

Introduction

Black Matters, Blackness Made to Matter

Pour une fois, je me suis mis à travailler comme un nègre. Je ne sais pas si les nègres ont toujours tellement travaillé, mais enfin. (And for once, I started working like a *nègre*. I don't know if a *nègre* ever worked that hard.)—PERFUMER JEAN-PAUL GUERLAIN of the Maison Guerlain, October 15, 2010

Eh bien le nègre, il t'emmerde! (Well, you know what this *nègre* says, F . . . you!)—AIMÉ CÉSAIRE, 1961 / Audre Pulvar to Guerlain, October 18, 2010

In recent years, France has seen an extraordinary flourishing of interest in blackness, anti-blackness, and Black identity, coupled with trenchant debates about the significance of race as a socio-political question. Past and recent collectives continue to organize around these issues alongside matters of diversity, the memory of slavery, colonization, empire, and what it generally means to be French, Black, *indigènes* and a citizen within the French Republic.¹ The Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires (CRAN),² the Comité pour la mémoire et l'histoire de l'esclavage,³ and [the] Alliance Noire Citoyenne⁴ are indicative of such groups that have formed around these questions amid a number of existing (and often disconnected) anti-discrimination and anti-racism associations in France. The CRAN—a prominent “Black” lobby that emerged in response to the revolts in 2005 in the nation's poorest and racialized suburbs—is particularly interesting both for attempting to document the specificity of anti-blackness statistically, in the first survey of that nature in France (where ethnographic statistics are banned under French law), and for strategically and intentionally deploying the taboo-ridden nomenclature “Noir” to self-

represent, in direct defiance of social prohibition specific to the term. These coalitions are positioned, then, against and within the prevailing discourse of colorblind indivisibility, designating nonetheless an unmarked normative whiteness intrinsic to a powerful republican ideology expressed in the narratives, symbols, and representations of French national identity.

And yet, the prevailing difficulty and anxieties about speaking of race and blackness outside highly restricted spaces (such as certain elite French academies that are not themselves immune) illustrate just how deeply inured the taboos around these formations are. Even as new waves of scholarship and anti-racism associations focused specifically on “les Noirs” in France continue to emerge,⁵ the co-existence of the in/visibility of blackness as a conspicuous body antithetical to a universal norm *and* as something simply unreadable as universal in dynamics of race and racism is far from a full excavation specific to “Afro/Black Europeans” in France and Europe.⁶ In localized politics of blackness, Paris in particular has long been a critical site of Black internationalism, well illustrated by Négritude, the Harlem-in-Paris Renaissance, the invention of “Negrophilia,”⁷ and persistent “negrophobias” that permeate France.⁸

In reconceptualizing the socio-historical discourses, narratives, and formations underpinning the commonsense-making in France specific to its distinctively configured Black populations (self-declared and perceived), the engaging and discerning chapters in this book lay bare a rather potent conundrum residing at the heart of French society. On the one hand, there is an evident constitutional and legal discourse of colorblindness in various spheres of French life whereby race has been rejected as a meaningful category, having been discredited as biology and rightly so. Thus, there are, in effect, no French “racial minorities,” only French people; nor is there an officially recognized identity discourse as there is, for instance, in the United States or the United Kingdom, where one finds terms such as “Black Americans,” “African Americans,” and “Black British” to express such differentiation. On the other hand, the lived experience of race—more saliently, anti-blackness—belies the colorblind principle enshrined in the universalist-humanist thought upon which the Republic was forged.

In seeking to make sense of this conundrum, this book contends that blackness does indeed exist as a social, cultural, and political

formation in France, but with a distinctively French cast. In particular, the existence of distinct and very different communities of African and Afro-Caribbean descent means that to be “Black” politically and self-reflexively or “black” in ascriptive racialized discourse in France does not imply the same kind of cultural and historical homogeneity that has traditionally characterized Black life in the United States. Rather, Black identities exist in dialogue with each other and with the universalist principles of the French Republic. As several of the authors in this book argue, blackness in France is primarily a response to and rejection of anti-black racism. To be Black is, above all, to be targeted by such racism and to develop strategies to resist it.

In keeping with this central argument, nowhere is this more evident than with regard to self-declared “French Blacks” who have reached a critical and visible mass in metropolitan France and who trouble neat notions of belonging in this site. Indeed, the very emergence of the term “visible minorities” and the confrontational use of the nomenclature “Noir” instead of the once pervasive English word “Black” by individuals and groups politically mobilizing in France represent a critical shift in French political culture on the terrains of race, identity, and other categories of recognition in the public space.⁹ A very real stake in these debates includes the opening up of the Republican library of political and social categorization toward their ultimate revision and remaking. Further complicating matters is the impact of a Black American presence for over two centuries on the French socio-cultural landscape, that is, a small yet no less consequential community whose positive reception in France—real, perceived, and utilitarian—has amplified intergroup tensions and unmasked presumptions of solidarity already questioned within Black populations and communities. Racism in the United States would not only engender the chain expatriation and ultimately migration of Blacks from the United States to France, it would also provide a racially symbolic community seemingly tailor-made to buttress France’s colorblind and race-free ideals, even at the height of French colonialism. Both the African American community in Paris, and the considerable influence of African American politics and culture more generally, have helped to shape and cross-pollinated with discussions about race and blackness in French society.

These and a variety of timely and pertinent questions are thoroughly examined in this book. The chapters in this book derive from

the “France Noire—Black France: History, Politics, and Poetics” conference, held at Columbia University’s Reid Hall in Paris on June 6–7, 2008. In many ways, this event was indebted to and followed in the tradition of the diaspora dialogues and debates that preceded it, ranging from the first Pan-African Congress in 1919 at Versailles, organized by W. E. B. Du Bois and Blaise Diagne (the first Black African elected to the French National Assembly), to the Clamart Salon organized by Jane and Paulette Nardal in the 1930s, to the Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres organized by *Présence Africaine* and Léopold Sédar Senghor in 1956, to the International Congress of Black Writers and Artists in 1956 spearheaded by Alioune Diop and the commemoration of this milestone in Black empowerment fifty years later, led by *Présence Africaine* in conjunction with the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research in 2006.

Similarly, the Reid Hall gathering, comprising distinguished and luminary panelists representative of the African diaspora in its purest sense, sought not only to engage what Aimé Césaire would describe as a radical Black humanism and counter-narrative to Western interpretations of life, but also, and more directly, to interrogate preexisting, unfinished questions of race, blackness, representations, intergroup relations, and identity politics that abide in France. The depth and breadth of these ideas were captured by the eminent member of the French National Assembly and deputy from Guiana Christiane Taubira,¹⁰ who proposed and defended before the National Assembly the legislation that recognizes slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity, legislation synonymous with her name. Introduced in 1998 amid considerable governmental and public opposition, the Taubira Law was not adopted until 2001, and it was not until 2006 that the article specifying the observance of a national day of commemoration was applied. As one of the most powerful and influential Black political figures in metropolitan France, Taubira, in her keynote address, set a decisive tone for the stimulating series of discussions that took place, and this speech now serves as a brilliant, penetrating foreword to this book.¹¹

As African American editors of this book, we approach the topic of race in France, and anywhere outside the United States, cautiously, well aware that the mere mention of the word, one so freighted with a history of violence in Europe, readily invites the charge not only of imposing a U.S. construct of the United States on French social realities,

but also of supposedly promulgating or promoting communitarian ideas through an assertion of “blackness” in a French Republic, where, again, race does not officially reside, even as racism and discrimination are long-term residents.¹² While we understand the reasons for such suspicions, we reject this charge, arguing that questions of race and blackness abound in French life and are not simply imported from the United States. Rather, they are very much rooted in European and French histories. The remarks casually advanced by the prominent perfumer Jean-Paul Guerlain of the Maison Guerlain and televised in October 2010 (quoted in the epigraph) are a stark reminder of the limits of race- and colorblindness in contemporary France. The same can be said of the French-Martinican journalist Audrey Pulvar’s channeling of Aimé Césaire’s riposte—Pulvar who in 2004 was the first recognized Black television news anchor in metropolitan France.

It should not be overlooked that Césaire’s re-signifying of the epithet “nègre” (the “French N Word”) both emerges from and reflects a history of race-making in France, inseparable from slavery and colonialism.¹³ Certainly, this point has been evinced by Aimé Césaire and a range of Black French intellectuals and scholar-activists in France (including those in this book) across generations, such as Suzanne Césaire, Léon Gontran Damas, Rokhaya Diallo, Édouard Glissant, Frantz Fanon, Dieudonné Gnamankou, Léopold Senghor, Maryse Condé, Euzhan Palcy, Alexis Peskine, Françoise Vergès, François Durpaire, Romuald Fonkoua, Pap Ndiaye, Jean-Paul Rocchi, Maboula Soumahoro, Kadya Tall, Lilian Thuram, Mahamet Timera, and Louis-Georges Tin, among others, in their sundry writings, films, and activism related to *Négritude*, *Creolité*, Black subjectivities, and anti-racism in France. The “Pulvarization” of Guerlain, as Audrey Pulvar’s rejoinder has been characterized, takes on a different hue at this moment in French society when anti-other sentiments are state-driven to divert attention from real social problems that the Republic has created and has failed to address. This would include President Nicolas Sarkozy’s advocacy of legislation designed to strip of their citizenship naturalized French nationals (namely, disaffected, socially aggressed outer-city youth, indiscriminately categorized as aggressors of the police) and of the deportation of the Roma from France, a political posturing that is frighteningly evocative of Vichy’s persecution and deportation of Jews.

While we ultimately reject the colorblind model and argue for the

importance of recognizing the social reality of race, and in particular anti-blackness, in French life, we also acknowledge the importance of analyzing how and why these social formations—race and anti-blackness as well as the tensions and uneasiness evoked by these terms—have been constituted, deployed, evaded, and renamed in France to designate human existence and grotesquely define life chances. The ideas of race and blackness in France can differ significantly from those in the United States and elsewhere, and yet, what these thought-provoking chapters effectively demonstrate is that these entities constitute an integral part of France's national *patrimoine*, even when misrecognized or concealed.

This is not just an issue in France. A concept of race has appeared from the shadows of culture and ethnicity in many European countries where “culture” has long served as a proxy. Moreover, for well over the past decade, there has been a great deal of discussion among European Union members about the spread of racism in Europe, and increasingly anti-black racism, as eyes in France turn toward and away from the United States for both models and counter models to address these growing concerns. This book offers a rich opportunity for comparative analysis of these questions, while providing a framework for theorizing and retheorizing race, anti-blackness, and belonging in France and Europe in relation to those who trace their actual and symbolic origins to the continent of Africa, and expressly those who self-identify and are identified as “Noir” in French society.

There are many aspects of racialization and blackness common to the United States that appear across France: for instance, the role of race in the political domain (e.g., immigration and struggles for representation); racial profiling, law enforcement, and violence and hostility to immigrants (and those perceived as such); the concentration of Blacks in lower sectors of employment, in the worst housing and schools, and disproportionately in prisons; underrepresentation in universities; and representations in the media linked with entertainment, sports, or crime. This provides fertile grounds for systemic comparisons.

And yet, France and other European nations reveal fundamental differences compared to the United States on issues of race and blackness historically and at present. For example, plantation slavery was not focused on home territories, as was the case in the United States. Many European countries have no long-standing Black population

descended from enslaved Africans in Europe. The absence of both legalized racial apartheid and a civil rights movement and the relatively smaller urban concentrations of Blacks compared to the United States are all important differences, even as there is now a critical mass of Black citizens in metropolitan France who have been there for generations. Such differences have distinctly and respectively shaped conceptions of blackness and being, as well as national identities in these sites.

As a range of theorists persuasively argue and lived reality keenly illustrates, a meaningful definition of “France” must go well beyond the boundaries of the Hexagon to trouble neat notions of geography and belonging. The controversial national identity debate launched by President Nicolas Sarkozy at the onset of regional elections in 2010, a debate examined in this book, failed to address what constitutes French identity at this moment and in the future.¹⁴ More to the point, what the debate on national identity and the well-crafted and illuminating chapters in this book document in myriad ways is that issues of race, discrimination, racism, and religious intolerance continue to occupy center stage in French society.

Explicitly naming and interrogating the taboo and contested issue of race and its idiom, this book represents an important and distinct contribution to the critical scholarship on these issues in relation to the African diaspora and France. With its complex and dynamic portraits of Black experiences, it sits in the eye of this storm, and ultimately offers new perspectives at this critical juncture when France is confronted by an unanticipated and, for some, an unwanted plural society that must indeed ask itself: “What does it mean to be French *now*?”

This book is divided into three parts that connect and juxtapose critical themes undertaken by our contributors and illustrates the fundamental and historical role of race in both subtle and explicit dimensions of Black life in French society. It takes an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to the subject of Black France, offering analyses of key issues from different perspectives and disciplines. Black French studies is a relatively new field of inquiry, one that owes much, like many new bodies of scholarship, to the interaction of contrasting disciplinary approaches. As with African diaspora studies in the United States, Britain, and other parts of the world, it features analyses from historians, literary scholars, and social scientists. Con-

sequently, we have felt it crucial to feature these different approaches, and moreover to place them in dialogue with each other. Each part therefore features a central theme analyzed by scholars from different disciplines.

Part 1, “Theorizing and Narrating Blackness and Belonging,” examines how blackness and race are imagined and bound up with empire and the prospects of a formation of belonging that has become naturalized in hegemonic power relations. It contrasts wide-ranging theoretical perspectives on the relationship between blackness and Frenchness with more localized and personal considerations of what it means to be Black in France. Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi goes straight to the heart of the issue in her interrogation of the significance of the term “black” in relation to an idiom of blackness, both political and self-referential. Mamadou Diouf explores how the wounds left by colonialism continue to shape debates on cultural pluralism in postcolonial France. Gary Wilder also considers France’s relationship, past and present, with Black Africa, critiquing President Nicolas Sarkozy’s infamous address at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal, relative to Léopold Sédar Senghor’s notion of “Eurafrrique” and its broader implications. Finally, the personal narratives of the award-winning writers Alain Mabanckou and Jake Lamar illustrate both the challenges and rewards of Black life and Black identity in contemporary France.

Part 2, “The Politics of Blackness—Politicizing Blackness,” investigates how anti-blackness in French society, born of slavery, colonization, and immigration, politically galvanizes groups whose subjectivity (or rejection thereof) as “Blacks” defines neither a community nor a group perspective, but rather the limits of solidarity. In representing various ways of being and not being “Black” that operate, nonetheless, within the Republican model, these chapters also illustrate the real prospects for political mobilization in France. To this end, Patrick Lozès examines the presence, radicalization, and incipient populism of the “Blacks of France” through the prism of the organization of which he was until recently the president, the CRAN. In his essay Dominic Thomas explores the hot-button issue of immigration and national identity relative to ethno-racial diversity and discrimination at present in France that would give emergence to the CRAN and other anti-racism associations, such as les Indigènes de la République. Using the national identity debate of 2009 as a lens to understand diver-

gent perspectives of blackness among French Blacks, Fred Constant argues they are divided on their views of race and French national identity, and offers an insightful critique of the assumption of a monolithic “Black perspective” in France. Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga’s critique of the very meaning of “Black” for Africans and African-descended people in contemporary France takes as its point of departure the 1990s, when, as he argues, many Africans and Afro-Caribbeans increasingly referred to themselves as “Noir” in popular discourse. Lastly, Michel Giraud considers the “question of blackness” in relation to Afro-Caribbean identity in France and debates about the memory of slavery.

Part 3, “Black Paris—Black France,” considers the centrality of Paris to the Black American migration experience and France symbolically to this narrative in addition to France as a global nexus of Black culture. Ever since the First World War, the French capital has been the site of Black diaspora interactions in music, literature, and politics, a role it continues to play in the contemporary era. These essays examine how that role also became important for the creation of a sense of blackness that is also French. Marcus Bruce’s chapter is the perfect opening for this part, since it focuses on the American Negro Exhibit at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Jennifer Boittin’s chapter takes us to the interwar years to compare Black anti-imperialist activism and life in a tale of two French cities: Paris and Marseilles. Bennetta Jules-Rosette examines the socio-historical significance of Black Americans in Paris through a reconsideration of the life of Josephine Baker, emphasizing the history of the Rainbow Tribe and her utopian dream of universal solidarity. Arlette Frund concludes this part with a chapter that explores the meaning of Black France by examining a series of commemorative projects in the French capital aimed at negotiating and constructing acceptable Black identities.

Allison Blakely’s chapter serves as a fitting coda to this volume. Blakely compares the French debates over black identity to similar considerations in other European countries, illustrating the transnational significance of the study of Black France.

Conclusion: The Silences That Blind Us

Inevitably, with such a rich topic, one can easily think of other themes worthy of exploration that emerge and are submerged in a multi-

perspective examination of the Black presence in France, topics that point to both the need for and significance of “Afro/Black French Studies” in France and trained scholars in this field. Gender, everyday racism, feminist thought, film studies, intersectionality, and legal studies specific to Blacks are among other areas ripe for further exploration, since they pertain to historical and present Black experiences in France.¹⁵ Issues of performativity, especially with regard to music and to athletics, have played a major role in the “French Black” experience. From jazz to hip hop and Afro-pop, music has not only frequently defined blackness in France, but also provided spaces for Blacks in French society. Sport has also emerged as a key locus of blackness and anti-blackness, especially with regard to football at both the local and national levels. In fact, as reported by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Council of Europe’s independent human rights monitoring body, “anti-black racism persists in member States, often taking extreme forms, such as organized attacks against individuals and communities. Colour-related insults are widespread during sports activities.”¹⁶ Certainly the football quota scandal in 2011 reinforces this point while illustrating how racism and anti-black racism coalesce, as exemplified by the French Football Federation’s (FFF) attempt to limit the number of Black and Arab players on the national team.

Questions of sexuality are another field of inquiry well worth developing. The rise of Black queer theory in Britain and the United States also sets a rich agenda for studies of Black France that challenge us to consider how ideas of normative sexuality have interacted with the marginalization of racialized Others in French society and culture. In addition, the issue of uncompensated and exploitative labor, so repugnantly expressed in Paul Guerlain’s remarks, merit further study. Both slavery and immigration, two key reference points of the “Black condition” in France, are above all systems for extracting labor power. Many of the most powerful images of Blacks in France, from the African immigrants sweeping the streets of Paris with twig brooms to the Black American musicians performing in nightclubs, are about people not simply working for a living, but most certainly working for a life.¹⁷

All of these issues, and more, will hopefully receive greater scholarly analysis in years to come, and future studies will no doubt bring new insights and scholarship on these subjects specific not only to France

but also Europe writ large. We hope that this book will help further ongoing analyses and the debates that arise from them. As they said in May 1968, “Ce n’est qu’un début!”

Notes

1. The politics of national identity in France have given rise to contemporary voices of African origin (North and sub-Saharan) who are precisely calling into question what constitutes indigénity in France amid great consternation. See “L’Appel des indigènes de la république: nous sommes les indigènes de la république!” web site of *Les indigènes de la république*, January 20, 2005.

2. Well in advance of the CRAN, a number of groups engaged in what could be characterized as “Black activism” and incipient Black populism in France. As the sociologist Abdoulaye Gueye argues, “The emergence of the CRAN is neither an isolated nor a unique event in France; it is part of a continuity in a politically-informed dynamic amongst people of African descent. The CRAN is probably the most visible, the most influential, and the most generalist organization of African-descended people. . . . Prior to the emergence of the CRAN, associations such as the Collectif Égalité, founded in 1998; Africagora, created in 1999; Cercle d’Action pour la Promotion de la Diversité, founded in 2004; and the Diaspora Africaine, formed in 1985, were all committed to shaping a Black identity in France and to defending the interests and rights of people of African descent regardless of their territorial extraction, place of birth, social class, or administrative status.” A. Gueye, “Breaking the Silence: the Emergence of a Black Collective Voice in France,” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 7, no. 1 (2010): 82.

3. See the compelling work on slavery and the recentering of the enslaved at the heart of modernity by the political scientist Françoise Vergès, who is also the president of the Comité pour la Mémoire et l’Histoire de l’Esclavage: Vergès, *L’homme prédateur* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2011).

4. Alliance Noire Citoyenne emerged about five years ago and became more visible through its organized boycott of the Guerlain boutique on the Champs-Élysées and the upscale department store Galeries Lafayette. Internal to the group is a collective known as La Brigade Anti-nérophobie, which was violently expelled from the commemoration of the abolition of slavery event on May 10, 2011. The members’ wearing of their group’s t-shirt to the ceremony in the Luxembourg Gardens triggered a swift police reaction that was caught on film and went viral in France and beyond.

5. The intense interest in the role of blackness in French life has also produced a flood tide of writing that explores this question from a variety of

perspectives that are in many ways a prolongation of colonial and postcolonial work specific to the African diaspora in France. Especially since 2005, a number of works have emerged on these topics that include Moïse Udino, *Corps noirs, têtes républicaines: le paradoxe antillais* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 2011), François Durpaire, *France blanche, colère noire* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2006); Rama Yade-Zimet, *Noirs de France* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2007); Patrick Lozès, *Nous les noirs de France* (Paris: Danger Public, 2007); Jean-Louis Sagot-Duvauroux, *On ne naît pas noir, on le devient* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2004); Jean-Baptiste Onana, *Sois nègre et tais-toi!* (Nantes: Éditions du Temps, 2007); and Pap Ndiaye, *La condition noire: essai sur une minorité française* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 2008), a major study in France that treats the history and conceptualization of the nation's Blacks. For other historical studies, see P. H. Boulle, *Race et esclavage dans la France de l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Perrin, 2007); M. Cottias, *La question noire: Histoire d'une construction coloniale* (Paris: Bayard, 2007); Y. Chotard, *Les ports et la traite négrière: France* (Nantes: Anneaux de la mémoire, 2007); J. A. Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); V. Hélénon, *French Caribbeans in Africa: Diasporic Connections and Colonial Administration, 1880–1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); P. Blanchard, É. Deroo, and S. Chalaye, *La France Noire: trois siècles de présences des Afriques, des Caraïbes, de l'océan indien et d'Océanie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011). Also recommended are existing and forthcoming writings by Claude Ribbe and the award-winning historian Dieudonné Gnamankou on Alexandre Dumas, which explore and document the African ancestry and blackness of this celebrated French writer. Additionally see Gnamankou's work on the Russian poet Alexander Puskin's great-grandfather, Abraham Hannibal, in *Abraham Hannibal, l'aïeul noir de Pouchkine* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1996). See also "La pensée noire: les textes fondamentaux," in a special issue of *Le Point*, April–May 2009.

6. For an illuminating analysis of the notion of "in/visible universal bodies," see N. Puwar, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place* (New York: Berg, 2004).

7. "Negrophilia" here refers to the formation most noted during the 1920s and 1930s to identify a "white" bourgeois escapist and primitivist gaze, indeed obsession, with all things "Negro," in particular art, music, and sports. See, e.g., J. Clifford, "Negrophilia," in *A New History of French Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 901–8; and P. Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000).

8. See, e.g., B. Diop, O. Tobner, and F. Verschave, *Nérophobie* (Paris: Arènes, 2005).

9. The anti-racism association Les Indivisibles effectively deploys humor to critique this very point concerning the anxieties around the use of the word “noir” in public discourse in France, which is well illustrated in their short film *N’ayez pas peur du noir . . .*, recognized at the “France Noire/Black France” film festival in 2010 in Paris, organized by Arlette Frund, Trica Danielle Keaton, Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, and Maboula Soumahoro. See the web site of Les Indivisibles for this film.

10. In this context, it bears noting additionally that the politician, writer, and scholar Christiane Taubira is one of very few women and faces of color in the French Parliament and that in 2002 she was a noteworthy presidential candidate in France.

11. For more on Christiane Taubira’s position on the law that bears her name and her political positions, see Taubira, *Égalité pour les exclus* (Paris: Temps Présent, 2009), among her other publications.

12. “Communitarian” in France is apprehended as a divisive and rejected multiculturalism based on race that is equated primarily with the United States and the United Kingdom, and is held to be indicative of identity politics and solidarity formations predicated on intrinsic racial essentialisms.

13. In addition to the magnum opus of the promethean poet, intellectual, and politician Aimé Césaire, see his revealing views on this and other issues pertaining to slavery, colonization, and discrimination in one of his last interviews: F. Vergès, *Aimé Césaire, nègre je suis, nègre je resterai: entretiens avec F. Vergès* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2005). See also the award-winning filmmaker and writer Euzhan Palcy’s documentary *Aimé Césaire: A Voice for History*, released in 1994.

14. The national debate in 2010 on French identity was viewed skeptically and criticized heavily as yet another attempt by Nicholas Sarkozy to court ultra-conservative anti-immigrant votes, shore up bona fides in regions dominated by the National Front, and reinvigorate his controversial Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Cooperative Development. This gamble, in the end, did not benefit Sarkozy: the Left won twenty-one of the twenty-two regions.

15. In this regard, important comparative work with theorists who have already extensively written on these topics, such as Philomena Essed, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill-Collins, and Hortense Spillers, among others, would be intellectually fascinating and instructive.

16. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Annual Report, 2009, p. 9, on the web site of the Council of Europe.

17. Studies addressing these themes include J. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); J. Winders, *Paris Africain: Rhythms of the African Diaspora* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); J. Timothée, *Champions noirs, racisme blanc? La*

métropole et les sportifs noirs en contexte colonial, 1901–1944 (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2006); L. Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); P. Benson, *Battling Siki: A Tale of Ring Fixes, Race, and Murder in the 1920s* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2006); H. J. Elam and K. Jackson, eds., *Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); K. Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994); M. Warner, ed., *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); J.-P. Rocchi, “Littérature et métapsychanalyse de la race,” *Tumultes* 31 (2008); M. Samuel, *Le prolétariat africain noir en France: témoignages* (Paris: Maspero, 1978); J. Adélaïde-Merlande, *Les origines du mouvement ouvrier en Martinique, 1870–1900* (Paris: Karthala, 2000).