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“Jaune à l’extérieur et blanche à l’intérieur”: French Asian ‘Post-Migratory’ Narratives, National Belonging, and Capital Erasures

Chloé Luu

Abstract: In Spring 2020, the revival of the debate over race in France, triggered by the killing of George Floyd and the foregrounding of France’s own victims of racialized police violence, coincided with a greater recognition of Asians’ exposure to racism. As this last decade witnessed an emergence of French Asian reappropriations of the question of race, this article focuses on Grace Ly’s debut novel *Jeune fille modèle* (2018). I draw attention to the ways narratives such as Ly’s, through their focus on the French Asian descendant, their preoccupations over identification and sense of national belonging, struggle to account for the inscription of Asian presence in the *longue durée* history of racial/capitalist exploitation.

IN SPRING 2020, during the lockdown measures related to the Covid-19 pandemic, France witnessed a period of the most important protests against racism and police brutality in its recent history, triggered by the killing of forty-six-year-old George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020 and the countless protests it gave rise to in the U.S. These events created a space in France for the Comité Adama¹ and other families of racialized victims of police killings to draw the question of systemic racism and France’s own situation of endemic police violence into the foreground. During these major protests, Asians expressed their solidarity by positioning themselves as a similarly racialized group, making themselves visible with signs reading “Asiatiques Antiracistes,” “Convergence des Luttes,” or using slogans from the early 1960’s Asian American movements such as “Yellow Peril Supports Black Power.”² This revival of the debate over race in the universalist realm of the French Republic, especially in the context of the pandemic, coincided with a greater visibility and recognition of Asians’ exposure to racism, breaking with their long-time apprehension as a racialized minority entering the dominant group. From this “printemps racial”³ emerged numerous French Asian collectives identifying as antiracist, which continued to consolidate the integration of Asians in the “question raciale”⁴ in France.

This turn was preceded by a first recent moment of Asian politicization in France, following the deaths of Chinese immigrants Zhang Chaolin in 2016 and Liu Shaoyao in 2017. Zhang Chaolin’s death, as the result of an aggression by three men implicitly racialized in the media as “jeunes garçons des banlieue,”⁵ led to unprecedented rallies exposing racial violence against

Asians. But the case of Shaoyao Liu, who passed away under very different circumstances at the hands of the police, marked an important ideological turning point. With it came the departure from mobilizations inscribed in republican logics of integration and centered on security concerns⁶ towards new French Asian movements that situate the violence experienced by Asians within a framework of structural racism. This analytic marked a break with the conceptions of Asians benefitting from a 'positive' racialization,⁷ and having long been apprehended outside of the discussions over racism and racial discriminations in France, leading to their absence from historical antiracist mobilizations led by Black and North-African groups since their first formations in the 1970's.

This past decade has witnessed an emergence of French Asian reappropriations of the question of race. Alongside explicitly antiracist militant activity, other initiatives have appeared at the crossroads between militantism and the cultural and artistic spheres. The emphasis has often been laid on the aim to fill in a representational void and shed light on the specificities of Asian experiences and narratives against their marginalization. It is in this context that literary works authored by second-generation writers have emerged in the form of memoirs or (semi)autobiographical works like French-Asian writer and activist Grace Ly's debut novel *Jeune fille modèle* (2018). *Jeune fille modèle* is a first-person narrative that follows Chi Chi, a teenage girl of Chinese-Cambodian descent during her formative years in Paris as she faces an identity crisis, torn between the 'Asian' values and norms of her first-generation family, on the one hand, and her socialization in France on the other. The first part of the novel is composed of short snapshots into Chi Chi's life, flashbacks and anecdotes of her family, their relationships, all of which contextualize her multicultural upbringing. Then towards the middle of the novel, Chi Chi's mother, "Ama," falls ill and is subsequently hospitalized, triggering Chi Chi's desire to explore her family's past and the history of their 'homeland,' Cambodia. The novel thus follows Chi Chi on a journey of self-discovery as she investigates and uncovers her familial history, and eventually comes to a better understanding of her identity and finds her place as a *descendante d'immigré.e.s* in France. Grace Ly has affirmed that the novel was not strictly autobiographical, though many aspects of Chi Chi's life, such as her upbringing, her heritage, and her mother's occupation, converge with biographical elements of Ly's life that she has shared in interviews, talks or on social media.⁸

In light of Ly's particular cultural/militant trajectory, this article analyzes how race and racial identity are approached in *Jeune fille modèle* through the focus on the second-generation concerns of identity crisis and double culture.

Against a perspective that has mostly considered the cultural productions authored by the second generation through their contribution to remodeling notions of Frenchness and challenging the French republican model, I draw attention instead to the ways narratives such as Ly's struggle to account for the inscription of Asian presence in France in the *longue durée* history of racial/capitalist exploitation.

Jeune fille modèle's back cover pitches the novel as the "premier roman qui donne la parole à une enfant de la seconde génération des Asiatiques."⁹ This description singularizes the novel as a ground-breaking departure from the genealogy of francophone literature written by Asian authors, ranging from authors who have lived under French colonial rule to those who emigrated and lived in France such as Linda Lê, Anna Moï or even Minh-Tran Huy,¹⁰ who was similarly born and raised in France like Grace Ly. This differentiation between Ly's novel and the literary works that precede hers is crucial as it delineates the specificities of new literary and artistic movements of which Ly is a part. These movements challenge the context of French universalism where any form of particularist affiliation or identification, and especially those related to race and religion, is considered as going against the values and the principles of the Republic, by foregrounding the authors' identities as both French and Asians. Ly's involvement in the public sphere dates back as early as her blog *la petite banane* created in 2011, in which she combines Asian restaurant recommendations in Paris with the ambition to "déconstruire les stéréotypes liés à la cuisine asiatique."¹¹ A year before the publication of *Jeune fille modèle*, in 2017, Ly created the documentary web series *Ça reste entre nous*, with each episode hosting different guests, brought in to chat about issues that concern them as Asians in France. In 2018, Ly also became a co-host of the podcast *Kiffe ta race* with journalist and activist Rokhaya Diallo, aiming at exploring racial questions "sur le mode de la conversation et du vécu."¹² This multiplication of projects contributed to imposing Grace Ly's presence in the public sphere as the face of a French Asian activism that has approached the question of race primarily through accounts of individualized experiences of racism and multiculturalist concerns of representation and inclusion.

Following Viet Thanh Nguyen's argument that Asian American literature "embodies the contradictions, conflicts, and potential future options of Asian American culture,"¹³ this article explores what the recent French Asian expressions emerging throughout the 2010s like *Jeune fille modèle* tell us about the late racial formation and politicization of Asians in France. As Ly has often been invited to talks and conferences organized by both activist collectives and the academic world to discuss personal experiences of

racism, Chi Chi as a fictional character is informed and enriched by these public statements of her author, to embody an archetype of the second-generation experience in its particular relation to questions of race. This assertion of a racial experience that is distinguished from that of the immigrant parents' leads to considerations of Asian presence and racialization in France as centered on a 'post-migratory' perspective, and to prioritizing nation-bound concerns of inclusion, integration, and the identity constructions of the descendants. This article thus examines how, through their focus on the French Asian descendant and their struggles in terms of identification and sense of national belonging, narratives such as Ly's fail to situate their endeavor within the discussions surrounding capitalist exploitation and continuing material inequalities.

'Failing Asians' and stories of national (non)belonging

In a fashion common for narratives about generational conflicts in immigrant families, the first part of *Jeune fille modèle* is peppered with moments when Chi Chi expresses incomprehension towards her mother's attitudes and views. Chi Chi's initial dispositions thus serve to foreshadow a coming change in her character, ultimately leading to a resolution where she comes to a better understanding of her mother's struggles.

The novel opens with Chi Chi stressing her mother's cultural difference, which in turn serves to naturalize her own belonging to the French nation-state. Despite living in France for thirty years, Ama has not mastered the French language: "Trente ans que ma mère vit à Paris et elle parle toujours français comme une vache espagnole" (Ly 9). Chi Chi points out her mother's "fautes de français" where "passé, présent, futur, masculin, féminin; tout s'emmêlait" and her "accent à couper au couteau" (Ly 10). Chi Chi's complaints of her mother's unwillingness to study a *Bescherelle* and try harder to learn French, compared with the time and hard work she devotes to her restaurant, establish a parallel with Ama's own frustrations over Chi Chi's own lack of proficiency in Cantonese and Mandarin. Their struggle to communicate, through dialogues "ponctués d'hésitations, de 'euh' et de trous comme autant de nids-de-poule sur une route sinueuse" (Ly 11), encapsulates the more general cultural gap that exists between mother and second-generation daughter. Chi Chi doesn't understand why Ama has to give up so much for the "restaurant-providence" (Ly 24), never taking vacation and forcing Chi Chi to work there as well; nor can she comprehend her social overconformity and compliance with rude and disrespectful clients. In turn, Chi Chi's constant questioning and invalidation of her mother's decisions simultaneously highlight her own failure at trying to be

“une bonne Chinoise” (Ly 11) and frame her identity as a “banane”: “jaune de l’extérieur, blanche de l’intérieur” (Ly 21).

This designation comes from Chi Chi’s mother on her first day at the prestigious “Lycée International,” to which her mother has worked so hard to have her admitted. That day, Chi Chi felt alienated around the other upper-class students in their Gérard Darel tailored-clothes and fine fragrances, mocked in class by her teacher for her Chinese-sounding last name. Chi Chi complains and claims never to want to go back again, bringing out the frustrations of her mother, who calls Chi Chi a “banane:”

“Malgré tous mes efforts, tu ne resteras qu’une *banane!*”

Les gens comme Ama appellent “bananes” les gamins comme moi, qui confondent les tons de “mère” et “cheval” en chinois. Jaunes dehors et blancs dedans, ils sont nés ici dans des familles qui vivent comme si elles n’avaient pas quitté l’Asie. (Ly 21)

Jeune fille modèle frames “banane” as first formulated and used by the first-generation parents to disqualify their French-born children’s ‘Asianness,’ particularly regarding their ingratitude vis-à-vis their parents’ sacrifices, too spoiled and lacking an education “à la chinoise” (Ly 65). Presented as a pejorative label ascribed at first from the outside, “banane” nonetheless becomes a term conveying this between-two-cultures experience of the French-born second generation that descendants can claim and self-identify with.¹⁴

The self-definition as a “banane” dates back to Ly’s first writing persona as “la petite banane” in her eponymous culinary blog created in 2011. This appellation is also extended to her readership, whom she called “mes bananes.” In her 2012-updated “About me” section,¹⁵ Ly expands on this pseudonym as such:

On m’appelle la petite banane. Paraît que je suis jaune à l’extérieur et blanche à l’intérieur. Parce que mes parents viennent d’Asie et que je suis née en France.

Manger du saucisson avec des baguettes ou tremper mon croissant dans une soupe de raviolis? Aucun problème, c’est le concept terroir x canard laqué.

Dans nos rues pavées, on m’interpelle parfois d’un *ni hao* ou *sayonara*. En Asie, j’ai plutôt l’air d’une touriste. Produit exotique ici et d’exportation là-bas, je vis la seconde génération comme une grande aventure. (Ly)

This presentation encapsulates the recourse to tropes of identity crisis and *entre-deux* positionality that is emblematic of the literature authored by second-generation writers, and that have notably been observable among ‘Beur’ authors.¹⁶ “Banane,” in the implied parallelism “jaune à l’extérieur, blanche à l’intérieur” emphasizes a similar double-edged experience for

Asians: too assimilated to French whiteness to live up to their parents' expectations and to be 'real Asians,' yet too racially marked to pass as *just* French. While "jaune à l'extérieur" underscores the experiences that are imputable to mechanisms of racial assignation,¹⁷ a "sur-détermination de l'extérieur"¹⁸ as Fanon puts it, is taken in a dialectical relation to "blanche à l'intérieur" that refers on the other hand to a process of auto-reclamation of an identity, and notably one of a "positive identification with whiteness" (Mannur 2). The racializing experiences of getting catcalled with "ni haos" and "sayonaras" then find their reverse side in being identified as a tourist in Asia; the alterization of embodying a "produit exotique" in France is rendered equivalent to the feeling of being an outsider in spaces occupied by 'real' Asians, that is, Asians born in Asian countries who are, for this reason, attributed a greater authenticity. Racial assignation in this context is presented as a problem, not on its own, but because it antagonizes the descendants' whiteness—"à l'intérieur"—and denies them the recognition of being assimilated to Frenchness: ultimately, what the label "banane" reveals is how the question of race is framed mainly as one of identity crisis and feelings of in-betweenness/(non-)belongingness as French-born descendants.

This standpoint as "bananes" is then highlighted as a selling point in *Jeune fille modèle*, with the recall of the expression "jaune à l'extérieur et blanche à l'intérieur" on the back cover, suggestive of a capitalization on the "symbolic stock of minority culture" (Nguyen 35) from the perspective of French-born Asians. It is not surprising, then, that this label is found in other recently published literary works authored by French Asian authors. In *Le silence de mon père* (2016), Doan Bui defines her siblings and herself as "enfants 'bananes': "Jaunes à l'extérieur, blancs à l'intérieur. Tous nés en France. De purs produits de la République française."¹⁹ Kei Lam's (autobio)graphic novel *Banana Girl* (2017) is similarly subtitled "Jaune de l'extérieur, blanche de l'intérieur."²⁰ Lana Chhor self-identifies as "banane" in her memoirs *Génération peau de banane: ou La vie après les Khmers rouges* (2018).²¹ And even if not systematically appropriated for self-definition, the notion of "banane" epitomizes this mode of expression, affirming a racial identification through the specific experience and position as French-born descendants that have constituted the dominant perspective in French Asian cultural productions and artistic/militant initiatives of this last decade. The emerging stories of this generation of French Asians are told through the lens of the "aventure" (Ly) of the second-generation, in its struggles regarding identity crisis and tension within the familial norms, as much as in the benefits of a double culture. In this sense, the reference to foodways that

combine French culinary practices with those from the parents' home country—Ly's "concept terroir x canard lacqué" (Ly) eating "saucisson" with chopsticks or dipping her "croissant" in a noodle soup, or Kei Lam's obsession with "dim sum" as much as "camembert"²²—emphasize the assimilability and adaptability of immigrant cultures, which are supposedly able to preserve their cultural specificities and differences at the same time.

Emphasizing themes of generational conflict and cultural difference, which are becoming key signifiers of French Asian culture as they have been for Asian American literature,²³ Ly's *Jeune fille modèle* is representative of this emerging literary movement of writers who speak up to impose their standpoint as Asian descendants in the French public sphere. While the double affiliation as French and Asian challenges the French universalist model, it does so by valorizing instead a form of pluralism that would recognize particular and diverse identifications in the nation, in a way that overshadows issues of material inequalities and reshapes racial identities into commodities. Following Lisa Lowe's critique in *Immigrant Acts* of multiculturalism and the promise of inclusion through national citizenry and rights insofar as it "institutionalizes the disavowal of the history of racialized labor exploitation and disenfranchisement,"²⁴ second-generation narratives like Ly's begin within the nation-state and turn solely towards concerns of inclusion and representation, failing to account for the colonial and material implications of immigration and Asian presence in France. The colonial history in these narratives is not denied but relegated to a 'before' that belongs to the immigrant parents, as a *toile de fond* for the identity formations and negotiations of the French-born descendants.

Colonial past lives and racial formations of the 'postcolonial' present

The history of colonization and the ties of racialized populations in France to the French colonial Empire are not silenced in these recent Asian narratives, as their authors are recognized as descendants of 'postcolonial' immigrants. But the presence of these immigrants and their descendants in France is apprehended through migration as a new beginning, part of a French domestic history of migration distinct from the French imperial history of exploitation of racialized labor, requisition of *main-d'œuvre étrangère et coloniale*, indentureship, and its reiteration under the form of forced and (un)free migration. The stories heralding the perspective of the second generation, as French-born descendants, whose presence in France is rendered evident and unquestionable, reaffirm this periodization between a colonial past and a post-colonial, and even post-migratory, present. Colonial history,

as Habiba Sebki has argued with regard to a “littérature issue de l’immigration” notably for the Beur descendants, “ne constitue pas une part active dans l’actualité de leur présent.”²⁵ Instead, the colonial past becomes subsumed as ‘l’histoire des pays des parents,’ catalyzed through concerns of intergenerational (non-)transmission and identity conflicts of second-generation descendants.

In these second-generation narratives—resembling what has been defined as “récit de filiation” or “récit de soi où la définition du sujet doit beaucoup à son rapport à son ascendance”²⁶—the colonial past surges forth but is largely individualized and relegated to the domestic sphere through the form of the familial silences, the conflicts it gives rise to, and the identity struggles it generates for French-born descendants. Similarly to Doan Bui’s *Silence de mon père*, which opens with the narrator’s father’s aphasia caused by a stroke, leading her to unearth her familial past and learn more about the history of the Vietnam war, it is the decline of Chi Chi’s mother’s health that triggers the return of ghosts from the past. As the story progresses, Ama faints multiple times, supposedly from overworking, and ends up unconscious at the hospital. After noticing for several days that her “Oncle Deux” has been waiting in the car instead of visiting her mother at her bedside, Chi Chi breaks the family tradition of not speaking up and reprimands her uncle for his absence and everyone else for accepting it. When all she gets in return is the assurance that “ce n’est pas aussi simple” (Ly 137) and brief justifications about her uncle’s inability to tolerate hospitals, invoking the past but without giving out any more information, Chi Chi finally explodes: “Ah ça non, alors! Tu vas pas me resservir l’excuse du passé! Ça suffit maintenant! C’est quoi, ce passé qui nous empêche de vivre? (Ly 138). When Chi Chi hears Cambodia referred to as *their* home country for the first time, and her aunt invoke their “passé douloureux” (138), it marks a shifting point in the narration. Chi Chi is led to question what it means to be a “Chinois[e] du Cambodge” (Ly 138), on the path to “poser des questions,” “fouiller le passé” (Ly 142), inquiring of her aunts and uncles, against her grandmother’s caution “tu risques de le regretter” (Ly 140). In a scene where Chi Chi expresses interest to Oncle Deux over the history of their family in Cambodia, he asks her:

- Pourquoi tu as besoin de savoir tout ça?
- Pour comprendre... parce que vous avez tout effacé...
- C’est la vie, c’est comme ça... Parfois on doit accepter. Pour regarder en avant. Pour continuer à vivre.
- Bah, moi c’est le contraire. J’ai besoin de comprendre toutes ces choses. Pour continuer à vivre. (Ly 156)

This dialogue captures the dominant narrative perspective in *Jeune fille modèle* in which the colonial past is looked back on, through the lens of an “enquête sur l’ascendance du sujet” (Gnocchi 2) and subsumed into this “passé douloureux” (Ly 138) of the previous generation, which is presented as in rupture with the present of the second generation as citizen-subjects. Yet, this past is apprehended as a *passé qui ne passe pas*:²⁷ manifesting in the everyday lives of these immigrants,²⁸ but through the familial conflicts and the ways *this past* puts the second generation in a troubled *entre-deux* position, raised between a socialization in French society and the specific cultural norms and histories of their parents they cannot fully comprehend. To this double illegitimacy and these feelings of (non-)belonging, the unearthing of the colonial past and familial story is presented in the narrative as the solution. And in the character of Chi Chi, second-generation descendants are turned into figures who take up this task and finally confront the past to break the silence, against the assumed passivity and self-erasure of the elder generation, enabling both children and parents to find closure. Over the course of her inquiries, Chi Chi finds out about the killings, abandonments, forced marriages, and other traumatic experiences and sacrifices experienced by her family under the conditions of the Khmer Rouge regime and forced migration, which leads her to reconsider moments when she was frustrated by the decisions and behavior of her mother or other members of the family. Chi Chi’s evolution is encapsulated by the ways she comes to reevaluate her uncle in a different light, after hearing about his experience at the camps, where he witnessed the death of his own brother and comrades and feared for his life daily. While she despised him in the beginning of the novel for his social hypercorrection, letting others crush him in order to “ne pas faire de vagues” (Ly 32), in finding out about her uncle’s past she reconsiders how one can “s’écraiser tout en restant” (Ly 153). Similarly, as she learns about her mother’s difficult familial story, Chi Chi looks back on their disagreements and arguments, coming to understand her aspirations and attitudes toward work. Even the figure of the absent father, about whom Chi Chi knew nothing and that has haunted her, ends up appearing in flesh and blood towards the last part of the novel. He tells Chi Chi about his romantic encounter with her mother under the Khmer Rouge, explains why he needed to leave for his other family, and provides her with the answers she needed all along, suggesting a way to complete the last missing piece of the family puzzle. Relegated to a past that does not directly concern the French-born descendants, colonial history is then apprehended in *Jeune fille modèle* only from the perspective of second-generation descendants’ preoccupations.

While Ashwiny O. Kistnareddy considers the redemptive aspect in narratives such as Ly's that allow for history be "rewritten and relived for a better understanding of the past and the future" (Kistnareddy, "Dire l'indicible" 116), I see these 'rewritings' as contributing to a forgetting, in the ways it privatizes the colonial past into questions of identity formations of the descendants and erases its continuities in the postcolonial present.

The apprehension of race, in the erasure of its entanglement with capitalism, is further encapsulated through the lack of self-reflexivity over the protagonists' socio-economic conditions as restaurant owners. While the novel does address their occupation as Asian restaurant owners by evoking the stereotypes and prejudices that surround Asian restaurants,²⁹ the material implications of their position vis-à-vis other racialized minorities, as a racialized group that has been able to secure business ownership, are not apprehended. The coolie, as embodying a radically different image of Asians than the one of the business owner, then appears unexpectedly in the novel. Yet, as the coolies are invoked in the novel through the "piquets de bambou sur [leurs] dos" (Ly 75), this reference is likely more to the hard labor embodied in the traditional colonial imagery in the figure of the *porteur indo-chinois*, and less to the history of the coolie as an indentured laborer, epitomizing a form of coerced labor brought to plantation economies and exploited across the Americas, and the British and French colonial Caribbean. In his groundbreaking monograph *Coolies and Canes* that reasserted the centrality of the figure of the coolie to the apprehension of Asian American history, Moon-Ho Jung opens by unsettling the traditional dichotomy of coolie versus immigrant that has served to dissociate the narratives of 'voluntary' and 'free' migration from the 'cruel' and 'infamous' ones of the coolie trade in a reification of American exceptionalism. Jung calls for reorienting the origins of Asian migration from the Gold Rush in California to coolie labor in the plantations of the Caribbean and Louisiana, so as to reframe Asian American history as a "story of labor migrations and struggles [...]—rather than immigration and assimilation."³⁰ Thus a similar inquiry into the French Empire's own recourse to coolie labor, I argue, would allow foregrounding an apprehension of Asian immigration in its embeddedness with racialized capitalist exploitation. Instead, "coolie" in the novel is used hyperbolically by Chi Chi to associate her own labor and 'exploitation' by her mother to the hardships of the coolies, as she is ordered to deliver the restaurant's food to customers. The intention is to produce a comedic effect, in such a way that the idea of capitalist exploitation is trivialized and privatized in the domestic sphere, in the relationship between mother and daughter. Such an evocation of the coolie sums up how all the issues

raised surrounding racialization and colonial past are presented in the narrative as being ultimately resolvable within the private familial sphere through an “interpersonal” reconciliation.³¹

The conclusion of the novel features a happy ending, where through Chi Chi’s efforts to push her family to confront and excavate this “passé douloureux,” mother and daughter finally come to understand each other’s perspectives. This resolution also happens to coincide with a better economic situation. The family decides to sell the restaurant, and though Ama’s future profession is not revealed, their economic situation is suggested as having improved as they managed to become homeowners, and Ama finally allows herself to go on vacation for the first time to Thailand, implying that with interpersonal reconciliation comes the resolution—or rather, the elision—of material concerns.

Conclusion

Grace Ly’s *Jeune fille modèle* and other first-person narratives by French Asian authors appeared in the wake of the 2016 Zhang Chaolin and 2017 Liu Shaoyao cases, in the context of a resurgence of French Asian movements invested in race and racial identity. As these tales come to be apprehended as foundational to the construction of a French Asian culture, the assertion of and emphasis on the position of the second-generation descendants gives shape to a genealogy of French Asian history that begins only after the moment of immigration and becomes subsumed with the standpoint of the descendant, as a citizen-subject incorporated in the nation. Taking the counterpoint to a perspective that has mostly emphasized the contributions of second-generation authors in questioning the French republican model and refashioning it towards a greater recognition and valorization of racial differences, this article foregrounds instead the ways the focus on the French Asian citizen-subject and their struggles in regards to questions of identification and sense of belonging in the nation, diverts from the apprehension of continuing material inequalities and racialized exploitation under racial capitalism.

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Notes

1. The “Comité La Vérité pour Adama” was created in 2016, represented by Assa Traoré, and has been fighting for over five years to bring to justice the police officers responsible for the death in police custody of her brother Adama Traoré.
2. Pictures of these signs have notably been gathered in an Instagram post by the “Asian feminist media” Slashasian (previously Sororasie), combining photographs taken during the

- protests in France and in the U.S. See Slashasian, “Les asiatiques étaient bien présentes à la manifestation historique d’hier en France et ailleurs. Présent.es en 1968, comme en 2020,” Instagram photo, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CA-hWyllvli/>.
3. Mame-Fatou Niang, “Innocence, Ignorance et Arrogance: Les trois grâces de l’anti-noirité en France,” *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 26:4–5 (2022): 361.
 4. Didier Fassin and Eric Fassin, *De la question sociale à la question raciale?: Représenter la société française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2013).
 5. Henri Boyer, André Bercoff, and Guy Lochard, *Scènes de télévision en banlieues, 1950–1994* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998).
 6. Ya-Han Chuang, *Une minorité modèle?: Chinois de France et racisme anti-Asiatiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2021).
 7. See Chloé Luu and Anne Zhou-Thalamy, “Un nouvel antiracisme asiatique? Émergence et structuration de nouvelles pratiques de luttes des personnes perçues comme asiatiques en France” in *Les Cahiers de la LCD* 1, 15 (2022), 65–83.
 8. See “Grace Ly (auteur de Jeune fille modèle),” Babelio and Jessica Gourdon, “Grace Ly, Autrice: “Quand ma mère me parlait devant l’école, j’entendais les moqueries, les imitations d’accent,” *Le Monde*, 2022, <https://z.umn.edu/97cr>.
 9. Grace Ly, *Jeune fille modèle* (Paris: Fayard, 2018).
 10. The late Linda Lê was one of the most prolific writers of Vietnamese descent, with an œuvre of over thirty works including several novels, short stories, and essays that have received literary awards such as *Les Évangiles du crime* (1993), *Les trois Parques* (1999), *Cronos* (2010), and *À l’enfant que je n’aurai pas* (2011). Similarly to Lê, Anna Moï is part of the generation and a half who left Vietnam as an adolescent and studied and lived in France since then. Her works include her most famous novel *Riz noir* (2004), *Le venin du papillon* (2017) and *Douze palais de mémoire* (2021). Minh Tran Huy on the other hand is part of the second generation born in France like Grace Ly. In 2007, Huy published her first novel *La princesse et le pêcheur*. Her other works include *La double vie d’Anna Song* (2011) and *Voyageur malgré lui* (2014).
 11. These words are taken from Grace’s Ly bibliography on the website-catalog Babelio. See “Grace Ly (auteur de Jeune fille modèle),” Babelio, <https://www.babelio.com/auteur/Grace-Ly/484596>.
 12. Binge, “Kiffe ta race,” <https://www.binge.audio/podcast/kiffetarace>.
 13. Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 2002), 3.
 14. See Anita Mannur, *Culinary Fictions: Food in South Asian Diasporic Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple U P, 2009). In the introduction, as she expands on “coconut” as a culinary metaphor used to name “assimilating” South Asian Americans, Mannur refers to “banana” as an analogue term used by Asian Americans as well.
 15. Lapetitebanane, “About,” <https://onetinybanana.wordpress.com/about/>.
 16. See Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction: Voices from the North African Community in France* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1991), and Iona Marcu, *La problématique de “l’entre-deux”: Dans les littératures des “inrangèr-es* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2019).
 17. See Sarah Mazouz, *Race* (Paris: Anamosa, 2020).
 18. In reference to Fanon’s “Je suis sur-déterminé de l’extérieur,” which itself is a reference to Sartre’s quote about Jews’ behavior being “sur-déterminés de l’intérieur” in *Réflexions sur la condition juive*. Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2015), 113).
 19. Doan Bui, *Le silence de mon père* (Paris: Groupe Margot, 2016), 81.
 20. Kei Lam, *Banana girl: Jaune à l’extérieur, blanche à l’intérieur* (Paris: Steinkis, 2017).
 21. Lana Chhor, *Génération peau de banane: ou la vie après les Khmers rouges* (Books on Demand, 2018).
 22. See the back cover of Kei Lam’s *Banana girl*.
 23. See Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke U P, 1996), and Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Race and Resistance*.
 24. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 10.

25. Habiba Sebki, "Littérature(s) issue(s) de l'immigration en France et au Québec" (PhD diss., U of Western Ontario, 2000), 177.
26. Maria Chiara Gnocchi, "La filiation et l'oblique: *Le silence de mon père* de Doan Bui," *Revue italienne d'études françaises*, 9 (2019): 1, crediting Dominique Viart's article "Le silence des pères au principe du 'récit de filiation,'" *Études françaises*, 45:3 (2009) for the notion of "récit de filiation."
27. In reference to Éric Conan and Henry Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).
28. Important scholarly works have justly considered silences and traumas of war being passed on from one generation to the other in the French colonial Indochinese context. See Catherine H. Nguyen, "Vietnam by Removes: Storytelling and Postmemory in Minh Tran Huy," Kathryn Kleppinger and Laura Reeck, eds., *Post-Migratory Cultures in Postcolonial France* (Liverpool: Liverpool U P, 2018), 96–111; Ashwiny O. Kistnareddy, "Dire l'indicible: Children, Trauma and Silences in Kim Thúy's *Ru* and Grace Ly's *Jeune Fille Modèle*," *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 23:1–2 (2020): 99–117; and Caroline D. Laurent, "*Voyageurs malgré eux*: Silence, Embodiment, and Exposure in Minh Tran Huy and Doan Bui," *French Cultural Studies*, 32:4 (2021): 346–63.
29. For instance, in an episode in which Chi Chi and her family face food inspectors (Ly 70–77), the latter's depiction as particularly suspicious towards the hygiene and food safety of the restaurant, and their joking about pets in the freezer and the unknown composition of certain foods, illustrates the racialized stereotypes surrounding Asian restaurants.
30. Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Canes* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U P, 2007), 10.
31. David Palumbo-Liu has previously made this argument regarding the narrator's issues in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, solved through a reconciliation between mother and daughter. David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*. (Redwood: Stanford U P, 1999) cited in Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Race and Resistance*, 149.