

Communicants/Speakers
Résumés/Abstracts

Jee H. An

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Kerry-Jane Wallart

International conference
Caryl Phillips, *Crossing the River*: “the many-tongued chorus”
6-7 October 2016

École Normale Supérieure de Lyon
<http://conferences.vanessaguignery.com>

Thursday 6th October 2016

Site Descartes (building formation), Room F008

09.30: Registration and coffee

09.50: Welcome address by Vanessa GUIGNERY (ENS de Lyon, IUF) and Christian GUTLEBEN (Nice — Sophia Antipolis)

Morning Session

Chair: Catherine PESSO-MIQUEL (Lumière University — Lyon 2)

10.00: Kerry-Jane WALLART (University of Paris 4 Sorbonne): “‘Saving Bodies’ – Theatricality in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

10.35: Oriana PALUSCI (University of Naples “L’Orientale”, Italy): “‘Race Matters’: the Languages of Slavery in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

11.10: Vanessa GUIGNERY (ENS de Lyon, IUF): “The Newton-Hamilton Dialogue in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*: Navigating between Appropriation and Creation”

11.45-13.30: Lunch Break

Afternoon session

Chair: Kerry-Jane WALLART (University of Paris 4 Sorbonne)

13.30: Jee H. AN (Seoul National University, South Korea): “The Sounding(s) of Countermodernity in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

14.05: Hubert MALFRAY (Lycée Claude-Fauriel Saint Étienne — IHRIM): “Une poétique de la précarité: économie(s) d’écriture dans *Crossing the River* de Caryl Phillips”

15.10: Catherine LANONE (University of Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle): “Repetition and Reckoning in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

15.45: Coffee Break

Chair: Vanessa GUIGNERY (ENS de Lyon, IUF)

16.15: Kathie BIRAT (University of Lorraine): “Embodied Voices: Literacy and Empathy in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

16.50: A Conversation with Caryl PHILLIPS

(with Vanessa GUIGNERY, recorded at Yale University and the ENS de Lyon on 27 September 2016)

20.00: Dinner

Friday 7th October 2016

Site Buisson (building D6), Conference room 1

Morning Session

Chair: Catherine DELESALLE-NANCEY (University of Lyon 3)

9.30: Nicole TERRIEN (University of Rennes 1): “‘The answer is blowing in the wind’: Emotion and the Rewriting of History in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

10.05: Christian GUTLEBEN (University of Nice — Sophia Antipolis): “Écriture noire, écriture blanche : esthétique du (mé)tissage dans *Crossing the River* de Caryl Phillips”

10.40: Coffee Break

Chair: Judith MISRAHI-BARAK (University Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3)

11.10: Catherine PESSO-MIQUEL (Lumière University — Lyon 2): “Dit et non dit : ruptures et reprises dans *Crossing the River* de Caryl Phillips”

11.45: İ. Murat ÖNER (International Burch University in Sarajevo): “Caryl Phillips and Rhizomorphic Gaze: A Geophilosophical Reading of *Crossing the River*”

12.20-14.00: Lunch Break

Afternoon session

Chair: Christian GUTLEBEN (University of Nice — Sophia Antipolis)

14.00: Mélanie JOSEPH-VILAIN (University of Bourgogne): “‘For beyond this trading community lies family life’: filiation et écriture dans *Crossing the River* de Caryl Phillips”

14.35: Eleanor BYRNE (Manchester Metropolitan University): “Queering the Black Atlantic in Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet* and Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

15.10: Josiane RANGUIN (University of Paris 13-Sorbonne): “The ‘High Anxiety’ of Belonging” in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River* (1993) and Steve McQueen’s *12 Years a Slave* (2013)”

16.00: End of the conference

Abstracts and biographies

* **Jee H. An** (Seoul National University, South Korea): “The Sounding(s) of Countermodernity in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

Both published in 1993, Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River* and Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* have been noted for their apparent similarities in the interrogation of the black diaspora and the memory of slavery as a repository for linking the present to the past. In fact, Gilroy’s emphasis on “black musical expression” and “expressive counterculture” finds a resonant echo in Phillips’s framing of the novel in the epilogue and the prologue with the “many-tongued choruses” that encompass not only the voices of those lost in the history of slavery but also black expressive culture in its invocation of jazz music and the black “beat.” There are many textual moments in which these traces of black expressive culture emerge—the “melancholy lamentations” of the slaves that Captain Hamilton describes, and Joyce’s enthrallment with “the sound of their [black soldiers’] voices and their clapping hands.” I borrow and extend Houston Baker Jr.’s notion of African American “sounds” and use the term “sounding” to describe the sounds and the utterances that are rooted in the history of slavery. Analyzing these moments of historical “soundings”, I argue that Phillips’s *Crossing the River* articulates a countermodernity through the memories, fragments, and the voices of various agents in the history of slavery and colonialism. The text reveals that slavery and racial terror were internal to American and European Enlightenment with its attendant ties to colonial ventures, and shows how Western “progress” from the 18th century to 20th century is deeply embedded in the enslavement and marginalization of blacks. However, Phillips’s text locates the memory of slavery not merely in the distant past. By specifically making connections among specific nodal points of jarring historical events—Liberian repatriation, territorial expansion towards West before and after the Civil War in the US, British slave trade and finally World War II—the African Diaspora is historicized. What I am interested in is elucidating how this text imagines the Diaspora and the colonial past through the soundings of countermodernity in order to arrive at a critique of the postcolonial present, with a political commitment to making the history of slavery relevant in the present. It is not just a “feeling” of redemptive critique of the black slave past that embodies countermodernity, but concrete claims to a politicized present, moving beyond Gilroy’s privileging of music and the memory of the slave sublime.

Jee H. An is Associate Professor of English Language and Literature at Seoul National University (SNU) in South Korea. She has been teaching at SNU since 2004, and was a Visiting Scholar at Harvard-Yenching Institute in 2010. She has also taught at Loyola University and University of Southern Maine. She grew up in Seoul, Korea, and received her BA and MA in English Literature at SNU and her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 2003. Her interests center on African American literature and critical theory, feminist and postcolonial theory and cultural studies. Some of her recent articles include “Du Boisian Critique of American Exceptionalism and Its Limitations: From *The Souls of Black Folk* to *Dusk of Dawn*” and “Why Dick and Jane Went Mad: Blues and Dolls in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*.” She is currently working on a book manuscript on the relationship between modernity and segregated home spaces in black women’s novels. Her most recent publication is a Korean translation of Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*.

* **Kathie Birat** (Université de Lorraine): “Embodied voices: literacy and empathy in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

Caryl Phillips’s novel *Crossing the River* owes part of its success as a novel to Phillips’s grasp of the pivotal role of written expression in the historical periods which he has explored. If literacy was a powerful weapon in the fight against slavery, both for blacks and for whites, it was also a clear indicator of the impact of the codes used by those who profited from slavery and that served as the underpinning of the system they defended; thus documents from the Bible to the American Constitution furnished the elements of a spiritual and democratic mythology that nourished slavery, although they would eventually be used to defeat it. The central role that Phillips gives to captain John Hamilton reveals his understanding of the power wielded by those who commanded economic literacy. His imitation of the written codes underlying slavery is thus a clear example of the relevance of Bakhtin’s dialogics in understanding the way in which a writer uses language to both reveal and subvert the codes embedded in language. For Phillips, language becomes the site of a complex negotiation between fiction and historical reality, allowing him to inscribe the subjectivity of his characters in their use of the written codes of their times.

However, a complementary approach to his exploration of language can be found in his awareness of the inscription of the body in language, not only in the codes of slavery that saw blacks as ciphers in slave captains’ accounts,

but in the forms of metonymy that embed the body in language, belying efforts to counter and overcome the body through the civilizing effects of language, as illustrated for instance by Nash's reference to the Africans' "infantile shacks" or by Joyce's remark that "occasionally I've found my dad on a bronze plaque." In this perspective, language becomes a symptom of the body's distress and allows the reader to hear the voices that call out from the spaces where suffering occurs, between the lines of historical texts. It is in these spaces that the empathy of which Phillips often speaks can develop as a supplement to the intellectual vision of the ironies of history expressed through the codes of literacy.

Kathie Birat is Emeritus Professor of American, African American and Afro-Caribbean literature at the University of Lorraine. She has published numerous articles on Caryl Phillips, Fred D'Aguiar, Earl Lovelace, Robert Antoni and other writers from the English-speaking Caribbean, with particular emphasis on questions of voice and the representation of orality. Recent essays on Caryl Phillips's *Foreigners: Three English Lives* and *Dancing in the Dark* have appeared in *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* (vols. 36, no. 1, and 37, no. 1). "The Dialogue of the Big and the Small: the poetry of Ben Okri," appeared in a special issue of *Callaloo* edited by Vanessa Guignery (38.5, 2016). Kathie Birat edited (with Brigitte Zaugg) a collection of essays entitled *Literature and Spirituality in the English-Speaking World* (Peter Lang 2014).

* **Eleanor Byrne** (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK): "Queering the Black Atlantic in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* and Caryl Phillips's *Crossing the River*"

This paper seeks to discuss the ways in which two Black British writers, Kay and Phillips, have explored and represented how a queer potentiality intersects with a certain postcolonial chronicling of the multiple experiences and complex legacies of the middle passage and its transoceanic cross-currents. In her 2008 article 'Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic, Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage', Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley offers an important critical reframing of Paul Gilroy's influential and ground-breaking work *The Black Atlantic* by thinking through the figure of a slave ship as a site of possible queer relationships. She does this not to assert the chronotope of the slave ship as the site of origin for a Black Queer Atlantic but in order to examine the fraught cross currents in maritime relations as they shift between spaces of memory and erasure, brutality and survival.

This paper will seek to identify the intersections of historical, conceptual and embodied experiences of a Queer Black Atlantic as depicted in Phillips's chronicling of the Atlantic slave trade and its legacies, and Kay's multi-voiced unravelling of race, gender, and sexuality in *Trumpet*, notably in her 'ecstatic' depiction of Jazz in the novel. I will argue that this writing speaks to Amiri Baraka's work, *Black Music*, and his concerns with the ways in which Jazz is stripped of its intelligent socio-critical philosophy in much white criticism. The paper will consider how a Queer critical focus illuminates both Phillips's and Kay's writing, as it foregrounds the fraught negotiations between race, sexuality, gender identity and power as experienced in the remembering of and chronicling of the Black Atlantic diaspora.

Eleanor Byrne is a Senior Lecturer in English and Postcolonial Literatures at Manchester Met, UK and has published on Postcolonial Theory and Literature, including a monograph on Homi K. Bhabha (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and a journal issue on Cosmopolitanism (*Open Arts Journal*, 2013). Her current work is on Transpacific cultural encounters with a focus on Hawaii.

* **Vanessa Guignery** (ENS de Lyon – IUF): “The Newton-Hamilton Dialogue in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*: Navigating between Appropriation and Creation”

In the third narrative of *Crossing the River* comprising Captain Hamilton's edited journal of his voyage to West Africa and correspondence to his wife, Caryl Phillips proposes both pastiche – through the imitation of the style of John Newton's authentic logbook, *Journal of a Slave Trader (1750-54)*, and of his letters to his wife – and a process of montage or collage through the inclusion of barely amended extracts from Newton's original documents. Critics have disagreed about the proportion of appropriation and creation in that third part (as well as in his previous novel *Cambridge*), with some of them – such as Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Lars Eckstein or Maroula Joannou – insisting on the creative transformation and transposition of the historical documents, thus situating Phillips within a postcolonial and postmodernist tradition of reworking of past authoritative texts, while others – more specifically Marcus Wood in his detailed and incisive comparison of the various texts – have argued that Phillips excessively relies on the original text while simultaneously reducing its “complexities and complicities”. The aim of this paper is to compare Newton's and Hamilton's logbooks so as to assess the achievement of a twentieth-century Caribbean-English writer in his

ventriloquism and transvocalization of an eighteenth-century slave captain within a historical narrative that is wedged between two fictional accounts by marginalized female characters.

Vanessa Guignery is Professor of English and Postcolonial Literature at the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon and a member of the Institut Universitaire de France in Paris. She is the author of several books and essays on the work of Julian Barnes, including *The Fiction of Julian Barnes* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), and *Conversations with Julian Barnes* (Mississippi Press, 2009), co-edited with Ryan Roberts. She has published articles on various British and postcolonial contemporary authors, as well as monographs on B.S. Johnson and Ben Okri. She edited and co-edited several collections of essays on contemporary British and post-colonial literature (Janet Frame, Ben Okri, Alice Munro, among others), a special issue of the *Journal of American, British and Canadian Studies* on Julian Barnes (Sibiu, 2009), of *Callaloo* on Ben Okri (Fall 2015), and of *Études anglaises* on the British Contemporary Novel (April-June 2015), co-edited with Marc Porée. Her collection of interviews with eight contemporary writers, *Novelists in the New Millenium*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2013. www.vanessaguignery.com

* **Christian Gutleben** (Université de Nice Sofia-Antipolis): “Écriture noire, écriture blanche : esthétique du (mé)tissage”

Clairement marquée par un axe de symétrie qui sépare d’un côté un prologue et deux récits nord-américains et de l’autre côté deux récits britanniques et un épilogue, la structure dyadique de *Crossing the River* révèle et relève à merveille le propos de Phillips qui entend distinguer autant que comparer, séparer autant que rapprocher. Dans un premier temps, la construction symétrique semble opposer les deux narrations d’outre-Atlantique (suivant une graphie américaine) et les deux témoignages anglais (suivant une graphie britannique) et cela d’autant plus que dans les premiers cas les voix les plus audibles sont celles d’esclaves noirs récemment affranchis tandis que dans les derniers cas les énonciateurs sont des sujets britanniques blancs. Cette opposition entre récits noirs et récits blancs paraît encore accentuée par une stratégie rhétorique manifeste : l’utilisation massive de l’hypallage dans les parties sur l’esclavage américain et l’absence quasi-totale de cette même figure dans les documents anglo-saxons. Or, l’hypallage, figure du transfert syntaxique, semble ici devenir figure du transfert symbolique, équivalent rhétorique du déplacement, du déracinement, de la déportation.

Pourtant, et c'est là que la symétrie structurelle joue son rôle de mise en relation, les effets de dislocation sont présents dans l'ensemble des récits et tous les protagonistes font l'objet de déplacements géographiques (échos de la traversée éponyme) qui représentent autant de bouleversements identitaires et idéologiques. Les divers récits sont donc reliés par une absence d'unité, à la fois topographique et formelle – comme le montre le mélange de voix narratives, de supports génériques ou de repères temporels – et finissent par former une esthétique de la fragmentation, distinctement métaphorique d'un éclatement axiologique. Et si l'on prend « écriture blanche » dans le sens barthésien « d'écriture neutre, [...] amodale », « d'écriture de l'innocence » qui est aussi « la façon d'exister d'un silence » (Barthes 1972 : 56), alors cette écriture blanche pourrait bien, paradoxe ultime, associer le récit de Martha et celui de Joyce, la face noire et la face blanche du roman. C'est donc par un travail esthétique de fragmentation narrative et d'écriture « au degré zéro » que Phillips met en correspondance les deux parties de sa construction symétrique et c'est par ce travail de tissage qu'il entend déconstruire toute dualité, toute binarité, toute dichotomie, fussent-elles poétiques ou politiques.

Christian Gutleben is Professor at the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis, where he teaches nineteenth-, twentieth- and twenty-first-century British literature and where he directs the journal *Cycnos*. His research focuses on the links between the Victorian and the postmodernist forms of art, and he is the author of one of the earliest critical surveys of neo-Victorian literature, *Nostalgic Postmodernism: The Victorian Tradition and the Contemporary British Novel* (Rodopi, 2001, reedited 2013). He has also published books on the English campus novel and Graham Greene, as well as numerous articles on postmodernism in British literature, and is co-editor (with Marie-Luise Kohlke) of Rodopi's Neo-Victorian Series, including *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering* (Rodopi, 2010), *Neo-Victorian Families: Gender, Sexual and Cultural Politics* (Rodopi, 2011), *Neo-Victorian Gothic: Horror, Violence and Degeneration in the Re-Imagined Nineteenth Century* (Rodopi, 2012), and *Neo-Victorian Cities: Reassessing Urban Politics and Poetics* (Rodopi/ Brill 2015). The last two volumes of the Series (*Neo-Victorian Humour* and *Neo-Victorian Biofiction*) are due to be published in 2016 and 2017.

* **Mélanie Joseph-Vilain** (Université de Bourgogne): “‘For beyond this trading community lies family life’: filiation et écriture dans *Crossing the River* de Caryl Phillips”

La plupart des lectures de l'œuvre de Caryl Phillips mettent l'accent sur la dimension polyphonique de *Crossing the River*, décrit par Bénédicte Ledent comme un « kaléidoscope vocal ». Le roman, multi-générique, emprunte aussi bien au roman épistolaire qu'au journal de bord ou encore au journal intime, réinscrivant ainsi ces modes d'écriture dans le genre du « *neo slave narrative* » « *post-Beloved* » (J. Misrahi-Barak). Il s'agira ici d'explorer en quoi ce choix d'une filiation littéraire multiple, « a polyglot family tree » pour reprendre l'expression de Salman Rushdie, est lié à une exploration de la filiation en son sens le plus littéral : les rapports entre parents et enfants. En effet, chacune des sous-parties du roman interroge, d'une façon ou d'une autre, cette question, dans le contexte plus large de l'esclavage et de ses conséquences à court, moyen et long terme. On essaiera de comprendre pourquoi, et d'analyser comment ces différents « portraits de famille » contribuent à inscrire, à leur tour, *Crossing the River* dans une filiation littéraire. Parmi les questions particulièrement saillantes, on peut citer le genre (*gender*), la notion de choix (adoption vs. filiation naturelle) ou encore celle de la distance (temporelle et géographique). Mais la question centrale sera celle du non-dit : dans *Crossing the River* les relations familiales se construisent en effet essentiellement dans le silence, le secret ou le mensonge. Les outils textuels qui permettent de traiter, le plus souvent en creux, la question de la filiation, seront donc analysés, afin d'établir le lien qui existe entre la filiation dans son sens littéral et la filiation littéraire.

Mélanie Joseph-Vilain is a Senior Lecturer at the Université de Bourgogne where she teaches postcolonial literature and translation. She has published articles and book chapters on South African, Nigerian, Guyanese and Zimbabwean literature, and co-edited *Postcolonial Ghosts* (with Judith Misrahi-Barak, PULM 2009), *Healing South African Wounds* (with Gilles Teulié, PULM 2009) and *Another Life* (with Judith Misrahi-Barak, PULM 2013). Her current research focuses on literary affiliations, postcolonial gothic, detective fiction, science fiction and the posthuman.

* **Catherine Lanone** (University of Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle):
“Repetition and Reckoning in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

In *Crossing the River*, Caryl Phillips revisits inadequate narratives of History to expose slavery and racism as a transnational, trans-period process. In Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved*, a blurred, surreal narrative evokes the horrors of the Middle Passage, as Morrison opts for the uncountable to convey unaccountable, unspeakable pain. On the contrary Phillips shows the cold economics of slavery, with dry numbers and a boatload to force the reader to supply the missing narrative of pain. Phillips’s reverse tactics plays on repetition (of the number three, of a leitmotif and echoes between the 3 main stories, and of intertextual echoes) to dramatize impossible reverse passages, negatives of tales of history, and explore the collapse of what Marie-Louise Pratt calls contact zones. Thus repetition and reversal become the key to a new reckoning of the past.

Catherine Lanone is an alumna of the École Normale Supérieure and Professor of English literature at the University Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle. She is the author of two monographs on E. M. Forster and Emily Brontë and has published articles on Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster, Graham Greene and Iain Sinclair, among other modern and contemporary authors.

* **Hubert Malfray** (Lycée Claude-Fauriel Saint Étienne - IHRIM UMR 5317): “Une poétique de la précarité: économie(s) d’écriture dans *Crossing the River* de Caryl Phillips”

Si la métaphore du passage sourd à travers le titre du roman de Caryl Phillips, elle en dissimule toutefois une autre, plus subtile: celle de l’échange, thème qui unit l’écriture à la question de l’économie. Cette problématique est pourtant présente dès les premiers mots du père qui, dans le prologue, annonce: « I sold my children. [...] I soiled my hands with cold goods in exchange for their warm flesh. A shameful *intercourse* » (1 - je souligne). L’économie en jeu dans le commerce d’êtres humains devenus purs objets de transaction va permettre aux divers narrateurs de Phillips de décliner toute une réflexion sur la question de la vulnérabilité et, par extension, de la pauvreté et de la précarité intrinsèques à la situation des hommes-marchandises, victimes de la diaspora et du discours de l’opresseur. Le texte laisse en effet entendre des voix précaires, appauvries, celles des marginaux, des minuscules auxquels l’Histoire n’a pas donné droit au chapitre.

À la suite de Barbara Korte (*Narrating Poverty and Precarity in Britain*), qui relie la question de la pauvreté à ce qu'elle nomme « lack of agency, opportunities, access to knowledge, traditions, rights or capacities », nous essaierons dans un premier temps de montrer l'importance du manque dans l'existence de ces sans-pouvoir, pour qui la lettre (à comprendre tant au sens de matériau premier du langage que d'épistole) est le symbole d'une quête aux accents de prière. Si le *precor* est celui qui prie, alors la prière, véritable aveu de précarité, devient à la fois la métaphore et la métonymie d'une écriture du « subalterne » (Guha, Spivak). Voix d'emprunt lorsqu'elle se récite, la prière est du même coup le symptôme d'une impuissance et la monnaie d'échange qu'invoque le sans-pouvoir pour réclamer son dû : qu'on l'écoute.

Cette réflexion nous conduira dans un second temps à voir comment la précarité se décline également sur le terrain de la famille et de la généalogie, puisque ces récits d'orphelins font se juxtaposer des voix fragmentées et déracinées qui semblent arrachées à leur lignée, et dont l'existence est persécutée par la dette qui les lie à une filiation avortée (le père africain et ses trois enfants ; Martha et Eliza Mae ; Travis et son fils) ou à une présence paternelle pesante et angoissée (Nash Williams face au trouble de l'origine, entre Afrique et Amérique). Le généalogique est précisément le lieu où s'enraye l'économie textuelle, où l'héritage et la transmission sont entravés au prix d'une faillite du « je ».

Ceci nous conduira à nous pencher enfin sur une autre faillite, étonnement bien plus vertueuse cette fois-ci : celle de l'Histoire (prise en charge notamment par la chronique de Hamilton dans la troisième section), qui est mise en défaut de paiement par le jeu subtil de la fiction. C'est là que ce que nous nommerons, en écho à Barbara Korte, le « lack of agency » de la fiction - c'est-à-dire sa désarticulation apparente - devient un vecteur de poéticité dont l'objet est d'inquiéter la perception unique et standardisée de l'Histoire de ces hommes-objets de la diaspora. Les fluctuations et spéculations de l'écriture deviennent sa richesse dans un roman protéiforme où la précarité exacerbée de l'écriture (du style, mais aussi du genre, et enfin du rêve face au réel) devient une véritable poétique, se faisant le salut des minuscules, la seule façon de faire « monter des voix » (« Voices begin to climb », 89) pour laisser entendre un « crude dialect » (23) qui donne à l'écriture de Phillips toute sa valeur.

Hubert Malfray est enseignant de littérature anglo-saxonne en khâgne au lycée Claude-Fauriel de Saint-Etienne, traducteur littéraire, docteur en littérature anglaise de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, spécialiste du roman

victorien et des écritures et genres mineurs. Il a déjà publié et communiqué sur les récits de voyages et sur la perception/construction de l'Autre colonial (Anna Leonowens, Thomas De Quincey, Joseph Conrad). Hubert Malfray est chercheur associé à l'unité mixte de recherche IHRIM (5317).

* **İ. Murat Öner** (International Burch University in Sarajevo): “Caryl Phillips and Rhizomorphic Gaze: A Geophilosophical Reading of *Crossing the River*”

Caryl Phillips's narratives are generally known for their fragmentation, ambiguity, displaced characters, mindboggling geographical and social passages, and intertextual allusions. *Crossing the River* similarly embodies fragmentation in its substance and narrative form(s), and it also features transgressors and travelers who geographically and socially cross borders and undergo deep transformations. Therefore, one's initial experience of reading Phillips's labyrinthine writing – such as *Crossing the River* – is that of utter confusion. In the academia, earlier studies have properly addressed the issues of Phillips's agenda: memory of oppression and displacement, history of dislocation and exile, and ultimate diasporic experience. This paper, however, proposes an alternative perspective for Caryl Phillips's readers: a geophilosophical analysis. This paper suggests that Phillips's sophistication arises not only from his writing agenda but also from his aesthetic concerns in handling historical nonequilibrium. Bertrand Westphal states: “Nonequilibrium is coherent and, ultimately, more interesting than equilibrium, since the latter is deprived of history.” Westphal also compares “equilibrium” with “a nonstory” and “nonequilibrium” with “a complex story” (19). As this paper suggests, geophilosophical reading makes more sense of Phillipsian dense *modus operandi* and artistic intents. This model also juxtaposes *Crossing the River* and Phillips's other narratives. Under such a scrutiny, Phillipsian fragmentation presents a “patchwork” of his “rhizomorphic” gaze at the nonequilibrium, and geographical and social passages are merely “smoothing” movements from “striations” of “the state apparatus,” and displaced characters turn into border-crossing “nomads” for whom displacement is an “intermezzo.”

İ. Murat Öner is an assistant professor at the Department of English Language and Literature at International Burch University in Sarajevo. His research interests are geocriticism, literary geography and cartography, and space theories. His dissertation entitled “Transgressive Spatiality in Caryl

Phillips's Writing: A Geocritical Study" engages with Phillips's complex spatial discourse.

* **Oriana Palusci** (University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy): " 'Race Matters': the Languages of Slavery in Caryl Phillips's *Crossing the River*"

Crossing the River, published in 1993, introduces the reader to a complex, fragmented, unstable narrative pattern in which conflicting voices – and also times, spaces, historical interpretations – face each other and clash with each other on the page. The title itself, *Crossing the River*, suggests different interpretations. The choice of language, pivotal in the novel, avoids the triviality of generalizations or simplifications, being a re-elaboration of a 'river' of meta-narratives. It is true, the master's voice prevails in the four episodes: it is embodied by the Christian worldview of Edward Williams, by the white civilization ruling the life of Martha in the second episode, by the impassive remnants in the sea journey of the slave ship (third episode), by the largely white background of England in the Second World War. However, the missing links, the gaps in the non-chronologically structured book, reverberate in the lexicon of slavery as a specialised discourse, dislocating the "Master" narratives.

Oriana Palusci is Full Professor of English at the University of Naples 'L'Orientale'. She has published extensively on a number of literary, cultural, linguistic and environmental topics related to English, American and Canadian Studies. She has edited volumes on different topics, among which *Postcolonial Studies. Changing Perceptions* (2007), and more recently, *Crossing Borders: Variation on a Theme in Canadian Studies* (2014), *Translating East and West* (2016) and *Green Canada* (2016). She is the President of the Italian Association for Canadian Studies.

* **Catherine Pessu-Miquel** (University of Lyon 2): "Dit et non dit: ruptures et reprises dans *Crossing the River* de Caryl Phillips"

Cet article propose d'abord d'examiner en détail la partie quatre, « Somewhere in England », pour analyser la voix de Joyce, ainsi que les fonctions respectives de la discontinuité temporelle, des béances du texte, du *non sequitur*, et des répétitions dans la création d'une narration originale

et distinctive, et dans la création d'un personnage féminin qui pour être un « type » n'en est pas moins singulier. La nature ambiguë de cette narration, entre journal intime, narration homodiégétique et monologue de mémoire, sera interrogée, ainsi que la grammaire de la différence et de l'exclusion qu'elle déploie. La qualité « dialectale » de la voix, et la tension triangulaire entre style télégraphique, humour grinçant et lyrisme seront étudiées parallèlement aux stratégies d'évitement et de « censure » qui passent tant de choses sous silence.

Néanmoins cette partie dotée du numéro quatre représente en fait la troisième destination du triangle de routine autrefois dessiné par les bateaux négriers, entre Afrique (parties I et III du roman), Amérique (partie II) et Europe. S'il est nécessaire d'analyser les spécificités de cette partie contemporaine, il est tout aussi indispensable d'évaluer sa place au sein du roman entier, et son interaction avec les parties plus « historiques » qui la précèdent. On pourra ainsi constater comment elle se positionne au sein de la double continuité mise en scène par ce texte : la continuité temporelle, à travers les siècles, des tribulations et des souffrances subies par les esclaves et leurs descendants, et une continuité des stratégies narratives, car dans l'histoire de Joyce résonne l'écho insistant et fertile de thèmes, de motifs et même de mots précis rencontrés dans toutes les autres composantes de l'élégante structure élaborée par Caryl Phillips.

Catherine Pessa-Miquel is Emeritus Professor of English Literature at the University of Lyon 2. Her research focuses on the contemporary novel and on travel literature, exploring questions of narratology, intertextuality, postcolonialism, and problematics linked to identity and feminism. She has published books and articles on American novelists (Willa Cather and Paul Auster), British novelists (Graham Swift in particular) and Indo-Anglian authors. She published a monography on Paul Auster in 1996 (*Toiles trouées et désert lunaires dans Moon Palace de Paul Auster*, Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle), Willa Cather in 2001 (*Alexander's Bridge, de Willa Cather*, Éditions du Temps), Salman Rushdie in 2007 (*Salman Rushdie, l'écriture transportée*, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux) and on Anita Desai in 2008 (*In Custody de Anita Desai*, Atlande).

* **Josiane Ranguin** (University of Paris XIII-Sorbonne): “The ‘High Anxiety’ of Belonging” in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River* (1993) and Steve McQueen’s *12 Years a Slave* (2013)”

The concluding chapter of Caryl Phillips’s *A New World Order* (2001), « The ‘High Anxiety’ of Belonging », focuses on the notions of home and memory. As « a man of African origin » (307) confronted with the memory of the traumatic severing from Africa, Caryl Phillips describes himself wrestling with the following questions: « To what extent do I belong to this place? How much do I want to forget? » (307). He also states that his home is « this watery crossroads » (304) laying « at a point equidistant between Britain, Africa, and North America » (304). This is precisely the triangle that Martha, Nash and Travis, sold by their father, will have to navigate in *Crossing the River* (1993), a novel in which the three members of the African diaspora negotiate their respective journeys towards the unknown. Disaffiliation and the sense of a precarious hold on life are also the focus of *12 Years a Slave* (2013), a film by Steve McQueen whose scenario is based on the firsthand account of Solomon Northup, an African-American man born free in the state of New York, captured in 1841, then sold into slavery and down the Mississippi River. Indeed, both novel and film chronicle fights for agency and visibility against ‘visuality’ (Nicholas Mirzoeff, 2011) and I will examine how the two Anglo-Caribbean artists endeavor to subvert received history and conjure up the spirit of a totalitarian world that enforces amnesia and the silent acceptance of absolute control over human beings designated as inferior others in a process that announces the advent of Empires. Defamiliarization and fractured timelines figure among the narrative techniques offering a new vision of the diasporan past. While montage and pastiche, favored by Caryl Phillips, cast a new light on slavery, elaborate staging and framing techniques enable Steve MacQueen to expose the roots of racialization.

Josiane Ranguin has received her PhD from the University of Paris XIII-Sorbonne Paris Cité, completed under the supervision of Professor Chantal Zabus. Her dissertation examined the Anglo-Caribbean gaze as evinced in a selection of Caryl Phillips’s works on which she has also published articles. Her areas of interest include French and English-language Caribbean literature, postcolonial writing and film studies.

* **Nicole Terrien** (University of Rennes 1): “‘The answer is blowing in the wind’: Emotion and the Rewriting of History in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

As a starting point, we choose to take our cue from Caryl Phillips himself who, in the many interviews he has given, somewhat endorses the role of critic of his own work. For instance, he claims that his primary centre of interest has always been history and, following Ricoeur and Hayden White’s perspectives, he considers that fiction plays a key role in shaping our sense of history and therefore present sense of collective identity (*Conversations with Caryl Phillips*, ed. Renée Schatteman, U.P. Mississippi, Jackson 2009. 23, 55). Being aware of his responsibility as a writer, he clearly states that he considers it his duty to revisit history in order to provide a new narrative which can incorporate the voices of those who have been left out of the official discourse. The purpose of this paper is to focus on some of the devices which allow Phillips to turn what he would call an “emotional portrait” (*Conversations*, 180) of characters into a moving representation of the past and a compelling new perspective on the present as he deals with “the ramifications beyond the pain being caused to an individual” (*Conversations*, 82).

Summoning unlikely parallels with Bob Dylan or James Joyce, may enlighten how Caryl Phillips, in *Crossing the River*, uses pathos to revisit history in order to “create in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race” (Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, final words). The recurring figure of the Father linked to the notion of Time seems to carry the echo of Stephen’s “great Artificer”. The incantation conveyed by the father’s voice which shapes the prelude/chorus also evokes tragedy and sets the tone for a form of pathos inciting the reader to feel empathy for the characters of the distinct stories which, stitched together, constitute the timeless narrative of oppression.

The first paradox to be studied concerns the “mise en intrigue” (Ricoeur) of history in a series of diachronic episodes which, each time, focus on a new character, against a different geographical and historical background. Names and the thematic repetition of racial discrimination ensures the fluidity of a narrative otherwise defined by its broken structure. This tension which can be read as Phillips’s signature (*Conversations*, 56) startles the reader out of the comfort of the linear reading of the plot, creating new horizons of expectation, making it impossible to reach definitive closure (*Conversations*, 64). The reader soon becomes aware of a multitude of micro seismic movements

which serve both as announcements and replica of the major ruptures which constitute the macrostructure of the novel.

The second paradox is that, beyond the carefully planned disrupting structure, the attention to detail in language allows a sense of fluidity between severed parts while slowing down the reading process with a haunting sense of déjà-vu; Phillips cites music as his model (*Conversations*, 108). Besides, a sort of two-way contamination between the language of the oppressor and the language of the oppressed blurs the limits between good and evil and establishes the grey area (*Conversations*, 167) Phillips constantly imposes to his reader so as to force the latter to abandon certitudes and feel for the frailty of human nature.

Finally, the distance between past and present being erased by the force of emotion, the novel finds its place as a work of art which cannot be defined by the conditions of its production alone. Literature is summoned through numerous intertextual references, implicit or explicit evocations which deepen the emotional response of the reader as they create a resonance which ensures the need for constant reassessment. Just as the present can neither be understood without knowledge of the past nor be reduced to the mere consequence of the past, the novel offers the endless possibility to rearrange the perception of the human psyche. The pleasure of the text, thus enhanced, confers to Phillips's novel the power to stand for one of the true representations of reality, the reality of human emotions.

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* **Kerry-Jane Wallart** (University of Paris 4 Sorbonne): “‘Saving Bodies’ – Theatricality in Caryl Phillips’s *Crossing the River*”

This paper turns to the tension between the private and the public realms orchestrated by *Crossing the River*. If the novel chooses to grapple with the facts of slavery and its aftermath through a quadruple movement of individuation, it is not to present exemplary cases but rather to draw attention to the singularity of each life and above all, of each body. While much criticism around the works of Caryl Phillips scrutinizes phenomena of polyphony and spectrality, I shall attempt to foreground the numerous effects of physicality in *Crossing the River*. Characters are not mere writers or speakers – or listeners, in the

cases of the father and Martha; they are bodies, with their needs and desires, their decrepitude and resilience. I will show how the representation of these bodies is allowed to become politically charged in the double perspective of narrated time (slavery, when a body is a thing with a mathematical value) and narrating time (nowadays). In going back to what is very much present, rather than absent, in the ghost, I will look at elements of theatricality and performance in a novel which has been, after all, written by someone who is also a major playwright.

Kerry-Jane Wallart is Senior Lecturer at the University of Paris Sorbonne. After first focusing on contemporary Caribbean theatre with a PhD dissertation and numerous papers on Derek Walcott, she has published articles about such African playwrights as Athol Fugard and Wole Soyinka. She has also written on V.S. Naipaul, E.K. Brathwaite, Wilson Harris, Pauline Melville, David Dabydeen, Fred D'Aguiar, Claude McKay, Salman Rushdie, Ben Okri and Seamus Heaney. Her research concerns itself generally with the migrations and mutations of genre in post-colonial literatures.