanding and official ties to the country. This lack of recognition is further reflected in the low-status jobs he has held—successively working as a baggage handler, janitor, and garbage collector. As portrayed in the novel, the janitorial position is particularly illustrative of the erasure imposed on migrants. Forced to clean and vacate the premises before other employees arrive, the father becomes a symbol of migrant minorities rendered invisible by—and for—the dominant groups in France.

Memory Between Worlds

As the narrator of *Ajar-Paris* demonstrates through her critique of the term “immigré”, these novels function as counter-discourses that challenge the dichotomy between migrants and non-migrants. By recounting their families’ migratory histories, the protagonists break with the paradigm of “root-identity”, which, according to Édouard Glissant, underpins the ideology of modern nation-states.¹⁵ This paradigm posits that each national community traces back to a single origin, legitimizing an exclusive claim to its territory—a people would rightfully occupy the place where its root is located. In both narratives, however, the postmigrant protagonists reveal the impossibility of claiming a singular origin. They enact what Glissant terms Digenesis: their history begins simultaneously in France, where they were born, and in the places from which their parents departed.¹⁶ This Digenesis becomes particularly evident when they decide to preserve and transcribe the memory of migration. The family past proves incompatible with a memory anchored in a single geographic or cultural space. Instead, the two postmigrant women construct narratives that align with the knots of memory theorized by Rothberg: in order to tell their family story, they must connect the various cultural worlds in which traces of their past remain.¹⁷ In doing so, they embed diversity within the French history to which they belong by birth. They develop a rhizomatic memory that links France, from which they speak, to numerous other histories, cultures, and spaces.

Through its polyphonic narration, *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue* formally embodies this rhizomatic memory: the intertwining of voices

¹⁵ Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation: Poétique III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), pp. 23-29.

¹⁶ Édouard Glissant, *La Cohée du lamentin: Poétique V* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), pp. 37-38.

¹⁷ Michael Rothberg, ‘Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de mémoire to Nœuds de mémoire’, *Yale French Studies*, 118-119 (2010), 3-12.

reflects the network of histories they carry. This network is further personified in Aunt Antoine: “Je crois qu’elle était heureuse que je la reconnaisse comme celle qui relie le passé au présent, la Guadeloupe à Paris, comme une racine souterraine et pleine de vie”.¹⁸ Connecting both time and place, Antoine is literally represented as a knot of memory upon which the postmigrant protagonist’s family history rests. Like her aunt, the protagonist is defined by her ability to connect memories across different locations. She recounts several personal experiences from her life in France. In two chapters, she describes the suburban landscape of Créteil, where she grew up. As illustrated in her account of her first experience with racism, she recalls multiple episodes from her youth tied to this city. Throughout the narrative, these French memories are constantly interwoven with a memory of Guadeloupe, which is itself dual. On one hand, the postmigrant shares impressions from her own stays on the Caribbean island; on the other, she collects and transcribes the memories that her father and aunts hold of Guadeloupe, which form the bulk of the novel. As she explains, she regards her parents’ memories as a fundamental component of her own identity: “Je m’y suis mise enfin, essayant de revenir au plus près de ce qu’ils m’avaient relaté avec plaisir et confiance [...]. J’espérais comprendre ainsi, avec le recul, le tour de ma propre existence”.¹⁹ The protagonist believes that, to fully illuminate her life in metropolitan France, she must take into account Guadeloupe, to which she is inextricably linked. Indeed, the memory of the Antillean island is essential for the postmigrant woman to trace, with the help of Aunt Antoine, the genealogy in which she is situated.

This memory is also essential for understanding the motives behind migration and, by extension, her presence in metropolitan France. Here, personal history intersects with the collective history of Guadeloupe. For both the father and the aunts, the reasons for leaving are partly rooted in the unequal relations between Whites and Blacks, inherited directly from the island’s colonial past. Thus, Antoine decides to leave Guadeloupe following the traumatic repression of an independence demonstration. The other aunt, Lucinde, moves to metropolitan France because she subscribes to discourses promoting the superiority of White European culture. The father, for his part, goes to Europe because, as a Black man, he sees no prospects for himself in his native island, where the White elite jealously guard their power and privileges. Through the destinies of her father and aunts, the postmigrant protagonist connects her history in France with Guadeloupe’s long colonial and political past: “J’apprenais à aimer mon histoire et la matière dont elle était faite; une succession de violences, de destins liés

¹⁸ Bulle, p. 17.

¹⁹ Bulle, p. 22.

de force entre eux, de soumissions et de révoltes”.²⁰ The use of the possessive in this excerpt is notable, reflecting the process by which Guadeloupean history becomes an integral part of the postmigrant woman’s French identity. This appropriation resonates fully with her awareness of her Digene-sis. As a mixed-race woman born in France to a Guadeloupean father and a mother from the Borinage, she understands that her existence depends on the connection of multiple worlds. Through Antoine’s story, she realizes that this connection is exponential: her Black grandfather married a White woman whose family originally came from Brittany. Consequently, she claims a plurality historically inscribed within her: “Cela ne signifiait pas que rien ne m’avait été transmis de cette terre, au contraire. Je le sentais dans mon corps, dans mes mots, dans ma façon d’appréhender la diversité du monde”.²¹ The protagonist’s family memory highlights the necessity of imagining a France open to cultural diversity, with Guadeloupean history serving both as its model and its vector.

Family memory is equally rhizomatic in *Ajar-Paris*. The novel opens with the protagonist coming to full awareness of the extensive trans-cultural connections that constitute this memory. The narrator admits that, until her grandmother’s death, she knew nothing of Mauritania, her father’s place of origin: “Je ne connaissais pas vraiment la Mauritanie”.²² This ignorance points to an incomplete knot of memory: before the narrative begins, the protagonist only accounts for a transnational history between France and Senegal, where she has already traveled and where part of her family resides. Her grandmother’s funeral, however, makes her realize that this transnational history must extend to Mauritania. By choosing to bury her grandmother in Ajar rather than Dakar, the family patriarch clearly signals that the Mauritanian village is destined to remain a place where part of the Dramé family’s memory rests. As the birthplace of both the grandmother and the father, Ajar is established as one of the starting points of the narrator’s postmigrant history. Repatriating the deceased’s body thus becomes a means of exploring the memory of this origin. By meeting numerous family members in Ajar, the protagonist can complete her transnational genealogy. She also uncovers the earliest traces of her father’s history—as highlighted in a scene in which family members point out the precise location where her father was supposedly born. More broadly, she can contemplate the arid landscape her father had to leave behind in order to build a life for himself.

Through the testimonies it conveys, *Ajar* ultimately functions as a catalyst of memory, prompting the narrator to explore and understand all the

²⁰ Bulle, p. 171.

²¹ Bulle, p. 171.

²² Dramé, p. 33.

factors that explain her father's migratory history and, by extension, her own postmigrant existence in France. This is why, after returning from the village, the protagonist asks her father to share the entirety of his transnational history, which she intends to preserve in writing: "Tout. Ton enfance et ton adolescence à Ajar, pourquoi tu as décidé de partir, ton arrivée à Paris, notre arrivée dans ta vie aussi. Tout. Depuis 1949 jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Tout".²³ As the narrator's statement indicates, she immediately frames the writing of memory around the movement from Ajar to Paris. As it gradually unfolds, her father's recollections both confirm and underscore the significance of the movement connecting places. The link between Mauritania and France is enriched by memories in Mali, where he pursued his Quranic studies, and in Senegal, where he met his future wife. His story thus reveals the transcultural network without which the narrator could not exist: without her father's journey, her parents would not have met, and she would never have been born in France. Moreover, as in Bulle's novel, this transcultural network is inseparable from a broader collective and political history. When explaining why he chose France, the protagonist's father refers to the colonial past: "comme la France leur avait imposé une histoire commune dans un passé encore récent, le pays de l'exil s'imposa par la force des choses".²⁴ Through such reflections, his migratory memory is situated within a much older transnational history of France. Consequently, Dramé's novel presents an alternative vision of French society, one in which cultural diversity and interconnection are recognized as intrinsic components of its history.

Towards Transcultural Belonging

As portrayed in both novels, transcultural memory also shapes a novel mode of belonging. Indeed, as noted, the multiplication of origins generates ties to multiple spaces for the protagonists. In this regard, the title *Ajar-Paris* is particularly illustrative. The hyphen between the two locations strikingly reflects the narrator's dual cultural affiliation. By its very form, Dramé's title also evokes the structure of a travel itinerary, emphasizing the movement and fluidity inherent in a transnational connection. Because of their family histories, the protagonists in both novels can never fully settle into or be confined to a single cultural sphere. In *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue*, this lack of fixity is explicitly emphasized by Antoine to her postmigrant niece: "Alors maintenant, petite, tu viens me voir, et tu te demandes où est notre place, à nous qui venons

²³ Dramé, p. 56.

²⁴ Dramé, p. 66.

d'un entre-deux du monde".²⁵ By using the pronoun "nous", which encompasses both migrant and postmigrant generations, the aunt grants them a shared fluid belonging, preventing them from claiming allegiance to a single cultural world. This fluid sense of belonging is also asserted by the narrator of *Ajar-Paris*, who is fully aware of her connection to multiple cultural worlds: "C'est donc en entrant à l'école que nous saisismes le concept de double culture qui allait nous amener à nous interroger toute notre vie".²⁶ By framing the interconnection of worlds as a constant source of questioning, the protagonist presents her cultural identity as inherently dynamic and perpetually in motion. In both novels, the characters' fluid belonging is rooted in partial connections.²⁷ The protagonists and their families can never fully adhere to one cultural system because of the ties they develop with another cultural sphere. These partial connections enable a form of flexibility: the characters can redefine the cultural practices of one space through the perspective offered by their second cultural affiliation. For protagonists born in France, this flexibility primarily manifests in a reconfiguration of the cultural signifiers associated with French identity.

Remarkably, in *Là où les chiens aboient par la queue*, this reconfiguration is articulated through the very notion of family. While conveying transcultural memory, the family unit simultaneously exemplifies the new cultural references that migration introduces into French society. From her first words, the postmigrant protagonist notes that, during her youth, she experienced a constant sense of ambiguity or dissonance ("constant sentiment d'ambiguïté, de décalage"²⁸) in relation to the other French people around her. In the same chapter, she traces the origins of this feeling to the family environment in which she was raised, which she describes as follows:

Je suis née dans une famille ressemblant à la famille française type, sans en avoir la structure aussi rigide et hiérarchisée: une amie d'enfance peut chez nous être considérée comme une cousine et désignée comme telle.²⁹

As this excerpt demonstrates, the notion of family is reconfigured through the broader, more inclusive kinship system of Guadeloupe. Yet,

²⁵ Bulle, p. 12.

²⁶ Dramé, p. 159.

²⁷ Marilyn Strathern, *Partial Connections* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2004); Amaury Dehoux, 'Roman de la post-migration ou paradoxes de l'identité connectée: présence et déliaison de l'Algérie dans *L'Art de perdre* d'Alice Zeniter', *Nouvelles Études francophones*, 38.1 (2023), 163–75.

²⁸ Bulle, p. 21.

²⁹ Bulle, p. 17.

despite its differences, this family model is not experienced by the protagonist as a source of exclusion. By emphasizing, through resemblance, a form of closeness to France, she immediately asserts a connection to the country of her birth. At the same time, she underscores that this connection remains partial, as her experience does not fully align with traditional French norms. As an act of embracing transcultural memory, the protagonist's narrative ultimately reflects a deliberate appropriation of her sense of dissonance as the foundation for a fluid belonging to France. In recounting and claiming her transcultural family, she affirms a conception of French identity that inherently incorporates an element of otherness, enabling her to belong to metropolitan France without relinquishing her ties to Guadeloupe.

The notion of family is equally reconfigured in Dramé's novel. The narrator of *Ajar-Paris* notes that her father created a family model that does not conform to the typical structures in France: "Inconsciemment, ils avaient reproduit au cœur de l'Europe le modèle des familles nombreuses africaines, dans lequel eux-mêmes avaient vécu, où toutes les générations étaient représentées".³⁰ Directly inspired by the cultural codes brought from Ajar, this family model explains the centrality of the grandmother in the protagonist's life, as she has always lived alongside her. According to Mauritanian traditions, respect for ancestors requires their omnipresence within the family, in contrast to the European tendency, which, according to the narrator, is to place elders in retirement homes. Yet, through the interplay of partial connections, the African family model is simultaneously transformed, as it becomes intertwined with French cultural practices. For instance, when the mother begins to work, she adopts behaviors considered European, departing from the figure of the homemaker promoted by Ajar's patriarchal traditions. The family thus becomes a site where worlds intersect. Through its interconnected structure, it metonymically reflects the narrator herself. Just as the protagonist comes from a transnational family, her identity is shaped by the transcultural paradigm embodied in the family model. As the daughter of migrants, she claims—for herself and for all post-migrants—a fluid belonging that allows them to navigate and integrate two cultural systems:

En réalité, c'est surtout plus difficile pour les parents [...], alors que leurs enfants, eux, sont riches de cette dualité et peuvent à loisir piocher dans ces deux mondes pour se construire le leur. Pas le cul entre deux chaises, le cul sur deux chaises.³¹

³⁰ Dramé, p. 125.

³¹ Dramé, p. 159.

Here, the narrator clearly emphasizes the challenge of partial connections, affirming her ability to draw from both cultural systems and her right to construct her own transcultural French identity.

The narrator's statement ultimately reflects the very status of the two novels and, more broadly, of the postmigrant literature to which they belong. Indeed, this literature rarely fits neatly into a national category, as it inherently involves the connection of multiple worlds. In this sense, postmigrant literature can clearly be defined as transareal literature, as conceptualized by Ette.³² Emerging from the diversity introduced by immigration, it exists only through a network of transnational, transcultural, and even translinguistic connections. As illustrated here through the lens of family history and memory, postmigrant literature cannot be anchored to a single territory. Rather, it occupies an uninterrupted continuum of movements linking different spaces across the globe. Through these movements, embodied by the protagonists of the two novels, French postmigrant literature demonstrates a dual plurality. On one hand, it presents diversity as an indispensable component of postmigrant French society. On the other, by representing this diversity, it creates a dialogue among the multitude of cultural perspectives that shape both the society and the history of France. In this way, literature becomes both the voice and the pathway of a plural Europe.

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³² Ottmar Ette, *Writing-between-Worlds: Transarea Studies and the Literatures-without-a-fixed-Abode*, trans. by Vera M. Kutzinski (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2016).

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