

2014

Névine El Nossery and Anna Rocca, eds. Frictions et devenirs dans les écritures migrantes au féminin: enracinements et renégociations. Sarrebruck: Editions Universitaires Européens, 2011. 258 pp.

Natalie Edwards
natalie.edwards@adelaide.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/sttcl>



Part of the [French and Francophone Literature Commons](#), and the [Modern Literature Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

Edwards, Natalie (2014) "Névine El Nossery and Anna Rocca, eds. Frictions et devenirs dans les écritures migrantes au féminin: enracinements et renégociations. Sarrebruck: Editions Universitaires Européens, 2011. 258 pp.," *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature*: Vol. 38: Iss. 1, Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415.1022>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature* by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.

Névine El Nossery and Anna Rocca, eds. *Frictions et devenirs dans les écritures migrantes au féminin: enracinements et renégociations*. Sarrebruck: Editions Universitaires Européens, 2011. 258 pp.

Abstract

Review of Névine El Nossery and Anna Rocca, eds. *Frictions et devenirs dans les écritures migrantes au féminin: enracinements et renégociations*. Sarrebruck: Editions Universitaires Européens, 2011. 258 pp.

Keywords

migrant, Francophone, gender

Névine El Nossery and Anna Rocca, eds. *Frictions et devenirs dans les écritures migrantes au féminin: enracinements et renégociations*. Sarrebruck: Editions Universitaires Européens, 2011. 258 pp.

Frictions et devenirs ('Frictions and Futures'), a collection of essays written in French, studies migrant literature by female authors from various areas of the Francophone world. The term migrant literature is in itself relatively new, and this book takes a specifically gendered approach to this topic. The subject matter is relevant to much theoretical work in postcolonial and Francophone studies. It asks what kind of artistic creation occurs in spaces of "inbetweenness," where authors write with a plurality of location, of belonging, and of identity. The logic of globalization has steadily produced more authors who resist attachment to a single, unitary space and who instead inhabit several national spaces. El Nossery and Rocca point to the creativity as well as the suffering that such a position may entail, a dichotomy to which their title alludes: both friction and a sense of becoming, of developing or of progressing, are discernible in the writing under discussion.

The introduction provides a sketch of the field of migrant literature and distinguishes this from immigrant literature. Although the introduction does not engage with recent debates over transnationalism, its overview of migrant literature gives a useful framework within which to read the following essays and highlights the points of convergence between them. It contains a discussion of the relevance of such terms as nationality, origin, race and home when reading the work of contemporary writers.

Section one, "Le questionnement identitaire," opens with Amy L. Hubbell's analysis of the writings of female Pieds Noirs, or former French citizens of Algeria. Concentrating on works by Marie Cardinal, Hélène Cixous and Anna Lanta, Hubbell shows how Pieds Noirs authors often use narrative strategies such as repetition to create an image of Algeria that serves as a complete and coherent rendition of the past. Yet any such attempt may only be temporary, since reality invades their work and their identity is thus exposed as resting upon loss and nostalgia. Literary writer and scholar Evelyne Accad then studies the effects of migration on five writers: Andrée Chedid, Etel Adnan, Vénus Khoury-Ghata, Assia Djebar and herself. Accad sketches the migrations and ensuing struggles for identity of each author, and links this to the major themes in their work. The last section, devoted to her own work, serves as a glimpse into a writer's thoughts, designs and influences, which is rarely available beyond the limitations of a structured interview. In chapter three, Adrienne Angelo interrogates the writing of French-Algerian Nina Bouraoui. Angelo traces the evolution of this author's nomadism as her characters—and she herself—attempt to "s'enraciner quelque part dans le monde" 'put down roots somewhere in the world'. Finally, Samia Spencer compares the autobiographical work of Iranian Chahdortt Djavann and Algerian Djemila Benhabib, refugees in Paris and Montreal, respectively. Spencer shows the similarities in the trajectories of these two women from two

different spaces who relocate to cities that are both “terres d’exil et terres d’accueil” ‘places of exile and places of refuge.’

In section two, “La violence de l’exil,” Alison Rice first analyzes self-referential writing by Mauritian Nathacha Appanah, Iranian Chahdortt Djavann and Bulgarian Julia Kristeva. Rice highlights the representation of stigmatization in their work and shows the persistent tension between their place of origin—often underlined by their repeated references to “là-bas” ‘over there/back there’—and their new place of residence. Such stigmatization is evident in the contribution of Eric Touya de Morenne, who compares the work of Chinese-Canadian Ying Chen to that of Haitian-Canadian Célie Agnant. Touya de Morenne compares the representation of murder and suicide in these writers’ work within a framework of the violence of the migrant experience, including such obstacles as racism, hostility, dehumanization and uprooting (“déracinement”). Névine El Nossery then performs a close analysis of one novel by Algerian Malika Mokeddem, focusing on the strategies her protagonist develops to escape the multiple levels of violence she faces both at home and abroad.

Section three, “La mémoire fragmentée,” begins with Lucie Lequin’s examination of texts by Lebanese-Canadian Abla Farhoud. Lequin analyzes the multiple levels of exile in one of Farhoud’s novels through the nexus of mental illness, thus interrogating the relationship between madness and migration. Jane E. Evans then reads *Sujets libres* by Jewish Algerian Clémence Boulouque as a national allegory, tracing the way in which the protagonist’s search for information on her identity may mirror that of the French desire to fill the lacunae in their knowledge of French-Algerian history. Lisa Connell explores the connections between migration, education and writing in Guadeloupian writer Gisèle Pineau’s work. Connell underscores how schooling brings the protagonist into contact with racism and alienation, in addition to resistance and emancipation, and shows how Pineau’s work moves from an individual encounter (with education) to a collective endeavor. Anna Rocca’s chapter is a specific contribution to this volume, introducing visual work to the corpus; Rocca examines Moroccan artist and photographer Lalla Essaydi’s work. Rocca shows how Essaydi’s photographs of confinement (“claustration”) stage a resistance to the orientalist gaze and herald new possibilities of female liberation. In the final chapter, Mouhamédoul Amine Niang examines the popular *Le Ventre de l’Atlantique* by Senegalese Fatou Diome. His analysis focus on Diome’s representation of telephone communication and its resonance with the workings of memory to forge what he calls a “post-epistolary novel.”

One of the main strengths of this book is the variety of authors it studies, including established writers such as Djébar, Kristeva and Chédid but concentrating on newer voices whose works are rarely studied or taught. The reader will be struck by the variety of experiences recounted by the writers/artists who represent female migrancy and the range of themes that they treat. Overall, this book will be useful for graduate students and

researchers working in the fields of women's writing, Francophone studies, postcolonial studies, immigration studies and transnational/global studies.

Natalie Edwards
The University of Adelaide