

# **UCLA**

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# Introduction

As the editors of *Paroles gelées*, we have the honor of introducing the 31st issue of this journal published under the auspices of the Department of French and Francophone Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. The present volume documents the proceedings of our 20th annual graduate student conference, *L'Empire du voyage: Travels of Mind, Body, and Soul*, which took place on October 1st and 2nd, 2015 at UCLA. When we convoked the conference, we sought to host a discussion that would investigate the link between French and Francophone literature and the notion of voyage, specifically overseas voyage, across the globe.

The desire to understand the movement of individuals and groups, particularly in relation to systems of power, led us to formulate the problematic at hand. The overwhelming response to our call for papers testified to the importance of the notion of “voyage,” both as a discursive topic and as the physical fact of movement, migration, displacement, and change. The act of “voyage” has held importance, both longstanding in the field, but now emerging in new and interesting ways.

Each of the articles in the present volume reflects on this notion of “voyage” uniquely. Anne Leys “Reconsidering Medieval Orientalism: Religion and Gender in *Le Conte de Floire et Blanche fleur*,” investigates the medieval context for trans-Mediterranean voyage, and the occasion it provides for the exchange of religious and gender identities. Vedran Catovic’s article, “*Ceux-là qui partent pour partir*: Travel as Relinquishment in Charles Baudelaire’s *Le Voyage*,” explores the importance of the notion of travel in Baudelaire’s *Les fleurs du mal*. His study reflects on the way that the notion of *errance*, or wandering, reflects the aesthetic of the *poète maudit*. Gina Breen, in “Travel in Autobiography: Albert Camus’s *Le premier homme* and Assia Djebar’s *Le blanc de l’Algérie*,” puts a posthumous work by Albert Camus in dialogue with a work by Assia Djebar. She interrogates the meaning of trans-Mediterranean travel between France and Algeria in the post-colonial context.

These questions of contact informed our conference proceedings. To further interrogate the ways in which voyage often raises the question of alterity, we hosted a roundtable examining Edouard Glissant’s concept of opacity. Moderated by Sara Melzer (UCLA), the participants included Ileana Chirila (University of New Hampshire), Madeleine Dobie (Columbia University), Yvonne Lindqvist (Stockholm University), and Zrinka Stahuljak (UCLA). The roundtable touched on questions of *Relation* and *Tout-Monde* to consider the implications of travel’s encounter with

the Other. Following the panel, our keynote speaker, Professor Dobie, presented her talk, entitled “Narrative Impasses: Algerian Migration and the Arts,” where she examined contemporary iterations of transnational voyage through new cultural productions in Algeria.

As scholars invested in thinking through these issues, the faculty at UCLA’s Department of French and Francophone Studies engage with “voyage” in various ways within their different specialties. Laure Murat’s *Ceci n’est pas une ville* (2016) offers a thoughtful reflection on her travels that have led her to Los Angeles, a city that is at the crossroads of culture and media. Our volume concludes with an interview with her, one in which she expounds upon the particularities of the city, often in comparison to Paris, to assess its singularity and opacity.

Two and a half years have elapsed since we held the conference, and the state of the field has expanded enormously. The persistent issue of the refugee crisis, which Professor Dobie discussed in her keynote, continues to raise questions of borders and contact. The rise of the Far Right in Western European nations, as well as the United States, has led to racialized and divisive public discourses against limiting not only physical travel, but also against the circulation of ideas. The issues of our time heighten the need for reflection on this topic. It is our hope that the present volume will contribute to the pressing dialogue concerning globalization and cross-cultural interactions. Open scholarly discourse and debate will continue to foster analysis and understanding in contrast to the misinformation and confusion that threatens to shape and mold public opinion.

We would like to thank our sponsors for their support in organizing the conference. Special thanks to: UCLA Department of French and Francophone Studies, UCLA Center for European and Russian Studies, UCLA African Studies Center, UCLA Department of English, UCLA Department of History, UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA Department of Italian, UCLA Center for 17th- and 18th-Century Studies, UCLA Department of Philosophy, UCLA Graduate Student Association, UCLA Campus Programs Committee, and the UCLA Center for Jewish Studies. We would also like to thank Françoise Lionnet for her help in drafting the conference call for papers.

Signed,

Nanar Khamo  
Cristina Politano  
*Editors in Chief*