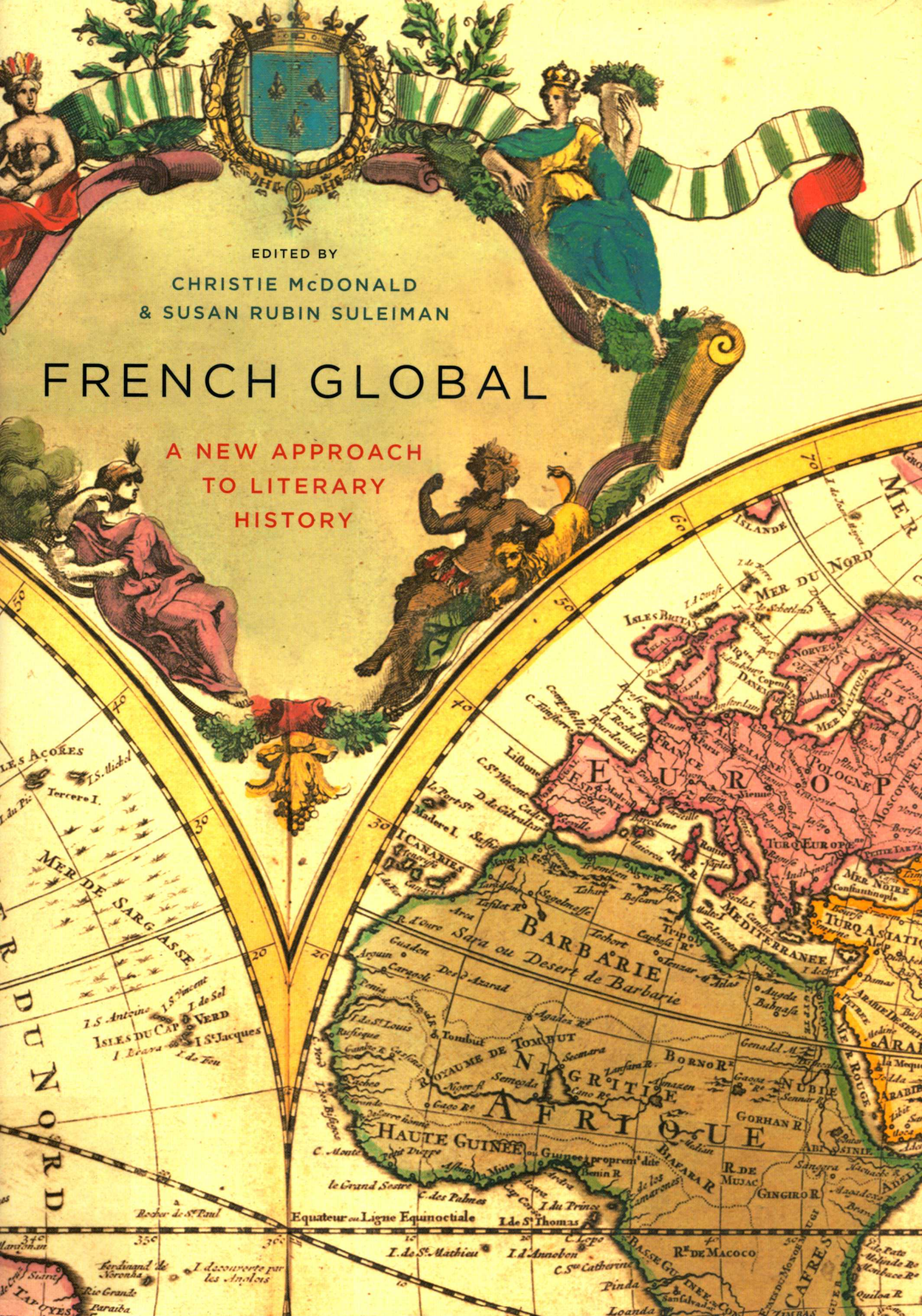

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FRENCH GLOBAL

A NEW APPROACH TO LITERARY HISTORY

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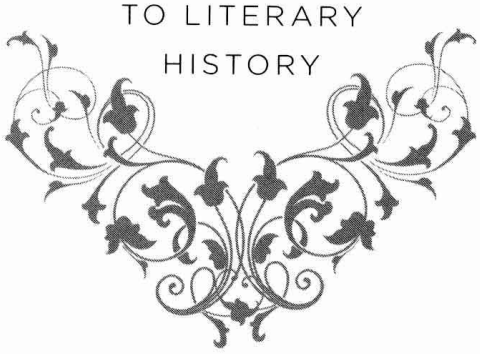

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FRENCH GLOBAL

INTRODUCTION

The National and the Global

Susan Rubin Suleiman and Christie McDonald

Is it possible to reread the whole sweep of French literature in a world perspective? That question is the foundation of this volume. Our aim is not to be exhaustive, but to provide roadmaps. We propose an *approach* to literary history, as defined by the multiple implications and resonances of the "global."

The equation of the globe with the world dates from the sixteenth century, contemporaneously with the first great wave of European explorations—and exploitations—of the New World. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites as the first use of the word in English Richard Eden's 1553 *A Treatise of the New India*, itself a translation from an earlier work in Latin: "The whole globe of the world hath been sailed about." The adjective *global* as defined by the OED is even broader, encompassing not only geography but also everything under the sun: "all inclusive, unified, total; involving the whole world; world-wide; universal." The global as the total, or totalizing, is the meaning often associated with economic globalization, especially in its negative or anxious connotations: the whole world converted into a single marketplace, where true differences are elided in an endless vista of identical (but differently labeled) "products" and services offered to the consumer. In this economic sense, the global is a synonym for homogenization and concentration of capital.

In the sphere of culture and ideas, the drive to totalization is the drive to assimilate and to elide cultural differences. This is a kind of "globalization" that has often been castigated (and parodied) about French colonialism, which defined its exportation of French culture to the colonies as a "civilizing mission"; hence generations of African and Caribbean schoolchildren grew up reciting "*nos ancêtres les Gaulois* [our ancestors the Gauls]" in their history lessons. France's tendency to describe French thought as universal goes back a long way, and it was one of the mainstays

of French pedagogy—including especially the teaching of French literature, which was seen as a "mirror" of the soul of the nation—from Napoleon's founding of the public system of education in the early nineteenth century onward.

This is not the sense in which we use the term *global* in this volume. For us, the definition of global is more like that of a global positioning system (to cite the OED a last time): "a world-wide navigation system which allows users to determine their location very precisely by means of receiving equipment that detects timed radio signals from a network of satellites in stable, predictable orbits." The satellites move in stable and predictable orbits, but the GPS device itself accompanies people who move around a great deal, often in haphazard, unpredictable trajectories. One of the best things about a GPS device is its constant ability and willingness to "recalculate." The fact that the system can be used by the Defense Department—which created and still manages the system—in cases of national emergency is its less utopic side. We emphasize that in our somewhat fanciful (and tongue-in-cheek) metaphor, the relevant aspect of the GPS device is that it allows users to situate and navigate *themselves*; it has also found uses in mapmaking and land surveying, activities apposite to our project.

Setting technological metaphors aside, what we mean by a global approach to literary history was stated in our original project statement, which has informed all the contributions to this book: "The sense of a globe that is interconnected, of cultural difference within and beyond the nation." Transactions between and among cultures and peoples, both outside and inside France's national boundaries (which themselves have changed over time) have been present in every period of literature in French. The approach we are proposing places, paradoxically, negotiations with otherness and boundary crossings at the very center of French literary history.

The most important changes in the field of French studies over the past forty years have been the theoretical explosion of the 1960s, the feminist revolution that started in the 1970s, and the recognition of "Francophone" literatures. We can add to these the even more recent development of the field of migration studies and the study of diasporic communities, which French studies shares with other disciplines. The 1960s saw the development of the human sciences beginning with "the linguistic turn," which produced important mutual influences among philosophy, anthropology, psychoanalysis, and literary studies. The feminist revolution beginning in the 1970s questioned the accepted canon, broke through and resisted the disciplines as they had been defined, and made possible new ways of reading gender in literature and society. The rise of Francophone studies has broadened thinking beyond the "hexagon," France's geopolitical territory, to include the overseas departments of France (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion, Guyane) and

literatures by French speakers ranging from sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb, the Caribbean, Quebec, Mauritius, and Vietnam. Questions about the relation of the (territorial) center to its extraterritorial peripheries have become crucial to discussions of Francophonie. Our contention is that such questions—about the tensions between multiplicity and unity, between diversity and uniformity, between "same" and "other," as well as the related questions of migration and diasporic identities—are not limited to the emergence of "Francophone literature"; rather, they have informed every period of French literature, starting with some of its most canonical texts. It is not an accident that the French national epic, the *Chanson de Roland*, survives in an Anglo-Norman copy located in Oxford, England.

An important precedent to this collection of essays is *A New History of French Literature*, published under the general editorship of Denis Hollier in 1989. That book broke important ground twenty years ago, not least because—as Hollier emphasized in his introductory essay—it was unusual to find a history of this prestigious national literature, the pride and glory of France, as many authors of literary histories have called it, written "in pieces" (two hundred short essays arranged under specific dates) rather than in a single narrative arranged by "great authors" and centuries; and written, furthermore, by dozens of contributors, almost all of them from outside France. Of the one hundred and sixty contributors, only seven came from French universities or research institutes. Hollier, playfully but also seriously, concluded his introductory essay by underlining this novelty: "What French person, asked Chateaubriand, would not smile at the idea of a history of French literature composed outside France's own frontiers? This *New History of French Literature* has been written from both sides of as many borders as possible."[1]

What Hollier and his colleagues could not have foreseen was the veritable explosion of new work that would take place in the two decades following the publication of the book (a book to which we ourselves contributed). This new work has challenged French literature's traditional borders as well as France's traditional self-image—that of a republic where "all citizens are equal," with no attention paid to ethnic or other differences. France's republican ideal, embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that emerged from the French Revolution, envisaged a centralized system of government and education, where citizens (who at the time of the Declaration did not include slaves or women) could all be assimilated under the single banner of French values. All were welcome, as long as they made no "communitarian" claims. Differences in culture or religion were tolerated in private life, but not in the political or civic life of the nation.

Today, the republican ideal of assimilation and centralization has come increasingly under attack: in the realm of literary and social theory, with their

conceptualizations of world-systems, European citizenship, or *littérature-monde*; in the realm of literary and artistic production, with the rise to best-seller status of works written in French by "foreigners" and the star status of minority musicians and filmmakers; and in the realm of political and social life, with ongoing debates about laws forbidding the wearing of the Muslim veil in public schools or about the use of affirmative action policies in job and school recruitment. It seems highly significant that the *New History* appeared in the bicentenary year of the French Revolution, one of whose enduring achievements was the creation of a centralized state and state institutions; despite its celebration of border crossings, that book too was firmly anchored in French history and in the centrality of French thought. Thus Lionel Gossman, in his essay "What Was Enlightenment," beautifully explicated (and defended) the universalist ambitions of French Enlightenment thought and concluded by pointing to its international character—in other words, to the radiating influence of France on the world. Yves Citton, in his essay in this volume, emphasizes instead the tensions and conflicts *within* Enlightenment thought, especially as it struggled with issues of unity and multiplicity.

Literature, Language, and the Nation

Gustave Lanson (1857–1934), who is generally credited with the creation of the modern discipline of literary history in France,[2] began his massive *Histoire de la littérature française* (first published in 1895, and reissued in new editions until more than a decade after his death) with the statement, "*avec la vie nationale, s'éveille la littérature nationale*" ("national literature awakens at the same time as national life").[3] Lanson's long career as a professor of literature coincided almost exactly with the consolidation of the French public education system under the Third Republic, a system designed to inculcate civic virtue and love of country in every schoolchild. Lanson, a man of liberal and capacious intelligence and a staunch supporter of the Republic, reached the pinnacle of his career as director (1919–1927) of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, France's premier institution of higher learning in the arts and sciences, founded by Napoleon with the specific aim of forming the nation's elite. Lanson's *Histoire,* which launched his career, was as much an enterprise of defining national identity as of teaching students how to explicate the great works of the national literature. French historians customarily begin their account of the founding of the nation with the first Merovingian king, Clovis I, who reigned from 481 to 511, while historians of literature most often begin with the first extant document written in French, known as the "Serment de Strasbourg" of 842. Lanson, however, considered the birth of French national life *and* of French literature to date from the coming to power of Hugues Capet (who reigned from

987 to 996), the first king of the Capetian royal line that Lanson credited with the creation of "French unity" (*l'unité française*).

The vision that underlies the whole enormous project of Lanson's *Histoire*—of language, literature, and nation melded together in a seemingly unproblematic union; of France's geographical and political borders coinciding with its linguistic borders (this coincidence ignored Belgium and Switzerland, and after 1830, the conquered territories of the Maghreb); of *l'esprit français*, the French spirit that found its highest expression in the work of its great writers—was not invented by Lanson. It was already fully articulated by his predecessor at the Ecole Normale two generations earlier, Jean-Marie Napoléon Désiré Nisard (1806–1888), who directed the Ecole Normale Supérieure from 1857 to 1867, and who had published his own *Histoire de la littérature française* in 1844 (it too was reprinted several times before Lanson's superseded it). Like Lanson, Désiré Nisard launches his work by stating that "Literary history begins . . . with the nation itself, with language."[4] But he distinguishes "literary history" from "history of literature," for literature is art, and true art does not begin until the Renaissance. "Everything before the Renaissance belongs to the history of the language," he writes with sovereign assurance, thus throwing epics and romances, the poetry of the troubadours and the Lais of Marie de France, out of the realm of art. Nisard is generally more dogmatic than Lanson, but he shares with Lanson a firm belief in the existence of *l'esprit français*, a spirit of rationality and a regard for universal truths that France's greatest writers have embodied. In the works of these writers, French readers recognize themselves as in a mirror. The argument is foolproof, if circular: the great writer is one who expresses *l'esprit français*, so that readers recognize themselves in his works; and if readers recognize themselves in a writer's works, he is great. The resulting roster is unchanging and permanent, like *l'esprit français* itself.

To a contemporary reader, such arguments no doubt appear chauvinistic and narrow-mindedly nationalistic; but tempering that view is the fact that both Nisard and Lanson (the latter more than the former) envisage the French spirit in broadly universalist terms: paradoxically, the national specificity of *l'esprit français*, as they conceive it, is that it is universal. "French literature is the idealized image of human life, in all countries and all times," writes Nisard. While other modern nations, like "those of the North," privilege nature, imagination, and the individual, France aims for nothing less than humanity in general. "In France, we love our country not with the jealous love of a mountain-dweller for his mountain . . . we love it because it appears to us the best country for man in general." Does this mean that only the French represent the human spirit? No, Nisard replies: "our privilege . . . is that we represent the greatest number of its essential traits"![5]

Lanson, although less naïve in his formulations (and more willing to admit the Middle Ages into the literary canon), shared Nisard's view that the "French spirit" (or what Lanson sometimes called the French soul) was defined by its rationality and its reach for the universal. True to his republican and Dreyfusard ideas, Lanson proclaimed, in a 1917 essay that was first delivered as a lecture in New York, "We have never known what French truths were: we know only truth, without epithets, the truth of all men."[6] Xenophobic nationalists such as Maurice Barrès or Charles Maurras had insisted, during the heated debates of the Dreyfus Affair (Dreyfus's arrest for treason in 1894 was almost contemporaneous with the publication of Lanson's *Histoire*), that "French truths" were more important than abstract "intellectualism"—so that even if Dreyfus were innocent (which was in any case impossible, said Barrès, since as a Jew Dreyfus had a natural penchant for betrayal), defending the French Army and French interests was more important than espousing "universal" principles such as justice for all.[7] Lanson, generous in his universalism, not only defended the "foreigner" Dreyfus, since he was innocent (although right-wing nationalists called him a foreigner, Alfred Dreyfus was an Alsatian Jew whose family had been in France for generations), but Lanson also argued that French literature and thought could only benefit from foreign influences. Unlike Nisard, who was somewhat suspicious of everything that was "not typically French," Lanson embraced the idea that the French spirit was open to the outside; at the same time, he maintained that France could safely "receive" ideas from elsewhere because it always converted them to its own use and put its own stamp on them.[8] If Lanson represents a capacious view of French universalism, this is its limit.

Clearly, there was not much room for consideration of differences and internal divisions in the pedagogical construction of *l'esprit français*—or of the French language. Nisard, breathtakingly overlooking the many dialects that were still spoken by the majority of French people in the early nineteenth century, asserted that the French language was unique and universal because it lacked both accents and grammatical inversion: linear in syntax and pure in pronunciation, French was the image of logic itself.[9] Lanson, in turn, considered the classical poetics of Boileau's *Art poétique*—promoting "pleasure, beauty, and truth"—as "the literary doctrine that may be most appropriate to the permanent qualities and needs of our spirit."[10]

Roland Barthes, looking back in 1969 on what must have been his own school memories (born in 1915, he grew up in the heyday of Lansonism), spoke of the "mythic paradigms" created by textbooks on the history of French literature, above all the paradigm of classicism as the embodiment of Frenchness. Classicocentrism, as Barthes called it, was linked both to notions of linguistic purity and monarchical power: "We irresistibly construct our schooldays image of literature

around the names of certain kings . . . in such a way that we finally have a polished image in which the king and literature are reciprocal reflections of each other. In the centered structure of the history of our literature, there is a national identification. The history manuals perpetually promote what are called typically French values or typically French temperaments." Barthes credits General de Gaulle himself with the latest definition of what is French: "*regular, normal, national.*"[11]

As the translator of this essay, Sandy Petrey, notes, Barthes wrote it in the aftermath of May 1968, the historical event that shook De Gaulle's definition of Frenchness to its core.[12] Barthes and other theorists of the 1960s and 1970s saw the multiplicity of textual meanings (what they called the polysemy of texts) as profoundly linked to a multiple, dynamic vision of language and society. Petrey's remark that Barthes "defines neglect of the polysemic text as neglect of the language through which human beings make or destabilize their world" resonates with Homi Bhabha's influential idea—itself very much indebted to Foucault, Kristeva, and other post-1968 theorists—about the role of the "performative" in definitions of national identity. Bhabha, writing in 1990, saw two tendencies at work (and in fruitful friction) in discourses about the nation: on the one hand, the pedagogical tendency, which defined the nation and its people as an object, homogeneous, solid, and stable; on the other hand, the performative tendency, where the people are active subjects in movement. The resulting "barred nation," Bhabha suggested, becomes a "space that is internally marked by cultural difference and the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities, and tense cultural locations."[13] The performative functions like Derrida's notion of the supplement: it does not so much *oppose* "master-discourses" as put them into question. Bhabha's often-cited notion of "the hybrid"—whether in nations or discourses—follows from his conception of supplementarity. Hybridity, as Bhabha sees it, is never simply "the admixture of pre-given identities or essences." Rather, it is "the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life."[14]

National Literatures in a World Perspective

The challenge of going beyond national literatures became acutely necessary to a healing process of nations during and after World War II. René Wellek and Austin Warren published the first edition of their influential *Theory of Literature* in 1942. In it, they redefined comparative literature in three ways. First, to the definition taken from oral literature and the study of the civilization of a "folk" (the cultural, esthetic, and religious context in which it was situated), Wellek and Warren added the study of written works. Second, they turned comparative literature,

defined as the study of "relationships between two or more literatures,"[15] away from the external study of sources and influences toward the autonomous study of texts. Wellek and Warren found what for them would solve the problems of past definitions and provide a way forward to study "general" or "universal" literature: taking up Goethe's notion of world literature, *Weltliteratur*, they described it as his "distant" ideal "of the unification of all literatures into one great synthesis, where each nation would play its part in a universal concert."[16] They acknowledged that for Goethe homogenization of literatures and languages was not desirable; neither was it possible, given the war that was still going on, to envisage nations relinquishing their singular histories, even literary histories; but by focusing on texts, they could admit differences and national specificities and yet envisage a "world" perspective. Wellek and Warren's third definition of comparative literature in a world context was the study of the great classics: Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Goethe. But they saw a weakness there too, noting that such a selection "can hardly satisfy the scholar who cannot confine himself to the great peaks if he is to understand the whole mountain ranges or, to drop the figure, all history and change." The hierarchy of works remained unchallenged in their concept of the greats and the others, but mulling over the terms "general" and "comparative," Wellek and Warren concluded, "possibly, it would be best to speak simply of 'literature.'" What was important to them was to "think of literature as a totality and to trace the growth and development of literature without regard to linguistic distinctions."[17]

The point, whatever terminology was used, was to show the "obvious falsity of the idea of a self-enclosed national literature." The difficulty with the participation of national literatures in a general literature was that "Instead of being studied with theoretical clarity, the problem has been blurred by nationalistic sentiment and racial theories."[18] Wellek's deep concern about the "permanent crisis," as he later wrote, that he saw in comparative literature since at least 1914 led him to seek a way to avoid "a cultural power politics."[19] If contact with the Orient, Europe, Russia, the United States, and Latin America was important and desirable, the overriding principle—largely conceived as European—was to find unity. This meant that, beyond the necessary linguistic skills needed to study the various literatures, there needed to be what Wellek and Warren considered a "widening of perspectives," that is, "a suppression of local and provincial sentiments, not easy to achieve." For them, "Literature is one, as art and humanity are one."[20]

The question of what world literature is continues in the beginning of the twenty-first century with different historical and theoretical parameters. David Damrosch acknowledges the long history of the debate and answers Wellek's concern this way: "world literature is not . . . fated to disintegrate into the conflicting

multiplicity of separate national traditions; nor . . . need it be swallowed up in the white noise that Janet Abu-Lughod has called 'global babble.'" Picking up on "the variability of Goethe's valuation of the foreign," Damrosch argues that rather than aspiring to an overall unity, world literature is defined simply by works that "circulate beyond their culture of origin."[21] Recalling the 1995 Bernheimer report for the American Comparative Literature Association, which recognized "classics," "masterpieces," and "windows on the world" as viable components of comparative literature, Damrosch goes on to show with great brio "that world literature is multitemporal as well as multicultural." Doing the long history of literature helps to avoid the problem of "presentism," which deals only with what is most recent or new, and also avoids the potential to slide into the "disneyfication of the globe" in commercial culture. Responding to the question of unity, Damrosch builds on the theoretical movements of the last four decades to define cosmopolitanism not as the homogenization of being everywhere and nowhere; rather, citing Bruce Robbins's notion of "local applications" in "Comparative Cosmopolitanisms," Damrosch seeks to rebalance the relationship of center to periphery, general to local. He calls this an "elliptical refraction of national literatures" within world literature, in a process of importation and reception with "the source and host cultures providing the two foci that generate the elliptical space within which a work lives as world literature, connected to both cultures and circumscribed by neither alone."[22]

We associate ourselves with the discussions around world literature, especially in seeing the broad change in viewpoint about literature as being less about canon formation (which texts have remained without question at the core of a national literature?), or about its contestation, than about a way of reading. *French Global* is not a study of world literature, however; it is about literatures in French and the world. The "engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time" in Damrosch's theory of world literature coincides with our view of a global approach, but not because it is a "detached engagement" with works, many of which are read only in translation.

Our focus is on literary traditions in French, inside and outside the country known today as France. The challenge is to read these works in relation to the globe: as world, as sphere, as a space of encounter with others and with the very idea of otherness. In our emphasis on French but in a global setting, we come perhaps closer to the arguments advanced by Linda Hutcheon and Mario J. Valdés to a theoretical volume on "rethinking literary history" that appeared around the same time as Damrosch's book. Hutcheon, Valdés, and their colleagues reject the "teleological" model of writing national literary history, without abandoning the notion of regional and linguistic specificities.[23]

Another influential recent attempt to come to grips with the question of world literature is Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters*, a book that aims to "rediscover a lost transnational dimension of literature that for two hundred years has been reduced to the political and linguistic boundaries of nations." Taking off from Fernand Braudel's notion of an "economy-world" and Pierre Bourdieu's idea of an autonomous literary field, Casanova proposes "a literary universe relatively independent of the everyday world and its political divisions," to describe an "international literary space" that operates according to its own hierarchical rules and forms of domination: "a world of rivalry, struggle, and inequality."[24] Casanova situates her study between what she sees as the historical trajectories of postcolonial criticism on one hand and the tradition of close reading within the French literary critical tradition on the other.

Expanding Bourdieu's views about "dominant" and "dominated" poles in the literary field to the world stage, Casanova proposes what she calls a "dual historicization": a writer's work, in her view, must be seen both in terms of the place it occupies in its "native" (national) literary space and in terms of the space occupied by the writer's native literature in the larger world system. While writers, in her view, "invent their literary freedom, which is to say the conditions of the autonomy of their work," the choices they make—including not only life choices such as Joyce's decision to leave Ireland and live in exile, but also aesthetic choices—are the result of this double positioning and must be analyzed as such. In its intent and scope, Casanova's book sets out to "lay the foundations for a true literary history." It is worth noting, however, that her project is almost entirely focused on the period after the French Revolution. And the hierarchical model she relies on necessarily emphasizes conflict and rivalry, as writers on the "periphery" struggle to overturn or displace those in the "center" and members of "dominated" literatures try to find ways to rise above their situation. Central to her own thinking is the predominant role that Paris played, from the late eighteenth century until the middle of the twentieth, as "the intellectual capital of the world." For Casanova, nation and language are linked: "the particular case of Paris, denationalized and universal capital of the literary world, must not make us forget that literary capital is inherently national."[25]

Contributors to this volume criticize the profound binarism in Casanova's analysis, asking whether it does not close off rather than open up questions vital to understanding history past and present. Christopher Miller wonders whether "there [is] any escape possible, in politics or in literature, from the permanent binarism of [the] relationship between France and its former colonies?" Françoise Lionnet proposes to emphasize "'the foreigner' *within*" in order to challenge "the fictions of a 'True France'" that have tended to stifle internal differences. Sharon

Kinoshita rejects not only the center/periphery model, but also a historical binarism that pits the Renaissance against its "unnamed (medieval) other." Seeking alternatives to such binarizations allows one to propose more dynamic and more inclusive models, both spatial and temporal.

In this book, rather than focus on the nation and on a model of literary space as an arena of struggle for domination—or even for Enlightenment ideals of freedom—we have chosen to emphasize points of contact and multiple kinds of dialogue that found and inform literary space, including history, philosophy, politics, religion, and geography; these are not external to literature but integral to its conception and history, from the Middle Ages through the twenty-first century. Rereading the past is always partly a way of reading the present, and this project seeks to assess what in the French tradition survives not only within the discipline of French literary study, but also in a more general rethinking of the relationships among language (in this case, the French language), literature, and culture in the new millennium.

French Global: A New Approach to Literary History espouses the kind of productive perplexity that results from seeing things from more than one perspective. Our aim is to see (French) language and nation in their multiplicity, their multiple possibilities. While we challenge the notion of a seamless unity between French as language, French as literature, and French as nation (let alone French as "universal spirit"), we do maintain the idea of literatures in French. The French language exists, performatively and dynamically, as a vehicle for literary and philosophical works produced by individuals with diverse origins, preoccupations, and allegiances both within and outside the geographical and political boundaries of the country known as France.

Spaces, Mobilities, Multiplicities

Roland Barthes, in his "Reflections on a Manual," proposed to "turn classicocentrism around and do the history of literature backward. . . . In this way, past literature would be spoken from a contemporary language and even from our contemporary language."[26] We were tempted, in arranging the essays in this book, to take Barthes's suggestion literally and start with the modern period, moving backward.[27] Instead, we have opted for a different kind of reordering, one that recognizes the exigencies of the contemporary without reversing the flow of time. We have divided the essays into three large, overlapping categories, each one arranged in roughly historical order. The essays in the first group are primarily concerned with spaces, taken in their physical, geographical, geopolitical, or even geometric sense; but also, at times, in a conceptual or metaphorical sense concerning borders

and thinking about borders. The second group of essays, "Mobilities," explores not only spaces and borders, but also movement across them: by pilgrims, by armies, by travelers and translators, by explorers and exploiters, by ethnographers and adventurers, or by the imagination. The third group, "Multiplicities," investigates not only mobility—whether of people, ideas, or money—but also the complicated negotiations of self and identity that result from such displacements.

Although this arrangement may appear to suggest a progression—from spaces to multiplicities, from the simple to the complex—that is not our intention. Nor is it, in fact, the case: a close look at the essays in the three categories shows that they are *all* in various ways and to various degrees concerned with space, mobility, and multiplicity. It was thus largely arbitrary that we placed Michael Sheringham's discussion of "charged geographies" under "Multiplicities," or Evelyne Ender's essay on the nineteenth-century lyric under "Spaces"; either one could just as well have found its place under another rubric, and that is true for most of the other essays as well. What we present here are three possible, complementary trajectories, and the reader is invited to rearrange the essays according to his or her own imagination or interest. Whatever order one reads them in, we hope that these explorations will inspire further work and further thinking about literature, literature in French—or any other language—and the world.

Notes

1. Denis Hollier, "On Writing Literary History," xxv. The tradition of "outsiderhood" continues with our own volume, which includes four contributions from scholars working in France out of a total of twenty-nine. Is this perhaps progress?

2. See Antoine Compagnon, *La troisième république des lettres.*

3. Gustave Lanson, *Histoire illustrée*, 1:4. The edition referred to here is the lavishly illustrated two-volume Hachette edition of 1923, which contained a foreword by the publishers that stressed the wounds suffered by France in World War I. With the new, happier period opening before it, the publishers state, the country needs "to make the inventory of its patrimony." Among its riches, they state, perhaps the most precious one is its magnificent literature, "which for centuries has assured [France] first place in the elite of peoples." Here and elsewhere, unless otherwise stated, translations are by Susan Rubin Suleiman.

4. Désiré Nisard, *Histoire de la littérature française*, 2.

5. Ibid., 15, 20.

6. Gustave Lanson, "La fonction des influences étrangères dans le développement de la littérature française," 93.

7. See Maurice Barrès, *Scénes et doctrines du nationalisme*, 152.

8. Lanson, "La fonction des influences étrangères," 92.

9. Nisard, *Histoire*, 22.

10. Lanson, *Histoire* (1923 ed.), 379.

11. Roland Barthes, "Reflections on a Manual," 74. (Barthes's italics.)

12. Sandy Petrey, "Translator's Introduction" to Barthes's "Reflections on a Manual," 71.

13. Homi Bhabha, "Dissemi/Nation," 299.

14. Ibid., 314.

15. René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 47.

16. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Gespräche mit Eckermann*, January 31, 1827; *Kunst und Altertum* (1827); Werke, *Jubiläumsausgabe*, 38:97. Cited in ibid., 48.

17. The three quotations from Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature*, are at 49.

18. Ibid., 49 and 50.

19. René Wellek, "The Crisis of Comparative Literature," cited in David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 136.

20. Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature*, 50.

21. The quotations from Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* are at 4, 12, 5, and 16. For the Bernheimer report, see Charles Bernheimer, ed., *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism.*

22. Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* 22, citing Bruce Robbins, "Comparative Cosmopolitanisms."

23. Linda Hutcheon and Mario J. Valdès, eds., *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory.*

24. Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, xi and 4.

25. Ibid. The quotations in this paragraph are at xii, 351, 30, and 34, respectively.

26. Barthes, "Reflections on a Manual," 74–75.

27. Another of Barthes's suggestions—namely, that "the history of literature should be conceived as a history of the idea of literature" (73)—was taken up quite literally by the French team that produced the latest history of French literature published in France (in 2007), under the general editorship of Jean-Yves Tadié. In his preface to this two-volume work, *La littérature française: Dynamique & histoire,* Tadié defines the project as tracing "the concept of literature" from its first appearance to its "putting into question in the second half of the 20th century," with authors and texts being mentioned only as "examples" (Tadié, "Avant-Propos," 12). One thing this work does not question, however, is the concept of the "Frenchness" of French literature: with very few exceptions mentioned in passing, this history and its examples remain firmly in the "hexagon."