“MILITANT OR MODERATE?”

ABD AL MALIK’S LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FRENCH *BANLIEUE*”

BLANCHARD, REBECCA.

Candidate à la maîtrise en langue et littérature françaises à l’Université de Toronto.

Abstract: Critics have argued that popular French rapper Abd al Malik’s musical production at times seems to support assimilationist policies. Through an examination of his recent literary texts *Qu’Allah bénisse la France* (2004) and *La guerre des banlieues n’aura pas lieu* (2009), this paper argues that his literature presents a more aggressive stance than his more mainstream music. With a focus on narrative form and Malik’s use of subversive language, this study examines how the author integrates a criticism of the French government and deconstructs pervasive stereotypes of the French *banlieue*. While dissenting with the status quo, Malik ultimately allows the unresolved tensions his characters experience to elucidate readers on the current challenges faced by French youth rather than explicitly outlining an ideological course for the refashioning of French national identity currently under way.

Keywords: Abd al Malik, French *banlieues*, *banlieue* literature, identity, alterity

Résumé: Certaines critiques affirment que la production musicale du rapper populaire français Abd Al Malik semble parfois soutenir les politiques assimilationnistes. À travers une analyse de ses textes littéraires récents *Qu’Allah bénisse la France* (2004) et *La guerre des banlieues n’aura pas lieu* (2009), cet article démontre que l’œuvre littéraire d’Abd Al malik présente en fait une posture plus agressive que sa musique populaire. En se concentrant sur la forme narrative et sur l’utilisation subversive, faite par Malik, du langage, cette étude montre comment l’auteur intègre une critique du gouvernement français et déconstruit des stéréotypes tenaces relatifs à la banlieue française. Tout en remettant en question le statu quo, Malik – ne serait-ce qu’en présentant, dans ses œuvres, des tensions non résolues entre ses personnages – en arrive ultimement à expliquer aux lecteurs les enjeux auxquels doit faire face la jeunesse française au lieu d’explicitement d’un discours idéologique en faveur de la refonte de l’identité nationale française (laquelle est d’ailleurs en cours en ce moment).

Mots-clés: Abd Al Malik, banlieues françaises, littérature de la banlieue, identité, altérité

Si l'on arrive à pacifier l'être,
à résoudre cette crise intérieure,
à combler ce vide essentiel,
on aura les outils au-dedans pour
que le changement se fasse au-dehors.
Brandir la littérature comme on brandirait un fusil
et tirer en l'air : PAN! J'ai votre attention ?

Abd al Malik,
La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu

Following recurring civil unrest in the French *banlieue*, recent scholarship has increasingly concentrated on popular culture emerging from these underprivileged peripheries of French cities. Hailing from the *banlieue* of Strasbourg, hip-hop artist Abd al Malik has subsequently experienced a noteworthy rise in popularity. More recently, however, Malik has been portrayed by the media as a rapper who is just not only tolerant but even sympathetic to assimilationist governmental policies¹.

This has set him apart from other rap artists who are generally represented as far more provocative and even aggressive in their political positions. By contrast, in his memoir *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!* (2004) and his recent semi-autobiographical novella *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu* (2009), Malik offers sharp and more pointed criticism of the French government and its role in producing essentialized stereotypes on the *banlieue*. While Abd al Malik does not explicitly outline a political course for the current refashioning of French national identity already under way, he allows the unresolved tensions and incongruities his characters experience to inform his readers on the inherent challenges of integration. In his literary works, he voices dissent with the status quo, offering incisive and often biting commentary on the systematic exclusion prevalent in these regions, primarily highlighted through a careful use of narrative form and a cautiously subversive use of language. Rather than offering specific political counsel, Malik argues in favour of mutual understanding founded in love and justice, a form of radicalism deemed subtle and far too easily dismissed as passive compliance. This position has differentiated him from other rappers emerging from the *banlieue* who often focus on the oppressive, dehumanizing conditions and call for a complete overhaul of French republican values.

Despite scholarship on his musical endeavours and media, little scholarly study of Malik's literary production has been undertaken. This paper seeks to fill that gap by providing an examination of Malik's treatment of the *banlieue*, particularly how his literary output addresses the pervasive institutional and sociocultural ambiguities that plague struggling youth seeking to reconcile their immigrant identities with French republicanism.

1. See recent articles by Stéphanie Binet in *Libération* for examples of how the media has attenuated Malik's criticisms of the French government. Instead, he has been presented as an idealized French rapper who embodies French republican values.

Abd al Malik's rise in popularity can be attributed to a number of factors. He entered the spotlight following a period of increased focus on the *banlieue* due to the impending presidential election. In addition, the rise of urban violence in the *banlieue*, following the riots of 2005, 2007 and 2010, also focused media attention on these urban peripheries. The *banlieue*, defined as neighbourhoods of poor-quality social housing, located on the peripheries of French cities, that are inhabited predominantly by immigrant and other disadvantaged populations, have since been increasingly cast as "an explosive cocktail of unemployment, poor housing, racial discrimination and lawlessness" (Hargreaves, 1999: 117). This space has also become strongly associated with growing tensions between secularist French republicans and Islamic immigrant communities.

Despite the predominance of oversimplified media images and discourses, cultural critics have increasingly recognized that this ideological vision of the *banlieue* is distorted. Mireille Rosello, for instance, argues that *banlieue* stereotyping enables the reduction of all immigrants to "the menacing silhouette of armed young male delinquents" (Rosello, 2000: 240). Postcolonial scholars have also increasingly critiqued the media stereotypes projected on to the *banlieue*. Achille Mbembe, for example, compares the discriminatory treatment of French citizens of African descent to the racist hierarchies established in French colonies (Mbembe, 2009: 55). In a similar vein, Didier Gondola has argued that residual colonial attitudes in contemporary France have created analogous models of exploitation in contemporary *banlieues* (Gondola, 2009: 147). These scholars claim that social structures in the *banlieue* re-enact the racial and ethnic conflicts of postcolonial Africa.

This critical awakening has also inspired its equivalents in contemporary French literary production. A variety of writers from the *banlieue* have attempted to present unprejudiced depictions of life in the French *cités* by examining the pervasive social problems of the *banlieues*. Abd al Malik, amongst a growing number of French hip-hop artists, makes use of his position to give an account of his experiences growing up as part of the underprivileged minority in France. Both the music and literature emerging from these communities focus on how individuals must navigate multiple identities in a variety of urban spaces in order to survive day-to-day life in this alienating environment. French rap music has also become extremely politicized. Just as much of Afro-American hip-hop music was originally quite political, much of the rap music being produced in France seems to harken back to this American tradition. Rap music has become recognized for "affirming the multiethnic composition of France's population and of articulating a vision of identity that both recognizes and valorizes diversity" (Oscherwitz, 2004: 45). These artists voice dissent against the oppressive and exclusionary French state and often unequivocally express the need for a pluralistic society.

Although Abd al Malik is perceived as a typical product of this tradition, he has been subject to very mixed reception in the media, particularly with reference to his views on the need for a new multicultural and polyvalent French identity. In his recent article "A 'Picture-Perfect' Banlieue Artist: Abd Al Malik or the Perils of a Conciliatory Rap Discourse", Olivier Bourderionnet outlines the reasons for Malik's complex relationship with the media and music industry and proposes that he has simply replaced older rap music clichés with new ones, a move which indicates "an increa-

singly incestuous relationship between political power, the press, the music industry and the artist" (Bourderionnet, 2011: 151-152). Bourderionnet presents a convincing case that Abd al Malik's rap music is fashioned, and even highly constructed, to reflect industry needs which results in its overly conciliatory sentiment. In his words, Malik's music is at best "gently subversive" (Bourderionnet, 2011: 151). Even more harmful, according to Bourderionnet, is the manner in which the media has hijacked this artist and turned him into a "model for integration" (Bourderionnet, 2011: 158). What is of particular interest is that Abd al Malik's literary endeavours present quite a different image of an engaged and political artist. In his recently published books, Malik more strongly condemns the discriminatory practices of the French state and of French society.

In the prologue to *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu*, Malik employs violent and harsh language, highlighted by staccato wording, capitalization of entire sentences, and an almost excessive use of punctuation, which creates a literary atmosphere in which the author's rage is palpable. The following sentence is repeated on three separate pages: "VOILÀ DE QUOI JE PARLE!" (Malik, 2011: 20, 22, 23). The repetition of this sentence intensifies the disenchantment and anger being expressed by the text. This sentence also emphasizes Malik's desire to have his voice heard. Declarative sentences splash the pages with condemnations such as: "C'est la République qui orchestre la concordance des différences" (Malik, 2011: 164). From the opening pages of this short text, it becomes clear that Malik's criticism of the French state is far more present and tangible than what is presented in his music.

This begs the question, without a doubt, of genre. Does the medium of autobiography or novella simply provide more space to present a critique and justification than a song lasting but a few minutes, primarily intended for radio play and mass consumption? Literature is in many ways less commercialized than the music industry and does not adhere as strictly to archetypal commercial models. Bourderionnet highlights the influence of an increasingly conservative and elite-run music and media industry, which continues to have an impact on allowable artistic expression (Bourderionnet, 2011: 156). This reality only further stresses the need to examine Malik's artistic expression as a whole. In fact, Malik is just one of a growing category of rapper-novelists emerging from the *banlieue*. Further comparative study of these individuals' literary and musical endeavours is thus required to develop a more comprehensive understanding of their position as cultural brokers².

MALIK'S BANLIEUE : A SUBVERSIVE PORTRAYAL OF URBAN LIFE

Abd al Malik's solo career debut was marked by the release of *Le Face à face des cœurs* in 2004, which coincided with the publication of his autobiographical text *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!* In this work, Malik reflects on his experience as a troubled youth growing up in a banlieue and his eventual conversion to Islam. He recounts his experience as a youth leading a double life, that of a successful student by day and petty criminal by night. Malik openly discusses dealing drugs and stealing wallets, all the while excelling at school. In a search for spirituality during his adolescence, Malik describes his brief encounter with Islamic fundamentalism and how he came to embrace

2. See Insa Sané, *Sarcelles-Dakar* (Paris: Sarbacane, 2006); Oxmo Puccino, *Mines de crystal* (Paris: Au Diable Vauvert, 2009); Disiz, *René* (Paris: Denoël, 2012).

Sufism. Despite economic hardship and difficult living conditions, it is interesting to note that Malik does not at any point present himself as a victim and speaks of the French school system and the French republican ideal almost reverentially at times. This is a departure from the emblematic figure of the violent and uneducated *banlieusard* as portrayed by the French news media. This also represents a departure from earlier *beur* immigrant literature, in which the French educational system is represented far more ambiguously as a space that reinforces assimilationist policies³. Not surprisingly, Malik's largely positive representation of this French institution has led to further questioning of his role as a so-called radical figure in French popular culture.

Malik further expounds on the need to deconstruct stereotypes on the *banlieue* in his semi-autobiographical novella *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu*, which he characterizes as "un conte réaliste d'une expérience vécue" (Malik, 2011: 23). In this fictionalized tale, Malik presents two young men whose lives are diametrically opposed. Peggy, who becomes Suleyman following his conversion to Islam, is representative of Malik himself, while Thomas Miniard, a blue-eyed, fair-haired Frenchman, struggles with racism but embraces Islam as well. The parallels between the stories of these superficially contrary characters are undeniable. Both characters also express their disconcertedness with modernity, as they struggle in a world where the individual is prized over the community. In this text, Malik explicitly advocates for a return to spirituality, which he feels has eroded in recent years. He also uses this story of two seemingly unremarkable young men to demonstrate how the *banlieue* can be viewed as a microcosm of the world. He argues that through love and understanding, balance can be restored in a society that is perpetually unbalanced due to heightened racism, materialism and overconsumption. While his music is open to varying interpretations, his literary texts critique the existing system of French values.

Malik's texts reveal their truly subversive agenda through the variety of paratextual and structural clues that colour the works. The underlying morals of the texts become evident as both are presented chronologically, highlighting each protagonist's journey to spiritual awakening. In *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!*, Malik opens the memoir with an explicit warning to his reader, stating: "Certaines personnes ont pu se sentir heurtées par quelques-uns des propos tenus sur eux dans ce livre et je tiens à m'en excuser sincèrement. Mais il s'agit de mon histoire de vie: je me devais de raconter" (Malik, 2004). The use of the verb *devoir* in these opening lines, evocative of a moral obligation, sets the tone for the narrative to follow.

This warning also inserts Malik's narrative into the tradition of autobiographical writing as it emphasizes the subjective and authentic qualities of his narrative. In *Le pacte autobiographique*, Philippe Lejeune defines the autobiographical genre by its "contractual" obligations (Lejeune, 1975: 44). This pact allows the reader to verify the authenticity of the narrative and to know that it mirrors or is at least similar to the author's reality and the events that took place. This quasi-judicial pact thus implies also that the reader can contest a narrative's authenticity, while still leaving place for the author to present their reality subjectively (Lejeune, 1975: 26). It is through this dialectical relationship that the autobiography differs from other literary genres. There has been an increasing tendency to devalorize literature emerging from the *banlieue* by labelling it reductively as popular or young adult fiction that is entertaining, but not serious. By inserting his narrative into the realm

3. See Azouz Begag, *Le gone du Chaâba* (Paris: Seuil, 1986).

of self-writing, he avoids having his work labelled simply as *banlieue* literature by tying it to a larger tradition. As the recipient of an autobiographical text, the reader is then positioned differently and Malik complicates the reception of his text.

Entitled “L’auteur annonce la couleur et le récit qui va suivre,” the preface to *La guerre des banlieues n’aura pas lieu* functions in a similar manner by destabilizing the readers’ expectations from the outset of the text. Readers are again forewarned that the following story might be difficult to swallow. The literary effect is two-fold. First, these paratextual elements increase the authenticity of the authorial voices of the texts. By extension, they also add legitimacy to the recommendations provided by the narrator for improving the *banlieue*. In this fictional account, he is far more scathing and far more penetrating with his criticisms of the government. One need only consider the epigraph to this text, which indicates that the music for the book is Sam Cooke’s “A Change is Gonna Come”. This song came to be emblematic of the American Civil Rights Movement and reference to it in Malik’s text functions to highlight a similar desire for change in France.

As indicated earlier, Malik also has a tendency to emphasize the larger, universal context of his literature. As he writes in *La guerre des banlieues n’aura pas lieu*:

Je parle de donner une âme au village global.

Donc, si je parle de moi, je parle de ma cité.

Et si je parle de ma cité, je parle de la France.

Et si je parle de la France, je parle de l’Europe.

Et si je parle de l’Europe, je parle de l’Afrique.

Et si je parle de l’Afrique, je parle du monde.

C’est parce que ce qui est vrai pour un être est vrai pour un pays.

Et ce qui est vrai pour un pays est vrai pour l’Humanité. (Malik, 2011: 161-162)

Malik suggests that any situation of marginalization faced by an individual in one country applies to oppression experienced worldwide. This notion is similar to that expressed by Jean-Loup Amselle:

Africa must be conceived of as a deterritorialized entity. As a floating signifier, Africa is a concept with a variable geometry that belongs as much to the French *banlieues* as it does to North American ghettos, to Brazilian favelas and African villages... The Africa-concept belongs to all those who choose to take hold of it, to connect to it. (Amselle, 2001: 15)

Malik echoes this sentiment in the preface to *La guerre des banlieues n’aura pas lieu* when he states: “Je ne parle pas que de mon quartier, je parle du futur de mon pays. Et j’aurais pu parler de la même manière des *projects* aux États-Unis, des *favelas* au Brésil ou des *townships* en Afrique du Sud” (Malik, 2011: 22). Whether consciously or unconsciously borrowing from Amselle, Malik emphasizes the declining role regional specificity plays in oppression and marginalization. Therefore, rather than emphasizing difference, he prefers to emphasize similarities among oppressed populations across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

It is worth noting that Malik accomplishes his project differently in his two literary texts. In *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!*, Malik expresses a desire to insert his story into a larger universal discourse against marginalization towards the end of his narrative, in a section entitled "En chemin vers l'Autre." In many ways, the section diverges from what comes before, particularly as the narrator leaves the space of the *banlieue*. Reminiscing about a trip to Krakow, Malik remarks: "La Shoah, le génocide le plus terrifiant par son ampleur industrielle et la modernité des usines de mort, a beau n'avoir touché qu'une fraction définie de l'humanité, elle concerne tous les hommes sans exception et au même degré" (Malik, 2004: 182). A similar feeling is expressed in the preface to *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu*, in which he presents his intention of positioning himself as a member of the global community more explicitly. By rendering suffering of any kind a global issue, he attempts to bring the issue of the French *banlieue*, an issue located on the periphery, to the forefront of discussion.

In *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu*, the need for change is explicitly stated from the beginning and further reiterated in the final section. It is curious that Malik is far less restrained in the outlining of his political position as well as in his criticism of the French state in this second text. Timing offers some explanation, suggesting he became more established after the release of albums in 2006 and 2008 and following the publication of *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!*. This rise in popularity potentially provided him with more freedom to speak his mind, though this does not seem to sufficiently account for such a shift in tone between his two literary works. It is also possible that Malik felt more at liberty to criticize governmental policy through the fictional character of Suleyman, an avatar of Malik himself, rather than within an autobiographical framework where thoughts and opinions expressed would be automatically attributed to him.

Malik also structures his literary works to juxtapose contrasting elements of his protagonists' daily lives throughout the narrative. Petty crimes and every day banalities are contrasted with moments of spiritual revelation as his autobiographical self and other characters constantly engage in a quest for identity. In *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!*, this opposition is often spatial. The *banlieue*, characterized by criminality and prison metaphors, is contrasted with school and the importance Malik places on his education. While he associates with gang members, drug dealers and thieves, others like Seneca, Thucydides, Albert Camus, George Orwell, Aldous Huxley and Aimé Césaire also enrich his life (Malik, 2004: 56). The inclusion of such a wide variety of intertextual references highlights the diversity in his education and subtly deconstructs the essentialist notion of the uneducated, cultureless youth living in the *banlieue*.

At first glance, the physical space of the *banlieue* can appear to be presented by Malik in a traditional, even stereotypical manner. The space is characterized by violence, instability and absent fathers. Nevertheless, Malik often emphasizes the sense of brotherhood that life in the *banlieue* inevitably creates among youth. In *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!*, Malik describes this sense of community almost as a leftover from his childhood in his native Africa, which was marked by stability and respect for one's elders (Malik, 2004: 13). When describing his mother, he shows the way in which she created a community for herself in an attempt to combat feelings of exclusion and ostracism. In many ways, her struggle to build a community represents a form of non-violent resistance that undoubtedly influences his worldview as well.

One particularly provocative section of his autobiographical text focuses on his experiences with Islamic fundamentalism during his youth. He does not avoid detailed descriptions of proselytizing, even though he came to later dislike many elements of his first encounters with Islam. He nevertheless chooses to diverge from the status quo and details his own experiences. For instance, he describes the way he and his peers attempted to convert the youth in their neighbourhood, even though certain readers could find such a discussion somewhat inflammatory. He also writes with particular sincerity when describing how fundamentalist Islam still provided him with guidance during one of the most difficult periods of his youth. In describing his shifting epistemological convictions frankly, he avoids commonplace observations on life in the *banlieue*.

When describing his education, for instance, one might expect him to comment on racism and discrimination. Instead, he mentions that he did very well academically and he emphasizes that it was not because he was the only African student in the school, and therefore somehow coddled. In fact, it was simply that he had a love of learning, instilled in him by his father at an early age (Malik, 2004: 23). At times seeming to almost evacuate race from the question, it is unsurprising that he has come under fire for lacking the racialized political aggression of his fellow rappers⁴. The argument could also be made that by attempting to move past questions of race, Malik focuses more on economic and social hardship and the resultant challenges⁵.

In *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu*, spatial tensions are also made more concrete as Malik uses dictionary-style definitions to demarcate different urban spaces that his characters are forced to navigate. For instance, he uses the space of the *banlieue* to critique the stereotypes presented by the politico-media complex. He explains that the archetypes advanced in popular discourse of violent gang members that supposedly populate the *banlieue* are actually few and far between (Malik, 2011: 34). Malik also does not limit this use of definition to space, but includes definitions of racism (Malik, 2011: 61) and Islam (Malik, 2011: 71), amongst others. These definitions show the social constructedness of many of these terms. The literary entanglement Malik creates by interweaving revisionist definitions, photographs and passages from the Koran therefore modulates people's expectations. Various photographs are also included in the text, which destabilize the reader's expectations. This formal hybridity mirrors the cultural hybridity that defines the French *banlieue* and allows Malik to present a more realistic and lifelike portrayal of these troubled neighbourhoods.

The hybrid language employed by the author also becomes representative of the internal identity conflicts experienced by his characters. *Banlieue* French is often used as a mean of asserting one's membership in a social community at the expense of those who do not belong. According to Pierre Bourdieu, communication and linguistic exchange also display the symbolic power relations between groups (Bourdieu, 1982: 14). Consequently, the language Malik uses is raw and often breaks with traditional French. This language, specific to the *banlieue*, allows him to shamelessly express the malaise of life in the *cit*. In both works, Malik uses street slang intermingled

4. Malik could also be criticized for his lack of commentary on gender and the *banlieue*. This remains typical of traditional rap, a genre that rarely problematizes gender. Although this is lacking in Malik's work, there has been an increase in narratives that examine the female experience in the *banlieue*. For examples of this growing category, see Faza Gune's *Kiffe kiffe demain* (Paris: Fayard, 2004) and Habiba Mahany's *Kiffer sa race* (Paris: J.C. Latts, 2008).

5. Malik's focus on socioeconomic questions mirrors Malcolm X's progression later in life. Malik does remark that Malcolm X influenced him in *Qu'Allah bnisse la France!* and the parallels in their writings merits closer examination.

with elegant descriptive passages to represent the intrinsic duality of *banlieue* existence. There are contrasting images of youth sniffing glue, drug overdose, spiritual revelation and the transformative power of art presented in rapid succession in his text, coupled with the instability of the language he employs.

In *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu*, footnotes are also used to define certain words to his readers. For instance, Malik defines the word *happs* in a footnote, which highlights its North African origin and common usage in the *banlieue* as a synonym for "prison" (Malik, 2011: 28). The use of non-standard language ultimately disrupts the reader's expectations. Language is also used as a marker of alterity in certain instances. While a French reader may live in the same city as the characters in this text, their realities are divergent to the point that a different language is employed in these neighbouring spaces. Malik thus rejects standardized French by integrating words from other languages and by using *verlanisation* (word inversion). This aesthetic tendency, common to many writers from the *banlieue*, demonstrates how language can ultimately function as a rejection of cultural heterogeneity.

ABD AL MALIK, A FIGURE OF NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE IN BANLIEUE LITERATURE

Although so many of the friends Malik describes fall victim to the volatility of the *banlieue* and end up overdosing on drugs or wasting away in prison, Malik still does not argue in favour of the explicit implementation of education programs, drug task forces or an increased police presence in the *banlieue*. Nevertheless, the Manichean existence he presents speaks far louder than any such tired recommendations could. As his characters oscillate between vice and virtue, between scenes of resignation and abject despair, Malik advocates in favour of mutual understanding and love. He tempers the gloom of the *banlieue* with moments of hope and possibility, which highlight his true objective: creating a world where literature and art serve as tools to achieve mutual understanding and, ultimately, peace (Malik, 2011: 166).

The literature of Abd al Malik ultimately reveals a writer from the *banlieue* who is using a variety of art forms to create a space for non-violent resistance. Malik merits further study as he falls into a new category of writers that "challenge literary historiography as it has been practiced up until now through their very position at the intersection of several geographic and intellectual territorialities" (Moudileno, 2000: 10). This boundary crossing is exemplified by Malik's non-traditional use of narrative structure and language. While *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!* is innovative largely in its treatment of difficult and complex subject matter, *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu* is even more particular. Malik does not simply interweave essayistic and anecdotal autobiographical writing; he also employs shifting narrative perspectives, fragmented imagery, slam poetry, lists, definitions, photos and even letters to create a complex but cohesive narrative fabric. When Dominic Thomas posits that the African diaspora in France is producing a new form of writing characterized by a multiplicity of national and ethnic differences and the transnational character of their experiences, one could consider that Malik falls into this category of writers (Thomas, 2007: 16). By examining Malik's literary production, we have complicated the portrait of this artist who is often recognized solely for his musical output.

As the number of writers emerging from the *banlieue* rises, further examination of how these novels deconstruct essentialist stereotypes is required. Further study will also allow perceptions of this literature to be rehabilitated. While it is true that *banlieue* literature is emerging from the peripheries of the French urban landscape, it should not be relegated to the margins of French literature because it offers a reservoir of individual experiences that directly address the efficacy of social and urban policies. This literature is also emblematic of a new form of diasporic writing that can crucially contribute to our understanding of marginalized individuals living in urban spaces of social and economic relegation worldwide.

- Amselle, Jean-Loup. *Branchements : Anthropologie de l'universalité des cultures*. Paris: Flammarion, 2001. Print.
- Begag, Azouz. *Le gone du Chaâba*. Paris: Seuil, 1986.
- Binet, Stephanie. "Quand les rappeurs font de l'incitation civique." *Libération*. 7 April 2007. Web. 22 August 2014.
- . "Bien sous tout rappeurs." *Libération*. 1 November 2006. Web. 22 August 2014.
- Bourderionnet, Olivier. "A 'Picture-Perfect' Banlieue Artist: Abd Al Malik or the Perils of a Conciliatory Rap Discourse." *French Cultural Studies* 22.2 (2011): 151-161. Print.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Ce que parler veut dire*. Paris: Fayard, 1982. Print.
- Disiz. *René*. Paris: Denoël, 2012.
- Gondola, Didier. "Transient Citizens: The Othering and Indigenization of *Blacks* and *Beurs* within the French Republic." *Frenchness and the Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*. Eds. Charles Tshimanga, Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009. 146-165. Print.
- Guène, Faïza. *Kiffe kiffe demain*. Paris: Fayard, 2004.
- Hargreaves, Alec G. "No Escape? From 'cinéma beur' to the 'cinéma de la banlieue.'" *Les enfants de l'immigration*. Ed. Ernstpeter Ruhe. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999. 115-28. Print.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *Le pacte autobiographique*. Paris: Seuil, 1975. Print.
- Malik, Abd al. *La guerre des banlieues n'aura pas lieu*. Paris: Seuil, 2011. Print.
- . *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2004. Print.
- Mahany, Habiba. *Kiffer sa race*. Paris: J.C. Lattès, 2008.
- Mbembe, Achille. "Figures of Multiplicity: Can France Reinvent Its Identity?" *Frenchness and the Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*. Eds. Charles Tshimanga, Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009. 55-68. Print.
- Moudileno, Lydie. "Littérature et postcolonie." *Africultures* 26 (2000): 9-13. Print.
- Oscherwitz, Dayna. "Pop Goes the Banlieue: Musical *Métissage* and the Articulation of a Multiculturalist Vision." *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 8.1 (2004): 43-50. Print.
- Puccino, Oxmo. *Mines de crystal*. Paris: Au Diable Vauvert, 2009.

- Rosello, Mireille. "North African Women and the Ideology of Modernization: From *bidonvilles* to *cités de transit* and HLM." *Post-colonial Cultures in France*. Eds. Alec Hargreaves and Mark McKinney. London: Routledge, 2000. 240-54. Print.
- Sané, Insa. *Sarcelles-Dakar*. Paris: Sarbacane, 2006.
- Thomas, Dominic. *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2007. Print.