



# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND NON-WESTERN THOUGHT

Imperialism, colonialism and  
investigations of global modernity

edited by ROBBIE SHILLIAM

INTERVENTIONS

## 10 Alternative sources of cosmopolitanism

### Nationalism, universalism and Créolité in Francophone Caribbean thought

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#### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The recent construction of multilevel governance within and between states of the European Union has led to a plethora of commentary upon the ethical possibilities and practical pitfalls of a new ‘post-national constellation’ (Calhoun 2002; Diez and Whitman 2002; Zürn 2002).<sup>2</sup> For some celebrated commentators, such as Jürgen Habermas, the new European public sphere offers hope of a true world citizenship that can be extended outwards to progressively subsume within it the unilateralism and belligerency of the United States (Habermas 2006). Indeed, within international relations (IR) the very possibility of applying normative political theory to make sense of the anarchical international system of states has received a significant boost by the ongoing project of the European Union (Dobson 2006).<sup>3</sup> It is possible, some claim, that the cosmopolitan values of the European public sphere could come to inform an EU foreign policy. Specifically, the EU might exercise a transformative ‘normative power’ that eschews the poles of a realist proto-superpower and an idealist ‘EUtopia’ in order to substantively promote the conditions of possibility for world citizenship (Roscrance 1998; Dunne 2008; Manners 2008). Such views are not merely academic, but are evident amongst the wider European foreign policy intelligentsia.<sup>4</sup>

The liberal claims of a new normative power Europe rely heavily upon European-focused cosmopolitan thought. And within this tradition of thought there is a strong tendency to argue that a truly worldly orientation can be cultivated from an internal gaze upon European history. At worst, this leads to a definition of the ‘political’ proper that reads modern European politics back into Ancient Greece and at the same time allows for a cavalier claim that historically politics did not occur outside Europe (Žižek 1998). But more sophisticated is the argument that the European experience of Enlightenment/modernity has been of a unique quality that has prompted and required a critical introspection (Linklater 1998, p. 198–204; Habermas 2001, pp. 82–8; Delanty 2005; Beck 2006, pp. 2, 163, 166–7; Delanty 2006, p. 40; Garton Ash 2007; Habermas 2006, pp. 43–8).<sup>5</sup> Scholars argue that this introspection has necessarily led to the cultivation of a European ‘self’ that is disharmonious with itself, thus pluralized, thus cosmopolitan in orientation. For many, especially Habermas, the European

project of cosmopolitanism is read as a contestation with its own production of nationalism and barbaric fascism. Echoes of this fundamentally contested history are observed in the present too; for example, the fallout of the Balkan Wars and the formal expansion of the EU exist in the same space in which there develops an increasingly pluralistic and multilevelled idea of citizenship. This even leads many to claim that the new European identity should not define itself in relation to an external 'other', because Europe's real defining other is its own previous self. Hence, scholars such as Gerard Delanty and Ulrich Beck claim that the new European cosmopolitanism arises out of the dissonance between the old straightforwardly universalist cosmopolitanism and the worst excesses of introverted nationalism. Beck puts it like this:

Cosmopolitanism which has taken up residence in reality is a vital theme of European civilization and European consciousness and beyond that of global experience. For in the cosmopolitan outlook, methodologically understood, there resides the latent potential to break out of the self-centered narcissism of the national outlook and the dull incomprehension with which it infects thought and action, and thereby enlighten human beings concerning the real, internal cosmopolitanization of their lifeworlds and institutions.

(Beck 2006, p. 2)

There have been other renewals of cosmopolitanism within cultural studies and social theory that do not depend upon the fates of Europe. These investigations of – and prescriptions for – 'cosmopolitics' share with European scholars such as Beck a common desire to go beyond the universalist cosmopolitanism of European Enlightenment thought. In particular, the new cosmopolitics disavows the old triumphalist understanding of an elitist detached universality defined in opposition to ordinary locally bounded life. Instead, the new literature grounds cosmopolitics in the 'tenebrous moment of transition', that is to say within quotidian experiences that, defined by their concrete particularity, nevertheless have a transnational scale: the 'cosmos' and the 'politics' are thus inescapably plural and not singular and unified conditions (Robbins 1998; Cohen and Vertovec 2002; Hollinger 2002; Pollock *et al.* 2002; Banham 2007).<sup>6</sup> A key aim amongst these scholars, then, is to contextualize cosmopolitan projects: cosmopolitanism is *not* a view from nowhere, meaning it is not a particular locale masquerading as a detached space; rather, there has not been and is no privileged locale that in its particularity holds the essence of cosmopolitanism.

Crucially, some scholars have used this critique to disrupt the neat history of ideas from Zeno to Kant to Habermas in order to historically situate the European cosmopolitan tradition within practices of colonialism and imperialism (Pagden 2000; Mignolo 2002; Van Der Veer 2002). Standing at the heart of empire, after all, is a privileged position from which to judge what experiences are merely provincial. For example, Walter Mignolo posits a 'critical cosmopolitanism' that examines Enlightenment and modernity from a position of exteriority, that is, from the position of the 'to be included' colonized (Mignolo 2002, pp. 178–9). It

is instructive to contrast Mignolo's definition of a critical cosmopolitanism with that of Delanty. Delanty claims that by focusing on the European experience a critical cosmopolitanism can be produced out of '... the internal transformation of social and cultural phenomena through self-problematization and pluralization' (Delanty 2006, p. 41). The difference in emphasis caused by the lens of examination is notable: Delanty looks inwards to Europe, from the inside of Europe, and somehow is rewarded with a cosmopolitan vista; Mignolo looks inside from the outside and in doing so breaks the assumption that all that is needed to cultivate a pluralistic orientation to the world can be found within European history. At this point, it is apposite to remember Enrique Dussel's point, mentioned in Chapter 2, that thought from the periphery is more than simply derivative of the original centre, and that thought from the centre can never be critical of its own situated experienced if it presumes that there is nothing new to learn from the periphery.

To be clear, it should be noted that any attempt to cultivate a cosmopolitan outlook necessarily requires situating the 'self' within a wider context. What is not in question, then, is the necessity of self-referentialism *per se*. But for the purposes of this chapter, narcissism is used in a specific heuristic fashion to indicate a particular form of self-referentialism that, in the process of attributing meaning to the 'self', assumes that all that is important in and to the social world is already prefigured within the historical becoming of that discrete cultural self. An example of this narcissism would be to assume that, as a European, one's cultural filial links to European history act as a microcosm of global linkages, so that experiencing being European is all that is needed to experience being in the world. Indeed, one could go so far as to claim that the new European cosmopolitanism still consists of a particular masquerading as a universal. In other words, the narcissism of 'methodological nationalism', in Beck's terms, has been transposed to create a narcissism of methodological geo-cultural regionalism: from a critique of the European 'self' one cultivates the orientation to *then* find the world in the shape of European history.

And yet different worlds were always already complicating and unravelling the singular filial cultural links made necessary by the project of writing European history. However, these worlds were not simply – or even primarily – constructed through state-making, nation-building and the rights of man, but through colonialism, imperialism and slavery. It is telling that none of these later activities is included in the majority of European-focused cosmopolitan critiques as *foundations* of the barbaric side of European history. And that is because these later activities require something *other* than a reference to the European self, namely the enslaved and the colonized. This chapter explores Francophone Caribbean thought as a potentially alternative source of cosmopolitanism situated within these complicating worlds of colonialism and slavery. An examination of Francophone Caribbean thought puts into sharper comparative relief the danger of narcissism that, contra Beck's claim above, remains evident in much discussion of cosmopolitan Europe.

Francophone Caribbean thought can be considered as one of the richest, most diverse intellectual traditions in the New World. Its richness derives in large

part from the starkly divergent historical and political experiences it reflects and explores. The islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, along with French Guyana, remain fully fledged departments of the French Republic, and as such are some of the most developed territories in the region, while Haiti has been independent since 1804, and has, notoriously, the worst living and economic conditions in the hemisphere. Haiti and the French American departments therefore represent polar opposites of the Caribbean situation, caught as they are between 'the poles of impoverished isolation and chronic dependency' (Dash 1998, p. 134).

At this point, it is worthwhile returning to Mignolo's injunction to investigate the thought of those subjects historically situated on the exteriority of the (European) cosmos, because it is here that a non-narcissistic orientation becomes a *necessary* and not just *desirable* requisite for thinking politically. At the exteriority there is no easy, automatic or *prior* retreat into a narcissistic self-critique of ones positionality from within an already formed geo-cultural universe to which one is filially related. Alternatively, Caribbean thought examines integrations through slavery and colonialism into global racial hierarchies that have substantively and ideologically sought to deny any cultivation of the Caribbean 'self' as a modern political subject. Owing to this denial, the production of a modern Caribbean self became a process of Creolization that variously syncretized aspects of ideas and practices attributed to and deriving from African, European and later on Asian 'civilizations', all the while resonating with the forced absence of the region's indigenous peoples. In other words, occupying a subordinate position within global racial hierarchies, Francophone Caribbean intellectuals have historically been denied the space to cultivate a discrete Caribbean 'self' filially linked to an endogenously developed Caribbean culture. In such a situation, self-reflection on modern subjecthood is congenitally an act of reflecting upon a plurality of cultural selves. It is not that this plurality can afford to arise from out of the prior construction of national subjects possessing a singular filial link to a master culture.

The remainder of this chapter will trace and analyse how Francophone Caribbean thought has developed differentially across the islands, comparing Haitian lineages of thought with those found within Martinique and Guadeloupe. The investigation will also identify points of convergence and commonality, especially the way in which Francophone Caribbean thought, when taken as a whole, has been unable to straightforwardly embrace either national introversion or revolutionary universalism. This inhibition speaks, paradoxically, to the latent cosmopolitanism that is congenital to Francophone Caribbean thought, even if there has not always been a conscious intention to pass from the national political subject to the cosmopolitan subject, as has been the case in recent critical renewals of European cosmopolitanism. First, the universalistic discourse of the Haitian Revolution is discussed and the slow morphing of thought on the Haitian nation into a form of indigenism is assessed as the outcome of an inability to come to terms with the foundational ambiguity of Caribbean subject formation, as discussed above. Then, the alternative trajectory of thought in the French Antilles is explored, leading to the formation of a *Créolité* School that has attempted to embrace this founding ambiguity of constructing modern Caribbean subjects. The

chapter will finish with some musings on how Francophone Caribbean thought complicates and unravels the world-historical narrative upon which European intellectuals have predicated their renewed cosmopolitan project.

### **Haiti, from revolution to indigenism**

If Haiti's independence came almost two decades after that of the United States, the new Haitian state was in many crucial ways years ahead of the Americans. The first nation of the New World to be governed by former slaves, Haiti was instantly different, a startling exception in the broader colonized world, and a challenge to dominant ideas of European and white superiority. At the same time, the Haitian Revolution tapped into, appropriated and sought full, unreserved application of the revolutionary ideals of universal human rights that had swept across France in the late eighteenth century. The *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, made in Paris on 26 August 1789, was at once the seminal event in the history of human rights and the document that initiated the Haitian Revolution. Although there had been other philosophical defences of human rights before 1789, the French declaration remains the most important because it was the first attempt to apply ideas of universal rights to an existing society (Nesbitt 2004, p. 19). As C.L.R. James puts it in *The Black Jacobins*:

Phases of a revolution are not decided in parliaments, they are only registered there . . . [The slaves] had heard of the revolution and had construed it in their own image: the white slaves in France had risen, and killed their masters, and were now enjoying the fruits of the earth. It was gravely inaccurate in fact, but they had caught the spirit of the thing. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

(James 1938, p. 63)

By seizing 'the spirit of the thing,' and translating its universalist discourse into the late eighteenth-century Caribbean, the slaves had made Saint-Domingue and the Caribbean in general one of the 'explosive borders of enlightened modernity' (Dash 2006, p. 10). The great political and philosophical achievement of the Saint-Domingue slaves lay in the way their actions exceeded those of the French Revolution, and globalized the ideals of revolutionary universalism. As Susan Buck-Morss argues: 'the black Jacobins of Saint Domingue surpassed the metropole in actively realizing the Enlightenment goal of human liberty, seeming to give proof that the French Revolution was not simply a European phenomenon, but world-historical in its implications'.<sup>4</sup> In effect, as Buck-Morss says, the events in Saint-Domingue were a 'trial by fire for the ideals of the French Enlightenment' (Buck-Morss 2000, pp. 835–6). The implications in terms of the communication, flow, and application of political ideals were also significant, as Dash points out:

The Haitian Revolution can be seen as an emancipatory project within a globalized colonial world where ideas were now circulating freely and could take root in the most unexpected places. The liberatory possibilities of the

Enlightenment were not meant to be applied in Caribbean plantation society. Global interaction in a modernizing world meant, however, that the periphery could now become the site of a concrete, radical application of ideas from the centre, that a local European revolution could be ‘world-historical in its implications.’

(Dash 2006, pp. 10–11)

The Haitian Revolution also exceeded events in France in that it was closer to a ‘total’ revolution, an unflinching, complete overturning of a despotic social order. It was in Saint-Domingue, not Paris, that revolutionary violence (on all sides) reached apogees of brutality, and that towns, plantations, and factories were literally, and repeatedly, reduced to ashes in the name of universal freedom. The slave leaders Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe willingly set their luxurious mansions alight to ‘initiate the campaign of total war’ that would lead finally to the declaration of independence on 1 January 1804 (Nesbitt 2004, p. 18). As Nesbitt says, nothing remained of the ‘greatest overseas colony the world had known, and this fact of the total nature of the revolution serves as both its glory and its misery’ (Nesbitt 2004, p. 18).

The Haitian Revolution effectively laid bare the universal truth of the *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* – that all humans were equal and should be free – and also revealed the limitations of the French Revolution, in its failure to abolish slavery. Events in Haiti exposed what Aimé Césaire would later call the ‘false universalism’ of the French Revolution, and of human rights discourse in general, which, as Césaire argues, often reduce and limit the rights of man to the rights of European man (Césaire 1981, p. 343). As Césaire indicates, it was Toussaint Louverture who made a concrete reality of the rights of man:

When Toussaint Louverture arrived, it was to take the Declaration of the Rights of Man at its word; it was to show that there is no pariah race; that there is no marginal country; that no one people can be excepted. It was to incarnate and particularize a principle: that is to say, to bring it to life. In history and in the domain of the rights of man, he was for the blacks the architect and the intercessor. [ . . . ] Toussaint Louverture’s struggle was the struggle to transform the formal rights into real rights, the fight for the *recognition* of man and that is why he inscribed himself and the revolt of the black slaves of Saint-Domingue in the history of universal civilization.

(Césaire 1981, p. 29)

The strikingly modern aspirations of Toussaint, and of the revolution in general, were mirrored and extended in the immediate post-revolution era. Even if Haiti remains in the international popular imagination a pre-modern, Africanized enclave of the Caribbean, or, in Césaire’s terms, the place where ‘negritude stood up for the first time’ (Césaire 1994, p. 23), post-revolutionary Haiti was never conceived of by its leaders as an isolated, culturally introverted nation but as a modern, socially progressive state. The revolution in effect envisaged a state

that would resist ‘atavistic longings for a racial past’ and where ‘the impulse was towards the future and not dwelling in mythical origins’ (Dash 1998, p. 44). As Eugene Genovese rightly says, Haiti’s revolution called for the ‘Europeanization’ of Haiti, just as it sought to compel Europeans to acknowledge the strikingly modern aspirations to freedom and democracy of colonial peoples. As such, Toussaint’s revolution envisaged full ‘participation in the mainstream of world history rather than away from it’ (Genovese 1981, p. 92). Ironically perhaps, as the post-revolutionary period developed, and the United States became the major threat to Haitian independence, the island’s intellectuals often aligned themselves culturally and socially with the former colonial power, and drew a contrast between the ‘refinement and generosity’ of France and the perceived vulgarity of the ‘grasping and coarse’ (Genovese 1981, p. 16).

At the same time, Haitian intellectuals in the nineteenth century often sought to ‘rehabilitate’ the nation in the Caribbean and the wider world. One of the fundamental aims of the new nation was to present itself as a progressive, *civilized* modern state. As such, Haitian culture – philosophy, anthropology, and especially literature – became a primary site for self-promotion and indeed rehabilitation in the eyes of a suspicious, hostile world. As the Haitian intellectual Anténor Firmin writes in the preface to his monumental 1885 rebuke to de Gobineau, the Haitian intellectual was charged not only with promoting Haiti, but with ‘the rehabilitation of Africa’. Haiti was to Firmin the foremost example of what the ‘black race’ could achieve, and yet he lays bare a general Haitian anxiety when he asks if

Haiti constitute[s] a sufficiently edifying example in favor of the race she is proud to represent among the civilized nations? What evidence does she offer that she possesses the qualities that are denied in African Blacks?

(Firmin 2002, p. lvi)

Firmin’s proof will lie, he says, in the many ‘brilliant’ works of his fellow Haitians, works of ‘sophisticated logic and elegant science’.

A similar impulse to rehabilitate Haiti, and the ‘black race’ in general, informs the work of Firmin’s contemporary Louis-Joseph Janvier, who also exemplifies the persistent strain of Francophilia that shaped much nineteenth-century Haitian culture and thought in his statement that ‘French prose, Haitian coffee, and the philosophical doctrines of the French Revolution are the best stimulants of the Haitian brain’ (cited in Dayan 1995, p. 7). The French-speaking Haitian peasants around whom Janvier constructed his fable of the nation were, as Joan Dayan says, ‘proud, vital, earthy, and black’, intimately connected to the land, which was itself the foundation of Haitian authenticity (Dayan 1995, p.7). Caught between European and African histories, the land became the site upon which Haitian culture, especially literature, *grounded* itself.

If the intellectuals sought to rehabilitate and ‘ground’ the Haitian people, Haiti’s politicians seemed to thrive on chaos and disorder. By the end of the nineteenth century, a cycle of political and economic plunder had established itself, and between 1911 and 1915 a series of revolts saw six presidents take and leave

office. Moreover, in the century that followed the revolution, colonial economic prosperity dramatically withered.<sup>7</sup> The causes of Haiti's economic and political crises were varied; external factors such as the collapse of the price of sugar in the nineteenth century and a post-colonial legacy of debt and international exclusion were significant. Internal factors were also important, as the author René Depestre indicates in his denunciation of the two centuries of the Haitian Republic:

the nineteenth century in Haiti, as far as massacres, Papa Doc-style military satrapy, autocratic protectionism, corruption, State terrorism and systematic bleeding of national resources was just as bad as the [twentieth] century that is now ending in solitude and horror for most of the seven million people of Haiti.

(Depestre 1998, pp. 71–2)

The Haitian intellectual Maximilien Laroche has persuasively argued that Haiti's problems lie in the 'militarization' of all aspects of post-independence Haitian life. Economically, he says, Haiti's leaders have acted like military generals. Because pillage and looting were 'acquired rights', the spoils of war, its leaders, on assuming leadership, have thought only of the 'booty to divide up'. In this sense, as Laroche points out, there is little difference between the Spanish conquistadors of 1492, the French colonials of the eighteenth century, and Haiti's political leaders since 1804. This common, largely uninterrupted history of plundering is, Laroche says, the 'double of official [Haitian] History, the phantom that haunts it' (Laroche 2005, pp. 7, 8, 10).

### **The American occupation: race and the new nationalism**

After the lynching of President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam in July 1915, Admiral Caperton ordered his United States marines to occupy Haiti. The initial pretext for the occupation was the need to restore order, but the Americans were to stay for nineteen years; in effect, this was a new period of subjugation, a return to foreign rule. The rehabilitation that nineteenth-century intellectuals such as Janvier and Firmin had envisaged had come to nothing, and the stereotype of the politically incapable black nation had apparently been confirmed. There was little sustained overt resistance to the occupation until 1929, when a student strike at the School of Agriculture at Damiens sparked a series of sympathy strikes in Port-au-Prince.

The previous year, in a short article in the newspaper *Le Petit Impartial*, Georges J. Petit and Jacques Roumain had demanded 'Youth, where are you? For twelve years the white man has trampled like a master over the sacred soil that our phalanx of heroes watered with their blood.' Petit and Roumain attacked the indifference of Haiti's youth to the 'capitulations' of the 'servile and cynical' elite. The article ended with a rallying call to the youth – 'let's pull ourselves together! . . . We have set things in motion and we hope, after the difficult days of struggle, to strike up the anthem of deliverance!' – that began to be answered in the 1929

student strikes (Roumain 2003, p. 463). The rising nationalist movement forced a change in American policy in Haiti: the Forbes Commission of 1930 recommended that elections be held and that American troops be withdrawn. The strikes and the end of the occupation that followed in 1934 were to some extent attributable to the activities of the various literary, cultural and political movements that had slowly gestated in the 1920s. Georges Sylvain, for instance, formed the Union Patriotique, and through his newspaper *La Patrie* he articulated the growing anti-American indignation of the literate classes (Dash 1981, pp. 52–4). The occupation also transformed the role of the intellectual in Haiti; the introverted, highly literary debates of the pre-occupation *La Ronde* generation – Francophile, symbolist-inspired authors such as Edmond Laforest, Frédéric Marcellin and Etzer Vilaire – gave way to the more politically and historically engaged writings of figures such as Dominique Hippolyte, Frédéric Burr-Reynaud and Christian Werleigh.

Despite lingering Francophilia among the elite, there was also a growing dissatisfaction with cultural mimicry, and an increasing trend towards racial mysticism. The title of Stéphen Alexis's novel, *Le Nègre masqué* (1933), is indicative of a sentiment of repressed or hidden identity, and of the need for more 'authentic', indigenous models. At one point in the novel, Alexis's educated, urban protagonist, Roger Sinclair, lays bare the primitivist urge that was to underpin much subsequent indigenous thought: 'I have learnt too much Greek and Latin. If I was an isolated and naked negro in the jungle, I would be happy' (quoted in Dash 1981, p. 43). The idealization of the 'naked Negro' in Alexis's novel indicates a wider shift in Haitian thought, and a reordering of its spatio-cultural coordinates. As early as 1919, Jean Price-Mars's *La Vocation de l'élite* had evoked the concept of the 'national spirit' (*l'âme nationale*) and had warned of the dangers of 'fragmentation' if the Haitian people did not 'instinctively feel the need to create a national consciousness from the close solidarity of its various social strata' (quoted in Dash 1981, p. 67). The emphasis on 'instinct' and on essential differences between the races echoed the concerns of contemporary works of European ethnology, for example Lévy-Bruhl's *La Mentalité primitive*, which is widely quoted in Jean Price-Mars's *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, the seminal text of Haitian indigenism. Haitian indigenism also bore a discernible influence of European Dadaism and surrealism; emerging poet-activists like Normil Sylvain and Jacques Roumain translated the nihilistic anti-conformism they had encountered in Europe to Haiti, and used it as a mode of attack in their challenge to the Haitian elite.

The younger generation's stated disenchantment with European civilization and rationalist thought reoriented nationalist thinking towards Africa, which had previously been largely denigrated in Haitian writing as a place of cultural and social backwardness. The pre-indigenist rejection of Africa by Haitian intellectuals can be attributed to the paradoxical situation of post-independence Haiti: self-definition and international acceptance of the first black republic called for a negation of its 'blackness', and an image of the nation as a 'civilized', modern state, 'completely worthy, thanks to its elite, of taking its place in the concert of

nations' (Hoffmann 1992, p. 134). The American occupation essentially laid bare the frailties and vanities of the elite's view of itself and of Haiti. The indignities of the occupation led to a radical re-evaluation of the elite's complacently held self-image, and specifically to a new identification with colonized Africa. As Hoffmann says: 'Treated now as underdeveloped natives, Haitians had to face the fact that their fight for independence and national dignity corresponded to that of their African brothers' (Hoffmann 1992, p. 144). The reorientation towards Africa was complemented by a turn inwards, a new interest in folklore and popular traditions. In the August 1927 edition of *La Revue indigène*, Normil Sylvain writes of Haiti's 'rich folklore,' its popular songs that are like 'tom-toms calling to dance from one hillside to another', of the 'beating, sensual rhythm of a meringue . . . that must become part of our poetry' (Metellus 1987, p. 184).

The influence of European ethnologists such as Lévy-Bruhl, as well as of French nationalist thinkers such as Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès, who promoted the countryside as a site of primal cultural purity, and also of the Harlem Renaissance movement shapes and informs the most elaborate expression of Haitian indigenism, Jean Price-Mars's 1928 essay *Ainsi parla l'oncle*. Price-Mars's passionate censure of the Haitian elite caught the spirit of the younger Haitian radicals such as Brouard, Roumain and Émile Roumer. In particular, Price-Mars denounced the elite for its post-revolution adherence to Western civilization, its belief that it was its 'superior destiny' to shape its thinking by 'getting close to its former metropole, resembling it, identifying with it' (Price-Mars 1928, pp. 43–5). The elite's continued identification with France was derided as 'collective bovarysme', or 'the ability a society has to conceive of itself other than it really is', against which Price-Mars calls for the reclamation of Haiti's neglected indigenous culture. Haiti's writers were called upon to free themselves from the prejudices that limited them to cultural mimicry and to draw on the local and indigenous so that their works might give a sense of the 'singular aspects' of Haiti and the black race. The precarious straddling of the space between Europe and Africa was now seen as a source of insecurity, and a struggle ensued as to the authenticity of modern Haitian subjecthood.

Following the departure of the Americans, debates arose between Marxist and Africanist factions in the indigenist movement. The Marxists' tendency was to look outwards, to place Haiti, as Janvier and Firmin had hoped in the nineteenth century, in the vanguard of progressive nations. In September 1927, Jacques Roumain writes in *La Revue Indigène* of the importance of Haitian authors being aware of 'world literature', for in the twentieth century, he says, 'one is a citizen of the world' (Roumain 2003, p. 435). In contrast, the Africanist movement in post-occupation Haiti, and chiefly figures such as Brouard, Denis Lorimer and François Duvalier, tended to look inwards, and to further elaborate the theories of race and culture that had begun in the earlier investigations into 'the Haitian soul'.

Whereas the Haitian Marxists retained the loosely defined notions of race and cultural authenticity of indigenism, the Africanists tended to solidify and fix racial identity into a rigid, essentialized ideology. In the 1930s, as Africanism slowly

mutated into the Griot movement, a distorted racial ideology became the vehicle for black, racially motivated politics looking to redress its sense of historical injustice and political isolation, which it blamed on the mulatto elite. The Griots' racial ideology implied a sliding scale of authenticity: the true Haitian soul was black, and the fairer the skin, the less Haitian one was. To the indigenists, the rediscovery of Africanity and popular culture had been a creative and open-ended act, but the Griots were strategically reductive, and systematically closed down the meanings associated with blackness and Haitian authenticity. Africanity and racial authenticity became the tenets of the political ideology of the rising black middle class, who saw in this ideology 'the rationale for a black cultural dictatorship' (Dash 1981, p. 101). The uncertainties and difficulties of post-occupation national reconstruction provided fertile conditions for the propagation of myths and mysticism. Complex questions and uneasy truths could be simplified and repressed by the fixed certainties that the Griots' Africanism offered. By remaining in the past in these crucial ways, the Griots neatly side-stepped the internal contradictions of colour and class politics in post-occupation Haiti, and effectively ensured that Haiti's future would be shaped by endless returns to those very same contradictions.

In contrast, the Marxist thought and poetry of this period – the mid to late 1930s and early 1940s – is more firmly connected with present and future time, and if the past is evoked it is used not reductively but to suggest a more creative vision of the present and future. Roumain's poetry exemplifies Haitian Marxism, in that it expresses a hybrid, loosely theorized set of ideas that retains the indigenists' interest in peasant beliefs and Africanity, but eschews the absolutism and mysticism of the Griots. Roumain tends also to demythologize questions of race and Africanity; peasant poverty and repression could be understood and addressed in terms of class rather than race, as for Roumain racial thinking in Haiti was nothing but 'the sentimental expression of the class struggle'. Roumain's solutions lay in 'freeing the Haitian masses from their mystical shackles', which could be achieved by 'progress in science, the continued development of human culture, a knowledge of the structure of the world' (quoted in Souffrant 1978, pp. 46–7).

On his return to Haiti from exile in 1927, Roumain almost immediately began to make an impression, taking part in the launch of two new reviews, *La Trouée: revue d'intérêt général* and, most significantly, *La Revue indigène: les Arts et la Vie*, journals that would call for a new role for Haitian writing, and also unwittingly help instigate a nationalistic thread of Haitian thought that would ultimately metamorphose grotesquely into Duvalier's *noiriste* totalitarianism. If Roumain had known how his call in the first issue of *La Trouée* for 'authenticity' in Haitian writing, how his demand that literature be 'the cry of a people', the expression of 'our ideas, our own Haitian ideas' (Roumain 2003, p. 433) would be adopted and adapted into an insular, reductionist ideology of black power, one wonders if he would have launched himself with such enthusiasm into the project of Haitian literary nationalism that became indigenism. And yet at the time, there seemed no other way forward for Roumain, who remained committed to the idea that literature must always be 'the servant of ideology' (Roumain 2003, xxxviii).

### **Négritude, Antillanité and Créolité in the French Caribbean**

Although the histories of Haiti and its Francophone neighbours Martinique and Guadeloupe have much in common – the experience of plantation slavery and colonialism, class and colour divisions – they also demonstrate many fundamental differences. Most notably, Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guyana have, since 1946, been fully fledged departments of the French Republic, and as such enjoy a higher standard of living than most other Caribbean islands, especially Haiti, notoriously the most impoverished nation in the Western hemisphere. But if, by the inter-war period, the Haitian intellectual tradition had started to veer towards an introverted indigenism, in the same period a different trajectory was being forged in the French departments.

In contrast to two hundred years of independent Haitian thought, the French departments had to wait until the 1930s to see the rise of its first wave of anti-colonial intellectuals. Before the 1930s, writing in Martinique largely consisted of minor works imitating French exoticist models of the nineteenth century. Antillean writers' imitation of the Romantics and Parnassians at once mimicked European form and also echoed Eurocentric views of the islands as places of exoticist escape. Such literary and cultural mimicry went largely unchallenged until the 1930s, when a new generation of young Antillean intellectuals emerged not in the islands, but in Paris. The initial products of this new sensibility were a series of student journals, the first of which, *Légitime défense* (1932), stridently denounced the assimilationism of the French Caribbean bourgeoisie and sought to reaffirm 'black' cultural values. Further journals followed, such as *La Revue du monde noir*, in which the founding fathers of negritude – Césaire, Damas and Senghor – proposed a wider, pan-African, diasporic framework, stressing similarities and commonalities of purpose across the colonized world.

It was to some extent ironic that the first expressions of Francophone anti-colonial sentiment were formulated in Paris, the metropole, and centre of colonial power. In another way, however, it is fitting and appropriate that Paris was the place where the ideas of negritude germinated. For, despite the narcissistic narratives of twentieth-century Europe, Paris in the 1920s and 1930s was a city in cultural ferment, as the anthropologist James Clifford explains:

In the 1920s Paris was flooded with things *nègre*, an expansive category that included North American jazz, syncretic Brazilian rhythms, African, Oceanian, and Alaskan carvings, ritual 'poetry' from south of the Sahara and from the Australian outback, the literature of the Harlem Renaissance . . . The writings of the anthropologist-collector Leo Frobenius. . . . proposed East Africa as the cradle of civilization. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *La Mentalité primitive* . . . gave scholarly credence to a common image of black societies as 'mystical,' 'affective,' and 'prelogical.'

(Clifford 1989, p. 901)

In other words, Paris at the time was culturally and intellectually enthralled by all manifestations of the non-European, pre-modern 'other'. The surrealist movement

was fascinated with the primitive in general, and with Africa in particular. In these societies, it was felt, resided remnants of a more 'authentic', 'essential' humanity, lost over the preceding centuries of industrial modernity in Europe.

Although Paris's interest in the primitive other was born out of specifically European preoccupations, there was much to attract Césaire and the nascent negritude movement to the French metropolitan scene. First, the Parisian revalorization of 'blackness', which was in essence a reversal or reconsideration of previous racist views of Africans as uncivilized and primordial, offered the negritude figures a reworked image of themselves that they could use to counter colonial imposition of degraded identities and inferiority complexes. For example, the work of the German ethnologist Leo Frobenius was a particular inspiration to negritude. Senghor talks of the profound effects of Frobenius's work on the negritude group, saying how he and his contemporaries were beginning to define 'black values', and of how these values nevertheless 'lacked vision in depth but also the basic philosophical explanation'. It was largely Frobenius who filled this void, who gave substance to what the young militants experienced essentially as urges and instincts, and who gave the term 'negritude' 'its most solid, and at the same time its most human significance' (Senghor 1973, p. viii). Although subsequent developments in ethnography have rendered much of Frobenius's work unviable, it was immensely influential on the negritude movement.

A further significant influence was the work of Sigmund Freud, in particular his idea of the 'collective unconscious'. Freud drew an analogy between the development of the individual and that of civilization: 'When . . . we look at the relation between the process of human civilization and the development or educational process of individual human beings', Freud says, 'we shall conclude without much hesitation that the two are very similar in nature, if not the very same process applied to different kinds of object' (Freud 1961, p. 141). This was important to negritude, and to Césaire in particular, as he felt that the Caribbean self had been subject to an extreme form of repression, and under the force of this had become in some ways 'neurotic'. Therefore, in looking to disalienate or 'cure' the Antillean, there would necessarily be a psychoanalytical component. Specifically, Césaire was interested in the collective unconscious which Freud describes as 'something past, vanished and overcome in the life of a people, which I venture to treat as equivalent to repressed material in the mental life of the individual' (Freud 1939, pp. 208–9). The idea of the collective unconscious offered Césaire the key to rediscovering the lost African-ness, the collective racial memory which might fill the existential and cultural void of colonial life for the alienated Antillean. If the collective unconscious was this common resource of images and symbols, then the question remained as to how to access it, to free these 'primordial images' and reacquaint the ruptured Antillean self with its ancient heritage. In fact, Césaire felt that poetry was the means which offered the most promising possibilities in reconnecting with the repressed elements of Caribbean identity. And, although he wrote important essays (notably, *Discours sur le colonialisme* and various articles in his influential journal *Tropiques*), and three very good plays, *Et les chiens se taisaient*, *Une Tempête* and *Une saison au Congo*, it is as a poet that he is best known.

Césaire's most influential poem was also his first published work: in 1939 the first edition of *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*) was published, and since then it has remained one of the most forceful and complex expressions of anti-colonial revolt. All of the influences that Césaire had absorbed in Paris fed into this long poem: there were touches of surrealist anti-rationalism, Frobenian valorization of Africanity and Freudian moments of rediscovery of the 'umbilical cord' between the Caribbean and Africa. Although it expresses a profound sense of disillusionment on returning to colonized Martinique, the poem evolves into a powerful, indignant rebuke of colonially imposed identities, as in the following passage:

And this country shouted for centuries that we are brute beasts; that the pulsing of humanity stops at the entrance of the slave-compound; that we are a walking manure a hideous forerunner of tender cane and silky cotton, and they used to brand us with red-hot irons and we used to sleep in our excrement and they would sell us in public and a yard of English cloth and salted Irish meat cost less than we did and this country was quiet, serene, saying that the spirit of God was in its acts.

(Césaire 1995, p. 105)

After *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, Césaire produced five more collections of poems – *Les Armes miraculeuses* (1946), *Soleil cou coupé* (1948), *Corps perdu* (1950), *Ferments* (1950) and *Moi, Laminaire* (1982) – as well as the essays and plays already mentioned. Importantly, though, he also had a remarkable political career. His most far-reaching and perhaps also controversial political act was to promote the 1946 departmentalization bill, which effectively made Martinique an integrated part of France, and which has perpetuated and strengthened the connections with the former colonial power. After 1945, when he was first elected as Fort-de-France's mayor, Césaire's political activities largely took precedence over his literary work and, as new generations of French Antillean authors have emerged, so his ideas have been increasingly challenged.

In considering the development of French Caribbean thought, each successive step does not mark a complete rupture with that which came before. Although certain ideas are rejected at each stage, there are also common preoccupations, and common areas of interests which link each stage with each other. The case of Frantz Fanon illustrates this play of commonality and difference well. Fanon shared with Césaire an interest in the psychological processes of colonialism, though his idea of a cure was less mystical and less poetic. In particular, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1953) emphasizes the role of language in the colonial context. Language, to Fanon, was perhaps the most effective means of imposing colonial culture for, as he says: 'To speak is to be able to use a certain syntax, to possess the morphology of a certain language, but it involves above all assuming a culture, to bear the weight of a civilization' (Fanon 1952, p. 13). Also like Césaire, Fanon was interested in the inferiority complex that they felt was inherent to French Antillean experience. Unlike Césaire, however, Fanon did not see

the solution to this inferiority complex in the recuperation of an Africanized collective unconscious. According to Fanon, the Martinican collective unconscious identified itself not with blackness or Africanness but with images of whiteness and Europeanness.

A contemporary of Fanon, Édouard Glissant has followed a quite different trajectory, and in his own way has forged a reputation as one of the region's most influential thinkers. Like Fanon, this novelist, poet, playwright and philosopher departs in his theoretical work from the essentialism of negritude, and rejects notions of absolute racial and cultural difference. Antillanité (Caribbeanness), a term coined by Glissant in his sprawling, dense collection of essays, *Le Discours antillais* (1981), is an attempt to redefine Caribbean culture in terms of its inherent qualities of relativity, contact, interdependence and hybridity.

Glissant shares with Césaire and Fanon a concern with history, with dealing with the consequences of the very particular traumas and disruptions of the Caribbean past. Unlike Césaire, however, and like Fanon, he dismisses the grand narratives of return to Africa, to a oneness of roots and identity. In *Le Discours antillais*, Glissant charts an alternative to the teleology of return. He starts by distinguishing between the situation of Caribbean peoples and others who have known exiles (the Jews, for example), but who have been able to transplant their own culture and language to the place of exile. In contrast to a people which 'maintains its original nature', Glissant sees in the Afro-Caribbean experience a history of deracination and of constant metamorphosis of identity (Glissant 1981, p. 14). As a counter to the myth of univocal identity, he proposes his theory of Relation, of a Caribbean culture and people which are in a constant process of Creolization. Relation proposes a situation of equality with, and respect for, the other as *different* from oneself. Importantly, Relation has no hierarchy and it is non-reductive, that is it does not try to impose a universal value system but respects the particular qualities of the community in question, in a movement away from imperialist 'generalization'. This is not to say that Relation involves a defence of cultures, but it allows a particularity only where this is outward looking and related to other cultures and values. Thus, Relation is more of an ongoing process than a fixed set of cultural relationships; it is fluid and unsystematic. Cultural diversity is a prime value of Relation; there is no centre any more, no periphery, only an unpredictable play of differences. To Glissant, the Caribbean is a prime location for Relation, which, he believes, is now becoming the condition of global society, as movements and plays between cultures multiply.

Glissant's Antillanité proposes Creole language as a linguistic manifestation or paradigm of Caribbean culture in general and of Relation in particular. Creole language to him, is 'variable', with no fixed form or essence. Moreover, as it arose out of the contact between different, fragmented language communities, it has no singular, organic origin but is instead 'organically linked to the worldwide experience of Relation. It is literally the result of links between different cultures and did not preexist these links. It is not a language of essence, it is a language of the Related' (Glissant 1981, p. 241). Creole language is also important to Glissant as it represents a prime example of what he calls detour. Detour is a strategy

of resistance through indirection, through camouflaging, through remaining unknowable to the colonial other. To Glissant, Creole exemplifies detour as it 'was constituted around a strategy of trickery' (Glissant 1989, p. 21). This trickery, says Glissant, came about as a result of the imposition of French language on slaves, and functioned as an appropriation of French. Creole speakers used French in a derisive way, as if they were wreaking violence on the language itself. Creole continually works *not* to transcend the French language, but as a detour, a diversion or turning away, as transcendence would entail the definition of a Creole authenticity. It is ultimately this resistance to authenticity, to fixed notions of culture and identity which underpins Glissant's Antillanité, a multifaceted, deeply complex set of theories which have their (rhizomatic) roots in negritude but which cut across every generation, every movement in French Caribbean thought.

The Créolité movement owes much to Glissant's work, notably to his valorization of Creole language. This movement was effectively launched in 1989 with the publication of *Éloge de la créolité*, which later appeared in a bilingual edition with the English title of *In Praise of Creoleness*. The principal figures in this movement are the Martinicans Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, all of whom have also published novels and essays. Créolité shares with Glissant a belief in the importance of Creole language and culture. The opening paragraph of the prologue sets the tone for the book's strident and forceful proclamation of Creole identity:

Neither Europeans, nor Africans, nor Asians, we proclaim ourselves Creoles. This will be for us an interior attitude – better a vigilance, or even better, a sort of mental envelope in the middle of which our world will be built in full consciousness of the outer world. These words we are communicating to you here do not stem from theory, nor do they stem from any learned principles. They are, rather, akin to testimony. They proceed from a sterile experience which we have known before committing ourselves to reactivate our creative potential, and to set in motion the expression of what we are. They are not merely addressed to writers, but to any person of ideas who conceives our space (the archipelago and its foothills of firm land, the continental immensities), in any discipline whatsoever, who is in the painful quest for a more fertile thought, for a more precise expression, for a truer art. May this positioning serve them as it serves us. Let it take part of the emergence, here and there, of verticalities which would maintain their Creole identity and elucidate it at the same time, opening for us the routes of the world and freedom.

(Bernabé *et al.* 1989, p. 886)

Like Glissant, the Créolité group challenge the traditional, colonially inherited mimetic impulses in French Caribbean culture. Although they cited Glissant as an important influence, they pose a very direct challenge to Césaire and negritude. Although they recognize the importance of Césaire in revalorizing the African elements in Antillean culture and proclaim themselves 'forever the sons of Aimé

Césaire', they strongly criticize what they see as Césaire's disregard for Creole language. Because Césaire wrote only in French, they say, he neglected the island's 'authentic' language and the rich oral tradition.

The most forceful Créoliste challenge to Césaire has come from Raphaël Confiant in his 1993 polemical work *Aimé Césaire: une traversée paradoxale du siècle*. Confiant's argument is that there exists a clear discrepancy between the violence and anti-colonial revolt of Césaire the poet and the compromising, moderate actions of Césaire the politician. According to Confiant, Césaire discarded the revolutionary potential of Creole language and culture, while always privileging France and Frenchness and treating his fellow Martinicans as colonized subjects whose welfare was dependent on the generosity of the metropole. At every historical juncture, Césaire argued that independence was simply not an option for Martinique, and defended his concepts of assimilation and later of autonomy. All of this, argues Confiant, makes Césaire a highly ambivalent figure in the history of French Caribbean culture and society.

It is perhaps this figure of ambivalence and ambiguity that finally characterizes Francophone Caribbean thought. Some of the most incisive and complex conceptions of Caribbean history, society, culture and identity have emerged from these small islands that are still intimately connected to their former colonial power. One of Caribbean's most strident political poems, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, was produced by a man who promoted departmentalization and reinforcement of ties with France in 1946. In another sense, there is little in this tradition of the romantic notion of revolutionary overcoming, the universalist discourse that David Scott critiques, and implicates in the post-colonial failures of Anglophone Caribbean nations (Scott 2004).

### Conclusion

In Francophone Caribbean thought relations between races, nations and hemispheres have rarely been conceived of in terms of Manichean divisions. Instead, Francophone Caribbean intellectuals have engaged with, theorized and positioned themselves in relation to the inevitable interconnections and relationalism that have historically characterized the geo-cultural making of the Caribbean (just as they also are now seen to characterize the contemporary world). Paradoxically, however, many French Caribbean intellectuals are caught in a neocolonial political situation but they are also prophets of a world to come, a deracialized, related world that many other intellectual traditions are only just awakening to.

Through negotiating the legacy of slavery and colonialism, Francophone Caribbean thought has proceeded with a self-referentialism that was *from the start* unavoidably pluralistic and global in its context. In effect, French Caribbean intellectuals had to write ideals of Enlightenment and ideas of the modern self upon a *syncretic* medium, Europe/Africa/America (and, later, Asia). The twists and turns of revolutionary practices and outcomes engaged with in Haitian thought arise from negotiating the construction of a modern political self through this medium; but the anxiety to claim a singular filial culture evidenced in much Haitian thought

clearly demonstrates (a) the influence of European ideals of homogeneous national identity and (b) that cosmopolitics in no way automatically develops out of this (or any other) colonial context. However, the creative acceptance of this medium – and its potential productivity – is evidenced most clearly by the *Créolité* group, which can be said to embody a cosmopolitan outlook, even if participants do not call this outlook directly by its Greek name.

Paradoxically, given the status of the small islands from which this group hails, the debates over Creole identity take place at the conceptual level of the post-national *even before/despite the attainment of national independence*. This issue of temporality and sequence is extremely important. The European narrative posits the generative sources of its cosmopolitan project in the dialectic of the emergence of the nation-state and the emergence of individual rights, that is to say, in the co-constitution of the singular collective self and the pluralistic individual self. In essence, the world-historical narrative of European cosmopolitanism assumes a sequence of empire to nation to cosmopolis that is woven together as the filial links of European culture. However, it could be argued that the far more intimate and close engagement with cosmopolitan plurality displayed in Francophone Caribbean thought is possible – necessary – precisely because this sequence does not hold in the colonial/slave-holding context. Does, then, this fundamental basis of plurality – *Créolité* – not complicate and unravel the (European) sequence that is assumed to hold universally but is, in fact, particular?

The tendency of IR literature to speak of post-national constellations and the normative power of cosmopolitan foreign policy overwhelmingly by reference to Europe is myopic. This is not to deny that interesting things might be happening to and within the EU. Nevertheless, to present these happenings as expressing, in its most advanced form, the global past and future significance of cosmopolitics is to have internalized the methodological regionalism evident in Beck *et al.* that, in fact, shares the narcissism of methodological nationalism. The point of this chapter has not been to substitute the Caribbean for Europe as the universal representative of cosmopolitan potential. Rather, the point has been to show that not all post-national ruminations and cosmopolitan projects start within or are derived from the contested cultivation of the European self. There are other intellectual traditions that have had to make far more foundational and urgent sense of the modern self through a cosmopolitan orientation. And there might, then, be other – perhaps deeper – sources of normative power running through the making of the modern world. Indeed, these traditions – and their ruminations of a post-national past and future – are arguably more apposite to the contexts in which most of the world's population considers the possibilities and pitfalls of contemporary political transformations.

### Notes

- 1 Many thanks to Eşref Aksu for his careful and critical comments on cosmopolitanism.
- 2 The debate has been recently focused around Habermas (2001); see, for example, Wilde (2007), Borowiak (2008) and Kumar (2008).

- 3 Andrew Linklater is one of IR's most stalwart cosmopolitans. See, for example, Linklater (2002).
- 4 For example, Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (2005) and Mark Leonard (2005), Executive Director of the think tank European Council on Foreign Relations.
- 5 For a critique of such narcissistic gazes upon European modern history see Bhambra (2007).
- 6 For an example of a cognate thought process in IR see Mandaville (2002).
- 7 For detailed accounts of the Haitian Revolution see James (1938), Césaire (1981) and Geggus (2001).