



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh Research Explorer

### Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?

**Citation for published version:**

Keown, M, Hargreaves, AG (ed.), Forsdick, C (ed.) & Murphy, D (ed.) 2010, Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne? Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing. in Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde . Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, pp. 240-257.

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Peer reviewed version

**Published In:**

Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

© Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing. In Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

## **Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: internationalism versus regionalism in Francophone Pacific writing**

Michelle Keown

In the 2007 manifesto 'Pour une "littérature-monde" en français', the notion of a 'world literature in French' is offered as an enabling alternative to the concept of 'la francophonie', widely criticised for its neocolonial political associations and the way in which it is often used to 'emphasize ethnic or racial "difference" from a perceived [metropolitan] "French norm"' (Forsdick and Murphy 2003: 7; see also Mabanckou 2009). The signatories to the manifesto posit the 1970s rise of a 'world literature in English' as a key precedent for their project, citing writers such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Ben Okri, Hanif Kureishi, Michael Ondaatje and Salman Rushdie as 'métis' pioneers who, 'instead of melting into their adopted culture, set out to create by drawing on the source of their plural identity', thereby 'taking possession of English letters' (2009: 55). The year 2006, in which five of the seven French literary prizes were awarded to 'foreign-born' writers, is taken as a similar watershed in French literary culture, heralding 'the emergence of a consciously affirmed, transnational world-literature in the French language' (2009: 56).

Though the signatories' invocation of the concept of 'world literature' is optimistic and celebratory, the reference to the literary precedent in English signals potential pitfalls in the valency and utility of the concept. The notion of a 'world literature in English' has, in its most idealistic sense, been invoked to promote global inclusivity

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

and diversity (as, for example, in the American periodical *World Literature Today*), and in its broadest and most politically neutral sense it encompasses 'all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin' (Damrosch 2003: 4). In other contexts, however, 'world literature' is often used, like the term 'world music', to denote literature that falls outside the British-American literary 'mainstream', circulated and received less as 'testimony to a wealth of cultural diversity' than as part of an exoticising 'domestication' of the foreign (Damrosch 2003: 17; Huggan 2001). As Barbara Herrnstein Smith observes, literary cosmopolitanism can become another form of cultural imperialism, with the Western subject perceiving 'in every horizon of difference new peripheries of its own centrality, new pathologies through which its own normativity may be defined and must be asserted' (1988: 54). Partly as a result of these associations, the notion of 'world literature in English' (like 'Commonwealth literature') has in many contexts been superseded by the near-ubiquitous designation 'postcolonial literature', which – though not without its own semantic limitations and contradictions – is often perceived as circumventing the Anglocentric associations of its predecessors.<sup>1</sup>

With these debates in mind, this essay considers the relevance of the notion of a 'world literature in French' to the context of Indigenous Francophone Pacific literature<sup>2</sup>, which (I will argue) does not readily lend itself to incorporation within such a paradigm. This exceptionalism can be attributed to a number of factors, not least the fact that until very recently, Indigenous Pacific literature in French has been published and circulated almost solely within its country of origin, remaining a

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

marginalised area even within the burgeoning field of Francophone postcolonial studies,<sup>3</sup> and ignored almost completely within metropolitan France (Forsdick and Murphy 2003: 12; De Souza 2009: 240; Mateata-Allain 2008: 19). Further, any sense of a *regional* collective of Francophone Pacific writers has been hampered partly by the very limited publishing resources and networks within and across France's Pacific 'territories'<sup>4</sup> (which include French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and New Caledonia), and by the dominance of Anglophone writing within regional models of Pacific or 'Oceanic' literature. The linguistic barrier between the Francophone and Anglophone Pacific has – to some degree – prevented Indigenous writers from the Francophone Pacific from taking part in the creative and political discursive networks from which writers of the Anglophone Pacific have benefited, and Francophone Pacific writing has often been overlooked in surveys of anti- or post-colonial Pacific writing.<sup>5</sup>

However, in keeping with recent developments in international postcolonial studies – which have included increasing recognition of Francophone as well as Anglophone contributions to the field – the last decade has witnessed burgeoning dialogues and collaborations between Francophone and Anglophone Pacific writers, as well as the emergence of a number of English translations of Francophone Pacific texts. In discussing these translingual dialogues with particular reference to the work of Kanaky (Indigenous New Caledonian) writer Déwé Gorodé, and Mā'ohi (Tahitian) writer Chantal Spitz, this essay will argue that these nascent regional affiliations between Indigenous Francophone and Anglophone Pacific writers call into question

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

the relevance (to the Pacific) of the argument for a transnational collective of Francophone writers.

In recognising the importance of these regional 'Oceanic' affiliations, however, the essay will also consider the pragmatics and problematics of translating Francophone Pacific literature for an Anglophone readership. Both Spitz and Gorodé engage with issues that are also prevalent in Indigenous Anglophone Pacific writing, but it is important to consider to what degree their work resists incorporation within Anglophone literary-cultural paradigms. In this context, it is also worth considering the degree to which their writing *does* resonate with the work of Francophone postcolonial writers elsewhere in the world. As I will demonstrate, although Francophone Pacific writers are a notable absence amongst the signatories to the 2007 manifesto<sup>6</sup>, and although Chantal Spitz in particular has expressed resistance to being incorporated within a global collective of Francophone writers, there are some identifiable thematic and stylistic connections that can be made between Spitz's and Gorodé's work, and the work of Francophone postcolonial writers beyond the Pacific.

### **Gorodé, Spitz, and Indigenous Francophone Pacific Writing**

Gorodé's and Spitz's work has emerged, respectively, from the two main 'centres' of Indigenous Francophone Pacific writing: New Caledonia and French Polynesia.<sup>7</sup> In both areas, Eurocentric education policies have resulted in low literacy rates and severe under-representation of Indigenous peoples in many professions, including

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

writing. Gorodé and Spitz belong to a small minority of Indigenous peoples of the Francophone Pacific to have received a university education in metropolitan France, and both have played an active role in fostering Indigenous creative writing within their respective societies. Gorodé was one of the first Kanak writers to enter a literary milieu dominated by Caldoche (white settler) authors: her début poetry collection, *Sous les cendres des conqués* (1985), was followed by a number of other poetry and prose works, some of which are discussed further below. Much of Gorodé's work is inspired by her involvement in the Kanak-led independence movement, which gathered momentum in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>8</sup> Gorodé was one of the founders of the independence organisations Groupe 1878 (named after the year of a major anticolonial Kanak uprising) and PALIKA (Parti de Libération Kanak, formed in 1976), and was jailed twice in the 1970s for her involvement in anticolonial protest activity. Further political protests in the 1980s helped bring about the 1988 Matignon Accords, which restored relative peace by establishing a constitutional framework within which to debate the territory's future and to improve socio-economic conditions for Kanak peoples.<sup>9</sup> In the 1990s, such advances included better publishing opportunities for Kanak writers, with poets and playwrights such as Pierre Gope, Wanir Welepane, Billy Wapoto, Denis Pourawa and Paul Wamo publishing their first works during and beyond that decade.

Like Gorodé, Chantal Spitz is also an Indigenous literary pioneer, publishing the first Mā'ohi<sup>10</sup> novel (entitled *L'Île des rêves écrasés*) in 1991. The novel is stridently anticolonial, exploring the inimical effects of French imperialism across generations

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

of Mā'ohi, with a particular focus on the devastating environmental and cultural impact of French nuclear testing (which took place across a 30-year period from the mid-1960s). Spitz's counterdiscursive emphasis on Mā'ohi environmental conservationism and animism is redolent of the work of an earlier wave of Mā'ohi poets (including Hubert Brémond, Henri Hiro, Charles Manutahi, Turo Raapoto, and Flora Devatine/Vaitiare) who emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, while a feminist strand in her novel resonates with the work of other female contemporaries such as Michou Chaze/Rai a Mai, Flora Devatine again, Louise Peltzer, Titaua Peu, and Célestine Hitiura Vaite. Vaite is an expatriate (now based in Australia) who has published a trilogy of novels in English – *Breadfruit* (2000), *Frangipani* (2004) and *Tiare* (2006) – that has now been translated into French (published by Au vent des îles in Tahiti).

Vaite's success as a Mā'ohi author writing in English has coincided with a growing interest in Francophone Pacific writing in English translation, particularly within Pacific metropolitan centres such as Hawai'i, Australia and New Zealand. In 2006, for example, the University of Hawai'i Press published *Vārua Tupu*, an anthology of contemporary Mā'ohi writing in English translation.<sup>11</sup> In 2007, Chantal Spitz's *L'Île des rêves écrasés* was published in English translation (under the title *Island of Shattered Dreams*) by New Zealand publisher Huia. In 2001, Kanak writer Pierre Gope's play *Le Dernier Crépuscule* (which explores the impact of commercial nickel mining upon Kanak peoples) was published in English as *The Last Nightfall*,<sup>12</sup> while in 2004, two volumes of poetry and short fiction by Déwé Gorodé were published by Pandanus of Australia. Gorodé's poetry collection (entitled *Sharing as Custom*

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

*Provides*) is a bilingual edition of previously published and new work, while the prose volume (*The Kanak Apple Season*) features English translations of work from Gorodé's two short story collections, *Utê Murunu* (1994) and *L'Agenda* (1996).

### **Regionalism and translanguaging in 'Oceanic' literary culture**

The increasing availability of Indigenous Francophone Pacific writing in English translation is viewed by many Francophone writers as a crucial means by which to reunite Pacific Islanders divided by the experience of colonialism. Mā'ohi scholar Kareva Mateata-Allain links this growing regional consciousness with the theoretical writings of Tongan writer Epeli Hau'ofa, who, in the 1990s, published a series of influential essays advocating a regional 'Oceanic' identity based in the shared marine heritage of Pacific peoples (Mateata-Allain 2008: 40). Pacific Islanders developed sophisticated maritime technologies that allowed them to navigate established trade routes throughout the Pacific long before Europeans arrived in the region, but many of these intercultural links were severed as the Pacific was divided into separate French, British, and other colonial spheres of influence. Further schisms were created by French explorer Dumont d'Urville's 1832 division of the Pacific into three geocultural categories, based on his identification of two distinct 'races': the 'black' peoples of Melanesia and the 'copper-coloured' peoples of Polynesia and Micronesia (see Keown 2007: 13). Hau'ofa's 'Oceanic' paradigm is designed to transcend these imposed divisions, uniting and protecting Pacific Islanders against the vicissitudes of global capitalism and climate change, as well as serving as a source of inspiration to



This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

contemporary Pacific artists and creative writers (see Hau'ofa 1998). Hau'ofa's model has been enormously influential throughout the Indigenous Pacific, and Mateata-Allain draws upon his work to posit Mā'ohi writing as a metaphorical va'a (voyaging canoe) that can reunite Anglophone and Francophone Pacific peoples through a process of 'intellectual cross-fertilization' (2008: 41). The word va'a has a clear pan-Polynesian valency, with cognates such as wa'a (in Hawai'ian), waka (in New Zealand Māori) and va'a (in Samoan), signalling the importance for Mateata-Allain of a common ancestral language (proto-Polynesian), as well as the voyaging canoe itself, as a vehicle for interpelagic commun(ica)tion (see Lynch 1998). Mateata-Allain's use of the term thus privileges the unifying potential of a precolonial Indigenous signifying system over colonial languages such as the globalised French celebrated in the 2007 manifesto. Significantly, images and metaphors of Oceanic voyaging abound in *Vārua Tupu* (the 2006 anthology mentioned above), and editors Frank Stewart, Kareva Mateata-Allain and Alexander Dale Mawyer anticipate that the volume 'will contribute to the work of reunifying the Polynesians' of the Francophone and Anglophone Pacific (xx).<sup>13</sup>

Chantal Spitz has also embraced the notion of a translingual fellowship of Indigenous Pacific writers as a means by which to combat the relative isolation of Francophone writers from the rest of Oceania. In an important series of essays published in *Littérama'ohi* – a Mā'ohi literary journal established in 2002 by Spitz and other Mā'ohi writers<sup>14</sup> – she rejects the notion of 'francophonie' in favour of fostering regional dialogues with fellow Pacific Islanders. In 'Identité Comment' (published in

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

the first issue of *Littérama'ohi*), for example, she argues that by identifying themselves as 'implied French people', Mā'ohi dissociate themselves 'from our [Oceanic] brothers while associating ourselves with ancient battles against a modernized perfidious Albion fighting francophony against anglophony' (2002: 110; translation in Mateata-Allain 2008: 46). Similarly, in her unpublished essay 'Écrire Colonisé', she argues Mā'ohi must free themselves from the 'trap of francophony' in order to re-establish connections with other Pacific peoples and, more broadly, with other colonised people 'who resonate so much [...] deeper within me than some other human being speaking thinking French' (2003: 2; translation in Mateata-Allain 2008: 49). It is significant that Spitz here prioritises trans-Pacific connections but also identifies with an international community, not on the basis of a shared language (French) but rather the shared experience of colonisation. Her most extended and vehement rejection of the notion of an international collective of francophone writers appears in her essay 'Francophonie' (published in the second issue of *Littérama'ohi*), where she asserts that 'Francophony has nothing to do with me. [...] History produced me speaking-reading-writing in French but has not made me feeling-thinking French. I do not feel linked to other French speakers under the pretext of francophony. I do not feel linked to French thinkers under the pretext of a common language' (2002: 122; translation in Mateata-Allain 2008: 51). Such arguments clearly reject the notion of a global fraternity of Francophone writers upon which the 2007 manifesto is based, even though Spitz goes so far as to acknowledge a shared experience of colonial oppression amongst Francophone postcolonial peoples.

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

Spitz's arguments for fostering trans-Pacific and translingual literary connections were put into practice in the fifth issue of *Littérama'ohi* (entitled 'Rencontres Océanienne'), which featured the work of a range of New Caledonian writers (of both European and Kanak descent), as well as translations into French of material by Anglophone Indigenous Pacific writers such as Russell Soaba (Papua New Guinea), Teresia Teaiwa,<sup>15</sup> Anita Heiss (Australia) and Sia Figiel (Samoa). The special issue is therefore doubly significant, establishing links between hitherto isolated literary communities both within the Francophone Pacific, and within wider Oceania. As Spitz puts it in her introduction to the issue: 'After a gruellingly long night, the people of Oceania are once more taking a journey. Like it once was when we navigated to our destiny under the stars of the sky, we now trace our future through the sense of our words [...] shared and exchanged through transcribed and translated texts' (2004: 44; translation in Mateata-Allain 2008: 49). Notable here, again, are the metaphors of trans-Oceanic voyaging discussed earlier in this essay. Although by 2004 the work of Anglophone Indigenous Pacific writers such as Alan Duff and Albert Wendt had already been translated for a metropolitan French readership, this was one of the first examples of a genuinely trans-Pacific translingual dialogue.<sup>16</sup>

Translingual and trans-Pacific creative exchanges have also taken place within New Caledonia in recent years, particularly since the 1998 Noumea Accord, which - as noted above - included an official commitment to recognising and promoting Kanak identity and culture. To this end, a biennial *Salon du livre* was inaugurated in 2003, located in the north-east coastal town of Poindimié in a specific attempt to foster

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

literary culture beyond the wealthy, highly urbanised Southern province (in which New Caledonia's capital Noumea, and most of the white settler population, are located). The 2003 *Salon du livre* brought writers from New Caledonia (including Gorodé) into contact with a range of Anglophone and Francophone Pacific writers (from Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Tahiti), and was so successful that a similar event took place in 2005 under the title *Salon international du livre océanien*. Significantly, the 2005 event included a series of round-table discussions addressing topics – such as attitudes to the natural environment, language and translation, culture and creativity, and tradition and modernity – upon which both Anglophone and Francophone Indigenous participants found common ground (see Brown 2006). Such affiliations suggest that the notion of a global collective of Francophone writers as advanced in the 2007 manifesto is less relevant to Kanak writers than it is to New Caledonia's white settlers and their descendants, many of whom *have* maintained close links with metropolitan French literary culture (see Brown 2006).

In this context, it is significant that Gorodé, like Spitz, has established strong affiliations with Anglophone Pacific writers, particularly those of other Melanesian countries that share both the experience of colonialism, and particular sociocultural dynamics that (in Gorodé's view) have disadvantaged women. She has expressed a particular affinity with ni-Vanuatu writer Grace Mera Molisa, translating a selection of her (English-language) poetry into French for the 1997 volume *Pierre Noire*. Before achieving independence in 1980, Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) was

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

an Anglo-French condominium, but Gorodé's interest in Molisa appears based more in their common experience as politically active Melanesian women than any sense of a 'shared' history of French colonialism. Both women have been centrally involved in independence movements in their respective countries, also serving in government in order to improve educational, creative and other opportunities for their fellow indigenes. Both have played an active role in the Pacific anti-nuclear movement, and have also been leading proponents of feminist movements at both local and regional levels. In this context, it is unsurprising that the majority of the poems in *Pierre Noire* engage with socio-political issues (such as (neo-)colonialism, women's rights, and Indigenous social dynamics) that are also prevalent in Gorodé's own work.

Gorodé includes a direct reference to the work of Molisa and other Anglophone Pacific writer-activists in her semi-autobiographical short story 'Dos Montes', which focuses on a group of Indigenous and women's rights activists gathered in Australia. The story includes an episode in which the narrator and a fellow feminist activist discuss 'collections of poetry by two Melanesian women, Grace Mera from Vanuatu and Julie Sipolo from the Solomons, as well as a book by the Fijian, Vanessa Griffen, dealing with the problems we as women have' (2004a: 89). Significantly, Molisa, Sipolo and Griffen – like Gorodé – are all Indigenous Pacific feminist writer-activists, but the story also indexes Gorodé's interest in Pacific self-determination initiatives that operate beyond questions of gender, making references to the Kanak, West Papuan and East Timor independence movements (2004a: 85).

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

Unlike Spitz, however, Gorodé has also conveyed a sense of belonging to a wider global community of nations colonised by France. For example, her story 'Benjie, My Brother', which features a group of young Kanak men who become involved in the independence movement in the 1980s, includes references to anticolonial uprisings in French colonies beyond the Pacific. The narrator of the story meets a fellow Kanak who is an avid reader of Maspero publications such as Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and Amilcar Cabral's *Unity and Struggle*, as well as *Afrique-Asie* (a France-based periodical that has supported independence movements in French and other colonial territories). Further, during military service in France, the narrator gains a detailed knowledge of anticolonial struggles in Algeria after befriending an Arab Algerian fellow serviceman, and at the end of the story he quotes a verse from the Koran alongside three anticolonial poems by Senegalese poet Malik Fall, thereby situating the Kanak nationalist movement within the context of an international struggle against French colonialism. The story, which clearly draws upon Gorodé's experiences as a university student in France during the 1970s, does in some ways conform to the 2007 signatories' model of 'a consciously affirmed, transnational world-literature in the French language' (2009: 56), but it is also very firmly grounded within its unique national context, confronting controversial contemporary social issues affecting young Kanak men (such as the spread of AIDS through drug use and sexual activity). Though aware of anticolonial struggles in other parts of the Francophone world, Gorodé has channelled her energies into fostering local and regional independence movements, and her writing, like Spitz's, is attuned more to a trans-Pacific literary milieu than a transnational collective of Francophone writers.

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

## **The pragmatics and problematics of translation**

As I have demonstrated, writers such as Gorodé and Spitz have actively fostered translingual dialogues between Indigenous Francophone and Anglophone Pacific writers, but while much of this dialogue has focused on political matters – the need to unite Pacific peoples divided by colonialism; the desire to consolidate regional anticolonial, antinuclear and feminist movements – it is also important to consider some of the aesthetic and pragmatic issues at stake during the translation process. One of the risks associated with the translation of Francophone Pacific literature for an Anglophone readership – even if it is a regional Pacific audience with political and cultural affiliations to the source culture - is that some of the unique stylistic properties of the source text may be lost to this new audience. In the case of Spitz's writing in particular – which uses a radically non-standard variety of French – this could obscure one of the most important counterdiscursive aspects of the source text, diluting its impact as a 'postcolonial' work that may indeed have a place in a transnational comparative study of Francophone literature. The translators of Spitz's *Island of Shattered Dreams* and Gorodé's *Sharing as Custom Provides* – upon which I will focus in the final part of this essay – have addressed these potential problems in various ways.

Jean Anderson, translator of Spitz's novel, is an advocate of 'resistant translation', a practice that resembles Lawrence Venuti's concept of 'foreignization' in that it seeks

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

to 'respect and reproduce', as far as possible, unique stylistic and other elements of the source culture without making significant allowances for a foreign reader.<sup>17</sup> To this end, her translation contains very little contextual or framing matter: a brief glossary of Mā'ohi terms (which appear mainly as isolated words and phrases in the source text) appears at the end of the book, and a short translator's note is included in the prefatory matter. Here, Anderson outlines some of the aesthetic properties of the source text that are central to its counterdiscursive aims, revealing that Spitz 'radically disrupt[s] many of the parameters of accepted literary French', making heavy use of repetition, capitalisation to 'stress cultural importance', and frequent code-switching between prose and lyric poetry, as well as between French and Mā'ohi. These stylistic features are preserved in the translation, serving to emphasise the importance of orality over writing in Mā'ohi culture, which – like many other Pacific cultures – had no orthography prior to the arrival of European explorers and missionaries. In the source text, Spitz decentralises the authority of European discourse by beginning her narrative with an untranslated Mā'ohi creation myth, which is then followed by a version of the biblical creation story in French. This discursive dialectic continues throughout the text through strategic code-switching from French into Mā'ohi. Though the source text contains no glossary and little in the way of contextual translation, Anderson includes a short glossary in her translation, but is able to preserve the estranging effect of the code-switching into Mā'ohi within the main body of the narrative,<sup>18</sup> while also deciding against offering a translation of the 86-line Mā'ohi creation poem that opens the story.



This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

Anderson indicates, however, that she was unable to find a viable way in which to signal an important distinction that Spitz makes throughout the text between 'parole' (which refers not just to the spoken word but specifically to Mā'ohi oral culture) and 'mot' (associated not just with writing but also French culture). However, her translator's note successfully alerts the reader to this distinction, which is traceable through the repetition of 'word' in contexts clearly associated with the oral tradition. Near the beginning of the narrative, for example, the Mā'ohi patriarch Maevarua is told that his son Tematua has volunteered to fight for France during the First World War, and (as is the case with instances of heightened emotion elsewhere in the text) he expresses himself here through a passage of lyric poetry that reminds Tematua of his ancestral connections with the land and the rhythms of the natural world. The section of poetry is prefaced with an account of Maevarua's search for the right 'words', and it is clear from the context that these are the 'paroles' associated with the Mā'ohi oral tradition: 'And then, because since the beginning of time his people have always expressed themselves through the Word, Maevarua searches deep in his soul to find words to offer his son, his flesh and blood. Words, the music of love that he will be able to hear in his memory when he misses his Land too much. Words chosen amongst the multitudes of words in their language to make this world live in him, this world he is preparing to leave to go to distant parts' (2007: 29). Notable in this passage, as in the source text, is the structural repetition used in Mā'ohi and other Polynesian oral traditions both for rhetorical emphasis and as an *aide-mémoire*. Where this section of the translation is clearly associated with the vitality of the Mā'ohi oral tradition, the association between writing and the formal restrictions of

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

French literary culture is contrastingly evoked in a later passage in which letters arrive informing Mā'ohi parents of the deaths of their sons in the war: 'Twelve letters take the place of twelve children, letters full of leaden words that only the minister can make out, written in that incomprehensible language' (33). Here, again, it is clear from the context that 'leaden words' corresponds with a reference to 'mots' (specifically, 'des mots inertes') in Spitz's original text (1991: 44).

Given Anderson's commitment to preserving Spitz's emphasis on the vitality of the Mā'ohi oral tradition, and the fact that this tradition is closely associated with the passages of poetry in the novel, it is perhaps surprising that in his review of the translation, Paul Sharrad finds the sections of free verse 'banal and melodramatic', arguing that Anderson could have provided 'some greater sense of the original structuring of rhythm and sounds' in the source text (2009: 191-2). A comparison of source text and translation reveals that Anderson has in fact faithfully reproduced the syntactic and semantic patterns of the original,<sup>19</sup> but Sharrad's response is in keeping with Douglas Robinson's argument that the 'strategic awkwardness' of a 'foreignizing' translation can be counterproductive, producing a 'quaint' diction that can, in contrast to a more 'liberal' assimilative translation, flatten the aesthetic nuances of the original text and even make the source text 'seem childish, backward, primitive, precisely the reaction foreignism is supposed to counteract' (1997: 111). However, the plurilingualism of Spitz's text, and her deliberate use of unconventional and estranging syntactical patterns, demands a more complex form of analysis: as Samia Mehrez points out, texts written by 'postcolonial bilingual subjects'

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

problematise the assumption (within traditional translation theory) of a transaction between discrete, clearly defined source and target languages, instead creating a hybrid 'in-between' language that demands a mode of evaluation beyond 'conventional notions of linguistic equivalence or ideas of loss and gain' (1992: 121).

Furthermore, the sections of poetry in Spitz's text - both source text and translation - produce complex layers of metaphorical and metonymic signification, underscoring central images and issues within the main narrative (particularly the link between the human body and the natural world), while simultaneously inviting comparisons with contiguous poetic traditions in other parts of the 'postcolonial' world. Spitz's vehement anticolonial rhetoric (for example), expressed through metaphors of heat and cold, invites comparisons with Francophone poets such as Aimé Césaire (suggesting that the notion of a 'world literature in French' has some relevance to her work in spite of her opposition to such a concept), but also with Anglophone Pacific poets such as John Kasaipwalova of Papua New Guinea.<sup>20</sup> More specifically, however, the translation appears targeted towards a Pacific readership: Huia is an Indigenous publishing company committed to the publication of works by Māori and 'our cousins from the Pacific'<sup>21</sup>, and Anderson's reference to Mā'ohi as 'another Pacific culture' in her introduction signals an implied readership likely to make links between Mā'ohi myths and values, and those of their Polynesian 'cousins'. Spitz's exploration of the inimical consequences of French colonialism across generations of Mā'ohi, and her excoriating attack upon French nuclear testing as the inverse of Mā'ohi environmental conservatism, resonate with the work of New Zealand

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

Māori writers and poets such as Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimaera and Hone Tuwhare, as well as native Hawai'ian poets such as Haunani-Kay Trask (see Keown 2007). Such affinities arguably reduce the need for detailed supplementary contextual information, but also, as Anderson acknowledges<sup>22</sup>, create the risk that some of the unique cultural specificities of the source text may be obscured.

A slightly different situation pertains to the bilingual edition of Gorodé's poetry.

*Sharing as Custom Provides*, like *The Kanak Apple Season*, is (in Kwame Anthony Appiah's terms) a 'thick translation', containing a lengthy introduction and a range of footnotes designed to assist a (scholarly) reader in situating Gorodé's work within a specifically Kanak literary-cultural context (Appiah 1993). The introduction, written by Peter Brown (who translated and edited *The Kanak Apple Season*), elaborates primarily upon the politico-cultural context of Gorodé's writing, but the footnotes (prepared by Raylene Ramsay and Deborah Walker, who translated the poetry) are often more specifically attuned to linguistic features that might escape a monolingual reader. A footnote to the poem 'Word of Struggle [Parole de Lutte]', for example, explains that the term 'parole' is closely associated with the Kanak oral tradition, and this – as is the case in Anderson's translation – signals the importance of orality in Gorodé's work as a challenge to the discursive restrictions of standard (written) French (2004b: 6). Most of the other footnotes, however, are translations of words from Gorodé's native language Paicî (used sparingly throughout the collection), or explanations of Kanak cultural practices and values. In interview, Ramsay and Walker indicated that they would have liked to include their own translators' introduction

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

explaining their method (a request refused by their publisher),<sup>23</sup> but to some degree, this omission is offset by the fact that the text is a bilingual edition that allows readers who understand both French and English to compare the translation directly with the original.

Such a comparison can reveal the difficulties of translating poetry that relies on aural effects in the source language. In the poem 'écouter', for example, Gorodé makes widespread use of assonance and alliteration to emphasise the aural theme of the poem: 'Écouter / une note / un mot / un son [...] un cri [...] une rime / un rythme' (2004b: 102). In their translation, Ramsey and Walker are able to preserve the repeated vowels as a *visual* phenomenon ('Listen / to / a note / a word / a sound [...] a cry [...] a rhyme / a rhythm'), but due to the wide variety of vowel phonemes in English, the aural patterning is lost to some degree. However, the footnote to the earlier poem 'Word of Struggle' alerts even a monolingual Anglophone reader to the fact that the word 'utterance' ('parole' in the source text) combines with other aural signifiers in the poem to posit the Kanak oral tradition as a means by which to break the 'silence' imposed by colonial epistemic and linguistic violence (2004b: 101).

'Word of Struggle' thus makes the point that a 'word' from the ancestral language can become 'the word that dares make a stand' in a 'radical poetics' which articulates 'a politics of struggle' (2004b: 6).<sup>24</sup> Significantly (as is the case with Spitz's use of Mä'ohi), the Paicî words remain intact and untranslated within the main body of both source text and translation, with any explanatory matter relegated to a secondary level. In this sense, Gorodé's native language (like Spitz's) remains the only constant

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

between source text and translation, acquiring a transcendental quality that poses a challenge to the dominance of the two 'metropolitan' languages. In this context – and in keeping with Samia Mehrez's arguments on plurilingualism - the process of translation can serve to underscore, rather than dilute, the counterdiscursive aspects of both Gorodé's and Spitz's writing.

## **Conclusion**

As I have maintained in this essay, the argument for a 'world literature in French' is problematic when considered with reference to the Indigenous Pacific, where writers appear more committed to fostering links with Anglophone Pacific writers than with Francophone writers in other parts of the world. As I have suggested above, the argument for a 'littérature-monde' is perhaps more relevant to the work of French settlers and their descendants in New Caledonia, as many of these writers have maintained strong links with metropolitan French literary culture, but within the 'postcolonial' Pacific, emerging translingual dialogues between Indigenous Pacific Islanders are best evaluated within a regional rather than global framework. As I have demonstrated with reference to the work of Déwé Gorodé and Chantal Spitz, there are potential pitfalls associated with the translation of Francophone Pacific texts into English, as some of the specificities of the source texts – including their counterdiscursive responses to French linguistic and literary culture – may be lost to a new audience more concerned with identifying politico-cultural connections between Francophone and other Indigenous Pacific cultures. However, as I have argued with

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

reference to the dialectic between orality and writing in Spitz's and Gorodé's work, the process of translation can preserve and even intensify the counterdiscursive aspects of Francophone Pacific writing, and is viewed by Spitz and others as a crucial means by which to reach a sympathetic readership beyond what has often proved to be an indifferent Francophone literary-critical community.

## **Bibliography**

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 1993. 'Thick Translation'. *Callaloo* 16: 808-19.

Brown, Peter. 2004. 'Introduction'. In Déwé Gorodé, *The Kanak Apple Season*.

Translated by Peter Brown. Canberra: Pandanus, ix-xxxix.

--. 2006. 'Books, writing and cultural politics in the Pacific: the New Caledonian *Salon du Livre*, October 2003-October 2005'. *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 9.2: 239-56.

Césaire, Aimé. 1956. *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. Paris: Présence Africaine.

Damrosch, David. 2003. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

De Souza, Pascale. 2009. 'Francophone Island Cultures: Comparing Discourses of Identity in "Is-land" Literatures'. In Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (eds), *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press: 238-47.

Forsdick, Charles and David Murphy (eds). 2003. *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*. London: Arnold.

Gorodé, Déwé. 2004a. *The Kanak Apple Season: Selected Short Fiction of Déwé Gorodé*. Translated by Peter Brown. Canberra: Pandanus.

--. 2004b. *Sharing as Custom Provides: Selected Poems of Déwé Gorodé*. Translated by Raylene Ramsay and Deborah Walker. Canberra: Pandanus.

Hau'ofa, Epeli. 1998. 'The Ocean in Us'. *The Contemporary Pacific* 10.2: 392-410.

Herrnstein Smith, Barbara. 1998. *Contingencies of Value*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Huggan, Graham. 2001. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*. London: Routledge.

Kasaipwalova, John. 1971. *Reluctant Flame*. Port Moresby: Papua Pocket Poets.



This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

Keown, Michelle. 2007. *Pacific Islands Writing: The Postcolonial Literatures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Oceania*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lynch, John. 1998. *Pacific Languages: An Introduction*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Mabanckou, Alain. 2009. "The Song of the Migrating Bird": For a *World Literature in French*.' Translated by Dominic Thomas. *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 45.2: 144-50.

Mateata-Allain, Kareva. 2008. *Bridging Our Sea of Islands: French Polynesian Literature within an Oceanic Context*. Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr. Müller.

Mehrez, Samia. 1992. 'Translation and the Postcolonial Experience: The Francophone North African Text.' In Lawrence Venuti (ed), *Rethinking Translation*. London: Routledge, 120-38.

Molisa, Grace Mera. 1997. *Pierre Noire*. Translated by Déwé Gorodé. Noumea: Grain de Sable.

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

Nicole, Robert. 1999. 'Resisting Orientalism: Pacific Literature in French'. In Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson (eds), *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 265-90.

--. 2001. *The Word, the Pen and the Pistol: Literature and Power in Tahiti*. New York: SUNY.

Robinson, Douglas. *Translation and Empire*. Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997.

Sharrad, Paul. 2009. Review of *Island of Shattered Dreams*, by Chantal Spitz (Translated by Jean Anderson). *The Contemporary Pacific* 21.1: 190-92.

Spitz, Chantal. 1991. *L'Île des rêves écrasés*. Tahiti: Au vent des îles.

--. 2002a. 'Identité Comment.' *Révue Littérama'ohi* 1: 110-13.

--. 2002b. 'Francophonie.' *Révue Littérama'ohi* 2: 120-22. Available online at <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ile.en.ile/litteramaohi/02/francophonie.html> (consulted on 4 August 2009).

--. 2003. 'Écrire Colonisé.' Unpublished paper.

--. 2004. 'Introduction aux rencontres océaniques.' *Révue Littérama'ohi* 5: 44-45.

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

--. 2007. *Island of Shattered Dreams*. Translated by Jean Anderson. Wellington: Huia.

Stewart, Frank, Kareva Mateata-Allain and Alexander Dale Mawyer (eds). 2006.

*Vārua Tupu: New Writing from French Polynesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

'Toward a "World-Literature" in French'. 2009. Translated by Daniel Simon. *World Literature Today*, March-April: 54-56.

---

<sup>1</sup> The decision to change the title of the journal formerly known as *World Literature Written in English* to *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* in 2005 is a case in point.

<sup>2</sup> Though I have used the term 'postcolonial' in other published work, in this essay I tend to use 'Indigenous' partly in order to reflect the ambiguous political status of the French Pacific territories (discussed below), and partly to distinguish Indigenous writers from white settler populations (who might in some contexts be classified as 'postcolonial').

<sup>3</sup> Notable exceptions include, *inter alia*, two special issues of the *International Journal of Francophone Studies* - 8.3 (2005) and 11.4 (2008), edited by Pascale De Souza and H. Adlai Murdoch – which include essays on Francophone Pacific writing as well as translations of poetry by Mā'ohi (Tahitian) poet Henri Hiro.

<sup>4</sup> I use the label 'territory' to reflect the fact that with the exception of Vanuatu (a former Anglo-French condominium which achieved independence in 1980), the 'French' Pacific is neither 'postcolonial' nor strictly 'colonial' in political status. Until relatively recently, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and New Caledonia were designated French 'Territoires d'outre-mer', enjoying greater local autonomy than 'Départements d'outre-mer' such as French Guyana and Guadeloupe. As of 2003, however, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna became known as 'Collectivités d'outre-mer', while New Caledonia, following the Noumea Accord of 1998, was uniquely designated 'Pays d'outre-mer' and granted even greater political decentralisation (Brown 2004: xxxii).

<sup>5</sup> Exceptions include Nicole (1999, 2001); Keown (2007) and Mateata-Allain (2008).

<sup>6</sup> Vietnamese writer Anna Moï is the one signatory who could be defined as a 'Pacific' representative, but Vietnam is commonly categorised as belonging to the 'Asia-Pacific' or 'Pacific Rim', which are separate geopolitical entities from the 'Pacific Islands Region' in which the writers discussed in this essay are located (see Hau'ofa 1998: 396-7).

<sup>7</sup> French Polynesia and New Caledonia have exponentially larger populations and concentrations of public resources than Wallis and Futuna, whose local economy is heavily dependent on remittances from expatriates located in New Caledonia (see Brown 2004: ix).

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Oceanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde*. (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

---

<sup>8</sup> Kanak involvement in the movement was partly motivated by a perceived need to protect Indigenous rights following an influx of new French settlers during the nickel 'boom' years of the late 1960s, when Melanesians became a minority ethnic group for the first time.

<sup>9</sup> Subsequently, the 1998 Noumea Accord provided for devolution of state powers over the following 15 years and a further referendum for independence is expected as early as 2013 (see Brown 2004: x-xii).

<sup>10</sup> French Polynesia comprises 118 islands and atolls grouped into five archipelagoes. The three largest of these archipelagoes include the Society Islands (encompassing Tahiti, Mo'orea, Huahine, Bora Bora, Ra'iatea, and Tahaa); the Austral Islands; and the Marquesas. The Gambier and Tuamotu archipelagoes are smaller and less densely populated. This essay follows local convention in using the term Mā'ohi to refer only to the Indigenous people and languages of the Society Islands, and primarily Tahiti (where French Polynesia's capital Papeete, and most of Tahiti's main publishers, are located). I also follow conventional linguistic practice in using an inverted apostrophe to represent the glottal stop phoneme and a macron to represent the long 'a' vowel phoneme in 'Mā'ohi'.

<sup>11</sup> Featured writers include Devatine, Hiro, Peltzer, Peu, Rai a Mai, Vaite, and other contemporaries such as Taaria Walker and Patrick Araia Amaru.

<sup>12</sup> This was a joint publication by Grain de Sable of Noumea and the Institute of Pacific Studies in Suva, Fiji.

<sup>13</sup> Also significantly, the title of the volume carries connotations of spiritual renewal.

<sup>14</sup> These include Patrick Amaru, Michou Chaze, Flora Devatine, Danièle-Taoahere Helma, and Marie-Claude Teissier-Landgraf, as well as Jimmy Ly (of Hakka Chinese ancestry).

<sup>15</sup> Raised in Fiji, Teaiwa is of I-Kiribati and African-American descent.

<sup>16</sup> Since 2006, a wider range of Anglophone Pacific texts in French translation have been published by Au vent des îles of Tahiti (see [www.auventdesiles.pf](http://www.auventdesiles.pf)).

<sup>17</sup> Personal interview, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

<sup>18</sup> On page 19, for example, Anderson is able to preserve an important distinction between 'traitorous' Mā'ohi (Mā'ohi ho'o 'ai'a) and 'patriots' (Mā'ohi here 'ai'a) by using Spitz's original Mā'ohi terms, also retaining Spitz's strategy of opposing Mā'ohi and French military terminology as a means by which to signal a cultural as well as linguistic standoff. Thus Spitz's original sentence 'Nous avons alors commencé à nous entre-tuer: canons contre ômore, fusils contre toi, acier contre àito' is translated as 'And thus we began to kill one another: cannon against 'omore, rifle against to'i, steel against 'aito' (Spitz 1991: 26; Spitz 2007: 19). In the glossary, 'omore is translated as 'spear', to'i as 'axe' and 'aito as 'ironwood tree'. (Neither edition uses inverted apostrophes for glottal stops as I do elsewhere in this essay; see note 10.)

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, a passage from the prologue: 'Vahine Maohi à la peau dorée / Fille du soleil / Fille de la lune / Longs cheveux noir déroulés / Comme les cascades dévalant les montagnes' (1991: 21), which is translated thus: 'Vahine Mā'ohi, golden-skinned woman / Daughter of the sun / Daughter of the moon / Your long black hair tumbling down / Like waterfalls cascading down the mountain' (2007: 15).

<sup>20</sup> See, in particular, Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1956) and John Kasaipwalova's 'Reluctant Flame' (1971).

This is the Author's Final Version of © Keown, M., Hargreaves, A. G. (Ed.), Forsdick, C. (Ed.), & Murphy, D. (Ed.) (2010). *Littérature-monde or Littérature Océanienne?: Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing*. In *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-Monde* . (pp. 240-257). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Please refer to the published volume for citation purposes.

---

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.huia.co.nz/about-us/the-story-of-huia/> (consulted on 19 August 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

<sup>24</sup> This claim is particularly significant given that Gorodé herself was involved in setting up specialist schools in the 1980s which educated Kanak children about their cultures and in their own Kanak languages (which number around 28). In the 1990s, she also collected and transcribed various Melanesian stories and mythological narratives for use in schools.