

Under the Wings of the Windmill: A Network in Post-Shoah and Post-Colonial Literary Milieux

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Abstract

In André Schwarz-Bart's posthumous novel, *Adieu Bogota* (2017), three strong 'cords' tie his unfinished, and imperfect, novel to three authors whom he met at the Moulin d'Andé (Eure, France). First of all, there is Georges Perec's overwhelming impact, through echoes in the choice of [sub-]title[s], the impossibility of mourning, and stitching 'remembrances' into a coherent text. Second, there is the Colombian refugee, Arnaldo Palacios, whose horrendous story about the 1948 events remembered as *La Violencia* left a deep imprint on Schwarz-Bart's imagination. And third, there is Maurice Pons, the author of the cult novel, *Les Saisons* (1965), whose plot and characters owe a great debt to Schwarz-Bart's novel, *The Last of the Just* (*Le Dernier des Justes*, 1959). In two directions and with different 'reciprocities', satellites of loss circle around André Schwarz-Bart (1928-2006) and his wife and co-author, Simone Schwarz-Bart (1938-). This article deals predominantly with a decentred history of the intellectual post-Shoah and post-colonial issues around the world after World War Two. I elaborate particularly on Perec and Palacios, and less on Pons, who bridged all those artists, philosophers, anticolonial thinkers, and Shoah survivors who spent time together at the Moulin.

Keywords: Oulipo, post-colonial and post-Shoah interferences, Moulin d'Andé, posthumous novels, literary couplings.

The Moulin d'Andé as 'parliament of writers' *avant la lettre*

Among the many scholars working on Georges Perec, the crucial importance of the Moulin d'Andé, located in Eure, Normandy, France (see Figure 1), remains quite marginally accredited. For instance, there is no mention of the Moulin in Bloomfield's detailed account of the Oulipo movement (Bloomfield 2017), or in *Georges Perec's Geographies* (Forsdick et al. 2019). Yet, it was here that the co-founder of the Oulipo wrote *La Disparition* (1969,

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Under the Wings of the Windmill



Figure 1: The Moulin d'Andé. Source credit: Reproduced by permission of the Estate of Suzanne Lipinska.

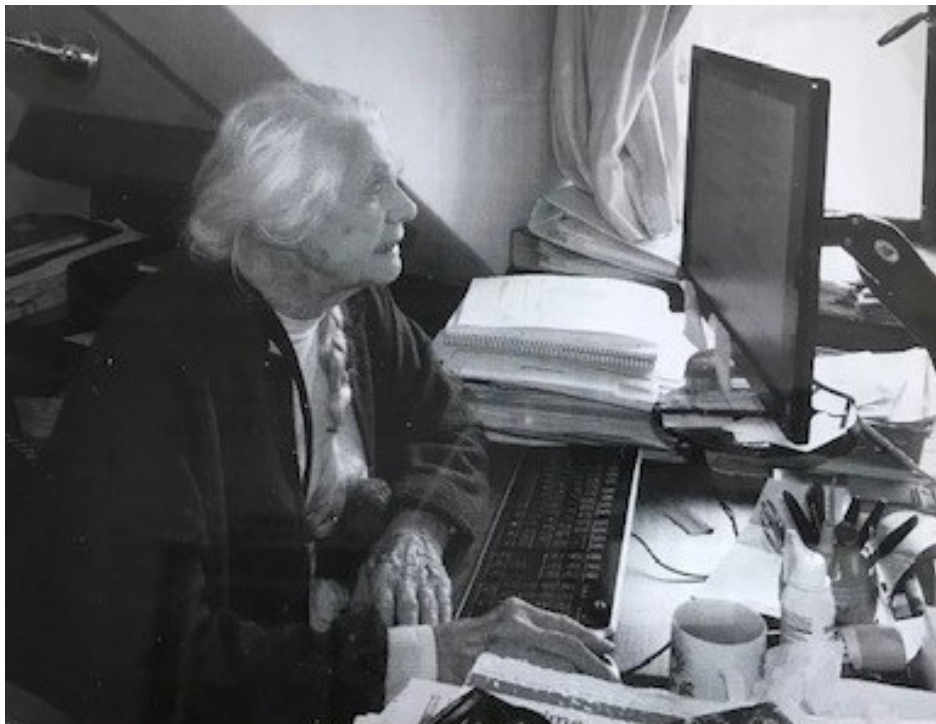


Figure 2: Suzanne Lipinska. Source credit: Photo by author.

A Void), and where he spent all in all five years, travelling back and forth between Paris and Andé, and befriending Jacques Lederer, Georges Condominas, Jean Duvignaud, Clara Malraux, and many other authors and artists from various professional, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds (Gyssels 2023a). It was here that he created not only a writers' and artists' residence, together with Suzanne Lipinska and Maurice Pons, but also a meeting place for intellectuals fighting oppression of individuals and communities, suffering racial injustice, social inequality, and religious intolerance, but most of all colonialism and capitalism in their manifold manifestations throughout the world after World War Two. During the last half of the twentieth century (Gyssels 2023a), this particular place of creative writing and artistic activity, of activism and militancy, remains neglected, because most scholars refuse to take a decentred view on linkages between left-wing intellectuals, post-colonial thinkers, and marginalised minorities, such as feminist waves and Shoah survivors,¹ uprooted and uncomfortable with Paris as, to use Léon Damas's expression, *nombril du monde* [navel of the world]. Even recent scholarly works on Perec's topographies (the aforementioned otherwise exquisite work by Forsdick, Leak, and Phillips, 2019) and posthumous publications, such as *Lieux* (July 2022), bring the focus once more to Paris, the rue Vilin, the places where Perec grew up. Thanks to Suzanne Lipinska (see Figure 2), the Moulin d'Andé became a refuge for displaced intellectuals and writers from various countries, religions and ethnicities (Gyssels 2020a). Unfortunately, the Moulin d'Andé is not mentioned in the prestigious biographies or memoirs—to name just a few, François Noudelmann's biography of Edouard Glissant (Noudelmann 2018), Dominique Bona's biography of Clara Malraux (Bona 2010), Claude Lanzmann's memoir (Lanzmann 2009), Catherine Clément's memoir (Clément 2009)—of writers who stayed for different durations and on various occasions in this '*lieu de memoire*' which reinvented itself constantly into a 'knot (*noeud*) of memory' (Rothberg 2010).

Fortunately, the Moulin d'Andé has an archive of most of its distinguished visitors. It is by pure coincidence that, on 8 June 2018, during a seminar at the idyllic Moulin marking the 50-year anniversary of Perec's lipogram, I discovered the first of five volumes of a scrapbook made by Maurice Pons, a *Livre d'or* [visitors' book] which was accessible to the visitors, providing proof that André Schwarz-Bart sojourned here. Moreover, in his entry in the book, he expresses his gratitude to the spirit of this place, of which he kept the best of memories (see Figure 3). Even though Schwarz-Bart's thank-you note is not dated, we can be sure that it was written after his triumph of 1959 with his debut novel, *Le Dernier des Justes (DJ)* (*The Last of the Just*, 1959), the monumental Shoah novel, which won the Goncourt Literary Prize and broke all sales records, but also attracted fierce reactions from critics.

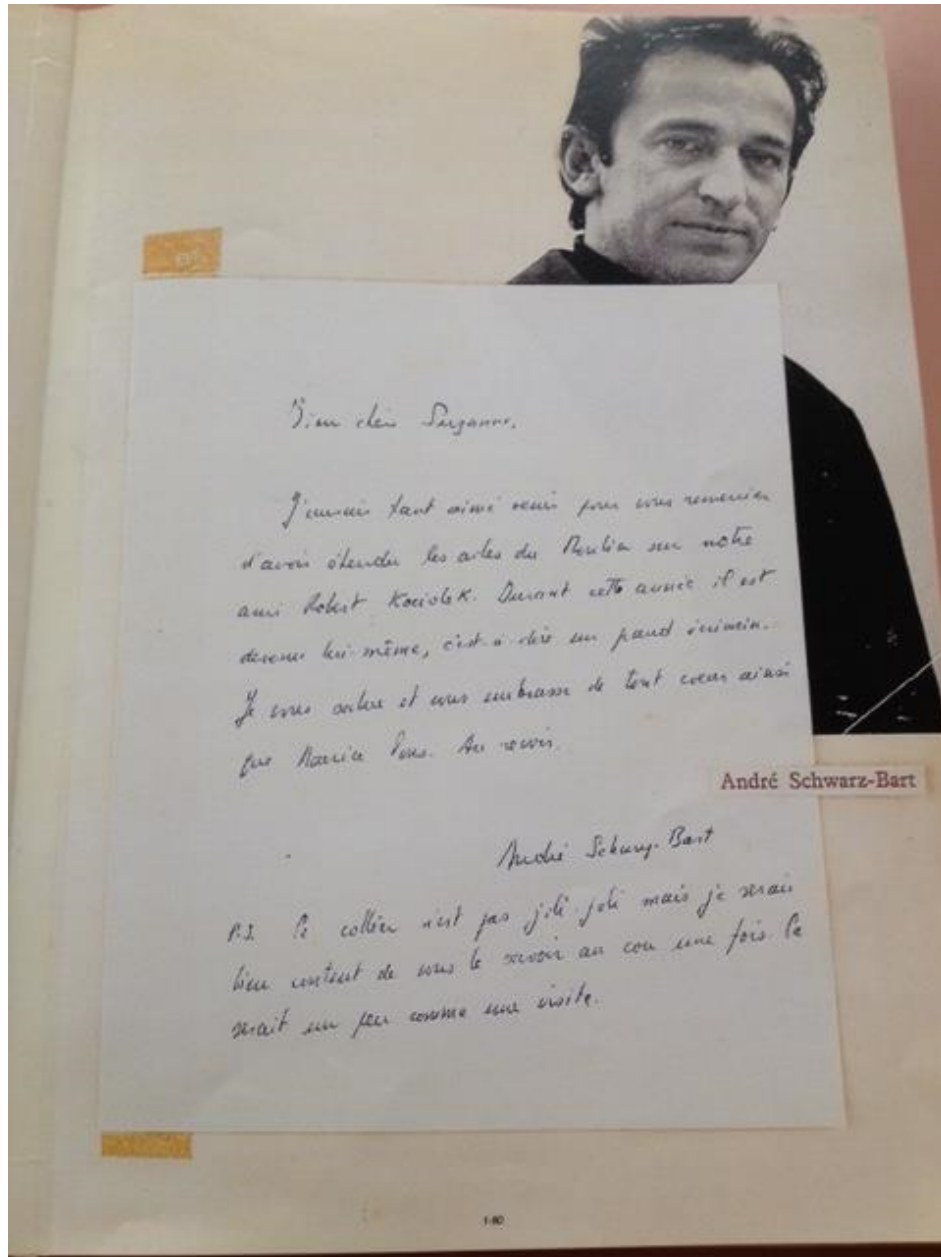


Figure 3: Page from the visitor's book of the Moulin d'Andé showing a note from André Schwarz-Bart to Suzanne Lipinska, with a photo of the note's author. The note reads in part, 'Dear Suzanne, I wish I could have come to thank you for spreading the wings of the Windmill over our friend Robert Kociolek. This year he became himself, that is to say, a great author. My heartfelt love and kisses to you and Maurice Pons. Until next time. André Schwarz-Bart'. Source credit: Photo by author.

That Perec knew Schwarz-Bart's acclaimed novel is a fact. Having been attacked by right-wing critics (Gyssels 2014b), Schwarz-Bart found a strong defender in Perec. In *L.G.*, Perec refuted André Parinaud's criticism and supported Schwarz-Bart for having fictionalised Auschwitz in a stunning novel which millions of readers have applauded (Perec 1992, 87).² Yet, in spite of Perec's support, which Schwarz-Bart was not aware of, the novelist almost ceased publication of new writing, although he promised to return to the literary scene. By way of strategy, André had his wife, Simone Schwarz-Bart, co-sign a second novel, *Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes* [*A Dish of Pork with Green Bananas*] (1967), which easily reads as parallel to Perec's *Un homme qui dort* [*A Man Asleep*], which was published the same year. Perec's editor at Éditions Denoël, Maurice Nadeau, launched a new collection under the name of 'Lettres Nouvelles [New Letters]', where he comments that the experimental novel of André and Simone Schwarz-Bart, the 'preamble' of a *cycle antillais* [Caribbean cycle], was evocative of Samuel Beckett and the *Nouveau Roman* (Nadeau 1967, 5).

In 1972, André Schwarz-Bart came back on the scene with a fiction that was even more surprising as it dealt with slavery in Guadeloupe, *La Mulâtresse Solitude*, translated into English by Ralph Manheim as *A Woman Named Solitude*. As this novel too received criticism, because it was written by a white author, indeed, a Jew, who could hardly speak for Afro-Caribbean enslaved women,³ the once so promising author was stigmatised with the labelling of *faussaire* [counterfeiter] (Finné 2010, 51).⁴ The consequences of the reaction of the press were 'irreversible', and led André Schwarz-Bart to write a variety of manuscripts which he ultimately left unfinished.

It goes without saying that Perec's shadow hangs over Schwarz-Bart's writing, even if close friends of Perec such as Marcel Bénabou confirm that they were not seen together either in Paris or at the Moulin (Marcel Bénabou, personal communication, June 2019 to 29 November 2023).⁵ Moreover, this influence is bidirectional. Their reciprocal influence also materialises through Perec's co-author, Robert Bober. The latter mentions André Schwarz-Bart in his literary testament, *Par instants, la vie n'est pas sûre* [*Sometimes Life Is Uncertain*] (2020). The author revisits their friendship in the very first chapter. Discussing at length his collaboration with Perec, Bober also recalls that he dedicated *Laissées-pour-compte* [*Rejects from Society*] (2005), to André Schwarz-Bart. Furthermore, at the end of *Quoi de neuf sur la guerre?* [*What News of the War?*] (1993), Bober thanks Schwarz-Bart along with Georges Perec, his editor Paul Otchakovsky-Laurens, and Pierre Dumayet (who interviewed André Schwarz-Bart for the French television news program 'Cinq colonnes à la une'), among others.

One can easily imagine that they would have discussed, among many 'issues', the work of memory (at a time when Pierre Nora's 'lieux de mémoire [sites of memory]' did not yet exist and nor had there been commemorations for the victims of the Shoah), the use of literature, and the visual arts. Each in

his own way, they strove for a revolutionary way of writing, coping with the traumas of the past. For Perec, his aim was to use his pen against the ‘*Hache* [axe] of History’. Perec aptly called the haunting feminine presences in another posthumous novel *revenentes*, this name evoking both female ghosts and a return to the past (Perec 1972).

If Robert Bober is just one of the go-betweens between these authors, he supported Schwarz-Bart, who believed in co-authorship as a means to protect the fragile individual, the singular author facing the hardship of criticism (Gyssels 2011). *The Last of the Just*, which was conceived between 1947-53, can be considered to some degree as a cooperative enterprise, even if the author himself (and his wife and now co-author) masked this collaborative dynamic for various reasons (Gyssels 2019).

At the same time, writing together has its risks, or even simply living with another writer has its dark side: other literary couples—think of Elsa Triolet and Louis Aragon, of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes—have coped with the extreme difficulty of writing one’s own oeuvre independently from the partner. In many cases, however, it is made clear who did what and how and when. None of this is the case with André and Simone Schwarz-Bart, where it seems as if Simone respected her husband’s need for discretion. As George Steiner has rightly addressed for Sylvia Plath’s poetry (Steiner 1979, 211-218), literary couples continue to be perceived as masculinised. In the case of André and Simone Schwarz-Bart, one might think that the joint authorship and textual editing by Simone makes her the dominant subject.⁶ I maintain that the concept of the literary couple should be extended to a network of influences and collaborations. During his life, André Schwarz-Bart was at the confluence of a group of authors (Perec, Bober, Claude Lanzmann, Arnoldo Palacios, even Richard Wright as resident at the Moulin d’Andé), and his work is consequently a compelling case for the redefinition of ‘authority’. Without the assistance of a partner and hampered by the many constraints (‘*contraintes*’) in the cultural space (francophone fiction, post-colonial literature, Judaism and Black writing), Schwarz-Bart gave up his many projects. Paralysed by procrastination and the burden of an unrepresentable traumatic past (Caruth 1996), he shares with Perec (and many other authors traumatised by the horror of the Shoah) unpublished material. Versatile and very sensitive to the reader’s gaze, they correspond in many ways, even if Perec became one of the most legendary authors of the twentieth century. According to David Bellos, Perec’s biographer, who visited the Moulin in order to prepare his biography, it cannot be confirmed that Schwarz-Bart was on Perec’s mind (David Bellos, personal communication, 28 November 2017 and 17 June 2023). However, a close reading of some *lignes confluentes* [convergent lines] teaches us otherwise.

Perec and Schwarz-Bart: *Lignes confluentes*

In order to illustrate that the Goncourt Prize-winning novel also left a mark on both Bober and Perec, some examples can be noted. In the middle of a chapter of *The Last of the Just* (*LJ*) (1960), the reader finds Bober's 1993 title, *Quoi-de-neuf-sur-la-guerre?*, embedded in daily conversation between anxious Jews in the Marais at the height of the Occupation, probably some days before the 'Rafle du Vel d'Hiv' (*LJ*, 278). Perec, similarly, must have been fascinated by the efficient way in which the Goncourt Prize-winning novel uses a foreign language, German, as a deep imprint of the verbal violence inflicted on the Jews in France and elsewhere in Europe. The author's search for 'writing on the wall' almost visualises Klemperer's *Lingua III Imperii* [*Language of the Third Reich*] (Klemperer 1947). Schwarz-Bart also uses German words, left untranslated in the text: *Schweinhund* (*LJ*, 232), *Vernichtungswissenschaft* (*LJ*, 351), *Unterscharenführer* (*LJ*, 371, *sic*), the names and titles of Ernie's friends such as Hans Schliemann (*LJ*, 222), and professors such as 'Herr Geek' (*LJ*, 222), the latter being a pun on the *golem*-ish character of the Nazi-instructor, and so on. With Barthes's *La Chambre claire* (1980, *Camera Lucida*) in mind, Schwarz-Bart (followed by Perec and Bober) uses the printed page as a mirror of the scapegoating messages displayed in public places during the Weimar Republic and later during the Vichy regime. The book's typography reflects the discrimination through language, the fragmentary writing being one facet of this disrupting logic and ruptured affection (Barthes 1980, 196).⁷ For instance, the intelligent way of the poor immigrant *Ostjuden*, considered 'the scum of the earth'⁸ upon arrival in the fictional Stillenstadt (*LJ*, 264), striving to have their shops and enterprises 'accepted' in the Weimar Republic, like the central character Ernie's father, Benjamin Lévy, who opens a shop with a sign that reads:

Au Gentleman de Berlin
Maison spécialisée dans le rapiéçage et retournage du vieux
Prix merveilleux, c'est vieux, hop, c'est neuf (*DJ*, 99)

In the book's English translation, this fragment of 'handsome and noble Gothic lettering (a soft blue against a pink background)' (*LJ*, 103) has been totally erased, amputating this important dimension: as it is not indented on the page, and the font has not been modified, the advertisement is hidden:

Specialist in Patching and Repairing old Cloths – Fantastic Prices –
It's Old, Presto, It's New!!! (*LJ*, 103)

The narrator deciphers 'Gentleman' as an allusion to the Gentile customer, who is not at all *gentil* [gentle]. It seems to me this is taken up by Perec, when he writes in *Je suis né* [*I Was Born*] (1990):

Je suis né le 25 décembre 0000. Mon père était, dit-on, ouvrier charpentier. Peu de temps après ma naissance, les gentils ne le furent pas et l'on dut se réfugier en Égypte. C'est ainsi que j'appris que j'étais juif et c'est dans ces conditions dramatiques qu'il faut voir l'origine de ma ferme intention de ne pas le rester. Vous connaissez la suite (Perec 1990, 10, quoted in Cliche 2005). [I was born on 25 December 0000. My father was, it is said, a carpenter. Shortly after my birth, the Gentiles were not and we had to take refuge in Egypt. This is how I learned that I was a Jew and it is in these dramatic conditions that I must see the origin of my firm intention not to remain one. You know the rest...]

In *Je me souviens [I Remember]* (1978), Perec plays upon the same feelings of dislocation and uprootedness which Mariotte, Schwarz-Bart's protagonist in *Un plat de porc*, experiences as an old Black Martinican lady dwelling in the rue Saint-André-des-Arts, near the Boulevard St. Michel. Topography and mapping are equally important in the respective authors' creative endeavours.

Hypertrophic topologies, hauntologies, form a constant tandem in the obsessive effort to maintain and control the evasive present and keep track of one's erased past. For instance, Perec's 'Memory Number 243' reads: 'I remember the 121' (Perec 1978, 65), which refers to the signatories of the famous Manifesto of the 121 vindicating the right to insubordination and protesting against torture during the Algerian War. Almost half of the signatories came to the Moulin d'Andé, as Suzanne Lipinska has confirmed, even if Marguerite Duras and Dionysos Mascolo initiated the manifesto in Paris (Suzanne Lipinska, personal communication, Summer 2020; 7 September 2021).

On the other hand, while Perec followed Schwarz-Bart's graphical experiment, his publisher, Seuil, had no idea of the author's wish to transcribe Schwabenland alphabet as a way to render the terrifying 'grandeur' of the Third Reich. Together with its distinct calligraphs, its songs ('When Jewish blood flows under the knife', *LJ*, 145), and its military parades through the streets, the newly assimilated Jews feared the 'Gentleman' (Gentile) of Berlin, Vienna, or Paris, even if he spoke *Hochdeutsch* with a terrible accent. Whatever Benjamin Lévy does, he will be a cast-out, a pariah, and very soon, a displaced person bound for deportation. A recurrent *mise en scene* of the learning and writing process is part of that reciprocal influence, too: mastering the French language is a condition *sine qua non* for the outsider, the immigrant, the colonial object to become a member in the host society. The Jewish schoolboy does his best during dictation to write down the schoolmaster's diction, which Ernie Lévy transcribes carefully. The narrator reproduces the text, including the punctuation instructions:

Qu'il-est-doux-virgule-le-chant-des-mésanges-virgule... (DJ, 195)⁹

These kinds of metaliterary reflections, comments in the enunciation, also remind us of Perec's deconstruction of conventional narrative, common speech, the arbitrariness of the sign. It refracts also through his invention and use of fictive titles like *Quel Petit Vélo à guidon chromé au fond de la cour?* [*Which Moped with Chrome-Plated Handlebars at the Back of the Yard?*] (1966). In retrospect, this strange title by way of a question might have inspired André Schwarz-Bart's next title: the same year that *Un homme qui dort* was published, André and Simone launched an Oulipian *Nouveau Roman* entitled *Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes*: a surprising, culinary title, estranging readers who were expecting a sequel to *The Last of the Just*. Hinting at Simone's Creole background, this novel set in Martinique and Paris astonished both the loyal supporters of the bestselling Shoah novel, and French-Caribbean readers, who were puzzled by the novel's double dedication to the Martinican poet, Aimé Césaire, and the Jewish survivor of the Shoah, Elie Wiesel (Gyssels 1996).

More than just a spectral presence in Schwarz-Bart's work, the co-founder of Oulipo was influenced by the masterpiece written over 15 years by the discreet French-speaking Polish Jew who had initiated the impossible: rendering Auschwitz in fiction, merging the sacred and the profane, blending History and memory, and ending with a kaddish that many famous authors and thinkers have considered a genial gesture of theodicy.¹⁰ One can imagine that they had been following each other's career over the years. But Schwarz-Bart made no tribute when Perec died, and nor did the reverse occur, by way of the most important scholars working on Perec—David Bellos, who dedicated his book, *Georges Perec. Une vie dans les mots* (1993), to Suzanne Lipinska (David Bellos, personal communication, 28 November 2017), and Jacques Neefs, who likewise dedicated his photographic book about Georges Perec to Suzanne Lipinska (Neefs and Hartje 1993), published several seminal essays on both *The Last of the Just* and Perec's work, and established the link between the two authors (Gyssels 2014b, 40, 225, 252).¹¹

Another common friend and visitor to the Moulin d'Andé, to weave another thread between Schwarz-Bart and some of the most outstanding Jewish creatives who have dealt with the ways in which the Shoah could or should be remembered, is Claude Lanzmann. In *La Tombe du divin plongeur* [*The Tomb of the Divine Diver*] (2012), the echo of Schwarz-Bart's voice triggers Lanzmann, the director of *Shoah* (1985) and co-founder with Simone de Beauvoir and J.P. Sartre of the political-literary journal *Les Temps Modernes* (Lanzmann 2012, 87-88). Lanzmann wrote letters (on the journal's letterhead) to the author of *The Last of the Just*, which he considered 'the best novel ever' on the 'Catastrophe' (Gyssels 2020b).¹² It would therefore not be unreasonable to deduce that his reading of this vast historical novel, which embarks the reader on nine centuries of anti-Judaism in Europe, sparked Lanzmann's project, a gigantic enterprise which resulted in *Shoah*. Yet, while he recognises *The Last of the Just* as a masterpiece, remembering the tacit

personality of its author and, as a reverence towards his admired friend, entitling the rushes which would become his last movie *Le Dernier des injustes* [*The Last of the Unjust*] (2013), André Schwarz-Bart's name does not appear in his vast memoir, *Le Lièvre de Patagonie* [*The Patagonian Hare*] (2009) (Gyssels 2021, 135-136).

In sharp contrast with Perec's spectacular radiance worldwide, Schwarz-Bart's masterpiece has been belatedly discovered by some of the most important scholars in the field: Boris Cyrulnik, who knew Schwarz-Bart quite well (Cyrulnik 2012, 166),¹³ Catherine Coquio (Coquio 2015), and even Philippe Mesnard, who does not refer to the author of *The Last of the Just* in his biography of Primo Levi (Mesnard 2011). This notable disparity in reception and disproportionate attention add further validation for the author's closest spokesperson, his wife Simone Schwarz-Bart, who unfortunately ceased publishing in 1987 after creating a single, short, yet successful, theatrical play, before a comeback thanks to Francine Kaufmann's posthumous project.

Finally, there is the Perecquian interference with Schwarz-Bart's representation of islands located in the 'New World'; both prison (Guadeloupe in *A Woman Named Solitude*) and paradise, islands are closed space and therefore a metaphoric place for 'outsiders' who want to start a new life there. For French slave owners, some of whom had affiliations with freemasonry, for example, the Chevalier DuParc (Schwarz-Bart 1973, 70), the French possessions in the Americas represent a better place, far away from the narrowmindedness and the concept of nation defined by 'one blood, one language, one religion'. Islands have been represented since the Enlightenment as both protective and prison space. In the Jewish imagination, they have often been a 'Promised Land' where expelled Jews could live in peace or, on the contrary, a place for the damned. Mutter Judith and her children know that Hitler planned a gigantic ghetto, first in Uganda, later on Madagascar, to become the confinement for European Jewry. With its absence of borders, the island near the African coast represents a terrifying destination for the Lévy family after expulsion from their *Heimat*: they all desperately observe there is no escape from Germany other than to embark on the 'little train' Ernie has seen arriving in a visionary dream (*LJ*, 264).

Like many other themes in Schwarz-Bart's and Perec's imagination, exile is a reversible one: the islands or coast (Guyana) are alternatively safe haven, utopian 'new world', and dystopian ghetto doomed to lock up the unwanted and ostracised 'Other'. It is here that Perec's *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* [*W, or the Memory of Childhood*] (1975) converges neatly with *A Woman Named Solitude*: 'insularity' is both a ghetto for deported Africans and a paradise for European humanists and slavers, adventurers, and the like. It is often a transit place on the way to the vast continent and its big promises, a projection of vast new options: Perec worked on *Ellis Island* (with Bober, 1994) and left an unpublished work, *L'Arbre. Histoire d'Esther et de sa*

famille [*The Tree. Story of Esther and of Her Family*], in which the diaspora of a single Jewish family rapidly reaches a planetary scale as the family members flee to different continents. Perec's idea for this work was explained to Maurice Nadeau—another 'bridge builder' between the authors of the *Moulin d'Andé*.

Shifting from the French Antilles to Latin America, Schwarz-Bart announced by means of a note in *Un plat de porc* that one of the volumes of his Antillean cycle would be 'Bogota Bogota'. This might have ignited Perec's imaginary migration to Latin America. Indeed, in, *W ou le souvenir d'enfance*, Perec's fascination with the Americas concretises in the setting of the second part of his autofictional "W" on a fictive island off the coast of Chile. *Adieu Bogota* (AB, 2017) follows the same line, as the protagonist, Mariotte, born in Martinique, leaves the island in 1903 after a devastating natural disaster (the volcano's eruption being a natural Holocaust, so to speak). She first chooses Cayenne and meets an ex-prisoner of the penal colony of Saint-Laurent de Maroni. By staging this romance between a 'daughter of Solitude', a woman of colour from the Antilles, and a white outcast, a *relégué* [relegated recidivist convict] from the *bagnes* [prisons], Schwarz-Bart once more interweaves Shoah and Slavery, albeit in a new constellation: victims of genocidal violence meet in this tropical 'concentration camp', as it were. The penal colonies spread over French Guyana served as 'prison' for Dreyfus, *droits communs* [non-political convicts], and Paris Communards. With *Adieu Bogota*, Schwarz-Bart once more installs interregional trafficking: from Martinique to Bogota via Cayenne (like Ellis Island to the continent, from France to Argentina in *W*). Often, perpetrators and victims live side by side in these countries of the New World; victims of the colonial oppression and the Shoah become the neighbours of their former bystanders and torturers.

Encounters with Perec and a political refugee from Columbia in the '*réseau oulipien* [Oulipian network]' motivated André Schwarz-Bart to set this particular novel (partly) in Bogota. Yet Mariotte's essence (cyclical endurance and suffering) puts the horror of victims of extreme violence (endured during the Shoah or dictatorships in Latin America) at the limits of 'representation'. Through speculative intertextualities, notably with Colombian narratives on the horrendous events of 1948 remembered as *La Violencia*, Schwarz-Bart transfers the focus to other locations of extreme sexual violence against women in a reversible portrayal of the Jewish and black female condition. Perec and Schwarz-Bart have represented islands both as 'haven' and 'ghetto', as a concentration universe, Guyana's transportation camps, and a safe retreat.

'Transit' to Bogota: knotting memory with Arnoldo Palacios

The second 'dweller in Perec's *Moulin d'Andé*' is Arnoldo Palacios, who was born in 1924 in Chocó and died in 2015 in Bogotá. He saw the manuscript of

his novel, *Las estrellas son negras* (1949), rescued from a fire in the city. The novel was published upon his arrival in Paris as a political refugee from a country which would know unending military violence against its citizens. His widow, Béatrice Palacios, confirms that her late husband and Schwarz-Bart first befriended each other in 1949 in Paris (Béatrice Palacios, personal communication, 7 September 2021). Palacios sojourned several times at the Moulin d'Andé, where his novel *Les Mamelles du Chocó* (1989) was conceived. Palacios combines *la négritude colombienne* [Colombian Blackness] with the systematic discrimination of *afrodescendientes* [women of African ancestry] in Latin America. Peasantry, and especially women of African descent, suffered discrimination and social inequality. From 1947 onwards, poor women often had to prostitute themselves in the streets to survive. Overall, the cities became a dreadful place after Jorge Eliécer Gaitán's death on 9 April 1948.

From letters dated April 1963, we learn that André started writing *Bogota* well before *Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes* (PP).¹⁴ Unfortunately, we do not have Simone's replies, but the tiny amount of correspondence between husband and wife testifies to the fact that André had already prepared this novel entitled '[Adieu] Bogota' but could not finish the 'events of Bogota'. Indeed, Serge Patient, a novelist himself, confirms that he hosted André in Cayenne while he struggled with this particular novel (Serge Patient, personal communication, 17 April 2012).

At this point, it needs to be recalled how vague and timeless Mariotte's *Cahiers* [Journal] is. Her Journal indeed leaves the reader frustrated, as many pieces of her puzzle remain missing. In the same way, we do not know what prevented André from completing this novel.

What is Mariotte hiding? What is the precise nature of *les événements de Bogota* [the events of Bogota], which threw her into '*un cul-de-basse-fosse d'elle-même* [a terrible state, mentally depressed]' (PP, 208)? In allusive ways, the unimaginable answers to these questions are already visible, in the errantry evoked in *Un plat de porc*, which is reframed in *Adieu Bogota*: for years, Mariotte remains haunted by '*l'odeur de chair brûlée des ruines de Saint-Pierre* [the smell of burnt flesh of the ruins of Saint Pierre]' (AB, 204). In other words, images and odour revive 'the traumatic experience'. The odour of ashes also bridges the gap between the descendant of slaves, whose entire village has been burnt to the ground (in *A Woman Named Solitude*, there is 'the smell of burned flesh' everywhere in the Diola village¹⁵), and the Holocaust survivor who cannot forget the odour and taste of cinders. In other words, André Schwarz-Bart brings the survivors of other catastrophes, elsewhere in the world, beyond 'competitive memory' (Rothberg 2009; 2010), as both descendants of slaves and of persecuted Jews are haunted by their nightmares. In her Journal, Mariotte glosses her journey of rescue from Morne Pichevin (close to Martinique's main town, Saint-Pierre) to Guyana. This takes place in 1903, soon after the eruption of Mount Pelée has destroyed

Saint-Pierre and killed the town's entire population except for three individuals. The reader understands bit by bit that, after 40 years, Mariotte remains traumatised (Caruth 1996).¹⁶ She cannot forget the 'arrows from nowhere' (*PP*, 61), and that she often feels like 'a simple dog' (*PP*, 205). In the posthumous *Adieu Bogota*, released only in 2017, chapter 9 confronts us with her rape by *Chien* [Dog] in the prison cells of Bogota. Without any clue as to when and why, the narrative unfolds like a *testimonio*,¹⁷ devoid of a precise year and circumstances. Unveiled, Mariotte's identity remains mysterious, the survivor of a tremendous calamity. Trying to work out her trauma through writing (doubling the author's trajectory), Mariotte is disappointed by her own wreckage as a writer. The impossibility of narrating these facts properly is raised in Mariotte's narrative:

Noyades, tu montes, tu redescends comme un ludion dans une bouteille agitée par des mains... facétieuses. (...) Où veux-tu en venir avec tes 'écritures'. [Drowning, you come up and go down again like a Cartesian diver in a bottle shaken by hands out of... mischief. (...)] Where are you going with your 'writings'. (*PP*, 185)

Mariotte clearly assumes the role of the *écrivaine*, to use Bernard Pingaud's concept (Pingaud 2007),¹⁸ mirroring the author[s]' own embarrassment with relating extreme sexual violence.¹⁹ The re-memory (Morrison 1995)²⁰ disrupts both language and style structure: it alters the narrative and makes one lose control over the coherent discourse. One recognises trauma as a leading obstacle for the making of a proper novel in the European ('White') mode and the French style, which Mariotte more than once judges to be despicable.

Today, Simone Schwarz-Bart clearly assumes the function of *dybbuk* [spirit] of her husband. This concept exists also in the Caribbean, where 'revenants' (spelled Perec's way) haunt the surviving individual, who has to bring out secret stories and harsh realities.²¹ Simone Schwarz-Bart is the reincarnation in female mode of her husband as, more than half a century after the latter's drafts were composed, she takes on the role of the ghostwriter: her introduction to *L'étoile du matin* (2009, *The Morning Star*) makes us believe she has been designated, by means of a simple 'post-it' with her nickname on it, to fulfil his last wish to publish this work. Her role as ghostwriter allows her husband to cross both gender perspective and ethnic positioning. Similarly, Mariotte becomes the dramatic persona who will relate 'unclaimed experience' (Caruth 1996), both of her own traumatic adventures in Bogota and of the miserable life of one of her best friends, Jeanne, an old lady who dies in a Parisian home for the elderly nicknamed 'the Hole'. The posthumous works have been completed, including a partial if not total process of rewriting drafts and previous versions, by Simone and Francine Kaufmann, one of her closest assistants. From Jean Jonassaint, one could speak about

‘muticephalous authorship’ in this respect (Jonassaint 2007, 25). However, these new narratives provoke many questions in terms of cohesion of the so-called Caribbean cycle. *Adieu Bogota* can hardly be called a new ‘volume’ of the Caribbean cycle. Furthermore, the co-editor/co-author seems to be unaware of André’s ideas and plans for the novel. This became apparent during a direct Q & A session, when the novel was launched in Paris on 26 June 2017. When Simone was asked at the Tschann Bookshop which political and historical events the chapter on Mariotte’s rape by Dog were based on, she could not answer. Months later, when the interview conducted before a small audience was transcribed, there was no completion, rectification or confirmation of the precise nature and reasons for the ‘marches on the capital’. The Q & A raised questions, the answers to which were quickly found in Bogota’s post-World War Two history. Taken together, the two posthumous co-signed novels, *L’Ancêtre en Solitude [The Ancestor in Solitude]* (2015) and *Adieu Bogota*, span centuries of the Caribbean, African diaspora.

The quick research into Colombian history revealed that Bogota was the scene of a terrible massacre of citizens and students on 8 April 1948. It all started after the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, nicknamed *El Negro*, who was a very popular presidential candidate at the time; the subsequent months saw escalating civil war—the FARC was ultimately dismantled only in 2019. This chapter of Colombia’s post-war history became known to Schwarz-Bart after he met Arnolando Palacios, first in Paris in 1949, later in Rome in 1959, where both participated in the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists (alongside Frantz Fanon), and finally at the Moulin d’Andé. The Colombian clandestine novelist spent many months in this hiding place, together with his wife and children, risking expulsion as soon as he turned up in Paris or elsewhere in France, because of unrest relating to Latin America’s dreadful situation with several dictatorships (like the one Perce, too, alluded to, namely, Pinochet in Chile). Gaitán’s death led to mass demonstrations in the streets of the capital, and very rapidly throughout the country. His assassination influenced the Colombian novelists Gabriel García Márquez, while writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), and he recalls this tragedy also in his autobiography,²² and Juan Gabriel Vásquez in *La forma de las ruinas [The Shape of the Ruins]* (2015) (Vásquez 2018). Kennedy’s murder in 1963, Uribe Uribe’s assassination in 1914, and Gaitán’s ending are the centre of this historical thriller. Vásquez claims he was unaware of the French-Polish writer and of the origin (Jewish?) of the charismatic leader murdered in 1948 (Juan Gabriel Vásquez, personal communication, 2 February 2022).²³ However, he agrees that the history of his country is soaked in blood. Even if critics and writers alike still ignore that the two authors met, it is interesting to see their common preoccupation with weaving together different plots and stories taking place in different places and times.

Without a doubt, André Schwarz-Bart was struck by the Colombian witness who told him this upsetting history. In Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the French novelist saw the perfect incarnation of a leader bridging the New World and the Old, as his very identity symbolised *métissage* and probably the Jewish and non-Jewish legacies in the Americas. Even if Gaitán's Jewish origin remains speculative, he was the Just man, the leader who stood up against oppression and fascist power, against poverty and corruption. His elimination ignited popular uprisings against the new regime that was put in place the morning after his brutal death, which led to slaughter and a civil war which would not cease until the early years of the twenty-first century. A hero slaughtered on the verge of Colombia's decolonisation, Gaitán embodies Schwarz-Bart's heroic maroon. Consequently, we might speculate that this victim's ancestors fled pogroms in Ukraine and Eastern Europe during tsarism. Many Ashkenazi families indeed saved their lives by migrating to the New World in the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with small numbers settling in the Caribbean and other parts of the region. Moreover, 'Eliezer' can be shortened to 'Elie', a name which appears again and again in both Simone and André Schwarz-Bart's novels and circles: think of Elie, Télumée's husband in *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle* [*Rain and Wind on Télumée Miracle*] (1972).

André Schwarz-Bart had in mind to weave together the post/colonial violence and the post-Shoah violence in places hitherto unrelated. Through a *noeud de mémoire* [knot of memory] (Rothberg 2010), links between the Jewish and the Black diasporas permit the work of individual and collective mourning across cultural boundaries. Articulating different postcolonial cataclysms in several spatial and temporal zones would become a shift in paradigm in the early years of the twenty-first century: André Schwarz-Bart and Perec, by not confining their trauma to their own dreadful past and the wreckage endured by their family of uprooted Jews, were setting the trend.

In *The Morning Star*, Schwarz-Bart's first 'posthumous novel', we encounter the same atrocities perpetrated on the most vulnerable citizens in a Jewish Polish *shtetl* before the outbreak of World War Two. Jewish women have suffered rape by invaders for centuries, their offspring adopted by Jewish fathers who, by doing so, became respected members of the community (Gyssels 2013). A pattern occurs in all of Schwarz-Bart's novels, either signed by Simone solely or jointly: rape and undesired motherhood/pregnancy, as in her play *Ton beau capitaine* [*Your Handsome Captain*] (1987).²⁴ During dictatorships in Latin America and Brazil, rape became a weapon of the oppressor. The novelist, who 'implements' the mixing of ethnicities first and foremost, reminds us that creolisation sprang from this miscegenation and rape. Moreover, André and certainly Simone Schwarz-Bart are illustrating what Scharfman aptly calls 'Mirroring and Mothering' (Scharfman 1981). This is the transgenerational trauma of sexual violence perpetrated on women (of colour).

This can be taken one step further: in *Adieu Bogota*, Mariotte is raped by Dog but does not feel any desire for vengeance. As a matter of fact, she even forgives her wrongdoer, this ‘beast’ trained to de-humanise his prey. Both instrument of torture and terror, dogs have also been a loyal friend to enslaved men and women, as in *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*, in which Man Cia undergoes a metamorphosis after her death (Gyssels 1996, 332). Foregrounding an ethical position shared by Emmanuel Levinas (Davison 2014) and Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1995), the female victim of rape raises questions about abortion and unwanted pregnancy, which brings the novels close to Jean Rhys (Rhys 1966) and Michèle Lacrosil (Lacrosil 1960), who also touch upon this unspeakable taboo. Ruptured affections ask for a blurring between I and the object of terror, explaining Mariotte’s ‘unnatural voice’ (Richardson 2006).

Mariotte turns out to be an apathetic narrator, who questions the relationship between Self and Other, human and inhuman, in the context of slavery or colonialism, war and ethnic cleansing. Underneath the atrocities she has suffered, she questions the possibility of forgiving her wrongdoer, who left her broken and trying to put herself back together. Caution when judging the criminal in extreme circumstances such as World War Two and dictatorship in Colombia, Chile, and other places has taught us about the thin line between victim and perpetrator, as Pierre Bayard examines in *Aurais-je été résistant ou bourreau? [Would I have been a rebel or an executioner?]* (Bayard 2013).

Testaments Betrayed (Milan Kundera): the posthumous novels

It has repeatedly been observed that Simone would not have published the posthumous volumes of the Caribbean cycle without the help of, first, Francine Kaufmann, and second, a growing number of literary ‘pilots’ whom she credits for their precious advice and thanks in a note at the end of another co-published work: *Nous n’avons pas vu passer les jours [We Didn’t Notice the Days Passing]* (Plougastel and Schwarz-Bart 2019).²⁵

It is as if the deceased author’s wish has been fulfilled by Malka Marcovich, assistant of the author during preparation of *Hommage à la femme noire* (André and Simone Schwarz-Bart 1988-89), and her son Élie Duprey, to complete the series he envisaged (Marcovich 2010; Duprey 2010). However praiseworthy their efforts are, the Caribbean cycle is not really a coherent series of fiction dealing with the Shoah and slavery and their aftermath. As a matter of fact, taken together, they don’t quite fit the definition by Alain Pagès: André and Simone’s cycle barely stands as a *series à entrée unique* [single entry series], which could be read separately. Nor is it a series with ‘multiple’ entries, which one has to have read to follow the plot, like Elena Ferranti’s oeuvre (Pagès 2016).

Impeded by writer’s block, uncertain of where to go, and completely lost in the many projects he planned and endlessly postponed, André

Schwarz-Bart destroyed many of his drafts and notebooks. In this context, his interest in seeing *Adieu Bogota* published is hard to discern. Questions remain, for instance, about the relationship between the two female characters in *Un plat de porc*: Mariotte pays tribute to her close friend, Jeanne, who all of a sudden, during an interview with Simone, is revealed to be Jewish! Nowhere in *Adieu Bogota* does this important ‘connexion’, both to *The Last of the Just* and *Un plat de porc*, in which various hints at the hollow Jewishness of Jeanne have been noticed (Gyssels 1996; 2016), appear. Is it possible that this, and other *imprints*, have been overlooked, and ‘refreshed’? Shifting and elusive explanations and paratextual ambiguities (the Prologue in *The Morning Star* is not attributed to André) make up for the mystification and deliberate veiling of the co-authorship.²⁶ Unable to complete manuscripts, endlessly cutting and revising draft after draft, the resilient author ultimately did not recover from his wounds (Cyrulnik 2012, 166).

Obscure boutiques (Perc)

One might label Schwarz-Bart a *non-écrivain* [non-writer] as in Coquio’s taxonomy (Coquio 2003). The unfinished manuscripts manifest the incurable wounds inflicted by the Holocaust, but Schwarz-Bart was also devastated a second time, when he met harsh criticism for being a white, moreover Jewish, writer fictionalising slavery and diaspora in the Caribbean. In that respect, it is a sad fact that prominent Martinican authors and essayists like Edouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, although the latter has borrowed quite a lot from Simone’s and André’s respective novels, paid little attention to the couple’s career. More precisely, the author who erased the ‘walls’ between perpetrator and victim, who saw Israel as a problematic ‘home’, does not come to their mind, neither in the manifesto *Quand les murs tombent: L’identité nationale hors la loi?* (Glissant and Chamoiseau 2008), nor in *Poétique de la Relation* (Glissant 2009), in which Glissant sums up the various ‘concentrationary universes’ all over the world. Schwarz-Bart was the first to knot suffering by both human and inhuman, and he attacked genocidal violence in other places, in other times. Connecting Jew and non-Jew in the work of memory and working out the trauma, he challenges the very nature of the literary discourse (style, structure, perspective), generations before trauma studies and ‘knots of memory’ were theorised. Forcing the reader to think also about his or her own ‘camp’, the narrator in each of these novels, jointly or separately, forces us to reflect on the fundamental question Bayard examines in works by Romain Gary, Browning, and others, in *Aurais-je été résistant ou bourreau?* (2013), transcending competitive memories and polarisation, and avoiding ‘camp thinking’ (Gilroy 2000).

It is clear that Perc’s shadow hangs over Schwarz-Bart’s writing, and conversely, the latter’s first novel contains Oulipian aspects *avant la lettre*. *The Last of the Just* stands as one of those rare novels which are the fruit of

lively imagination, personal records and, most of all, many revisors and helping hands. It was especially his encounters with Latin American refugees that led André Schwarz-Bart to include various variants of Rousset's 'concentrationary universe' in his narratives. It was coming across Palacios's non-conventional treatment of another 'Catastrophe', the civil war that damaged Colombia for more than 50 years, that he conceived the idea of dedicating another volume of his Caribbean cycle to this hemisphere with Caribbean 'links'.

Satellites of loss circle around the author of *The Last of the Just*: what all the authors indeed share is a traumatic past, most notably Perec and Palacios. Pons was able to help many would-be authors such as Simone Signoret (also of Jewish descent) and René Depestre, a Haitian author who fled his island under the dictatorship of François Duvalier. For all of them, the Moulin d'Andé remained a utopian place of peace and heaven where freedom of expression, through literature, was highly valued.

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Endnotes

¹ I use the term ‘Shoah’, following André Schwarz-Bart’s friend, Claude Lanzmann, who also visited the Moulin d’Andé, as did his brother, the novelist and songwriter Jacques Lanzmann. ‘Shoah’ (instead of ‘Holocaust’) unites the authors dwelling around Schwarz-Bart like satellites around a

space shuttle. The image is not neutral, given the striking incipit of *The Last of the Just*: the narrator looks at the stars, thinking of the myriad of dead souls wandering in the sky.

² This 1992 publication re-printed works Perec produced as part of the *Ligne générale* group between 1959-63.

³ Arnold Rampersad, the famous biographer of Langston Hughes and Ralph Ellison, introduced the English translation and brought up the ‘appropriation of voice’. He no longer remembers the circumstances of how he came to be asked to introduce the excellent translation by Ralph Manheim (Gyssels 1996, 33, 411).

⁴ Finné also mentions Yambo Ouologuem who, by plagiarising *The Last of the Just* in *Le Devoir de violence* (1969), would equally disappear. Under the pseudonym Utto Rudolf, Ouologuem revisits the 1959 Goncourt Prize in his polemic *Les Mille et Une Bibles du sexe* ([1969] 2015). In his preface and subsequent publications, Orban ignores the intertextual play with the young lovers Ernie Lévy and Golda Engelbaum (Gyssels 2022).

⁵ Further confirmation was provided by Jacques Lederer (personal communication, 28 November 2023). I thank both Mr Bénabou and Mr Lederer.

⁶ Although the couple is not included in the corpus of Marjorie Stone and Judith Thompson (2006), it would have fitted perfectly. The Schwarz-Bart partnership remains a taboo in French (Parisian) criticism dealing with ‘l’écriture à quatre mains [writing with four hands]’, as neither a special issue of *Genesis* (41, 2015) nor Benoît Peeters and Michel Lafon’s *Nous est un autre, Enquête sur les duos d’écrivains* (2006) includes the couple. Although Peeters published ‘Échafaudages’ in *Cahiers Georges Perec I* (1985), the link is never made. In my proposal to shed light on variations between the unpublished manuscript and the final version of *L’Etoile du matin* (2009, *The Morning Star*), based on a comparison between the annotated draft by André Schwarz-Bart and the ‘finished’ product by Simone Schwarz-Bart and her team, notable distortions in the process of completing come to the surface (*Genesis*, 51, 2020; Gyssels 2023b). Moreover, the archival material was supposed to stay on the island, as Julie Duprat notes in her Master’s thesis, but it was decided otherwise because of financial ‘instability’ on the island (Duprat 2019, 21). The BnF is a more prestigious location, but the question remains as to whether André’s wish was to have his papers transferred to Paris.

⁷ Roland Barthes invented the ‘biographème’: ‘De la même façon, j’aime certains traits biographiques qui, dans la vie d’un écrivain, m’enchantent à l’égal de certaines photographies; j’ai appelé ces traits des “biographèmes”; la Photographie a le même rapport à l’Histoire que le biographème à la biographie. [At the same time, I like certain biographical traits which, in the

life of a writer, are charming in the same way that some photographs are; I called these traits ‘biographèmes’; Photography has the same relationship to History as the biographème has to biography]’ (Barthes 1980, 53). Another author who is in Schwarz-Bart’s ‘entourage’ is the French-Canadian Régine Robin, who writes in *Le Roman mémoriel [The Memorial Romance]*: ‘La voie du fragmentaire me semble aujourd’hui la plus féconde pour la réflexion de l’historien. Elle consiste à opposer le curriculum vitae aux biographèmes... [Nowadays, the voice of the fragmentary seems to me to be the most fertile for the reflection of the historian. It consists of setting the curriculum vitae in opposition to the biographèmes...]’ (Robin 1989, 156-157).

⁸ Albert Cohen’s novel, *Le Livre de ma mère* (1954) portrays the same stereotypical oriental Jews, “notre tribu orientale [our brethren from the East]”, and their bad reputation as ‘scum’, ‘schnorrers’, poor, and dirty.

⁹ Emphasis mine, italics in original.

¹⁰ Catherine Clément taught the novel’s sublime ending which made her weep (Clément 2009, 170). During our interview in Brussels soon after André Schwarz-Bart passed away on 30 September 2006, Elie Wiesel confessed that he taught the novel in his Master classes of theology at Harvard University. Like many readers, Claude Lanzmann was moved by the same ending (Lanzmann to André Schwarz-Bart, 17 August 1976). In *Situations IX. Mélanges*, Sartre, too, recognised its astonishing power, being the kind of novel that you can’t read while quietly eating peanuts (Sartre 1972). Finally, in his *Autobiographie d’un lecteur*, Pierre Dumayet, too, would forever remember the silence and the broken voice of the author (Dumayet 2000, 120-122). Among the many authors he had interviewed, Schwarz-Bart was one of the most enigmatic.

¹¹ See Francisca Loewagie’s monograph, *Témoignage et littérature après Auschwitz*.

¹² Emphasis in original.

¹³ Boris Cyrulnik, who knew André Schwarz-Bart very well, according to Elise Marienstras (Elise Marienstras, personal communication, 8 August 2023), finally mentions Schwarz-Bart in one of his last essays inspired by his concept of ‘resilience’ (Cyrulnik 2012, 166).

¹⁴ In a letter dated Friday, 26 April 1963, he regrets that his working schedule has been interrupted, without specifying the reasons: ‘Tous les chantiers s’étant mis en branle, je quitterai en principe la pension à la fin de la semaine, dès que j’en aurai fini *avec la Colombie*. [With everything underway, I’m planning to leave the pension at the end of the week as soon as I’m finished *with Colombie*.]’ (italics mine) (ITEM, Agora platform, Schwarz-Bart Group)

¹⁵ See Chapter 3, Part One, 35 ff.

¹⁶ Cathy Caruth aptly defines trauma as a disruption of temporality (Caruth 1996): indeed, Mariotte's past surfaces in the present, locking all perspectives on future projects. Anne Whitehead combines slave novels and Shoah fiction in her essay (Whitehead 2004).

¹⁷ Testimonio – a first person account from a subaltern woman who has gone through terrible ordeals, such as Rigoberta Menchu, laureate of the Nobel Prize for peace in 1992.

¹⁸ 'L'écrivain est celui qui se laisse porter par le flux des mots sans se demander où ils le mènent. L'écrivain est celui qui contrôle ce flux dans l'idée d'en faire une œuvre [The écrivain is a writer who allows himself to be carried by the flow of words without wondering where they are being carried. The écrivain is a writer who controls this flow with the idea of creating with it]' (89). Pingaud dwells on Kafka's posthumous work which would have remained unknown to us if Max Brod did not decide to 're/arrange' it and publish it (97). He also invokes Beckett's *Molloy*, as a work which contains traces of unfinished drafts (99).

¹⁹ We put the s in 'author[s]' between brackets, as Mariotte remains the 'character' created by both André and Simone, if the reader trusts the Preamble.

²⁰ In Morrison's *Beloved*, the most unbelievable deprivation to a slave mother is related: Sethe is treated as a cow and is forced to give breast to the three 'nephews' of her Master. Morrison fills in the 'blanks that the slave narratives left' (Morrison 1995, 93-94).

²¹ See Gyssels 2020a, 2020b, and 2023. Simone Schwarz-Bart allowed me to visit and research André's vast collection of books at their house, La Souvenance: although Perec seems to be 'missing' from an impressive inventory of fiction, essays, press articles, etc., arguably Perec influenced Schwarz-Bart profoundly. How are we to explain Perec's excision from the library? Is it possible that his influence, like other major influences, such as Abrasza Zemsz and Pietro Sarto (Gyssels 2019), has been deliberately erased?

²² Gabriel García Márquez reports in his autobiography, *Vivir para contarla* (2002, *Living to Tell the Tale*), that Encarnación Roa, the mother of Gaitán's murderer, Juan Roa Sierra, first found out about the murder on the radio, and that when she was dyeing her best dress in black to mourn Gaitán she heard the news that her own son had been the perpetrator, an accusation she purportedly always refused to believe.

²³ Juan Gabriel Vásquez confirmed in an email that to his knowledge Gaitán had no Jewish roots (personal communication, 2 February 2022). In his novel, he explains that the biblical middle name Eliécer was a tribute to his father, who had a mission on this earth (2017, 544).

²⁴ This would be one of the last publications by Simone, who all of a sudden resurfaced in 2009 with *L'étoile du matin*, which she does not sign but introduces. It is also surprising that during the many talks she has given, she does not talk about her own novels but focuses only on her belated husband's work.

²⁵ In a paratextual note at the end of the book, the authors thank a long list of old and new acquaintances. It comes as a surprise to see this book, co-signed, backed up by a growing number of personalities of the Parisian media (most of them affiliated with *Le Monde*, like Yann Plougastel himself). However, this support stands in sharp contrast with the lack of academic attention to the posthumous volumes. For example, there are no articles dedicated to *Adieu Bogota* in Jean-Pierre Orban's special issue of *Continents Manuscripts*, although he summarises the book at length in an interview with Simone in the same volume and promises new insights with the archives being made accessible to scholars (Orban 2017, 2020, 2021).

²⁶ Benoît Peeters recognises the double difficulty in the question of the Schwarz-Bart couple: posthumous publishing implies delicate questions, especially when the authors veil the repartition of their respective responsibilities and re/writings. I thank the author of "Écrire ensemble. Un projet inachevé" (Peeters 2015) for our conversations (personal communication, 30 August 2021). See also Stone and Thompson, *Literary Couplings*.