

“We Were but Women, Real Pioneers:” *La Dépêche africaine*, *La Revue du Monde Noir*, and the Women-Centered Origins of the Négritude Movement

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Abstract

Following the First World War, black people from Africa, the Antilles, and the United States converged in Paris. Deeply influenced by the Harlem Renaissance, the Négritude Movement emerged during this period. A literary, cultural, and political movement by intellectuals from the Antilles and Francophone Africa, Négritude celebrated African culture and history and employed the French language as a revolutionary tool. A male-centered historiography, past studies on Négritude credit Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Léopold Senghor with the movement’s founding. Women of color who contributed to the movement are often overlooked. However, recent work by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Brent Hayes Edwards, Jennifer Boittin, and other scholars have begun to explore women’s roles in the formation of the movement, emphasizing the accomplishments of the Martinican Nardal sisters. The purpose of this research is to examine Black women’s contributions—particularly the Nardals—in two interwar publications, *La Dépêche africaine* (The African Dispatch) and *La Revue du Monde Noir* (The Review of the Black World). At both journals, women of color established transnational connections, explored their intersecting identities as black women, and established a feminine conceptualization of the Négritude Movement.

Keywords: Négritude, Diaspora, Nardals

1. Introduction

Martinican author Roberte Horthe wrote the short story “Histoire sans importance” for the black diasporic publication *La Revue du Monde Noir*.¹ Horthe’s narrative followed Lea, an Antillean woman, who moved to Paris to pursue an education. At the end of the piece, Horthe concluded:

In this country, she will never be a woman like the others, with a right to a woman’s happiness, because she will never be able to blot out, for the others the absurdity of her soul fashioned by Occidental culture but concealed by an objectionable skin. She sighed; she had only overlooked one little fact, a thing of no importance, the simple irony of her mixed blood.²

Horthe’s story addressed race, gender, and Western culture. Although Lea attended a university in the metropole, she faced racism and fetishization by French society. Not seen as a respectable woman, but as a “doll to be proudly exhibited to guests, a strange fruit that flattered the taste of the discoverer,” Lea’s experience abroad centered on “a thing of no importance, the simple irony of her mixed blood.”³ “Histoire sans importance” is an example of the woman-centered writing found in *La Revue du Monde Noir* and in another interwar publication, *La Dépêche africaine*. Martinican and African American women played an active role at both publications. Their writings, particularly those by the Martinican Nardal sisters, established connections across the Black diaspora, explored their intersecting identities as women of color, and established a feminine conceptualization of the Négritude Movement.

2. Brief Literature Review

Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor, and Léon Damas often receive credit for the founding of the Négritude Movement. Lilyan Kesetloot's work, *Black Writers in French: A Literary History of Négritude*, for instance, examines the lives and poetry of Césaire, Senghor, and Damas. The first comprehensive study of the Négritude Movement, Kesetloot's book evaluates the origins of the movement through the 1960s, using interviews with the triumvirate. *Black Writers in French*, however, overlooks women's contributions to the founding of the movement.⁴

Césaire, Damas, and Senghor founded *L'Étudiant noir*, a journal established by students from the Antilles and Francophone Africa, during the interwar period in Paris. Césaire coined the term *négritude* in the Parisian publication in 1935.⁵ The burgeoning literary, political, and social movement espoused pride in blackness, African cultures, and displayed anti-assimilationist sentiments. Additionally, the Négritude poets employed the French language, using it as a revolutionary tool, and re-appropriated the pejorative *nègre* to empower people of color from the Antilles living in the metropole.⁶ Césaire explained the use of the French language and literature in an interview when he stated:

I don't deny French influences myself. Whether I want to or not, as a poet I express myself in French, and clearly French literature has influenced me. But I want to emphasize very strongly that while using as a point of departure the elements that French literature gave me at the same time, I have always striven to create a new language, one capable of communicating the African heritage. In other words, for me French was a tool that I wanted to use in developing a new means of expression. I wanted to create an Antillean French, a black French that, while still being French, had a black character.⁷

Since the early 2000s, a growing number of historians have examined the role that Black women intellectuals played in the establishment of the Négritude Movement. These scholars include T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Jennifer Boittin, and Brent Hayes Edwards.⁸ In 2003, Sharpley-Whiting wrote the only full-length study concerning the Nardal sisters and the Négritude Movement. In *Négritude Women*, Sharpley-Whiting provides a woman-centered analysis of the origins of the movement. Boittin contributed to the scholarship about the Nardals with her book, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris*. Edwards's chapter in *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Diaspora, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* also provides insight on the positioning of women in the movement.

In *Colonial Metropolis*, Boittin describes Paris as a "colonial space," where people of color, white feminists, and anti-imperialists converged, sharing similar interests in dismantling French colonialism.⁹ Boittin argues that the journal *La Dépêche africaine* represented a way for women contributors to cross race, class, and gender lines. Boittin contends that Paulette Nardal facilitated networking between activists while working at *La Dépêche africaine*. In his chapter about the Nardals, Edwards argues that they conceptualized a feminist incarnation of Négritude. Emphasizing Paulette Nardal's role in the formation of the Négritude Movement, Edwards asserts, "Paulette Nardal became the most important connection between the 'Harlem Renaissance' writers and the Francophone university students."¹⁰ He also states that the Nardals' work "became the core of the Négritude Movement."¹¹ My research adds to this scholarship by further examining the distinct experiences of women and men of color in the metropole during the interwar period, by exploring the writings of Black women in *La Dépêche africaine* and *La Revue du Monde Noir*, and by analyzing the transnational and gendered activities at the Clamart salon.

3. Background: The Nardal Sisters

Born in François, Martinique, the Nardal sisters grew up in a household with parents who valued education. Fortunately for the sisters, their parents' passion for learning extended to their seven girls. Educated by the French colonial system, the sisters' father, Paul Nardal, attended school in France where he studied construction engineering. Nardal worked for the colonial government at the Department of Health and Bridges, as the first Black engineer in Martinique.¹² Prominent Francophone author Joseph Zobel described Paul Nardal's position in Martinican society and his role as a patriarch in his family. Zobel observed, "Mr. Nardal was the only man of the family. A type of tribal chief or lord, whose powers radiated only on his wife and his seven daughters, and whose prestige extended well beyond the city."¹³

Although the Nardal family occupied a position in the upper stratum of Martinican society, their privilege remained relative. Living under French colonial rule, the Nardals dealt with issues of racism and colorism. Discussing her

father's place in the racial and social hierarchy of Martinique, Paulette Nardal recalled in an interview, "It is said that if he would have been a mulatto the government probably would have appointed him; but being a pure Negro, they considered it bad policy for him to hold such a position."¹⁴ The Nardal sisters' class status in Martinique shaped their experiences in the metropole and their writings in *La Dépêche africaine* and *La Revue du Monde Noir*. Paulette Nardal and her sisters left Martinique for Paris to get in education in the early 1920s, arriving in the metropole during a period of heightened racial consciousness and transnational activity.

4. Gender, Race, Transnational Connections, and Interwar Paris

In the preface of *La Revue du Monde Noir*, Martinican scholar Louis Thomas Achille discussed the convergence of people of color in Paris, exploring the gendered and transnational elements of the black presence. He wrote:

During fifteen years or so, in post-war Paris, successive waves of Jazz music and Charleston dance occurred and the musical called *Revue Nègre*, which took place in the Champs Élysées theater revealed to the European public: Joséphine Baker, the future queen of the Parisian cabaret music hall Folies-Bergère and Casino de Paris, who was the inimitable incarnation of black femininity; the negro-spirituals of Roland Hayes; Antillean orchestras and creole biguine from the Bals Nègres; African sculptures that shook up the beauty standards of classic art; publications from Black Antillean French individuals including a prize in French literature (Prix Goncourt); and rare copies of the Anthology of Black writers coming from the United States, gathered by Professor Alain Locke.¹⁵

African American Eslanda Goode Robeson added to Achille's observations when she wrote the article "Black Paris" for the publication *Challenge* in June 1936. For the article, Robeson interviewed black people in Paris, recording the experiences of both men and women in the metropole. Her interviews included people from the Antilles, West Africa, and the United States. Robeson determined that people of color contributed to every aspect of life in Paris. She described the black presence between the wars as a "definite part of Parisian life."¹⁶ Robeson continued by stating that black people "play[ed] an important and recognizable role in political, educational, intellectual, literary, and the theatrical life of Paris..."¹⁷

Paulette Nardal traveled to Paris on an academic scholarship to study French and English at the prestigious Sorbonne. In the opening of her interview with Nardal, Robeson described Nardal's beauty and astuteness. She wrote, "Paulette Nardal is beautiful," she continued, "her voice is low and soft, cultured and controlled, and her dictation is flawless."¹⁸ Robeson's interview with Nardal revealed a gendered dimension of the black experience in Paris, demonstrating considerable differences between the lives of men and women. Although men of color faced racism, Black women contended with multiple oppressions, on the basis of not only their race, but also their gender.

Fewer black women traveled to the metropole than men of color.¹⁹ Marginalized, black women in Paris faced isolation and feelings of dislocation, as discussed by Paulette Nardal in her short stories that she wrote for *La Dépêche africaine*, "Actions de grâces" and "En exil." In her interview with Robeson, Nardal commented on black women's predicament, noting that women of color "did not have a happy time in Paris."²⁰ Most of the women who traveled abroad during the interwar period belonged to the middle-upper class, and travel remained largely a masculine activity, with women often traveling with their husbands.²¹ The writings in *La Dépêche africaine* reflected this classism, with neither *La Dépêche africaine* nor *La Revue du Monde Noir* including the perspectives of working-class women of color. In writing narratives, such as "Actions de grâces" and "En exil," the contributors took the role of speaking for all people of color, when, realistically, they only represented a small population.²² Although the magazines are valuable in providing insight to the black experience in the metropole, this lack of class diversity is problematic. However, regardless of the class status of their authors, the narratives in the publications provide a revealing perspective of the lives of women of color in the metropole between the wars.

In "Actions de grâces" and "En exil," Paulette Nardal romanticized the Antilles, flattening out the islands as a carefree, exotic paradise, a theme throughout the Nardals' work in *La Dépêche africaine* and *La Revue du Monde Noir*. Nardal described the Parisian winter as an oppressive force in "Actions de grâces." Rather than the "overly civilized," "overly refined" metropole, Nardal characterized Martinique as "a land in perpetual summer."²³ She wrote, "The heavy gray clouds, the persistent cold, the grim atmosphere of winter; it seemed to me that all that weighed on my chest, oppressed me."²⁴ Nardal suggested that for Antillean women, the winter represented both an oppressive and alien force, one that led to feelings of disillusionment and isolation. At the beginning of "Actions de grâces," Nardal addressed her readership, posing the question, "Do you realize what the return of spring, or rather summer,

might be for the Antillean woman, having long lived in France?”²⁵ Summer, Nardal argued, constituted an “act of grace.”²⁶

Like in “Actions de grâces,” Nardal described Paris as the “enemy of fantasy,” in her short story, “En exil.”²⁷ She also incorporated a class analysis in her narrative, through her protagonist, Elisa’s, occupation as a domestic for a white, wealthy French family. Although Nardal presented Martinique as tropical paradise, Elisa’s job on the island mirrored her domestic work in Paris. In one passage, Nardal described a daydream had by Elisa about her life in Martinique. Nardal wrote, “After a day of ironing, she sits down on a worm-eaten bench in front of her single-story house, attracted by the chatting of friends, who like her, she inhales the salt air with delight.”²⁸ However, Nardal’s story indicated the presence of an extensive community of women of color in Martinique. As both of these stories and Robeson’s interview suggest, no such community existed, or was extremely limited, for Antillean women in the metropole. “Actions de grâces” and “En exil” are only two of the contributions made by the Nardals and several women to *La Dépêche africaine*. The journal acted as a site for a feminine perspective for both black and white women.

5. *La Dépêche africaine*: Background and the Women Contributors

A moderate publication featuring both Black and white contributors, Antillean intellectuals founded *La Dépêche africaine* in 1928. Women wrote for all sections of the journal, including the areas considered traditionally masculine, such as politics and economics.²⁹ Jane and Paulette Nardal contributed articles to *La Dépêche africaine*, investigating issues of black women’s sexuality, black internationalist politics, and exploring and demonstrating pride in their identities as Antillean women. Paulette Nardal’s article covering the work of African American sculptor Augusta Savage added to the journal’s feminine and transnational perspectives. Moreover, Nardal’s article about Savage’s work contributed to the pre-Négritudian element of the publication by highlighting pieces of African art.

Nardal declared Savage’s autonomy as a woman at the beginning of the article, describing Savage as “a complete ‘self-woman.’”³⁰ As suggested by the title of the piece— “Une femme sculpteur noir”— Nardal not only addressed Savage’s gender, but also her race. Nardal emphasized Savage’s passion for black art and her resilience as a black woman in the diaspora, stating that Savage’s “inspiration is racial before anything else, which is something typically rare coming from people of conquered and transplanted race.”³¹ Another Nardal sister, Jane, further contributed to the woman-centered and race-based analysis of *La Dépêche africaine*, with her essay “Pantins Exotiques.”³²

Jane Nardal wrote “Pantins Exotiques” to address the treatment of women of color—particularly women from the Antilles—in literature. In French literary works, French writers presented people of color, the African continent, and the Antilles as primitive and exotic.³³ Through representations in French literature, black people became a sexualized, primitive Other.³⁴ Nardal’s analysis also scrutinized the role that African American Josephine Baker played in the fetishization of black women. Nardal charged Baker with perpetuating the image of the African continent and the Antilles, and the people that lived there, as exotic and primitive. In the essay, Nardal wrote:

Should it come to be known or perceived that you are “exotic,” you will arouse a lively interest, preposterous questions, the dreams and regrets of those who have never traveled: “Oh the golden Islands! The marvelous lands! With their happy, naïve, carefree natives!”³⁵

In this quotation, Nardal addressed women of color living in Paris. The white Parisian populace, according to Nardal, regarded the Antillean woman as “exotic,” and imagined that she was from the “marvelous islands.”³⁶ She discussed the trope of the sexualized, tropical “exotic princess,” which she argued arose from the ideas about Antillean women in French literature.³⁷ She suggested that Baker furthered this image through her stage performances. Nardal wrote that Baker “leaps onstage with her shellacked hair and sparkling smile,” entertaining Parisians in a banana skirt and with American dances, such as the Charleston.³⁸ By writing articles like “Pantins Exotiques,” Nardal committed an act of resistance, protesting the sexualized images and exoticization of women of color in the metropole. Jane Nardal also crossed gender and racial lines, writing about politics for the publication, by contributing her article, “Internationalisme noir.”

In “Internationalisme noir,” Nardal argued that the dislocation of people of color caused by World War I, brought a sense of racial awareness to black people in Paris.³⁹ Designating Black Americans as the “pioneers” of racial thought, Nardal adopted African American Alain Locke’s idea of the New Negro, conceptualizing the “Francophone New Negro.”⁴⁰ The New Negro, according to Locke, emerged following World War I, with a deeper race consciousness and demonstrated pride in a diasporic blackness intellectually, politically, and artistically.⁴¹ By writing “Internationalisme noir,” Nardal contributed to diasporic element of the publication, calling for Black solidarity across

borders, religions, and nationalities. She wrote, “Blacks of all origins, of different nationalities, mores, and religions vaguely feel that in spite of everything they belong to one and the same race.”⁴² Paulette Nardal revisited this idea of transnational black solidarity in *La Revue du Monde Noir*. Additionally, she embraced Africanness, suggesting a “turning back to Africa, the cradle of the Negroes, in remembering the common origin.”⁴³

Jane Nardal did not include a gendered analysis in “Internationalisme noir.” However, like the other women contributors who wrote about politics for *La Dépêche africaine*, Nardal’s article was significant, given her gender. Later in 1932, Paulette Nardal wrote “L’Éveil de la conscience de la race chez les étudiants noirs” for *La Revue du Monde Noir*.⁴⁴ In the article, Nardal incorporated a black internationalist perspective through a feminine lens. Prior to the founding of *La Revue du Monde*, the Nardals established the Clamart Salon, which became known for its feminine character and transnational connections facilitated by the Nardal sisters.⁴⁵

6. Clamart: A Diasporic Women’s Space

During their time abroad, the Nardal sisters lived in the Parisian suburb, Clamart, where they opened their apartments to intellectuals and established a literary salon. As one of the only guests to write a detailed account of the salon, the Nardals’ cousin, Louis Thomas Achille, recorded his observations in the preface of *La Revue du Monde Noir*. He remembered the atmosphere of the salon noting:

The sisters from Martinique were wonderful hostesses and the way they welcomed people would encourage people’s creativity in the most joyous way—particularly with young individuals and students—and reflected the mundane traditions of the “little country” into this Paris suburb.⁴⁶

In this inviting atmosphere, black intellectuals gathered, including African Americans Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen, and future Négritude poets Léopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and Léon Damas.⁴⁷ The Nardal sisters’ central role, along with other women of color, allowed for a feminine perspective at the gatherings, another notable characteristic of the salon. Achille described the role of women at the gatherings, “Women were the dominant voices during those rites taking place on friendly afternoons in contrast with masculine clubs and circles.”⁴⁸

The Nardal sisters referred to the salon as “the circle of friends,” where guests met to examine literary works, perform music, and discuss issues of race across the diaspora.⁴⁹ For example, visitors read and evaluated Martinican author René Maran’s monumental work *Batouala* and explored Alain Locke’s theory of the New Negro.⁵⁰ Guests also discussed politics and racism in the metropole. Achille further remembered that, “People would think on the colonial as well as interracial problems, on the growing rate of colored men and women in the French life, they’d also prepare themselves to fight any signs of racism with appropriate means.”⁵¹ The conversations about racism and ways to combat its presence in the metropole demonstrates the central role that the salon played in the development of racial consciousness among black intellectuals. Additionally, the diasporic activities in the salon allowed for the establishment of *La Revue du Monde Noir*.⁵²

7. A Feminine Voice: *La Revue du Monde Noir*

With Paulette Nardal and African American Clara Shepard as translators for the bilingual publication, the staff of *La Revue Monde Noir* published their first edition in fall 1931. In the preface of the journal, Achille included Paulette Nardal’s perspective on the first edition of the journal. The magazine, according to Nardal, constituted a “movement” and a “new political reality.”⁵³ However, Nardal insisted that the journal was apolitical, unlike the pan-African movements of the period. Addressing this, she argued that the contributors’ aims were cultural and sociological, noting that through the magazine they hoped to establish, “Not a people, a black *nation*, but a culture, a soul, a black humanism, a *black World*, that is diverse and open to all men and women desiring to gain knowledge from this culture or simply to discover it.”⁵⁴ Through her emphasis on locating a Black culture, soul, and humanism, Nardal emphasized three of the tenets of the later Négritude Movement.

Nardal wrote in her article “L’Éveil de la conscience de la race chez les étudiants noirs” that “the aspirations that were crystallized around *La Revue du monde noir* asserted themselves among a group of Antillean women students in Paris.”⁵⁵ As indicated by this statement, *La Revue du monde noir* provided women of color a space to produce women-centered writings, which also emphasized pride in their overlapping gendered and racial identities. Achille further emphasized Antillean women’s contribution to *La Revue du Monde Noir*, describing the publication as produced by

“young francophone women from the Antilles” in the metropole studying at the Sorbonne.⁵⁶ Like her sisters Jane and Paulette, Andrée Nardal provided her perspective on black Parisian culture through a gendered lens. In her article “Etude sur la Biguine Créole,” she explored Josephine Baker’s influence on Parisian culture, analyzing Baker’s cultural influence on Black dance, particularly the Antillean traditional dance, the biguine.

In “Etude sur la Biguine Créole,” Nardal observed that upon Baker’s arrival in Paris, “Negro cabarets” began to “spring up like mushrooms in Montparnasse.”⁵⁷ In the article, Nardal declared the authenticity of the biguine, as opposed to the dances that Baker brought to the metropole, such as the Charleston, which Nardal described as “nothing more than a rhythmic exercise.” Rather, the biguine, Nardal concluded, “could not be presented to Parisians under an obscene interpretation.”⁵⁸ With Baker’s dominant role in the proliferation of these dances, Nardal’s comments suggested a desire to separate Antillean traditional dance from the Black dance popularized by Baker in Paris. To conclude the article Nardal declared:

The romance of the guitars and mandolins, the garrulous shashas, the tinkling triangles, the simple accordion of the country-side, the wailing clarinet, the blaring trombone, the staccato of the strings, the muffled beats of the bass-drum, transform the dreariest winter day into the dazzling tropical sunshine flooding the palms.⁵⁹

Andrée Nardal’s language in “Etude sur la Biguine Créole” is similar to her sister Paulette’s in *La Dépêche africaine*, painting the tropics in an idealized fashion, with phrases like, “dazzling tropical sunshine flooding the palms.”⁶⁰ Moreover, Nardal’s examination of Antillean dance indicates to the reader the power and beauty of Antillean dance, rather than those performed in Parisian clubs. Her attempt to ascertain the biguine from dance in the metropole indicated that Nardal sought to preserve an element of Antillean culture. Like her article about African American sculptor Augusta Savage, Paulette Nardal contributed another article about an African American woman to *La Revue du Monde Noir*.

In “Une Noire parle à Cambridge et à Genève,” Nardal discussed African American student Grace Walker’s reading of African American poetry to an audience of intellectuals.⁶¹ In this article, Nardal commented further on the African American experience. Similar to her article on Savage, Nardal analyzed Walker’s position as a Black woman in the diaspora. Nardal noted that as Walker read the poetry she, “framed the Negro in his American atmosphere” and “reconstituted the atmosphere from which he developed, up from slavery, toward a form of civilization of which the reader is a living image.”⁶² Writing about Walker further added to the diasporic element of the journal from a feminine perspective, while demonstrating the resilience of black women, who triumphed past a history of slavery.

8. Conclusion: Paulette Nardal and “Awakening of Race Consciousness among Students”

Paulette Nardal wrote “L’Éveil de la conscience de la race chez les étudiants noirs” for the April 1932 edition of *La Revue du Monde Noir*. Like Jane Nardal’s “Internationalisme noir,” Nardal centered the origins of black consciousness with African American writers. At the time Nardal wrote the article, she noted that people of color, specifically young people, were beginning to take an interest in their black identities. In the article, she discussed the emergence of race consciousness among Antillean students in the metropole and in Martinique noting, “A mere few years ago, one might not even say a few months, certain subjects were taboo in Martinique. Woe to those who dared broach them! One could not speak of slavery nor proclaim pride in being of African descent without being considered a fanatic or at the very least eccentric.”⁶³ Significantly, Nardal emphasized Antillean women’s role in the development of this race consciousness.

Through this article, Nardal centered the experiences of women of color in the metropole, removing them from the periphery. The piece challenges the male-centered narrative of the Négritude Movement. Nardal declared:

The women of color living in the metropolis, who until the Colonial Exposition were less favored than their male compatriots, who have enjoyed easy success, felt long before the latter the need for a racial solidarity that would not be merely material. They were thus aroused to race consciousness.⁶⁴

She continued by encouraging Antillean women to pursue degrees in history and geography to produce scholarship, which explored not only their blackness, but also their identities as women. The Nardal sisters’ work in *La Dépêche africaine* and *La Revue du Monde Noir* allows for a divergent reading of the Négritude Movement as not a masculinist movement, but an idea that both women and men worked to conceptualize. The Nardals’ work set the foundation for

the Negritude Movement through a feminized lens. As Paulette Nardal declared in a letter referring to Senghor, and Damas in 1963, “We were, but women, real pioneers, let’s say we blazed the trail for them.”⁶⁵

The Négritude poets are less studied in the English-speaking world than Anglophone writers, such as Claude McKay and Langston Hughes. Compared to Césaire, Damas, and Senghor, the Nardals are essentially erased. Through this paper, I aimed to highlight a body of work put forth by the Nardals and to discuss the overall contributions of Black women in two interwar publications, *La Dépêche africaine* and *La Revue du Monde Noir*. This paper provided only a brief glimpse of the Nardals’ journalism over a short period of time. As a journalist, Paulette Nardal’s articles appeared in subsequent publications during the interwar period in Paris, and she continued her career in post-war Martinique, with her Catholic-based journal, *Les femmes dans la ville*, an area still largely unexplored by historians.⁶⁶ My essay contributes to this shift in including women of color in the study of the Négritude Movement. By analyzing the writings of the Nardals and their diasporic activities at the Clarmart Salon, my work centered the experiences of women of color in the metropole, rather positioning them on the periphery.

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11. Endnotes

1 For a historical examination of the concept of diaspora see: Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley. "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World." *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 11-45. *La Revue du Monde Noir* translates to *The Revue of the Black World*, and "Histoire sans importance" translates in English to "A Thing of No Importance."

2 Roberte Horthé, "Histoire sans importance," *La Revue du Monde Noir*, 1, no. 1 (November 1931) Digital Collections: Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k32946v/f87.item>; Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010). Boittin also uses this quote at the beginning of her chapter, "In Black and White: Women, *La Depeche Africaine*, and the Print Culture of Diaspora."

3 Horthé, "Histoire sans importance," *La Revue du Monde Noir*.

4 Lilyan Kesteloot, *Black Writers in French: A Literary History of Négritude* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1991).

5 Robin D.G. Kelley, "Introduction: A Poetics Of Anticolonialism," In *Discourse on Colonialism*, by Aimé Césaire and translated by Joan Pinkman (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 12. *L'Étudiant noir* translates to *The Black Student*.

6 Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 25-38. Edwards provides a brief history of the usage of the word *negre*.

7 Aimé Césaire, "An Interview with Aimé Césaire," in *Discourse on Colonialism*, by Rene Depestre, Aimé Césaire, Joan Pinkman and Robin D.G. Kelley, 83 (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 83. For an example of Césaire's *négritude* also see: Aimé Césaire, Translated by James A. Arnold, and Clayton Eshleman, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, Bilingual ed. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2013).

8 Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Négritude Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) Also see: Robert P. Smith, "Black Like That: Paulette Nardal and the Négritude Salon," *CLA Journal* 45, no., 1 (2005): 53-63; Imaobong D. Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activists-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018); Claire Oberon Garcia, "Black Women Writers, Modernism, and Paris," *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 14 (2011): 27-42; Hardin, Tayna L, "Discursive Encounters: Dance, Inscription, and Modern Identities in Interwar Paris," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 14, no. 2 (2016): 176-87.

9 Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), xiv.

10 Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, 119.

11 Ibid.

12 Emily Musil Church, "In Search of Seven Sisters: A Biography of the Seven Nardal Sisters of Martinique," *Callaloo* 36., no. 2 (Spring 2013): 380. Read this article for a biographical sketch of the Nardal sisters.

13 Joseph Zobel, Quoted in Robert P. Smith, "Paulette Nardal and the Négritude Salon," *CLA Journal* 45., no. 1 (September 2001), 57.

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- 14 Eslanda Goode Robeson, "Black Paris," *Challenge* (June 1936), Schlesinger Library: Digital Collections, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Harvard University, accessed November 1, 2018, [http://schlesinger.radcliffe.harvard.edu/onlinecollections/west/search?names\[\]=Robeson.%20Eslanda%20Goode](http://schlesinger.radcliffe.harvard.edu/onlinecollections/west/search?names[]=Robeson.%20Eslanda%20Goode). For an excellent academic biography on Robeson, see: Barbara Ransby, *Eslanda: The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).
- 15 Louis Thomas Achille, Préface, *La Revue du Monde Noir*, 1, no. 1 (November 1931), Digital Collections: Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k32946v/f87.item> Achilles's observations in the preface are presented like a memoir. The Nardal's cousin, Achille took part in the cultural and political activities of interwar Paris. His preface is one of the only sources that I could locate where the Clamart salon was discussed in detail.
- 16 Robeson, "Black Paris," *Challenge*.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Imaobong D. Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activists Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 6-8; Jennifer M. Wilks, "Black Modernist Women at the Parisian Crossroads," in *Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance beyond Harlem*, Davarian L. Baldwin and Minkah Makalani, eds (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013). Wilks discusses Black women's feelings of dislocation and loneliness while residing in the metropole.
- 20 Robeson, "Black Paris," *Challenge*. "Actions de grâces" translates to "Acts of Grace" and "En exil" translates to "In Exile."
- 21 Umeron, *Race Women Internationalists*, 6-8. However, women did travel on their own sometimes. For example, Eslanda Robeson traveled on her own to Africa. See: Barbara Ransby, *Eslanda: The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). See also the autobiography of Ada Bricktop Smith: Bricktop with James Haskins, *Bricktop* (New York: Atheneum, 1983).
- 22 Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 120.
- 23 Paulette Nardal, "Actions de grâces," *La Dépêche africaine*, May 30, 1929, Translated by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting in *Negritude Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 114.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid., 115.
- 27 Paulette Nardal, "En exil," *La Dépêche africaine*, December 15, 1929, translated by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting in *Negritude Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 116.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 134-135.
- 30 Paulette Nardal, "Une femme sculpteur noir," *La Dépêche africaine*, August 1930. Translated by Tim Schneider. Digital Collections: Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed December 9, 2018, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb327559117/date1929>. "Une femme sculpteur noir" translates to "A black female sculptor."
- 31 Ibid. Although Savage committed herself to producing Black art, people of color often refused to pose for her. Nardal noted, "Augusta Savage also produced several heads and busts of White models with remarkable sensibility. But we were shocked to hear that people of color and particularly Black models refused to pose for her. Is this the effect of a prejudice being even more absurd for Blacks than for Whites?"
- 32 "Pantins Exotiques" translates to "Exotic Puppets."
- 33 An example of a literary work that sexualizes and represents African people and the continent as the Other is: Paul Morand, *Black Magic* (New York: Viking Press, 1929).
- 34 Brett A. Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire: The Exotic Black Other In Jazz-Age France* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000); T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).
- 35 Jane Nardal, "Pantins exotiques," *La Dépêche africaine*, (October 15, 1928) translated by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting in *Negritude Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 108.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 "Internationalisme noir" translates to "Black Internationalism."
- 40 Jane Nardal, "Internationalisme noir," *La Dépêche africaine*, February 15, 1928, translated by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting in *Negritude Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 106. To read about Alain Locke's theory of the New Negro, see: Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (Atheneum Paperbacks, 1970).
- 41 Sharpley-Whiting, *Negritude Women*, 40-41.
- 42 Nardal, "Internationalisme noir," 105.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 "L'Éveil de la conscience de la race chez les étudiants noirs" translates to "The Awakening of Race Consciousness among Black Students."

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- 45 Achille, Preface, *La Revue du Monde Noir*.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Umeron, *Race Women*, 15-22
- 48 Achille, Preface, *La Revue du Monde Noir*.
- 49 Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, 155; Achille, Preface, *La Revue du Monde Noir*.
- 50 Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, 155.
- 51 Achille, Preface, *La Revue du Monde Noir*.
- 52 For more information about the Nardal's salon, an informative article is: Robert P. Smith Jr, "Black like that: Paulette Nardal and the Negritude Salon," *CLA Journal* 45, no. 1 (September 2001): 53-68.
- 53 Achille, Preface, *La Revue du Monde Noir*.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Paulette Nardal, "L'Éveil de la conscience de la race chez les étudiants noirs," *La Revue du Monde Noir*, April 1932, translated by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting in *Negritude Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 119.
- 56 Achille, Preface, *La Revue du Monde Noir*
- 57 Andrée Nardal, "Étude sur la Biguine Créole," *La Revue du monde Noir*, 1, no. 1 (November 1931) Digital Collections: Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k32946v/f87.item>; Etude sur la Biguine Créole translates to "Notes on a Biguine Creole."
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 "Une Noire parle à Cambridge et à Genève" translates to "A Negro Woman speaks at Cambridge and Geneva."
- 62 Paulette Nardal, "Une Noire parle à Cambridge et à Genève," *La Revue du monde Noir*, 1, no. 1 (November 1931) Digital Collections: Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed December 8, 2018, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k32946v/f87.item>.
- 63 Nardal, "L'Éveil de la conscience de la race chez les étudiants noirs," 119.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Quoted in Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, 122,
- 66 Brent Hayes Edwards, "Pebbles of Consonance: A Reply to Critics," *Small Axe* 17 (March 2005), 137-138; T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Beyond Negritude: Essays from Women in the City* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009). Edwards notes that Paulette Nardal published articles in *Le Soir*, *France-Outremer*, and *Univers*. Sharpley-Whiting translated several of Paulette Nardal's essays from *Women in the City*.