

La main de Thôt

ISSN : 2272-2653

Éditeur : Carole Filière

12 | 2024

Traduction et résistances

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Référence électronique

Tiffane Levick et Timothy Lomeli, « Créole in the Métropole: Co-Translating *Ady, soleil noir* », *La main de Thôt* [En ligne], 12 | 2024, mis en ligne le 19 décembre 2024, consulté le 07 janvier 2025. URL : <http://interfas.univ-tlse2.fr/lamaindethot/1383>

Créole in the Métropole: Co-Translating *Ady, soleil noir*

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TEXTE

- 1 Gisèle Pineau's novel *Ady, soleil noir* was published in 2021 by Philippe Rey, and was awarded the *Prix du roman historique* for presenting the forgotten story of Adrienne Fidelin. Adrienne, or Ady, arrived in Paris from Guadeloupe in the late 1920s and met photographer Man Ray at the Bal Colonial (Bal Blomet) in Paris. She subsequently became his muse and model, as well as a muse for other surrealists such as Picasso and Paul Éluard, while continuing her work as a dancer and actor. The novel gives Ady a voice to tell her story, as she only has traces in archival material, a few paragraphs in Man Ray's *Self Portrait*, or a surrealist painting by Picasso *Femme Assise sur Fond Jaune et Rose, II* (1937). However, Pineau also addresses the tension between French citizens living in Hexagonal France, especially Paris, and those beyond those boundaries. Much of the novel takes place in the mid-1930s, before Guadeloupe was officially departmentalised in 1946 and accurately depicts these racial tensions that inspired Aimé Césaire, Léon-Gontran Damas, and Léopold Sédar Senghor to start the *négritude* movement. The geographical, cultural, and linguistic distance between France and the Caribbean, and the question of Blackness complicates what it means to be French.
- 2 In this piece, we outline the practical details of our collaboration, and explore some of the key challenges we faced while translating. We decided to work on the novel together in 2022 after hearing about

the World Writing in French: New Archipelagoes Series established by the Winthrop King Institute and Liverpool University Press (LUP). Timothy has a background in francophone and Caribbean literature – he is currently finishing his PhD on Haitian literature – and he approached Tiffane because of her background in translation and language, since we had complementary skills that would allow us to produce an informed translation. In light of the fact that Adrienne Fidelin has been largely erased from discussions of the surrealist movement and of Man Ray's life, we wanted to focus on bringing out the complexity of her identity and background in our translation.

Practical Details of the Co-translation Process

- 3 The application involved a sample translation of 2000 words and a form with a range of questions related to the novel and its potential place in the series, as well as its potential readership and competition. We argued that the novel's depiction of the interwar period (1918-1939) and its depiction of the surrealist collective were among the strengths of the novel for an anglophone audience. For example, the translation's publication in 2025 neatly aligns with the new biopic on Lee Miller (*Lee* 2024) in which Ady appears in the first act and a few of the archival photos included in the novel are recreated, notably *Picnic, Île Sainte-Marguerite, Cannes, France 1937* by Lee Miller and *Ady Fidelin, Lee Miller and Nusch Eluard, Lambe Creek, Cornwall, England 1937* by Roland Penrose.
- 4 Within a few months, we were informed that our application had been successful (among the 20-odd applications, two projects were selected for publication), but it took nine months to receive a contract. The bulk of the translation was completed between July and September 2023. We submitted a final draft at the end of September of the same year, and received the revisions proposed by a specialist in Caribbean literature in April 2024. As of December 2024, the translation is in the hands of LUP copy editors and will be published in April 2025.
- 5 To facilitate the co-translation process, we decided to create a shared Google Drive with folders for each chapter, including docu-

ments for each draft, documents with research questions, and translation notes. The first draft included a table with the original French on the left and initial translations into English on the right. When the first draft was finished, the original draft was duplicated, and we left comments and suggestions for each other on this second draft. Once we had agreed on these comments and suggestions, we created a third draft that included only the English text, which we both read through again to check the flow of the language. We initially struggled to identify an efficient and equitable means of distributing the workload in a way that played to each person's strengths. Our conflicting schedules, due to our differing time zones at various points of the process (Europe, the US, Australia), during the summer further complicated communication and collaborative decision-making to determine an approach and schedule. We decided to let each other know when we had finished initial drafts through Telegram. Then once a draft had been edited and commented on, we would schedule a Zoom meeting to discuss remaining suggestions and questions.

- 6 Ultimately, we resolved these issues through trial and error, establishing that it was more logical for Timothy to focus on content and research-related work, especially regarding Caribbean and Francophone culture. His familiarity with this context allowed him to more easily identify intertextual and Creole references in the text and to track down missing information. Tiffane took on the role of producing a polished first draft of each chapter, as her background in translation and micro-analysis made her better suited for ensuring linguistic accuracy and fluidity. Throughout the process, beyond the initial drafting stage, Timothy continued to handle tasks related to contextual accuracy while also compiling the glossary, and he proofread the translation to identify awkwardness and typos and flag inconsistencies, whereas Tiffane focused on the linguistic and stylistic aspects of the translation.
- 7 Outside of the practical aspects of co-translating, we also encountered a number of challenges in tackling the complexity of *Ady's* multifaceted identity. This identity manifests itself in the text through a number of references to Guadeloupean places, food, and practices, through the presence of racially-charged language, as well as intertextual references, both explicit and implicit. The narrative

style poses an additional challenge for translation, being characterised by dated language, given that the story of the novel unfolds in the first half of the 20th century, as well as run-on and verbless sentences, shifts in tense, and varied registers, and inconsistencies and misspellings in the source text itself. In what follows, we focus on three of these challenges: translating the tension between Ady's life in mainland France and her Caribbean background, racially-loaded language, and the numerous cultural and intertextual references peppered throughout the novel.

Mainland France and its Overseas Territories

- 8 The novel is peppered throughout with cultural and geographical markers that anchor the text firmly in various parts of hexagonal France, with sections also referring directly or indirectly to Ady's childhood and family in Guadeloupe. Our translation seeks to maintain the hexagonal Frenchness of the text in such a way that it forms part of the backdrop, while integrating techniques that accentuate the references to Ady's Caribbean heritage. Since for readers of the original French, the references to Parisian or French sites form part of the background and are not especially marked, we decided to leave them unchanged in English, not translating them, and not italicising them to mark them as requiring additional attention. Additionally, we adopted anglophone typographical norms so as to make their presence in the text appear more natural. The following example illustrates our approach to rendering the references to places in Paris:

La musique antillaise est en vogue. Les dansings et cabarets créoles sortent de terre comme des brassées de fleurs tropicales au mitan du bitume. L'Élan noir au 124, boulevard du Montparnasse, Le Pélican blanc pas loin de la place Denfert-Rochereau, Le Jockey rue Campagne-Première, Le Madinina Biguine rue de l'Arrivée, Le Mikado sur le boulevard de Rochechouart, Le Tagada, La Savane, La Boule d'or rue Plumet, Le Magada Biguine, Le Bal Tabarin... (PINEAU, 2021, 15)

Caribbean music is in vogue. Creole dance halls and cabarets are springing up like tropical flowers growing in the bitumen. There's the Élan Noir at 124 Boulevard du Montparnasse, the Pélican Blanc not far from Place Denfert-Rochereau, the Jockey on Rue Campagne-Première, the Madinina Biguine on Rue de l'Arrivée, the Mikado on Boulevard de Rochechouart, the Tagada, Savane and Boule d'Or on Rue Plumet, the Magada Biguine, the Bal Tabarin...

- 9 In this passage, all nouns in proper noun phrases are capitalised, in accordance with English-language norms (e.g. *Élan noir* becomes *Élan Noir*) and street types are also capitalised (e.g. *place Denfert-Rochereau* becomes *Place Denfert-Rochereau*, *boulevard du Montparnasse* becomes *Boulevard du Montparnasse*).
- 10 These decisions allow proper nouns and references to the setting to remain unmarked in the translation of the novel, reminding the reader that the novel takes place in a francophone context. The choice encourages anglophone readers to distinguish between the words left in French but not italicised, and the words related to Ady's Caribbean background that we borrowed and italicised. This distinction appears in a similar manner in the French text, since although the references are not typographically marked in the original, they stand out to readers as different simply because of a potential lack of familiarity with the context presented.
- 11 As well as being maintained and italicised, these terms specific to the Caribbean were explained in a glossary. It was Timothy's suggestion to include this glossary, since his familiarity with Caribbean fiction (in French and in translation) meant that he had seen many examples in other works. Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, for instance, includes a glossary in the English version (translated by Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov, 1997), as does Maryse Condé's *Célanire Cou-Coupé*, in the French text published in 2000. Our decision to include this glossary necessarily shifted the tone of the novel slightly, meaning that our translation took on a more informative function than the original text, despite its historical mooring.
- 12 Gisèle Pineau did not include a glossary in her novel, even for the Creole words and expressions in the text, which reflects a desire to let her readers sit with this unfamiliarity. Moreover, as well as the historical aspect of the French text, we also decided to provide additional information for readers interested in learning more about the contextual aspects of the novel. We felt that this aspect of our translation was justified because the text would appear within a collection created for works of non-hexagonal francophone literature in translation published by an academic press. Furthermore, because we decided to simulate this unfamiliarity in other ways, for example, by

ing example, we decided to keep the two Creole words included in the original French, to italicise them and to explain them in the glossary:

<p>À Paname, dans ces années-là, on n'a qu'à souffler « 33 » à n'importe quel chauffeur de taxi pour qu'il ajoute sitôt : « rue Blomet ! » Marrade et bamboche garanties... Y a aussi le 33 de la rue Vavin, avec La Boule blanche où se produit Stelio... (PINEAU, 2021, 14-15, our bold)</p>	<p>Back in those days in Paname, all you have to do is say "33" to any taxi driver and he immediately chimes in "Rue Blomet!" Marrade and bamboche guaranteed... There's also 33 Rue Vavin, with the Boule Blanche where Stelio performs...</p>
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- 13 We defined “marrade” as “a nominalised form of the French verb, ‘se marrer’, meaning ‘to have a lot of fun’, which roughly translates to ‘great times’” and “bamboche” as “a social gathering at which food is served”. While “bamboche” is a term specific and common in the Caribbean, it is unfamiliar to French readers, Pineau avoids having to explain this term by using “marrade” which, also common in the Caribbean, can be deduced by her reader due to its origins in French.
- 14 Our decision to include a glossary to define these terms rather than footnotes or chapter endnotes was twofold. First of all, we wanted to make reading the entries optional, avoiding interrupting the flow of the reading, while encouraging readers to attempt to deduce the meaning from surrounding context or to recognise the terms as related to the Caribbean facets of Ady’s identity without having to find the exact meaning straight away. Secondly, the references for the numerous passages from other works of poetry or literature were already provided in footnotes, and we wanted to establish a clear separation between the intertextual references present in the original text and our own additions.
- 15 These explicit inclusions of Creole in the source text were accompanied by the occasional use of Creolised French. When we noticed that the expression used in the novel was “non-standard”, as in the expression “*faire des dièses*” below, we decided to substitute the Creolised French for the actual Creole:

<p><i>Les filles du pays me toisent. [...] Leurs lèvres fardées se tordent et elles tchipent sans trop savoir pourquoi, peut-être pour m'intimider, se donner une contenance. Deux, trois doudous en madras et dentelles font des poses et des dièses. Je les connais, elles sont bonniches et ouvrières, nounous, trottins, petites mains dans les maisons de couture. (PINEAU, 2021, 19-20, our bold)</i></p>	<p>The girls from back home glare at me. [...] They twist their painted lips and suck their teeth without really knowing why, perhaps to intimidate me, to afford themselves a sense of composure. Two or three doudous wearing madras and lace pose and fè dyèz. I recognize them – maids, laborers, nannies, errand girls, seamstresses in fashion houses.</p>
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16 Timothy recognised that “faire des dièses” was here a calque of the Guadeloupean Creole “fè dyèz”, and we thus inserted the Creole directly into the text, in italics, with an explanation in the glossary: “A term in Guadeloupean Creole which means ‘to show off’”. “Faire des dièses” has no significance for a native reader of French, unfamiliar with Creole, so its use in the original text seemed to create distance between the (hexagonal) French reader and someone from Guadeloupe. Our use of the Creole expression here was intended to produce a similar effect on anglophone readers, all the while providing anglophone readers with more insight than their non-Caribbean French counterparts.

17 In addition to the restitution of Creole in these cases, as stated previously, we also sought out opportunities to add Creole elsewhere, specifically when it came to naming members of Ady’s family. The French words for mother and father, for instance, were translated as Manman and Papa. Their proximity to the English terms and their use in context meant that we decided not to italicise and explain them, though the words were capitalised on the request of LUP.

<p><i>La berceuse de ma mère se tient là, receleuse des prières, poèmes des Antilles et grands secrets de famille. Taillé dans le mahogany, le fauteuil de mon père : un trône à sa mesure revêtu de velours bleu. (PINEAU, 2021, 34, our bold)</i></p>	<p>It's where Manman's rocking chair sits: a repository of prayers, poems from the Caribbean, and important family secrets. And Papa's armchair, carved in mahogany: a throne made to measure, covered with blue velvet.</p>
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18 For Ady’s sisters, Rose and Aimée, we introduced creolised forms of their nicknames, italicised them in the first instance, but not thereafter, and explained them in the glossary, as in the example below:

<p><i>Chaque fois qu'elle tourne son regard vers la table mortuaire, ma sœur Rose pousse un cri d'orfraie suivi d'un long râle. [...]</i> <i>Mon autre sœur, Aimée, celle que nous appelons la Douce, est en train de prier Dieu. (PINEAU, 2021, 63, our bold)</i></p>	<p>Every time she turns her eyes towards the mortuary table, my sister Rose, or Wòz, as we call her, lets out a loud scream followed by a long groan. [...] My other sister, sweet, gentle Aimée, or Dous, is praying to God.</p>
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- 19 We added the adjectives “sweet” and “gentle” to our translation in the French text, since the sister’s nickname “la Douce” is a nominalised form of the adjective *douce*. This allowed us to transpose the connotations of the nickname before the first name, making the implicit reasoning behind the choice of the nickname explicit in our translation, and allowing us to transform the French into a creolised nickname. We reasoned that the use of nicknames over real names is a common practice in the Caribbean, and the name Dous would likely have been used among the sisters in any case. Incidentally, Creole, a phonetic language, is able to be read by English speakers, which again allowed for a fairly seamless inclusion of foreignness in the novel in a way that would not hinder the fluidity of the text.
- 20 All of these decisions contribute to foregrounding Ady’s Guadeloupean roots, while adding a subtly pedagogical dimension to the novel in translation. Our choice to italicise and provide optionally consultable definitions for Creole terms carried across from the source text, to transform hints of Creole into explicit Creole, and to add Creole words to refer to Ady’s family members, allowed us to create a clearer distinction between the hexagonal and Caribbean French references in the novel. Given that the act of translating the text into English necessarily introduces a third layer of language into the text, we reasoned that the borrowed setting-related terms in French would inevitably stand out from the surrounding language in English, unlike in the source text. By italicising the Creole terms, either consistently or solely on their initial mention, we recreated a distinction between the two languages of the source text that called for additional attention to the non-hexagonal French aspects of the novel and of Ady’s identity.

Racially-loaded language

- 21 The use of racially-loaded language was perhaps the most challenging aspect of the text to translate from French into English, and also often involved the use of borrowing and the inclusion of definitions in the glossary. Since the context of colonisation and immigration is markedly different across countries and continents, so-called equivalent slurs will necessarily have different connotations. To circumvent the risk of alluding to a different context and of producing a potentially offensive text in English, we decided to keep the bulk of the racially-loaded terms in French. This decision is in line with the pedagogical aspects of our translation and allowed us to stay closer to the original French context by adding definitions in the glossary to situate the terms in their initial context.
- 22 The most commonly used term in the French novel is “*nègre*”, and related variations, which we often kept, and italicised, as in the example below:

À ce qu'il paraît, leurs ancêtres ont été rois en Afrique. Alors, au bal Blomet, ces princes déchus aux mains calleuses prennent leur revanche. Ils savent les femmes blanches impatientes de remuer les reins et se pâmer de plaisir. Collées aux chemises trempées de sueur, les bourgeoises distinguées des quartiers huppés de Paris tanguent et s'offrent à eux sans chichis. Faut voir ces blondes cavalières tomber l'une après l'autre dans leurs bras, molles, moites, mielleuses, semblables à des fruits mûrs. Bon Dieu ! L'odeur du **nègre** les rend folles. (PINEAU, 2021, 19, our bold)

Word has it that their ancestors were kings in Africa. At the Bal Blomet, these fallen princes with callused hands seek their revenge. They know that the white women are eager to shake their hips and swoon in pleasure. Distinguished bourgeois women from swanky Parisian neighborhoods sway to and fro and offer themselves up to the men, clinging to their sweat-soaked shirts. It's quite a spectacle, observing the swarms of blonde escorts falling into the men's arms, one after the other: limp, clammy, sweet, akin to ripe fruit. Good Lord! The smell of the **nègre** drives them crazy.

- 23 In the glossary, we provided two definitions for the term “*nègre*”, explaining firstly that in the French Caribbean and in some places in French-speaking Africa, it is used as a term to mean “man”, “person”, or “human”. The term was reappropriated by Afro-Caribbean intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s and lent itself to the neologism “Négritude”. We reasoned that the term carries a different and more nuanced meaning in French than any potential words in English, since they carry different cultural connotations, even when consider-

ing the second definition, when it is used to refer pejoratively to Black people.

- 24 We did also sometimes translate the term as Black, with a capital B, when it is used in reference to Black people globally, not only from the Caribbean (especially African-Americans). Again, the concept of Négritude influenced our choices here, since the literary movement born out of the Caribbean reappropriated the word “nègre” in its meaning “human” or “person”, which itself tried to establish a transnational pride in being Black. The word is also sometimes juxtaposed with a reference to white people, and we used Black in these instances to emphasise the opposition, as in the example below:

<p><i>On raconte qu'ils s'enfoncent avec suffisance dans les fauteuils de velours des sœurs Nardal, boivent du thé au lait et papotent à n'en plus finir : colonisation, esclavage, apartheid, négritude, ségrégation, décolonisation, indépendance, Harlem Renaissance, Y'a bon Banania, doudou créole, identité, conscience noire... Tout y passe ! Ils apprennent à se reconnaître frères, à se regarder comme d'une même souche en s'inspirant les uns des autres. Ils récitent des poèmes révolutionnaires et inventent un avenir rêvé où les nègres ne seraient plus les larbins des Blancs, porteurs, Oui bwana, chair à canon, Y'a bon Banania...</i> (PINEAU, 2021, 24, our bold)</p>	<p>Word has it that they sink into the Nardal sisters' velvet armchairs, looking smug while drinking tea with milk and chatting endlessly about colonization, slavery, apartheid, Négritude, segregation, decolonization, independence, the Harlem Renaissance, Y'a bon Banania, Creole doudous, identity, Black thought, the list goes on... No topic is off the table! They come to talk among brothers, men cut from the same cloth, who inspire each other. They recite revolutionary poems, invent an imaginary future in which Black people are no longer white people's stooges, their porters, Oui bwana, cannon fodder, Y'a bon Banania.</p>
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- 25 Here Black is capitalised and white in lower case, which reverses the typographical choices in the French. Our decision to capitalise the word may seem anachronistic, since it follows more contemporary norms, but we felt that it aligned with our overall goal of producing a translated text in line with norms in postcolonial fiction and theory. The capitalisation of Black has become a norm to underscore a shared ethnic and cultural identity – that this text appears to underscore through the term *nègre* – so its usage aptly fills this role in English without the overly heavy and negative connotations that other forms might take. Even if the majority of the novel is set in the first half of the 20th century, it was written (and translated) in the 21st century.
- 26 This passage also contains the expression “Y'a bon Banania”, which became a slur in France because the brand, Banania, used imaging

with a caricature of a Senegalese Tirailleur. We decided to keep the slur in French to maintain the reference, and, again, explain it in the glossary. This decision was also influenced by the logic that any anglophone brands that have similar history, like Aunt Jemima in the U.S., would be illogical to the time and place of the story. Similarly, “Oui bwana” explicitly references France’s colonial occupation of Africa, and translates roughly to “Yes, master”. We left this untranslated because “bwana” is of Swahili origin; its meaning is not necessarily understood literally by the French reader, but its use is meant to underscore this feeling of inferiority due to racism.

- 27 The following example also includes an elliptical version of the expression “Y’a bon Banania”, without the explicit mention of the brand. We kept the shortened expression intact in our translation, and adopted the same approach for the other racially-loaded terms at the end of the passage.

<p>Sur les avenues et les Grands Boulevards, on tombe encore sur des veuves en noir et ces malheureux orphelins, pupilles de la nation que la première grande guerre a semés dans sa folie. On gratifie d’un sourire ou d’une tape amicale dans le dos les gueules cassées, les poilus éclopés. On remercie d’une poignée de main les vaillants tirailleurs sénégalais coiffés de leur sempiternelle chéchia rouge. Ceux-là, les gentils « Y’a bon », ont tranché des têtes de « Boches » par milliers pour secourir la France. À peine civilisés, mais bien formés à la discipline militaire et au maniement des armes, machettes et baïonnettes, ils ont libéré la mère patrie aux côtés de l’armée française blanche et de ces autres basanés des colonies lointaines – conscrits antillais, bamboulas, bougnoules, métèques, bridés. (PINEAU, 2021, 92, our bold)</p>	<p>On the avenues and the Grands Boulevards, we still stumble upon widows dressed in black, and miserable orphans, wards of the nation that the Great War sowed in its madness. We give the maimed and crippled veterans a smile or a friendly tap on the back. We offer a handshake of thanks to the valiant Senegalese Tirailleurs, sporting their eternal red cap. They, the kind “Y’a bon”, cut off Boche heads by the thousands to serve France. Barely civilized, but well-trained in military discipline and handling weapons, machetes, and bayonets, they liberated the motherland alongside the white French army and the other tan-skinned conscripts from the Caribbean and faraway colonies who were given names like bamboulas, bougnoules, métèques, bridés...</p>
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- 28 The adjective “antillais” here is translated as Caribbean, because for most anglophone readers, Antillean does not evoke an immediate geographical reference, and “French West Indian” carries a heavier colonial connotation than “Antilles” does in French. The adjective was translated as the prepositional noun phrase “from the Caribbean” and placed earlier to allow us to present the pejorative terms in their foreign form in list-form at the end, after the added relative clause “who were given names like”, to allow for a seamless inclusion of these borrowed items, all italicised, and all included in the glossary. These

terms would be immediately recognised as slurs by a native French speaker, and have roots in French colonial history. The term “bam-boula”, for instance, is a drum used in certain African and Afrodiasporic cultures, and is also used to refer to dances or parties, as well as, pejoratively, to Senegalese Tirailleurs.

- 29 Our decision to borrow these terms corresponds to our overall desire to retain the specific connotations present in the French text, with further explanations in the glossary. The inclusion of the glossary also results in a fairly fluid translation, since explanations or additions do not interrupt the flow of the narrative or dialogue and do not shift the tone of the novel within the text. This may also have been a risk with the inclusion of footnotes, since the added information at the bottom of relevant pages and the inclusion of numbers in the text may have appeared overly academic. Rather, we wanted the explanations to act as optional additions for curious readers, and for the use of italics to indicate the availability of further information while also acting as a reminder of the multifaceted nature of Ady’s background.

Intertextual references

- 30 The novel contains a number of explicit and implicit intertextual references which further develop Ady as a well-read intellectual herself. While there are references to canonical French writers, many of the citations that inspire her come from the *négritude* and surrealist movements, and, importantly, many also come from the Caribbean. These references establish a firm franco-caribbean identity and required careful consideration in translation.
- 31 Each chapter begins with a quote or an extract from a literary work. Timothy spent a lot of time sifting through material trying to track down the versions in English, when an English-language version existed, either because it was originally in English or because there was a translation available (as is the case for Man Ray’s *Self Portrait* which was originally published in English). More well-known texts, such as those by Charles Baudelaire and François Villon, had translations available and we decided to use translations that would have been available during the time period of the text. Additionally, we used the translation by A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman for Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal*, because the text is well-

known and so is this particular translation for the text. Many of these works had not been translated at all, however, such as those by Maurice Chevalier, Léon-Gontran Damas, Paul Éluard, Thérèse Georgel, John-Antoine Nau, Saint-John Perse, and Daniel Thaly, which meant that we needed to translate them ourselves.

- 32 Two of these references included at the beginning of chapters were particularly challenging to manage in the translation. Below is a quote from Lee Miller, originally in English:

<p><i>Je sais maintenant que si je pouvais tout recommencer, Je serais encore plus libre dans ma tête, dans mon corps et dans mes sentiments. Surtout, j'essaierais de trouver un moyen de me frayer une voie dans ce silence qui s'abat sur moi dès qu'il est question de sentiments...</i> (PINEAU, 2021, 203)</p>	<p>I know, myself, now, that if I had it over again I'd be even more free with my ideas, with my body and my affection. Above all, I'd try to find some way of breaking down, through the silence which imposes itself on me in matters of sentiment.</p>
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- 33 In the French text, this quote is cited from the French translation of *The Lives of Lee Miller* by Anthony Penrose (*Les Vies de Lee Miller*, translated by Claro and published by Seuil in 1994). However, this text does not exist in the original English. Timothy wrote to the archivist, Lori Inglis Hall, at the Lee Miller Archive to find the original text from Lee Miller, who wrote back on 21 September 2023 with the full quote and context:

- 34 “The quote is from a note Lee wrote on 9th September 1947 as she awaited the imminent birth of her baby (he was born later that day). She wrote instructions for her partner Roland Penrose in the event of her death. ‘I keep saying to everyone, ‘I didn’t waste a minute, all my life – I had a wonderful time,’ but I know, myself, now, that if I had it over again I’d be even more free with my ideas, with my body and my affection. Above all, I’d try to find some way of breaking down, through the silence which imposes itself on me in matters of sentiment”.

- 35 The second is a quote from Frida Kahlo:

<p>Mon corps voudrait t'embrasser dans ton sommeil. Mon corps voudrait en pleine nuit dormir et dans ces ténèbres être réveillé parce que tu m'embrasserais. Ma nuit ne connaît pas de rêve plus beau et plus cruel Aujourd'hui que celui-là. Ma nuit hurle et déchire ses voiles, ma nuit se cogne à son propre silence, mais ton corps reste introuvable. Tu me manques tant et tant. Et tes mots. Et ta couleur. Le jour va bientôt se lever. (PINEAU, 2021, 251)</p>	<p>My body would like to kiss you in your sleep. My body would like to be sleeping in the middle of the night and in that darkness be awoken because you kissed me. My night knows no dream more beautiful nor more cruel today than this. My night screams and tears its veils, my night collides with its own silence but your body is nowhere to be found. I miss you so very much. And your words. And your color. Day will soon dawn. Frida Kahlo (our translation)</p>
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- 36 While the quote exists in *Frida Kahlo, la beauté terrible* by Gérard de Cortanze (Albin Michel, 2011), the text cited by Pineau, de Cortanze actually attributes the quote to another text: *Frida Kahlo par Frida Kahlo, lettres 1922-1954* (Éditions Christian Bourgeois, 2007). The quote does not actually appear in this text, neither in the French translation nor the original Spanish, *Escritura de Frida Kahlo* (Ampliada editions, 1999). Therefore, we decided simply to translate the text as it was cited by Gérard de Cortanze, with the attribution “quoted in Gérard de Cortanze, *Frida Kahlo. La beauté terrible* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2011), p. 123 (our translation)”.
- 37 There are also instances of songs in the text, which we mainly decided against translating, for a number of reasons. First of all, because none of these songs had been translated into English outside of text, and because Creole and English lyrics are also often included in the source text without any explanations. Secondly, these songs generally reflect Ady’s state of mind and the complex racialised experience. For example, Ma Rainey, the famous blues singer, appears in the first chapter. Here, the music genre and song “See See Rider Blues” reflects the Black American experience that had no genre equivalent in France. Finally, because these songs, in addition to their lyrical themes, are meant to also evoke tensions of language in the text which reflect Ady’s internal battle with the problem of language.
- 38 Joséphine Baker becomes a notably important figure for Ady. Baker is one of the only Black people in France to achieve fame and notoriety in the 1920s and 30s—initially and notably for playing into France’s ra-

cialised view of Black people, going on stage in skirts fashioned out of bananas and crawling across the stage in *La Revue nègre*. Her song, “J’ai deux amours”, also reflects Ady’s personal experience with being torn between two identities—for Baker, American and French; for Ady, Guadeloupean and French. We decided against translating this song because it provides no additional context to the reader. Keeping it untranslated seemed additionally worthwhile due to the fact that Baker sings it in French is in itself heavy with meaning, as she is lauded for her identity and her ability to assimilate into French culture, while native French Black people like Ady face constant discrimination. Moreover, Baker’s song in French here plays a role similar to Ma Rainey’s in the original text, where the song’s language and the words are not necessarily important, but the juxtaposition with the dominant language of the text emphasises the effect on the reader (or listener).

- 39 There is also a song in Creole, by Léona Gabriel, which we kept in the translation to maintain the opacity, given that the use of Creole in the French, once again, would not be immediately understood by the (hexagonal) French speaker. The presence of Creole also serves as an additional reminder of Ady’s Guadeloupean origins and her longing for her homeland, and the themes that the song evokes are already present in Ma Rainey’s “See See Rider Blues”: both songs deal with longing for a lover who has left them.
- 40 We did, however, translate one song, “La complainte de Violette Nozière”, because its content provides necessary context to the reader. Violette Nozière became an important figure for the surrealist movement to underscore the French government’s hypocrisy with regard to colonisation, and the governmental corruption that contributed to the recession in France. The song explains the crimes with which Violette Nozière had been charged.

<p>Elle empoisonna ses parents La lâche Violette Nozière Se riant de leur calvaire Pour leur soutirer de l'argent [...] Cette gueuse vagabonde A commis ce crime monstrueux Pour aller faire la noce Danser, boire, changer d'amis Roulait déjà, fille précoce Dans les hôtels et boîtes de nuit... (PINEAU, 2021, 45)</p>	<p>She poisoned her parents The cowardly Violette Nozière Laughed at their suffering To squeeze money out of them [...] Vagabond wench She committed this monstrous crime So she could hit the town, Dance, drink, make new friends. Already getting around, precocious girl In hotels and nightclubs...</p>
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- 41 When it came to the poetry present in the novel, if there was no existing translation, we translated the passages ourselves, except for four of the more complex poems. Here, we enlisted the help of the Haitian poet and scholar, Mehdi Étienne Chalmers, as he has experience in both writing and translating poetry. Chalmers translated the poems “Des nuages dans les mains” (Paul Éluard and Man Ray), “Le jardin des Tropiques” (Daniel Thaly), “S.O.S.” (Léon-Gontran Damas), and “La complainte du nègre” (Damas).
- 42 In terms of the more implicit references present in the novel, in certain cases, we kept the French because it was a reference to a work that had no translation in English. For example, Paul Éluard and Man Ray’s *Les Mains libres* has never been officially translated. As stated above, this forced us to translate certain poems cited from this collection that were referenced throughout the text. However, in some instances, as in the example below, it is not an explicit citation – which we would translate – but the narrator uses the turn of phrase only to evoke the work in the minds of the reader.

<p>Au fait des dernières tendances de la mode parisienne, les avant-gardistes noires et blanches arborent des coupes courtes au carré, ou bien des mèches sculptées, ondulées et crantées, plaquées sur le front comme une œuvre d'art, des accroche-cœurs sur la tempe. [...] D'un coup d'œil assassin, elles se jaugent les unes les autres. Et puis, elles se font des compliments ponctués de grands faux sourires. Des masques de poix sur leurs visages poudrés. (PINEAU, 2021, 76, our bold)</p>	<p>Their finger on the pulse of the latest Parisian trends, Black and white avant-gardists sport short bob cuts, or sculpted, wavy and notched locks, plastered to their forehead like a work of art with spit curls on their temples. [...] They size each other up with murderous glances. And then pay each other compliments, interspersed with big fake smiles. Masques de poix on their powdered faces.</p>
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- 43 The term “masques de poix” here is a reference to a line of the poem “Narcisse” by Paul Eluard which appears in the collection *Les Mains libres*, accompanied by a drawing by Man Ray. In instances such as

this, a translation of the expression would make it impossible for anyone to know that it is meant to evoke another person, piece of literature, or imagery, especially because this poem is never explicitly cited anywhere else in the text. We thus left the term untranslated, italicising it and providing an explanation of the reference in the glossary.

Concluding remarks

44 Even in their native French, Caribbean novels are more inherently complex. They contain words, references, and turns of phrases that can be prohibitive to their publication, because publishers of novels in French are mostly based in Paris and evidently strive to produce texts that will appeal to “de souche” readers. The vast number of cultural, linguistic, geographic, racial, and intertextual references in *Ady, soleil noir* contribute to forging an image of a complex, multifaceted individual. Overall, our translation seeks to bring this complexity to the fore, creating layers of language and meaning that stress Adrienne Fidelin’s Parisian-Guadeloupean-artistic identity and reflect Pineau’s own success in publishing while remaining true to her (and *Ady*’s) Caribbean origins. We have built on Pineau’s aims of bringing *Ady* out of the shadows, with decisions that grapple with the challenges of reproducing linguistic and cultural tension in another language. Together, we navigated the process of co-translation through trial and error, identifying and recognising our individual strengths and weaknesses to produce a version of the novel in English that we believed did justice to Pineau’s endeavours. The informative function of historical fiction is augmented in our translation, through our typographical choices, the more explicit presence of Creole, and the inclusion of a glossary. Our decisions are collaborative, the result of countless drafts, discussions, and negotiations, but they are our own. Conveying complexity is complex. The final product matches our aims and skills, while remaining a necessarily subjective reproduction of a work of art.

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