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A DISSERTATION

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

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BY

MELVIN BEAUNOROUS TOLSON, JR.

Norman, Oklahoma

1964

THE ROMANS AND RÉCITS OF RENÉ MARAN

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THE ROMANS AND RÉCITS OF RENÉ MARAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Colonial official, poet, critic of colonialism, novelist, biographer of explorers for empire--all these preoccupations filled the long life of René Maran, which began in Fort-de-France, Martinique, on November 5, 1887, and ended on May 9, 1960, in Paris. René's father, a minor clerk in the office of the secretary-general of the island, was twenty years old when his son was born. the mother was two years younger. In the last months of 1890, the father was named to a very modest post in Gabon, in what was then French Equatorial Africa, to the west of the French Congo. It is famous today as the location of the work of Albert Schweitzer at Lambaréné. Maran was living at the capital, Libreville, on the Gulf of Guinea. René had difficulty in trying to become acclimated; and, in 1894, the child's precarious state of health necessitated sending him to France. He was placed in school in Talence, a few kilometers southwest of Bordeaux. Although he was in school, his life was very lonely. This period is described in the autobiographical work Le Coeur serré

of 1931.

To protect himself against youthful tormentors among his playmates, he became "un fort" and made himself be respected. From his earliest years, he also made it a point of honor to gain the first prizes in grammar. This showed that he, a black child, could use the French language better than many natives of the country. The winning of the Goncourt Prize was later to implement this idea with a more solid achievement.

In the years that followed, the lonely René lived in the dormitories through most of the summers. He seldom saw his parents and was frequently in bad health. He became very good at soccer, however, and lived for the academic year when his comrades returned to classes. A younger brother came to live with him, but he died in 1905, leaving the boy more melancholy than ever.

Despite this temperament Maran became a member of a small group of students from the upper class of the lycée, all of whom were interested in writing. The poet Emile Despax was a special friend and had earlier protected him against the careless taunts of his classmates. Members of the "cenacle" were André Lafon, François Mauriac, Louis Piéchaud, Jean de la Ville de Mirmont, and others. They used to meet at the home of one of the professors, Fortunat Strowski, later at the Sorbonne, who lived on the road to Toulouse. By this time René was a student in

the Faculty of Letters at the University of Bordeaux. Jean Balde speaks of his personality at the time:

> Il était alors ce qu'il est resté, laborieux, profondément épris des lettres antiques, d'un stoïcisme, éprouvé par les duretés de la vie et tout nourri de Marc-Aurèle.[1]

With Georges Elis he founded a small magazine: Burdigala. André Lafon, assistant master of the lycée, wrote Les Poèmes provinciaux, which were published by a Flemish house at Lille, the Bibliothèque de Beffroi. Fired by their compatriot's success, several members of the "cenacle" summoned up the courage to submit their own work to the same publisher. Only that of Maran was accepted. This was La Maison du bonheur in 1909.

The sudden death of his father forced upon the conscientious Maran the necessity of providing for the education of his two younger brothers, who had also joined him in France. He therefore abandoned the Continent in 1910 to accept a small colonial post at Bangui in Oubangui-Chari (now the Central African Republic), south of Lake Tchad. He was not happy in leaving his beloved France as he feared both the temperature of the tropical regions and the isolation from his preferred environment. It had originally been the inability to adjust to the climate which had forced his parents to send him to France. His approach to the situation was, nevertheless, not typical:

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[1]Jean Balde, "En marge de Batouala," Revue Hebdomadaire, XII (1921), 563.

> Car maintenant, avec un coeur français, je sens que je suis sur le sol de mes ancêtres, ancêtres que je réprouve parce que je n'ai pas leur mentalité primitive ni leurs goûts, mais ce n'en sont pas moins des ancêtres.[1]

From that time dates the duality which one will see in Maran: the instinctive sympathy felt toward his still barbarous brothers and the secret obligations he felt toward the civilization "qui lui a donné une âme et un cerveau de blanc singulièrement cultivé."[2] His situation forces upon him in all its acuteness the problem of the conflict of races:

> Que sont venus faire les Européens sur cette terre? Ils ont spolié inutilement de pauvres êtres apathiques éternellement ensomnolés auxquels la civilisation fait plus de mal que de bien.[3]

He was accused, when named commissioner of police at Bangui, of being particularly severe. However, it was merely evidence of his highly developed conscientiousness. He often worked more than twelve hours a day: up at five; work until twelve; work from one to seven; surveys of the suburban villages from nine until eleven; reading and writing until early morning. In order to escape the boredom of considerable administrative detail, he asked for a more advanced post and was sent to Grimari in June, 1912. This occurred after a short holiday in France where the entangled business affairs of his father had taken him.

The new post was a week's caravan ride from Fort

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[1]Letter to Léon Bocquet, February 1, 1910. "Préface," Le Petit Roi de Chimérie (Paris: Albin Michel, 1924), p. 15.

[2]Ibid., p. 16. [3]Ibid., p. 16.

Sibut, north of Bangui. The location was more healthful; furthermore, the work was less demanding and left him more time for writing, being more isolated in the jungle. From the pursuit of reflection, of memories and auto-analysis comes his next collection of verse: La Vie intérieure.

He wrote to friends of the numerous forays with soldiers which were often necessary to subdue the tribes which killed the native militia sent to them. Most of the tribes were unpacified, hostile, and very warlike. But his love of physical exercise found new outlets. It was during this period that he wrote letters full of picturesque details on the tribes and the jungle, full of observations on animals and plants. For the first time he was able to enjoy this life. The beauty and charm of the exotic region about him filled his letters. The descriptions, sometimes long, usually short and intense, of moonlight, of strange trees and plants, of storms and rain-spattered air, foreshadowed passages from his books:

> La lune, en son plein, poursuit vers les hautes étoiles, sa lumineuse ascension. Pas de nuages. L'air fait défaut. Quelle oppression! Bruits de danses et de chants. Puis tranquillité, odeurs fortes et légères et rien, rien qu'un murmure assourdi d'eaux sur le brisant des rapides, là-bas.[1]

Toward the end of 1913, his letters reflect a growing concern for the future of France, as war clouds gather. Those

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[1] Ibid., p. 28.

of 1914 are filled with observations on his feelings and those of other officials on the course of the conflict. When, on September 25, 1914, a telegram confirmed the victory of the Marne, joy was unbounded. When March 10, 1915, brought news of the death of his mother, he wanted to return to France and enlist in active service. However, he was already mobilized as a member of the colonial service.

Everywhere in his travels and various posts: Bangui, Grimari, Fort-Crampel, Fort-Sibut, he had carried a large library, to escape the crushing power of equatorial heat and nature, to resist apathy and inertia. He read voluminously in Virgil, Tibullus, Marcus-Aurelius, Sidonius Apollinarius, Lactantius Firmianus, annotating his copies. He ordered hundreds of volumes, commenting the Pléiade, Rutebeuf, Adam de la Halle, Charles d'Orléans, Villon, Rabelais, Brantôme, d'Aubigné, Malherbe, Théophile, La Fontaine. More modern authors found their way with him from post to post: Zola, de Maupassant, Jean Lombard, Pierre Louys, Suarès, Henri de Régnier, Gide, Renan, Albert Samain, Angellier, Louis Ménard, Baudelaire, Bergson, and Tagore. He subscribed faithfully to Mercure de France, la Revue bleue, la Nouvelle Revue Française, La Vie. He further had his Parisian friends send him the young "little magazines" in France and Belgium, from Revue des Deux-Mondes to Belles-Lettres. Time being of little meaning in the tropical posts, he reflected and meditated

upon his reading, commenting on various authors and articles, often months after their appearance, untroubled by the "petites chapelles littéraires" of the capital. He interested himself scrupulously in style, researching etymology syntax and orthography. One can thus understand why Batouala, announced as finished in 1912, was written, unwritten, and rewritten during a period of eight years. a single chapter redone as many as twenty times. Of this novel he remarks:

> J'admire ceux qui peuvent élucubrer en moins de trois mois une histoire de trois cents pages. Ce n'est pourtant pas l'imagination qui me fait défaut. Au contraire. Je suis obligé de la brider. Alors? . . . Alors, je crois que le français est une langue admirable, qu'on ne la soignera jamais assez et que le meilleur moyen de prouver combien on l'aime est de l'écrire aussi bien que possible.
>
> Mais je suis sûr que mon récit apportera une note nouvelle dans la littérature. C'est de l'exotisme vécu, vrai, cru.[1]

Despite the work accomplished, and the winning of the Prix Goncourt of 1921, the novel sustained harsh and even vituperative criticism, principally because of its anti-colonialist preface. It is necessary to distinguish between the novel and its preface. Batouala is an ethnic document that the author has attempted to render as objectively as possible. It is the result of a minute and exhaustive inquiry into the mores of an almost totally unknown people.

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[1] Ibid., p. 41.

To enter into the depth of his characters, Maran learned Sango, the lingua franca of the river villages. He delved into the souls of both black and white with an intensity which elicited howls of disapproval from both sides.

Even more: Maran did not invent his characters, but took them from persons who actually lived and with whom he was intimately acquainted. Under the name "Batouala" the author depicts the real chief of a Banda village, Goara, with whom he often had long palavers. The hatred of the invader, French, English, German or Portuguese, was taken from the words of the chief.

The criticism of colonialism and what it has purported to do is not one of the main themes of the novel. It appears in a few comments and thoughts of the characters although it is part of the intimate fabric of their life. It is, however, in the preface that anti-colonialism is strongly expressed. Maran discusses, not only the degradation produced in the natives and the desecration of fertility and beauty in the land, but also the theme expounded so often by Somerset Maugham: the corruption of the white man working for long periods in the tropics. Naturally, in 1920 colonialism was upheld as a necessary factor in the greatness of France by the politically and economically influential sectors of the nation. Montesquieu had spoken of the impossibility of feeling pity for people so deformed physically as the Africans. The French Empire abounded

with examples of the destruction of people and natural phenomena, for which apologia were written by writers of the eminence of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl.

However, Maran was not appealing to the French to get out of Africa, nor did he desire the continuance of the type of existence led by Batouala and his tribesmen. The preface makes a direct indictment. In it Maran appeals to Frenchmen as a Frenchman. He cries to his "brother writers of France" for support against the methods of colonial rule and the type of men employed in it. He mentions the drunkenness, ignorance, and callousness of some colonial officials. He says that such men, who understand neither the language nor the customs of those they rule, may indeed be a worse oppression than even the most barbarous native customs. Does the fact that native orgies are bloody, customs are barbarous, and laziness seemingly irremediable excuse inhumanity and disguised slavery? It is not civilization that he censures but the manner of certain civilizers. In another letter to Léon Bocquet, he formulates his position very clearly:

> La question dépasse de beaucoup la question de races. Car ce n'est pas une race ici que j'attaque ou que je défends . . . J'appartiens à l'une. J'ai trop de raison pour aimer l'autre qui, au surplus, par les parents de ma mère, a instillé dans mes veines quelques gouttes de sang. Ce n'est pas une question de races. C'est un principe, le fameux principe des nationalités dont on parle tant et que l'on écrase tant.
>
> Fonctionnaires, commerçants, missionnaires, colons, soldats, les Français qui vivent dans ces parages ne sont d'ordinaire que des déchets de France. Instruction

générale: 0. Education: 0.[1]

On the other hand, each time that he met an administrator who was a representative type of civilized man, Maran noted it in his letters. His ideas were not, therefore, doctrinaire and incapable of modification. He was not motivated by a sentimental pity for the destruction of the life of the "unspoiled savage." In the preface he called attention to what he saw in his years spent in the colonies, saying without adornment what he thought should be done about the conditions.

Maran spent a year in France during and after the publication of Batouala, returning to the region of Fort-Archambault in April, 1921. In France he had enjoyed renewed friendships with Manoel Gahisto, Henri de Régnier, Foulon de Vaulx, Jacques Boulenger, and others.

The region around Lake Chad was humid and hot, with mosquitoes, tsetse flies, gnats and other aggravations. It is described in great detail in Bêtes de la brousse when the protagonist is "Bokorro, le serpent python." Despite the conditions, Maran wrote within a year's time the fantastically poetic Le Petit Roi de Chimérie, 1924. This satirical allegory incorporates the names and ideas of hundreds of books, authors, and legends. Characters from Rabelais, La Fontaine, Maeterlinck,

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[1]Ibid., p. 47.

Pierre Louys, Anatole France and Alfred Jarry are found side by side with others from Greek, Roman, Norse, Celtic and Oriental mythologies and fairy tales. Situations imitated from the Bible are interspersed with symbols and learning from the medieval alchemists, Alexandrian and Arabian scholars. It is a treasure house of allusions.

If the autobiographical Un Homme pareil aux autres is to be believed, it was during this period that he met and fell in love with the future Madame Camille Maran. In the remote provinces of central Africa, the amenities of continental France lacked their civilizing rigor. For this reason he attempted to resist this love which the lady herself shared. Maran was understandably reluctant to subject her to the life she might be compelled to lead in the colonial service as wife of a Negro. Finally, however, he ended his colonial office connection and returned to France in 1923 to remain there and be married. René and Camille Maran made their home in Paris. He wrote for newspapers and magazines and did book reviews and critiques on the radio. Invitations to lecture came from France, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The following is a list of some of his lecture subjects:

"La France et le préjugé de couleur."

"A Travers l'âme et le folklore nègre."

"L'Ame noire."

"L'Eglise et sa politique coloniale."

"Racisme et colonialisme."

"L'Apport du noir à l'art européen."

"Le Mouvement littéraire aux Antilles et à la Guyane."

"Les Noirs aux colonies françaises."

Maran was still writing poetry, of which a third volume entitled Le Visage calme had appeared in 1923, after Batouala. Like La Vie intérieure the title was taken from his reading of Marcus Aurelius, whose work had been a sort of breviary to him. This period after his return to France was not an easy one for the author. The acrimony aroused by the publication of Batouala was double-pronged. Official France condemned him as ungrateful for what French civilization had done for him! Negroes condemned the objectivity with which the novel was written. Although later works were to prove superior to this first novel, it was as author of Batouala alone that he was usually known. In the United States, not even his masterpiece, Le Livre de la brousse has been published. When the present Ambassador to Mali, Dr. Mercer Cook, was a professor of French at Howard University, Washington, D. C., he attempted to have a translation published. This personal friend of the author reports that an American publisher said to him: "Maran has shot his bolt in Batoula."[1]

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[1]Mercer Cook, Five French Negro Authors (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, Inc., 1943), p. 132.

The novel was a bestseller in France, Russia and Japan, but from the latter two countries Maran was never able to collect the large royalties due him. Furthermore, publishers in France did not wish to issue his later works. This was partially due to a sensational article attacking the powerful Senegalese deputy and Undersecretary of Colonies, M. Blaise Diagne. Maran denied having written the article (its genre was not his type of work), but it was attributed to him. As Diagne protested through the courts, the case naturally attracted wide attention. The "Tiger of France," Georges Clemenceau, was himself one of the witnesses; and Maran escaped a prison sentence by an eyelash. Only the firm of Albin Michel would accept his manuscripts until 1937, when Librairie Gallimard published his biography of David Livingstone, the African explorer. During this time, however, he contributed to many periodicals: Candide, Je sais tout, Les Lettres françaises, Erasme, Europe, Présence Africaine, Les Nouvelles littéraires, and Les Oeuvres libres. It has been said that the lifting of the publishers' ban, if such it was, was effected by André Gide, one of the guiding spirits of Gallimard.

In 1927, both Djouma, chien de brousse and Journal sans date appeared. The latter book was first intended to be named Roman d'un noir. The title was later changed to Défense d'aimer, published in No. 73 of Les Oeuvres libres. It is now the autobiographical work known as Un Homme pareil aux autres, publish-

ed by Albin Michel in 1947. Le Livre de la brousse, which Cook has called his "masterpiece," was issued in 1934. In 1935 appeared Les Belles Images, another collection of poetry.

In Paris Maran and his wife lived on the sixth floor of a modest Latin Quarter walk-up apartment house. The book-lined walls showed his love of reading: the unpretentiousness of the whole was witness to his refusal to use his talents for the fortune which a less scrupulous person might have amassed in his position. During the years of the War, 1939-1940, he worked diligently in patriotic endeavors. His literary ability and experience in French Equatorial Africa were enlisted by the Colonial services. He contributed unsigned articles to the official bulletin of the Colonial Ministry. He published articles on the Negro in French history, many of which appeared in the Bulletin quotidien of the Service Intercolonial d'Information et de Documentation de la Ministère des Colonies.

During the winter of 1939, one letter to Dr. Cook announces his intention to leave Paris to work on a study of the three Dumas--a project of which nothing else is learned.

Then came the fall of France, and Maran writes despairingly from Bordeaux, where he had gone with his wife. He says that he would kill himself rather than fall into the hands of the Nazis. The latter regarded him rather less than kindly because of his refusal in Paris to collaborate in enlisting

the support of French Negro subjects as well as continental Frenchmen to the new regime. Although he went into hiding when Bordeaux was occupied, his creative writing did not suffer. In June of 1941, Bêtes de la brousse was published by Albin Michel in Paris. Without the help of friends in the Bordeaux region, he would have perished.

In 1938 Gallimard had issued the 267 page study of Livingstone et l'exploration de l'Afrique. This opened a new area of work to Maran, and he pursued it for the remaining twenty years of his life. Returning with his wife to Paris, to the same modest circumstances as before the War, he worked on poetry, imaginative prose, and history. In 1943 and 1946 Albin Michel published Volumes I and II of Les Pionniers de l'Empire; the third volume appeared in 1955. This work, covering more than a thousand pages, is erected on research done by the author in the library of the Société de Géographie. There are no romanticized biographies; everything is painstakingly documented. Among the major and minor figures Maran writes of are Jean de Bethencourt, Anselme d'Isalguier, Jacques Cartier, Jean Ribaut, Samuel Champlain (143 pages), Robert Cavelier de la Salle (165 pages), Belain d'Esnambuc, André Brue, René Madec, and others. Concurrently he published Brazza et la fondation de l'A.E.F. in 1952, and wrote articles on colonialization and peasantry, on Martinique, and overseas French problems.

Maran was interested in other writers and their relation to overseas literature and customs, as one can see from the names of some essays: "Du Roman régionaliste d'expression coloniale," "Andre Gide et l'Afrique noire," :Littérature française d'outre-mer," "Senghor: poète de l'Union francaise." These subjects did not exhaust his writing since Un Homme pareil aux autres, the autobiographical story of his love and marriage, appeared in 1947. His series of jungle stories was continued with Mbala, l'éléphant in 1943, and Bacouya, le cynocéphale, ten years later. The latter was the last story with the bush country of Africa as a locale. His last published work was Le Livre de souvenir of 1963. This is an anthology of his poems written in the years 1909-1960. He died on May 9, 1960, at his apartment in Paris. In addition to the Prix Goncourt of 1921, he has been recipient of the Grand Prix Broquette-Gonin de l'Académie Française in 1942, the Grand Prix de la Société des Gens de Lettres in 1949, and the Grand Prix de la Mer et de l'Outre-Mer in 1950. He is survived by Madame Maran, who still resides in the apartment near the Latin Quarter.

Maran was the first Negro in the French language to tell the truth about certain types of colonists and to reveal the true mentality of the tribal Negro and what he thought of European oppression in the name of civilization. The latter facet of his work has particular importance at the present

time because of its connection with a concept which is widely discussed among Negro thinkers, especially in Europe and Africa. It concerns négritude: the essence, if such exists, of what it is to be a Negro. Underneath, or because of, the cultural accretions--and they are various--is there at the core a difference in being a Negro? The question is being constantly debated in opinions often diametrically opposed. It is true, nevertheless, that the work of Maran must be considered a document for study in such discussions.

Despite his importance historically as the first novelist who was a Negro in the French language, there have been few, if any, lengthy studies on the works of this author. The present writer has elected to study only the novels, but there are works of poetry, history and essays which might profitably be examined in the future. The paucity of such studies might be traced to the special milieu and characters of his works which would ordinarily not attract students of continental French literature. The appeal of such works is too special for general consumption, and the anti-colonialist opinions of the characters do nothing to enhance this appeal.

The novels of René Maran are not limited, however, to their value as historical documents. As artistic evocations of a vastly different milieu, full of characters viewed from a perspective just as different, they have their own excuse for being and, therefore, for study. They are works of imagination

and sensitivity, not of propaganda, despite the adverse publicity suffered by the author. As such they form part of the panorama of literature each of whose works gives edification and delight to its own peculiar degree. These nine works are being studied as examples of the literary art rather than for extra-literary purposes. In fact, there are many other authors whose novels trace in detail the drama of the native in actual contact with white civilization and the traumas that result. This is not at all the preoccupation of Maran. Of the novels, only two: Batouala and Le Livre de la brousse are concerned except incidentally with human characters. Le Coeur serré and Un Homme pareil aux autres are autobiographical works. Le Petit Roi de Chimérie is a parable whose setting is a mythical Oriental-Occidental land. The remaining works, four of them, are depictions of the life of animals--a fact that is obvious from their titles: Djouma, chien de brousse; Bêtes de brousse; M'bala, l'éléphant; and Bacouya, le cynocéphale.

The present work will present a synopsis of each of the works, followed by a study of the style and ideas expressed in them. Because of the similarity of various elements in the novels, it was decided to group them into four chapters corresponding to the four divisions mentioned above: those dealing with human protagonists, the satirical allegory, the autobiographical novels, and those dealing with animal protagonists. Bêtes de la brousse is actually a collection of four short

stories of varied length, but it was included with longer works depicting animals. Since René Maran is not a philosophical novelist nor an essentially psychological one, there are no special sections on these aspects of his work. The authenticity of the milieu is unquestionable, and its impact upon Maran is evidenced in letters to friends in France during the years he spent in colonial service. The six works on the jungle must be recognized as a recreation in imagination of Maran's sojourns in the bush country. All of the works are the dedicated efforts of a man-of-letters who chose, as do most writers, the environment he knew best--in this case, the jungles of French Equatorial Africa.

CHAPTER II

WORKS WITH HUMAN PROTAGONISTS

Batouala: véritable roman nègre

The first published work of René Maran, like that of so many French writers, was a small volume of poetry: La Maison du bonheur, which appeared in 1909. When he accepted his first African post in 1910, he had already begun writing a second volume of verse: La Vie intérieure, published at the end of that year. In the meantime, he was already at work on a novel of which he wrote to his friend Léon Bocquet.[1] As early as 1912 Maran announced that the work was finished, but he continued to alter and refine it for eight more years. On its publication in 1921 it was awarded the Prix Goncourt. This elicited a storm of controversy, principally because of the Preface. Maran called for the elimination and amelioration of the evils practiced in the name of "bringing civilization to the hapless blacks." He had spent ten years in the colonial service and was the commander of a region. His descriptions of some of the spiritual and moral wrecks serving

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[1] Léon Bocquet, "Préface," Le Petit Roi de Chimerie (Paris: Albin Michel, 1924), pp. 34-35.

in positions of authority aroused indignation and cries of sacrilege. As for the novel itself, criticism seldom included its literary merit. One result of the outcry was the refusal of other publishing houses to issue his works.

Batouala: véritable roman nègre (Paris: Albin Michel) is about a very short period in the life of Batouala, chief of many villages, and ends with his death under the claws of a panther. He is paramount chief of a village between the Pombo and Bamba rivers. The region is Ubangui-Chari, one of four colonies in what was French Equatorial Africa, near the center of the continent. It was bounded on the south by the Ubangui River, on the east by the watershed of the Congo and the Nile, and on the north and west by the watershed of the Congo and the Shari. Like the other colonies it was divided into departments, which in turn were subdivided into smaller districts. The department was an administrative unit.

The department of the Kémo in the novel comprised four districts: Fort-de-Possel, Fort-Sibut, Dakoa and Grimari. To the natives--and even the Europeans--they were known only as Kémo, Krébédgé, Kombélé, and Bembé. Fort-Sibut, otherwise Krébédgé, was situated about 190 kilometers north of Bangui, capital of Ubangui-Shari, the European population of which did not exceed 150 persons.

The district of Grimari (or Bembé or Kandjia, from the two names of the river near the government station) was about

120 kilometers east of Krébédgé. The region had once been rich in rubber and had a large population. There were plantations of every kind, teeming with goats and poultry. At the time that Maran wrote Batouala, seven years of colonialization had been the ruin of the area. Villages had grown fewer and farther apart, plantations were disappearing, and livestock was nearing extermination. The natives were broken by incessant toil, for which they were not paid, and were robbed of even the time to sow their own crops. Their numbers grew less and less as disease and famine took their toll among a people whom neither constant internal strife nor frequent raids by enemies had been able to decimate. They were called Bandas, after the nets which they used for hunting in the season when the brousse (bush or scrub country or any area of wild vegetation) was set ablaze.

Outside of the areas of human habitation the district of the Grimari is fertile, picturesque and full of game. Buffalo and wart-hogs abound, as well as guinea-fowl, partridges, turtle-doves and myriads of other creatures. Every part of the district is watered by streams. The trees are, however, sparse and stunted. This is not surprising because the thick equatorial forests stop at Bangui, about 150 miles to the south. Fine trees are not to be seen except in the wooded strips bordering the watercourses.

The rivers wind between heights that the Bandas call Kagas. The nearest kaga to Grimari is the Kossegamba, two

or three kilometers to the southeast of the government station. Two others, Gogo and Biga, are in the N'gapu country, twenty kilometers to the northeast.

The Banda people are divided into tribes: Dacpas, Dakouas, M'bis, Maroubas, Langbassis, Sabangas and N'gapus. These tribes are mentioned in Maran's works, but some have since been destroyed.

The areas described are found today in the Republic of Central Africa, whose capital is Bangui. The population is Sudanic-speaking rather than Bantu-speaking like the peoples of the Congo region. The Republic covers most of the plateau between the Congo and Chad basins, the Ubangui being the main tributary of the Congo.

Batouala: véritable roman nègre was the first novel in an African setting written by a French Negro. After November 5, 1920, Maran, who was on vacation at his home in Bordeaux, sent the novel to Albin Michel. The narrative traces the activities of Batouala and his village through typical days of planting, hunting, and feasting. The central occasion of the novel is a festival which celebrates the circumcision rites of the young men and nubile girls. The villagers gorge themselves on a variety of foods: millet, manioc cakes, bananas, dishfuls of caterpillars, eggs, fish, bitter tomatoes, wild asparagus, meat from the antelope, the elephant, the wart-hog and the buffalo, and several kinds of potatoes. They grow drunk on beer from fermented millet and

maize. There are even a few bottles of Pernod. From neighboring villages come men, women, children, boys, boyesses, slaves and dogs.

As the freshly constructed tomtoms were played, there was dancing and singing. The tribal adults held palavers in which the main topic was the effect of the coming of white men and women to the territory. The war between the "Frandjes" and the "Zalemans" is discussed because some colonial administrators are leaving the country: good news for the natives.

The intrigue upon which the plot is based reaches its climax during the festival scene. It concerns a love affair between the favorite wife of Batouala, named Yassiguindja, and Bissibingui, most handsome young man of the tribe. The latter is renowned among the maidens and married women for his love prowess. He and Yassiguindja have not yet consummated their mutual attraction, but the occasion is approaching. At the height of the ga'nza ceremony, the circumcision occurs and the newly-initiated adults are made drunk with the strong beer. The completion of these rites is the signal for the beginning of the love-dance, whose culmination starts a general sex orgy. In the midst of this orgy Batouala sees Yassiguindja and Bissibingui sinking to the ground. With a roar he chases them into the jungle where they escape.

This occasion itself does not seem, however, to be sufficient grounds to accuse them of adultery; but Batouala begins to plot the death of his former friend. The younger

man is warned by a soothsayer that he must beware of this danger. He must kill his chief. Both men realize this but continue to manifest signs of friendship.

Yassiguindja, who has long been an object of envy in the tribe, is accused of having caused the death of the father of Batouala. She is tried by the traditional method of subjection to dangerous tests. She has a rendezvous with Bissibingui in the jungle and tells him of the ordeals. She fears that she may not be able to overcome the tests except that of poison. It is possible, she says, to avoid death by taking too much of the poison. However, the ordeals of boiling water, poison in the eyes, a red-hot iron in the loins, and hunger and thirst are always lost. Yassiguindja wants to run away with Bissibingui to the Post where he could become a native gendarme. He refuses to go until after the hunt.

At the end of the dry season, a great chase is planned in which the animals will be driven toward the hunters by a series of fires set in the bush. Batouala and Bissibingui realize that this is the time that each will attempt the death of the other. The question in both minds is how the murder will take place. Bissibingui thinks of surprising his enemy in the jungle and making the death look like the work of a panther. Batouala thinks of making an "accident" occur in the burning jungle. Neither does anything. They sit drinking around the small fire, waiting for the hunt to begin.

Batouala relates parables and riddles to the younger man; these express the attitude of the natives toward death, evil spirits, and knowledge. In addition they are clearly warnings of death to Bissibingui.

Finally the noises in the jungle tell the waiting men that the fires are driving the animals toward them. As beasts of every kind flee into the open space occupied by Batouala's men, the chief attempts to kill Bissibingui with a thrown spear at the very instant that a panther attacks his party; but he misses and is disemboweled by the animal himself. His body is carried back to the village where the sorcerer attempts to drive out the evil spirits. His death is, however, a foregone conclusion. When all hope is finally abandoned by the villagers, Bissibingui and Yassiguindja, alone with the festering body, make love. With a supreme, dying effort, Batouala rises in a delirious attempt to reassert his mastery; but he falls with death rattling in his throat as the two lovers flee again into the bush.

The main intrigue of Batouala is a simple one, following the lines of the classic ménage-à-trois set in a primitive, African milieu. There are no complications of plot, and the length of the novel (189 pages) is rather that of a récit or conte than of the classic novel.

If one includes every mention of the characters on any page, the plot development represents only about one-third of the 189 pages. This means that the spinning out of the impli-

cations and relations of the characters is not the principal aim, or at least, the only one, of the author. Batouala is the least flat of the characters, and he never becomes the fully-fleshed individual one expects of more orthodox, Western literature. He is an interesting character because of his difference from what any reader could have expected. His thoughts and emotions are described as typical of those of any native. Their import lies in their divergence from accepted Western modes of acting and feeling.

His favorite and youngest wife, Yassiguindja, has a name that seems to be derived from "yassi" (wife). She is individualized in no way other than one calculated to advance the jealousy necessary to provoke the enmity of Batouala and Bissibingui. One waits until page 118 for a physical description, at her first private meeting with Bissibingui, but long after the triangle has begun:

> Mais, aussi, pourquoi avait-elle au cou un collier à trois rangs de coquillage? Pourquoi, aux pieds, de lourds anneaux de cuivre rouge?
>
> Elle était charmante. Un petit morceau de bois traversait le lobe do son oreille gauche; un autre était fiché à l'aile de la narine droite. Ces bijoux lui donnaient un air distingué, qui ne convenait qu'à elle.
>
> Elles avait les seins plats, de larges hanches, les cuisses rondes et fortes, de fines chevilles. Seuls, les cheveux étaient de ce visage et de ce corps admirables, une femme en état d'impureté devant momentanément renoncer à tout souci d'élégance.[1]

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[1]Maran, Batouala, p. 118.

We are thus able to see in Yassiguindja only the typical figure of a native woman: we take it from the words of her would-be lover that she is more attractive than the others. However, there is no attempt to individualize her.

As for Bissibingui, he is also a typical, cardboard figure, a young warrior ("sixteen winters") desired by women and envied by men:

> Bissibingui jouissait de cette force dans la souplesse, qui est la beauté des mâles. Une ossature parfaite, des épaules et une poitrine craquelées de muscles, pas de ventre, des jambes longues, pleines, nerveuses.
> Lorsqu'il courait, il devait dépasser une m'bala qui fuit en barrissant! Et ne savait-elle pas à quel point il était viril, puisque celles qui l'avaient eu rien qu'une fois s'efforçaient de le retenir, dussent-elles descendre aux supplications et aux larmes, dussent-elles subir ses injures, ses brutalites, son mépris.[1]

This is the longer of two descriptions of Bissibingui. The other, scattered through pages 45-47, employs some of the same terms:

> C'était un jeune homme bien découplé, vigoureux et beau.[2]

> Il s'était développé tout à coup, avait pris du corps et des muscles. C'étaient les yassis qui le recherchaient, non lui, elles. Elles célébraient sa fougue, sa vigueur.[3]

The main character, Batouala, is described even more succinctly than his young rival:

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[1] Ibid., p. 119

[2] Ibid., p. 45.

[3] Ibid., p. 47.

> ... Robuste, membru, excellent marcheur--au lancement de la sagaie ou du couteau de jet, à la course ou à la lutte, il n'avait pas de rival.
>
> D'un bout à l'autre de l'immense pays banda, on renommait sa force légendaire. Ses exploits amoureux ou guerriers, son habileté de vaillant chasseur se perpétuaient en une atmosphère de prodige. ...[1]

It is evidently in the role of Chief of the tribe and as the vehicle of the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of the natives that Batouala is important to the author and to the reader. To form the ménage-à-trois, the author had to give explicit reasons for Batouala's jealousy; another character must comment on the strangeness of the Chief's anger. It is clear that this is not a part of the mores of the Banda-M'bis. Thus, had Batouala been typical in this attitude, there could have been no triangle. The tradition thinks differently than Batouala acted:

> Le possesseur habituel, si on use de son bien, il suffit qu'on le dédommage en poules, en cabris ou en pagnes, du préjudice causé. Et tout est pour le mieux.
>
> Malheureusement, il fallait prévoir qu'il n'en serait pas de même avec Batouala. Jaloux, vindicatif, et violent, on pouvait être sûr que, malgré la coutume, il n'hésiterait pas à supprimer ceux qui passerait sur ses terres. Il voulait être le seul à les ensemencer, les ayant acquises au prix des plus lourds sacrifices.[2]

If the three main characters are briefly described so that they remain two-dimensional, there is a complete absence of details concerning the appearance of other members of the tribe. It is possible that such descriptions might have

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[1] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[2] Ibid., p. 46.

pointed more clearly to the type-casting of Yassiguindja, Bissibingui, and Batouala. The motives leading to the formation of the triangle are the same in this primitive world as would have occurred in a more sophisticated one. However, the cultural dissimilarities between their world and the occidental one are frequently underscored. The flatness of the characters is, therefore, somewhat balanced by the very differences which mark them as exotic and distinctive when compared to standards of western culture. Maran might have chosen to depict in depth the psychology resulting from an interaction of native endowment and the primitive environment. Such a work would be fundamentally different and would tend to ignore the primary concern of the author.

Because of the time devoted to it and its omnipresence, the more important element of the novel is the milieu of Central Africa, just south of the Lake Chad region. From the first page, which describes the hut of Batouala, to the final pages in which his badly wounded body is taken home, the environment fills this brief novel.

The village, a mere collection of huts, is in the middle of the jungle between the fork of the Pombo and Bamba rivers. As in all tropical settings, Nature is vertically and horizontally inescapable:

> Le mur circulaire de la case suinte. Une confuse clarté filtre par le trou lui servant de porte. On entend, sous le chaume, le frottement discret et continu des termites. A l'abri de leurs galères en terre brune, ils fouillent les branchages de la toiture basse, qui leur offre un refuge contre l'humidité et

contre le soleil.[1]

In the jungle, as in the hut of Batouala, there is the constant reminder that the trees and sky have a life that often seems to have little relation with the even more hurried pace kept by insects and animals on the ground and under it. Climate and weather conditions are described in dozens of combinations:

> Là-bas, là-bas, entre Soumana et Yakidji, le sombre des nuages se résout en traînées grisâtres, qui unissent à la terre le ciel.
> C'est la pluie. Pousse par la meme puissance qui a dirigé les nuages, elle fond sur la Bamba, elle se rue sur Grimari.
> A mesure qu'elle progresse, elle comble de brouillards les terres qu'elle a conquises. ...[2]

> Il faisait bon. Des tam-tams. Des chauves-souris. Des hiboux. Des lucioles. Des feux, au loin. Un plein ciel d'étoiles. Et de la rosée, de la rosée![3]

The number of animals, birds, and insects mentioned is amazing in so brief a work: panthers, lions, water buffalo, elephants, armadillos, anteaters, vultures, weaver birds, hornbills, turtledoves, caterpillars, antelopes, monkeys, baboons, crocodiles, snakes, hyeneas, jackals, warrior ants, frogs, toads, termites, dogs, and domestic fowl and animals.

Throughout the work the author uses the technique of speaking to such creatures, and even addressing inanimate phenomena. He achieves an intensification of life by imputing to the animal or to the inanimate a will and purpose that

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[1] Ibid., p. 19. [2] Ibid., p. 58.

[3] Ibid., p. 130.

seem human. This is often done without having resort to a figurative use of the verb:

> Quand l'herbe est inondée, quand tous les plis de terrain sont autant de petits lacs, les crapauds et les grenouilles chantent.
>
> Donnez le ton, grenouilles-mugissantes! Votre voix est grave, profonde, mesurée. Donnez le ton; les crapauds reprendront en choeur! ...
>
> Letteureus et koungbas crapauds et grenouilles chantent. Ils sont heureux de l'humidité qui les entoure. Lorsqu'elle règne ainsi, ils sont vraiment les maîtres du monde.[1]

Inanimate aspects of Nature may be personified, using verbs expressing volition and human motivation:

> Les nuages obstruent le ciel bas. Maintenant, stationnaires, ils dominent la Bamba, la Déla, la Déka; ils dominent les villages de Yakidji et de Soumana, de Yabingui et de Batouala; ils dominent les villages de ... Poumayassi, de Pangakoura; ils dominent toute cette verdure que leur ombre étouffe, suppriment la vie quotidienne et, pleins d'une menace imminente, attendent un signal qui ne vient pas.[2]

Another intensifying technique is to have one of the human characters, Batouala or Bissibingui, begin by speaking <u>about</u> the animal in the third person, and then, without warning, have him assume the role of the animal by speaking in the first person:

> Non, le bamara [lion] ne rugit qu'afin d'exprimer sa joie, une fois dépecée ou agrippée la proie qu'il convoitait. Douhout! ... dout-dout! ... Tout va bien. Ma faim est calmée, ou ne tardera pas à l'être. Je me sens heureux. J'ai envie de jouer à poursuivre mon ombre au soleil. Mon rugissement va terrifier les gogouas et les antilopes du voisinage. Douhout! ... Que les bêtes sont bêtes! ... Douhout! ... Ah! que je ris.[3]

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[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 61.

[2] <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 57-58.

[3] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 25.

Like Jean Giono, René Maran makes Nature a living, pulsating entity whose denizens in the scale below man demand as much completeness of description as man himself. The following scene is a vignette with the ducks as actors:

> Les canards, eux-mêmes, les placides canards, réunis autour d'un chef de bande,--en portant le cou à gauche, en le retirant pour l'allonger derechef, en le baissant, en le haussant, tous les canards glous-saient d'étonnement.
>
> Il semblait que fut survenu un phénomène plus extra-ordinaire que tous les phénomènes connus des canards. Ils remuaient leur queue, cancanaient, cherchaient à droite, à gauche, avaient l'air de s'interroger.
>
> Lorsqu'ils crurent avoir trouvé ce qu'ils cherchaient, --graves, importants, maladroits, l'un derrière l'autre, par rang de taille, ils firent le tour des paniers à caoutchoux, en répétant les mêmes gestes.
>
> A chaque pas de leur brinqueballante promenade, le poids de leur gorge les précipitait un peu en avant.
>
> Cahin-caha, ils s'en furent tenir conciliabule en un coin. De loin en loin, ils regardaient anxieusement du côté de la sortie.
>
> Brusquement, l'un d'eux se décida. Il fit cinq ou six pas vers où le jour blanchissait,--apeuré, battit le sol des ailes afin d'accélérer son élan, s'engouffra par l'ouverture, disparut.
>
> Les autres de l'imiter aussitôt.[1]

This description of the ducks trying to decide to go out into the morning air from Batouala's hut contains only three words which might be considered instances of personnification: "étonnement," ils crurent ...," and "tenir conciliabule." The rest of the language used is factual observation and does not impute to the ducks any power of human thought. It might be said that "anxieusement" and "l'un ... se decida" express attributes of human beings; if so, there still remains

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[1] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

the large number of descriptive elements which are not anthropomorphic. Yet the length of the scene makes it significant, for the ducks have become characters as important as the human ones.

The dog Djouma (native word for "dog") receives an even more extensive treatment in Batouala than the ducks. Maran again uses a combination of the factual and the anthropomorphic to depict the life of Djouma from his earliest days as a pup.

> Au début, la vie lui avait paru pénible. Il ignorait son métier de chien jusqu'à oublier d'aboyer à tout venant.[1]

> Il y avait belle lurette que rien de l'esprit des hommes n'était étranger à Djouma, le petit chien roux! Il y avait longtemps qu'il n'ignorait plus que, s'il voulait rester à faire grasse matinée, personne ne lui porterait de quoi manger![2]

The primitive animism which pervades the world of Batouala assumes even greater proportions than in the examples of the ducks and Djouma. In either explicit or implicit fashion, plants, animals, objects and weather conditions are ascribed a life principle with the ability to choose that makes them similar to men. The wind, for example, is as much alive and purposeful as Batouala himself:

> Le vent du large, souffletant le feuillage des fromagers, s'insinuait entre les branches, frissonnait parmi le vert tendre de leurs jeunes pousses.[3]

In such imagery, the moon becomes a landowner:

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[1] Ibid., pp. 24-25. [2] Ibid., p. 26.

[3] Ibid., p. 33.

> Lentement, sortie de sa case en nuages, la lune parcourt ses plantations d'étoiles.[1]

The moon and the sun are seen as chasing each other across the aerial jungle; the storm wind takes a whip to lash the trees and bushes into submission while threatening the puny lairs of men and beasts with punishment for their insolence. Lightning claws the clouds, trying to reduce the darkness to small pieces. Inanimate things are thus pictured with a will toward purposeful activity.

The practical extension of animism, the belief in and practice of sorcery and magic, is not frequently described; but it is used in the attempted healing of Batouala after he has been mortally wounded by the panther. However, very little space is given to this act of attempted magic; the sorcerer is never characterized and the rites are scarcely sketched in.

> Ainsi, devant la case de Batouala, on avait disposé, suivant les indications du sorcier, sur une manière de petite claie à claire-voie, les gris-gris efficaces, les sachets aromatiques, les amulettes souveraines contre le mauvais oeil, les sonnailles et les clochettes qui terrorisent les malins esprits et les chassent.
>
> Les esprits malins ayant, malgré cela, tardé à disparaître, des voceratrices et des joueurs de "go'nga" vinrent veiller Batouala.
>
> Hélas! on eut beau faire retenir sa case, des cris et des tams-tams les plus affreux, la maladie restait maîtresse. Un génie méchant torturait son corps amaigri. Ce n'était plus la peine de lui serrer fortement le ventre d'une corde! ...[1]

Although the mention of sorcery rites is extremely limited in Batouala, another aspect of tribal life is found in

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[1] Ibid., pp. 184-85.

great abundance: the use of folktales and lore. There are numerous instances of entire stories told by Batouala, most of them being told on one occasion, that of the warning of his rival Bissibingui shortly before the hunt began. He tells of Iili'ngou, the equivalent of Prometheus, who gave fire to mankind, and from whose accidental death men began to die also. Bissibingui refutes this story of the giving of fire by claiming that among another group of tribes the story is told that the ancestors of Djouma, the dog, discovered fire, Batouala replies in this menacing tone:

> Je sais encore beaucoup de choses, Bissibingui, beaucoup de choses qu'il n'est pas bon que tu saches, parce que tu sais déjà plus de choses qu'un homme de ton âge ne devrait connaître.[1]

When Bissibingui does not respond to the threat, Batouala proceeds with a tale of the enmity of Lolo the sun and Ipeu the moon. Drunkenly, he continues with recitals on the "a'mbérépi" (stars); on N'Gakoura, the principal deity of the tribe; on Dad'ra, the meteor. He then relates the legend about Kolikongbo, a hairless dwarf who is both devil and mischief-maker, akin to the Alberich of Wagner. The slaves of Kolikongbo do not mine treasure, but work his numberless plantations for which there are never enough workers.

Great use is made of short, pithy proverbs of the type found in all cultures. They form part of the thought-

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[1] Ibid., p. 142.

fabric of both human beings and animals:

"Absent le bouc, les chèvres jouent."[1]

"Contre l'usage, tout raisonnement est inutile."[2]

"Est mal réveillé qui ne se gratte pas."[3]

"Lorsqu'on ne peut pas manger tout ce que l'on désire, on affirme que l'on n'a plus faim."[4]

Folktales and proverbs are further augmented by the observations of the characters on natural phenomena and on the reasons for their own actions. Two classes of these examples of native reasoning revolve around Batouala's position as the representative of the older, conservative order of life and the native's resentment and disagreement with the philosophy of the white man.

> Par ignorance, jeunesse est volontiers goguenarde. Elle se moque des vieillards et de leur sagesse. Elle n'essaie pas de raisonner. Ou, plutôt, elle croit qu'un éclat de rire vaut un raisonnement.[5]

> Seulement, dans la langue des blancs, ce mot (travail) revêtait un sens étonnant. Il signifiait fatigue sans résultat immédiat ou tangible, soucis, chagrins, douleur, usure de santé, poursuite de buts imaginaires.
> Ah! les blancs. Ils feraient bien mieux de rentrer chez eux, tous. Ils feraient mieux de limiter leurs désirs à des soins domestiques ou à la culture de leurs terres, au lieu de les diriger à la conquête d'un argent stupide.
> La vie est courte. Le travail est pour ceux qui ne la comprendront jamais. La fainéantise ne dégrade pas l'homme. A qui voit juste, elle diffère de la paresse.[6]

> Nous sommes nés pour vivre. Si l'on meurt, c'est que tel a fabriqué un "yorro" ou prononcé des incantations.[7]

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[1] Ibid., p. 63. [2] Ibid., p. 30. [3] Ibid., p. 29.

[4] Ibid., p. 56. [5] Ibid., p. 101. [6] Ibid., p. 21.

[7] Ibid., p. 110.

> La honte du corps est vaine. La pudeur n'est qu'une de ces hypocrisies exportées par les blancs.[1]

Reactions against the rule of the French are found in various places, but especially in the long harangue of Batouala at the palaver just before the beginning of the circumcision ceremony, the "ga'nza." Hatred of the colonialists is expressed by several mouths, and Batouala recounts the history of the incursions of the whites and of their methods of submission and expulsion of the natives. The palaver continues for eleven pages and is finally cut off by the father of Batouala, who calls for more drinking and less talk.

The "ga'nza" is described in pages 80-91. It is accompanied by songs and dancing and drinking. By means of the tomtoms, Batouala has invited friends and relatives from surrounding villages to come and the village is full as the two lines of young men and of young women enter for their initiation into adulthood. They chant to the drum rhythms:

> Ga'nza ... ga'nza ... ga'nza ... ga'nza! ...
> Ce soir, femmes vous serez toutes.
> Vous serez vraiment des hommes, ce soir,
> Après avoir subi le ga'nza,
> Ga'nza ... ga'nza ... ga'nza ... ga'nza! ...
> Ga'nza ... ga'nza ... ga'nza ... ga'nza! ... [1]

After the ceremony everyone begins to dance and drink, and finally an orgy takes place beginning with the Dance of Love.

> Le seul désir était maître.
> Plus de tam-tam. L'on ne jouait plus du kondé ni du balafon. Les exécutants avaient voulu profiter de cette joie qu'ils avaient provoquée, soutenue, élargie.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 87. [2] Ibid., p. 93.

At the height of the debauchery, Batouala sees a couple lowering themselves to the ground and rushes toward them; they are Bissibingui and Yassiguindja, who run away. Suddenly someone cries that the commandant is returning, and everyone runs home, the occasion having abruptly ended.

Whereas, in quotations concerning the differences between youth and older persons, Batouala echoes similarities with the thought of many nations, his treatment of Bissibingui's daring is contrasted with the white man's.

> Irrité, un blanc voit rouge, là, tout de suite. Bandas ou mandjias, sangos ou goubous procèdent autrement. La vengeance n'est pas aliment qui se mange chaud. Il est bon de cacher sa haine sous la plus affectueuse cordialité, la cordialité étant la cendre que l'on répand sur le feu afin de lui permettre de couver. Cases, plantations, cabris, argent meme, on met tout à la disposition de son ennemi. Tout. L'on essaie de prévenir jusqu'a ses demandes. Il faut endormir sa méfiance ...
>
> Ce jeu de dupes peut durer ainsi longtemps. Il ne s'agit que de savoir attendre. La haine est une longue patience.[1]

In the manner which the author uses in innumerable instances of the novel, the above quotation is narrated by him but is made to seem part of the cogitation of Batouala who sits amicably with his rival awaiting the death of his father, who had probably been stricken ill during the "ga'nza." Batouala contemplates the various fates that he might mete out to Bissibingui and decides upon that of the killing "faisant la panthère." The young man had also considered this. It seems to resemble the murders of what has become well-known in the Western world as the "Leopard Society," in which the killer is masked and awaits his victim in ambush.

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[1] Ibid., p. 104.

> Un bond violent. On la (victime) terrasse. On l'étrangle. Après, au moyen d'un couteau ébréché, d'un caillou coupant ou des ongles, on vous lui tranche les veines du cou, comme fait la panthère, et, membre à membre, comme fait la panthère, on vous la déchiquète.[1]

It is not to be thought, however, that Bissibingui is unaware of what is going on in Batouala's mind--in the manner of Othello at the mercy of Iago--, for "Bissibingui raisonnait à peu près de même. Aha! L'admirable spectacle que la vue du cadavre d'un vieil ennemi!"[2]

Not so much space is given to another aspect of tribal life, the finding of the one who has laid a "yorro" or spell on Batouala's father. In the native thinking, it was obvious that he died for this reason since "On est né pour vivre," and death from natural causes is unthinkable. Suspicion turns upon Yassiguindja and she must undergo the tests used to prove guilt or innocence. At a tryst with Bissibingui, she relates what the sorcerer has done, uselessly until then. Despite the supposed innocence proved by the signs, she says, the old ones have decided that she must undergo the poison tests.

> Certes, je ne les crains pas tous. Par exemple, c'est sans répugnance que j'absorberai le "gou'ndi." J'en boirai meme beaucoup. C'est le seul moyen de le rendre inefficace.[3]

This sophistication concerning the best method of defending herself against the poisons is an example of the way in which civilized medicine has grown onto ancient

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[1]Ibid., p. 105. [2]Ibid., p. 106. [3]Ibid., p. 120.

roots, since in our own society, overdosage has often been the cause of a suicide's life being saved.

The above scene is the only one in the novel in which the two would-be lovers face each other and declare their mutual attraction. Everyone and everything has conspired to prevent the realization of their love, but she ends by quoting another example of native parable:

> Mais, vois-tu, l'on a beau accumuler et multiplier les barrages, l'eau va toujours vers l'eau les kagas [hills] eux-mêmes, malgré leur masse, ne peuvent pas empêcher deux rivières de confluer.[1]

Batouala's father, for whose death Yassiguindja is being put to the test, is buried in a short ceremony which details the manner of native burial. He is placed in a sitting position in the grave. Wood and earth are placed on top of him and stamped down. Then his clothes, tools and bed are placed on top. A dance is performed and the death song is sung:

> Nous allons te conduire enfin
> A ta nouvelle demeure,
> O père de Batouala.
> Ne regrette pas la vie.
> Au pays de Kolikongbo,
> Tu seras plus heureux que nous.
> Tu mangeras, tu boiras,
> Jusqu'à plus faim et plus soif.
> Il ne t'en faut pas davantage.
>
> Tu es au pays de Kolikongbo,
> Parmi les anciens des anciens.
> Un jour, nous t'y retrouverons.[2]

It will be remarked that the song contains sentiments

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[1] Ibid., p. 121. [2] Ibid., pp. 107, 109.

reminiscent of the songs sung in churches of all nations to the dead: the lack of need to regret leaving this earth and the expectation that dead and living will meet again in some future place.

The materials which René Maran exploited for Batouala were quite new in the history of French literature. His was the first novel to be situated in the African veldt and to make use of natives as protagonists, attempting to give an insight into their modes of thought and perceptions. Exotic material had been used in travel accounts and narratives since the Voyage autour du monde of Bougainville in 1771. However, none of these were told from the standpoint of the native. In telling this story Maran has a further distinction in being able to benefit from centuries of evolution in the French language itself, from the classic prose of La Princesse de Clèves in 1678 to the epitome of the utilization of all previous styles found in the work of Marcel Proust. In the previous chapter we have seen that his reading spanned the great and many minor writers of Latin and French literature. Such reading and study endowed him with a wealth of linguistic resources analyses of which can profit from the painstaking stylistic research done in fairly recent years by critics like Charles Bally, Elise Richter, Amado Alonso, Martin Turnell, I. Buffum, Charles Bruneau, Leo Spitzer, and Helmut Hatzfeld.

One of the observations in the earlier part of the

chapter concerned the primacy of milieu over individual characterization and plot intrigue in the novel. This would seem at first glance to be the natural outcome of a work which is depicting for the first time a setting and people of which nothing had hitherto been known in literature. However, it must also be realized that such a vision is also the result of the changes which occurred in the French novel during the period of Realism and Naturalism. The emphasis had changed from an interest in the psychological to that in the social and environmental. Turnell has traced this evolution in language to "the dissolution of the traditional world-picture."[1] With Maran's work the author finds it necessary to erect a world-picture which will be recognizable to the reader in the midst of a completely new setting. For this reason the importance of the milieu is easily understood.

Novelists of the 17th and 18th centuries assumed in their readers a familiarity with the type of setting within which the characters met and dealt with the crises to which they were subjected. The rise of scientism in the latter 18th century saw espousal of interest in the picturesque and even the conventional physical environment which has hardly decreased since. Perhaps the ultimate in the detailing of physical phenomena because of their conceived influence on human behavior is found in the works of naturalistic writers of the

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[1]Martin Turnell, The Art of French Fiction (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1959), pp. 25-26.

various countries. The group of novels by James Farrell on Studs Lonigan, so popular in the America of the 'Thirties, could trace its primogeniture to Emile Zola of the 'Nineties. The relation of cause and effect is heavily underscored in these writers.

Despite the influence of late nineteenth century writers on the work of René Maran, the scientific pretentions of such writers are not found in Batouala. Maran is not attempting, like Zola with Etienne Lantier of Germinal, to show the influence of the savage environment upon his characters except insofar as their lives are lived in this milieu and are a part of its fabric. Bissibingui wishes to possess the wife of his Chief, but not for motives bearing any resemblance to those of Julien Sorel toward the wife of his employer: simply because she is the most desirable woman in the novel and the most nearly unattainable. Yassiguindja is not going to be unfaithful to Batouala for the complicated motives that environmental Fate produced in Emma Bovary, but simply because Bissibingui is young, handsome, and renowned for sexual prowess. Thus, the wealth of physical detail is quantitatively even more pervasive than in the typical realist or naturalist novel, but the attempt to trace its effects on the psychology of the characters is absent.

This is not to say, however, that one does not see the influence of environment upon the characters in another

way: the physical. Such effects are to be expected in any novel which situates its action in a real physical setting. One of the most notable passages describing the effect of living in a primitive, tropical setting upon the ability of the native to endure its inconveniences and dangers is found in one of Batouala's mental pestiferations: "a plague on the whites."

> Les blancs, ah, les blance!
> Ils pestent contre la piqure des moustiques. Celle des fourous les irrite. Le bourdonnement des mouches les rend nerveux. Ils ont peur des scorpions, de ces noirs et venimeux prakongos, qui vivent parmi les toitures ruineuses, la pierraille ou les décombres. Ils redoutent les mouches-maçonnes. Tout les inquiète. Un homme digne de ce nom doit-il se soucier de ce qui s'agite et vit autour de lui? Ah, les blancs, les blancs![1]

Naturally the effects of the environment upon choice of housing, clothing, occupations, weapons and pace of living constitutes a truism which need not be pursued here.

The language of René Maran is rich in the linguistic resources which have been developed by the French, particularly in the course of the past two centuries. One of his most evident modes of expression involves impressionistic use of syntax. Fairly recent studies in stylistics have been appearing during this century, and one of them[2] examines at length the literary modes of impressionism and expressionism and grammar. Both

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[1] Ibid., p. 37.

[2] Charles Bally, Elise Richter, Amado Alonso, Raimundo Lida, El Impresionismo en el lenguaje (Argentina: Universidad de Buenos Aires: Departamento Editorial, 1956).

modes of expression are often intermixed within a single passage; however, the following illustrates the spiritualizing of natural forces.

> D'imperceptibles brouillards voilaient la cime des kagas [hills]. Le soleil baissait.... Des nuages s'étirent contre le ciel qu'ils pommellent. Le soleil ... émet des rayons qui se dispersent en gerbes évasées. Enfin, il s'abîme dans la gueule de caïman du vide.[1]

Elise Richter calls this type of passage animistic, rather than personification, because the author has chosen his verbs as vehicles expressing the similarity of the actions of the inanimate with those that might be performed by persons. She cites this as an impressionistic device, one in which the author mirrors the impressions he receives from observation of the phenomena without the correction that naturalistic thinking would produce. Everyday language is full of such utterances which have become so hackneyed that their expressiveness has been lost, but the artist consciously, or at least volitionally, makes use of the techniques for intensifying effect. Thus, Maran says in the passage above that "the sun sets," but he also uses "Fogs veil the summit of the hills," "Clouds stretch out," they "pummel" the sky, and the sun is "engulfed in the cayman's snout." The passage contains a mixture of impressionistic images of varying degrees of novelty and banality. On the same page is found an example of what Mme Richter calls expressionistic personification in its purest form: "Une mélancolie poignante émeut les étoiles

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[1]Rene Maran, Batouala, p. 49.

apparues dans l'infini incolore." Here there is no doubt of the free imaginative activity which was produced in the poet's own mind and then expressed in an image that had no objective basis in reality. This is the type of imagination which is associated with the Romantics when they grafted onto natural phenomena their own mental and emotional states. The fact that certain of these modes of expression have become also stale and banal does not militate against the frequent and effective use of the technique by master writers.

In the matter of stylistic characteristics, one notes the recurrence of a syntactic device in Batouala which produces a moment of suspense in the reader by the transposing or rearranging of idiomatic word order, i.e., hyperbaton:

> Nues, les cheveux huilés de ricin; les oreilles, les narines et les lèvres traversées de verroteries multicolores; chevilles et poignets cerclés de bracelets de cuivre, chacune maintenant les épaules de celle qui la précédait, des femmes vinrent les remplacer.[1]

In such instances, lengthy qualifying phrases and groups of words are given, with the reader often having little conception of what is to follow until the end of the sentence. It seems to be almost typical of Maran's style, particularly in passages of exotic and picturesque description.

In the parts of the book depicting the might and terror of the natural occurrences, Maran makes great use of rhetorical devices such as accumulation, enumeration and repetition. It

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[1] Ibid., p. 83.

is better to speak of these devices together since their use is usually in combination in the novel; the passages have been rearranged typographically to emphasize the device used:

> Les nuages obstruent le ciel bas. Maintenant,
> stationnaires,
> ils dominent la Bamba, la Déla, la Déka;
> ils dominent les villages de Yakidji et de Soumana,
> de Yabingui et de Batouala;
> ils dominent les villages de Bandapou,
> de Tamandé,
> de Yabada,
> de Gratagba,
> de Ooualade,
> de Poumayassi,
> de Pangakoura;
> ils dominent toute cette verdure que leur ombre étouffe,
> suppriment la vie quotidienne et,
> pleins d'une menace imminente,
> attendent un signal qui ne vient pas.[1]

The sentence is constructed for the utmost effect of the ubiquitous power of the storm about to break over the entire countryside, the very names of which increase the presentiment that nothing can escape the coming deluge. Another example is found as the storm becomes more violent:

> Tiède
> torrentielle,
> diluvienne,
> en hordes lourdes,
> rapides,
> serrées,
> infatigables,
> irrésistibles,
> incessantes,
> elle tombe sur la Bamba,
> elle tombe sur la Déla,
> elle tombe sur la Déka.
> Elle tombe sur tous les kagas que l'on voit encore,
> sur tous les horizons que l'on ne voit plus.[2]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 57-58. [2] Ibid., p. 59.

Both of the examples above also illustrate another device frequently used by Maran in such passages: anaphora, or the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive lines. Perhaps the outstanding example of this device in French literature is the famous "Dois-je oublier ...?" speech of Racine's Andromaque in Act III, viii. Enumeration and accumulation are found in Montaigne and later writers, especially of the realist school. In the second quotation, the sentence: "Elle tombe sur tous les kagas que l'on voit encore, sur tous les horizons que l'on ne voit plus," illustrates the use of chiasmus, words used in reverse parallel form and content.

Maran makes effective use of onomatopoeia in various places, furnishing an air of greater authenticity, and often adding to the mystery that so easily adheres to the exotic when he reproduces sounds of creatures unknown to us either by name or by sound. However, in general the onomatopoeic utterances add a freshness and vividness to the descriptions. In the following paragraph, Maran begins and ends with a series of written imitations of sounds. Two long sentences between the onomatopoeic syllables consist of a descriptive sentence with many nouns and adjectives but only one active verb in each sentence.

> Ka-ak ... ka-ak ... titilu ,,, ti-tilu ... kee-ex ... kidi-kidi ... ki-kidi ... dja-ah ,,, dja-ah. ...
> Tintements de sonnailles, chocs de pilons, cliquetis de sagaies, vomissements incoercibles, discrets ou clairs, criards ou rauques, les coasse-

> ments de toutes les sortes de crapauds et de toutes les espèces de grenouilles font yangba.
>
> Grenouilles-mugissantes, crapauds-cymbales, crapauds-buffles et rainettes-forgerons concertent leurs bruits d'enclume, leurs voix cliquetantes et leurs meuglements.
>
> Ti-tilu ... ti-tilu ... kee-ex ... kee-ex ... ka-ak ... Ka-ak ... ki-kidi ... kidi-kidi ...[1]

In each of the two sentences above, the active verb has been underlined to emphasize the light weight it carries in the sentence. This is typical of sentences veering toward the "style substantif." Marcel Cohen[2] speaks of the 19th century as having seen the rise of the verbless "sentence":

> ... L'emploi littéraire d'une phrase de description, quelquefois de raisonnement, sans verbe. (J'appelle phrase, sans m'embarrasser de définitions savantes et plus ou moins contestables, ce qui est compris entre un point et un point (ou autre ponctuation forte) ou le début d'un chapitre et le premier point.)[3]

He further traces examples of it back into the Roman period with Sallust, Tacitus and Plautus.[4] But it is only with Michelet and the later Hugo that it begins to be particularly noticeable in French literature. It contributes to impressionism in style, of which we have noted above several examples in the novel. Furthermore, it must not be supposed that action is totally missing in such sentences. Examination of the following part of the paragraph on page 24 will show that both noun- and adjective-functioning words have

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[1] Ibid., p. 61.

[2] Marcel Cohen, Grammaire et style (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1954).

[3] Ibid., p. 92.

[4] Ibid., p. 95.

often been made to carry the burden of suggested or implied action. In this way there is certainty of action without the limitation that tense would provide: the idea of action can spread around the phrase implying it like ripples around a dropped pebble:

> Tintements de sonnailles, chocs de pilons, cliquetis de sagaies, vomissements incoercibles, discrets ou clairs, criards ou rauques, les coassements de toutes les sortes de crapauds et de toutes les espèces de grenouilles font yangba.[1]

The words underscored all carry implications of action and of sounds which are even stronger than the very weak active verb "font" of the last section.

In a later part of the novel, René Maran has used the purely substantive style in an elliptical "sentence" which follows this one: "Tous les jours ne sont pas jours de fête":

> Après la saison sèche, la saison des pluies, les chants de deuil après les chants de joie et, après le rire, les larmes.[2]

At moments of pithy action, quick in the doing and in the telling, Maran uses sentences syntactically complete, but brief, and even their combination into longer sentences does not prevent the breath units within them from remaining brief:

> Iaha! Le signal! voilà le signal! Le feu est en marche, le feu multiple et brutal, qui réchauffe ou brûle, qui débusque le gibier, détruit les serpents, effraie les fauves, abat l'orgueil des herbes et des arbres, le feu qui défriche les terrains propices aux prochaines semailles et, en passant, les abonnit.[3]

It may be remarked that the verbs above are fitted into phrases whose length seems to mirror somewhat the

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[1] Ibid., p. 61. [2] Ibid., p. 98. [3] Ibid., p. 170.

relative duration of the action: "réchauffe, brûle, débusque, détruit, effraie, and abat," are all parts of short phrases. "Défriche" controls the longest segment of the sentence and its action is the most enduring. "Abonnit" expresses quickly the result, not only of the clearing away of the land, but of all the other actions expressed in the sentence.

Maran sometimes makes of the substantive elements small patches of color such as one sees in close viewing of impressionist paintings, without combining them into larger syntactic units:

> Il faisait bon. Des tams-tams. Des chauves-souris. Des hiboux. Des lucioles. Des feux, au loin. Un plein ciel d'étoiles. Et de la rosée, de la rosée! Ah! qu'il faisait bon![1]

> Routes de brousse, si mouillées au matin et si fraîches; parfums moites, molles senteurs, frissons d'herbes, murmures et, entre les feuilles, frisselis pressé de la brise; brouillards en bruine, vapeurs--des collines et des vallons s'élevant vers le pâle soleil; fumées, bruits vivants, tams-tams, appels, cris, éveil, éveil![2]

The latter quotation, the most extensive of the substantive "sentences" in the novel, contains twenty-one nouns with only two instances of the coordinating conjunction, and without a single active verb. Both examples illustrate a technique one might call literary pointillism, after Seurat. Immediately after the above lines, there is another example of anaphora:

> Trop haut sur les arbres chantent les oiseaux!
> Trop haut tournoie et tournoie le vol des charognards!
> Trop haut est le ciel dont semble l'azure incolore ...[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. . [2] Ibid., p. 153. [3] Ibid.

Another stylistic technique which Maran uses, although not very frequently, is that of directly addressing the character or creature who is the center of the action at the moment. This can be done because of the omnipresent point of view taken by the author, and, sparingly done, it adds to the vividness of the writing. Some might object to it as a way of the author's telling the reader what to think and feel explicitly.

> Batouala, il est bien inutile que tu t'obstines davantage à ne pas vouloir mourir! Vois-tu, eux seuls existent! Ils t'ont supprimé, toi! Tu ne comptes plus pour eux.[1]

> Fuyez, vous aussi, oualas et darra'mbas! Effrayés de l'ombre de vos longues oreilles et de tout, n'ayant plus confiance qu'en la rapidité des zig-zags de votre course, fuyez, fuyez! Craignez le peuple féroce de tous les frères de Djouma. Ne vous terrez plus aux replis de terrains aussi bruns que vos corps. A bas les subterfuges! Meme vos terriers ne sont pas sûrs. Allez droit devant vous, vers où des fumées noirâtres n'annoncent pas que le feu dévore la brousse. Il vous faut fuir, fuir, fuir! ...[2]

In the latter passage, we see that the apostrophizing of the animals before the threat of the fire is used to create a sense of excitement and urgency, the attempted expression of which would be made ordinarily by description and narrative. The addressing of the reader as though he were personally involved in escaping the coming conflagration heightens the tone of the passage. Direct address of this sort is not the usual literary recourse of the author, however. Throughout the book one finds, instead, free indirect discourse much more widely used.

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[1] Ibid., p. 188. [2] Ibid., p. 154.

It was with Gustave Flaubert that the "style indirect libre" became a permanent and much-employed part of the literary arsenal. Albert Thibaudet studied the technique in the works of this author,[1] and Marguerite Lip did a dissertation on the technique some four years later in 1926.[2] It can be found in the work of many writers and is not now remarkable.

In such a passage there is transposition from the first and second persons to the third person. There may be the use of "que" to introduce the clause of indirect discourse, or it may be omitted. There is also generally the transposition of verb tenses with the present becoming the imperfect and the future the conditional after an independent past. In general, one thinks of the "style indirect libre" as being used to place the reflections and observations or questions of the principal character concerned in the third person, as in the following:

> Batouala songeait. Djouma, les poules, les canards et les cabris étaient partis. Il sentit qu'il se devait de les imiter. Et puis, il y avait cette fête de la circoncision. Il n'y avait encore invité personne. Il était temps de réparer cet oubli.[3]

The above lines are obviously in the mind of Batouala; however, Maran seems also to place similar lines in the collective mentality of members of the tribe:

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[1]Albert Thibaudet, Gustave Flaubert, sa vie, ses romans, son style (Paris: Plon, 1922).

[2]Marcel Cohen, op. cit., p. 98.

[3]Maran, op. cit., p. 28.

> Certes, il était bien mort, le père de Batouala. On n'en pouvait douter.
> Après huit jours d'exposition, des essaims de grosses voumas vertes s'acharnant sur sa pourriture, il était grandement temps de le planter en terre.[1]

Maran does not always shift to the imperfect and conditional tenses so that at times one must call the technique a modified "stream of consciousness" form because the tenses are the present and future. In such cases it is often difficult to tell whether the ideas recorded are to be attributed to the character involved or to the author as omnipresent and omniscient. The following quotation is part of an extended passage which is probably meant to give the thoughts of Batouala, but which partakes of the ambiguity just mentioned:

> Les blancs n'ont pas l'air de comprendre l'utilité qu'il y a de savoir ou l'on pose le pied. Les cailloux blessent; la boue favorise les chutes. Avec un peu d'attention, l'on peut éviter chutes et blessures, ou les attenuer. Il n'y a pas perte de temps, pour qui poursuit le moindre effort. Et comme, au surplus, l'expérience nous apprend que le temps n'a pas de valeur, on n'a qu'à s'en remettre à sa sagesse.[2]

On one occasion, the celebration of the death of the father of Batouala, one may notice about six pages of such material styled like indirect discourse and like apostrophes directed to an unknown hearer, unless it be the reader. At the end of the passage we find out they are the thoughts of Batouala:

> Celui qui est vraiment parti pour le lointain pays, son corps raidi ne tarde pas à se decomposer. Ne parlant plus la langue des vivants, par sa puanteur même,

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[1] Ibid., p. 100. [2] Ibid., p. 45.

> il leur exprime le désir qu'il a d'être enterré.
> Comment voulez-vous que les blancs puissent traduire ce langage nuet et admettre la sagesse de la coutume!
> Telles étaient les pensées de Batouala. A voix basse, ils les confiait à Bissibingui.[1]

It is obvious that such language could not be the proper vehicle for thoughts of Batouala, just as Cohen remarks on Zola's attribution of rather too elegant forms of speech to some of his characters.[2]

The present tense and even the compound past are quite frequently used in the novel:

> Le feu que l'on a coutume d'allumer chaque soir, en laissant un grand amas de cendres chaudes encore, s'est lentement consumé au cours de la nuit.[3]

> Bissibingui marche dans la nuit. Il porte un arc, des flèches, un carquois. ...Il a encore deux couteaux de jet. ... Il va ainsi, dans la nuit interminable, sans inquiétude et sans hâte.[4]

One continually sees the influence of the example of major writers of the post-realist school upon Maran in the use of tenses. Sometimes the imperfect and past definite are used according to the grammar-book rules:

> La Pombo franchie, il contourna le village de Batouala et s'en fut vers l'une des huttes désolées où vivait Macoudé, le pêcheur.[5]

At other times the two tenses are used for the expressive and tonal purposes introduced by the prose of the Goncourts and of Flaubert:

> Lorsqu'elle cessait, l'on n'entendait plus que le crépitement de la brousse.[6]

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[1] Ibid., p. 103. [2] Cohen, op. cit., pp. 104sq.

[3] Maran, op. cit., p. 19. [4] Ibid., p. 128.

[5] Ibid., p. 129. [6] Ibid., p. 34.

> Puis la chanson reprenait plus indistincte.[1]
>
> Déçu, le male revint sur ses pas. Il piétinait le sol avec violence.[2]
>
> Depuis combien de temps s'enfonce-t-il dans la nuit, un tison en sa main droite? Lui-même ne le savait pas.[3]

The last two pages of the novel are in part composed of an apostrophe addressed to the dying Batouala who is attempting to assert his mastery one last time. The paragraph before the scene is introduced by a substantive construction and a sentence in the past definite:

> Douceur de vivre, instant de tous le plus merveilleux! Bissibingui s'approcha de Yassiguindja, l'embrassa et ... prit possession de sa chair profonde.[4]

The suffering Batouala is then addressed as though by a friend, who describes the scene. At the end of the novel as the Chief falls like a great tree, the tense reverts to the third person present, as at the beginning of the book:

> Peu à peu les rumeurs s'apaisent. Le sommeil gagne les animaux. Il n'y plus que le silence qui te veille, Batouala, et que la solitude. La grande nuit est sur toi. Dors! Dors.[5]

We see that the last sentences are again turned into an apostrophe directed to Batouala, who is now dead.

The tone of Batouala is more personal than one meets in the ordinary novel not told in the first person. The author attempts to impel identification with the protagonists

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[1] Ibid., p. 34. [2] Ibid., p. 35. [3] Ibid., p. 128.

[5] Ibid., p. 189.

through the use of free indirect discourse and through the technique of directly addressing the characters, animals and natural phenomena. Whereas, one may stand outside of the directly quoted words of the speaker, the use of the "style indirect libre" places in the mouth of the reader the observations made either by the author or the characters. In the numerous interjections, exclamations and apostrophes, the reader is made to speak with the tongue of the author as he observes the events and, therefore, to partake of the latter's opinions.

In the matter of language, the observation of René Maran himself that: "(Ce roman) n'est, à vrai dire, qu'une succession d'eaux-fortes"[1] is very appropriate. The vocabulary is an immediate consequence of the movement toward "le mot juste" which began earlier with the pre-Romantics, such as Chateaubriand. Since the concrete word is most apt to render the impression of the exotic, it is entirely appropriate that one finds an extensive use of the native words for natural phenomena: the names of animals and plants and topographical features, as well as the proper names assigned to various aspects of Nature. Here is a partial list of some of these words reproduced by Maran in French spelling:

Bacouyas: baboon.	M'barta: horse.
Prakongo: scorpion.	Golokoto: turtle-dove.
Tagoua: type of monkey.	Bokoudoubas: larger doves.
N'gouhillé: " " "	Koungbas: type of frog.
Djouma: dog	Letteureus: " " "

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[1] Ibid., p. 9.

Mourou: panther.
Bamara: lion.
Gogouas: buffalo.
Voumas: flies.
Lihouas: type of dove.
Kouloungoulou: centipede.
Voungba: wild boar.
Niaou: cat.
M'bala: elephant.
Koli'ngo: type of lizard.
Darrambas: hares.
Bassagrabas: rhinoceroces.
Oualas: hares
Kokorro: type of serpent.
Cibissis: cane-rats.
Bé'ngué: wart-hog.
Bozobo: antelope.
To'ndorrotos: porcupines.

There are dozens of other names of plants and animals, many of which can not be identified from the text. Greater and more impersonal natural phenomena are also named, often by proper names:

Ipeu la lune.
A'mbérépi: the stars.
N'Gakoura: God.
Poupou le vent.
Do'ndorro: the spirit of stomach aches.
Lolo le soleil.
Kolikongbo the Demon.
Dad'ra the comet.
Koboholo, sleeping sickness.

The small number of examples above give some hint of the variety of native vocabulary which Maran has incorporated into the fabric of the novel and used effectively to elicit the atmosphere of the environment.

Further authenticity is added by the extensive use of onomatopoeia in exclamations and in reproducing the cries of animals and insects:

Pcha-pchapcha: the ducks.
Gologolo: snoring.
Kékéréké: the roosters.
Douhout, dout-dout: lions.
Tac, tac: rifles.

With these utterances attributed to various animals and phenomena one should include the numerous exclamations of surprise, disbelief, amazement, pain, and other emotions, which abound. Such impressionistic devices give great explicitness

to the exoticism of the book.

Maran does not restrict the use of native names to the above-named phenomena. Words which might easily be taken from the French language itself to identify objects and persons common to the Continent are often given the names used by the natives:

Mokoundji: chief.
Tourougou: gendarme.
Doctorro: doctor.
Boundjou: white man.
Pata: five francs.
Bi'mba: one-sou piece.
Tatalita: trumpet.
Yassi: woman.
Li'nghas: drums.
Garabo: pipe.
Yangba: a party.
Boundjoudouli: white tradesman.
Méya: ten sous.
Boundjouvouko: mulatto.
Léa-léa: death agony.
Donvorro: strong wind.

It is not to be thought, however, that all possible phenomena are identified by native or onomatopoeic terms. There are many instances in which it would appear that these might have been used, but for some reason, unknown, more technical, European terms are applied:

La panthère.
Les grenouilles.
Les perdrix.
Les pintades.
Les termites.
Les iguanes.
Les moustiques.
Les chevreaux.
Les merles.
Les crapauds.
Les phacophères: wart-hogs.
Les tourterelles.
Les boeufs sauvages.
Les toucans.
Les tiques.
Les canards.
Les perroquets.
Les charognards.

It is not to say that these terms should not have been used (although "phacopheres" is somewhat pedantic), but where there is such an abundance of native terms, one often expects to find more common creatures such as "canards" identified by a native word. However, there is also the necessity of some

degree of intelligibility for the reader to be considered. Without the introduction of such easily understood words, the novel might well have been a monument to linguistic originality, but a mass of unintelligible gibberish.

In the choice of verbs, one finds another instance of the desire for "le mot propre" in the realization of the novel. Maran renders the actions of his creatures more realistic by the use of exact words to record them:

> Le frottement des termites.
> Le chevrotement des cabris.
> Le ricanement des toucans.
> Les canards gloussaient d'étonnement.
> Les crapauds et les grenouilles coassaient.
> Le lion rugit.
> Le barrissement des m'balas (elephants).

Marcel Cressot has noted the increased use of techniques to attain the exact word in late 19th century writers, such as the Goncourt and Huysmans.[1] According to Cressot the rhetorical devices known as enumeration and accumulation might be considered lexically to be examples of this technique: several terms are tried, one after the other, until the proper term is obtained.

> Soufflant, balourd, grognant, geignard, furieux, le ventre distendu et retentissant du perpétuel donvorro [strong wind] de sa digestion, bassaragba [rhinoceros] arrive, le [l'homme] culbute, le bouscule, le fait, en se couchant sur lui, éclater comme un bambou sec, se relève, le piétine et ne s'en va enfin, patala-patala, que lorsque du cadavre il n'est plus qu'une bouillie sanglante dont, la nuit venue, les chacals se partageront les restes.[2]

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[1]Marcel Cressot, Le Style et ses techniques (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 43.

[2]Maran, op. cit., p. 156.

It is probable, however, that in such a passage as that above, the attribution of the series of adjectives and verbs solely to the desire to achieve "le mot juste" is a bit simplistic in view of the several actions and impressions which the author wishes to express. The scene is too much a series of acts by the rhinoceros, who himself exhibits several distinctive characteristics, to allow a single verb or adjective to carry the fullness of meaning and impression. However, Cressot does not imply a perjorative significance to the use of this technique; he points out possible excesses in its use.

Conclusions on Batouala: véritable roman nègre fall into several areas: character, setting, plot, and style.

In this novel the author either had not discovered how to construct three-dimensional characters, or chose not to. Batouala, Bissibingui and Yassiguindja are cardboard figures when compared to more nuanced portrayals by many other writers. However, their exoticism compensates fully, in my opinion, for the lack of depth in their portraits. They were a new phenomenon in Occidental literature, but their milieu was even more different. Despite the fact that there is no creation of a society of individuals in Batouala, the absence of other characters and the strangeness of the three principals make them appear to be recognizable persons. When Maran depicts the customs and mores of the Bandas through their chief, he is placing in literary annals a character who can

not possibly be confused with any other in literary history. To this extent he has succeeded, and the lack of roundness in the character is not a fault.

The rendering of the milieu is more important to René Maran than the rendering of character. Again the reader is faced with an exoticism which can not be seen anywhere else in French literature. Whereas, Chateaubriand painted a luxuriant jungle in Atala, it was fictitious. Maran placed at the disposal of his literary talent all the years spent in the African jungle areas. The changes in the seasons, the special character of certain climatic conditions, and the influences of the climate upon the human beings and animals are rendered with the eye of a painter.

The plot is frankly a banal one, which has furnished the skeleton for hundreds of stories and plays in literature. It is however, sufficient for this work. An involved plot would have detracted from the parts of the book which are extraordinary: the milieu and the characters. The latter two are the important elements of Batouala, and Maran was correct in using a plot of secondary importance.

The work of any literary artist is inseparable from a consideration of his style. Maran's novel is no exception. Batouala brings into French literature an individual style of great attractiveness. The brief novel employs the full gamut of techniques utilized by writers of the schools after Romanticism without any of the sentimentality of Rousseau or

Bernardin-de-Saint-Pierre in their portayals of natural settings. Maran possesses a luxuriant vocabulary which is not limited to that of continental French. Much of the air of strangeness is rendered by transcriptions of native words into French spelling. The use of onomatopoeia is frequent, as are the verbs which name the exact sounds made by each individual species of animal. The pursuit of "le mot juste" is evident in the use of enumeration, accumulation, anaphora, and repetition with slight rearrangement of words. Only on one occasion does Maran use the jargon known as "petit nègre": in the quoted words of a native gendarme.

The "style indirect libre" in the imperfect and the present tenses is one of the most ubiquitous techniques in the novel. The use of tenses is often virtuosic and does not follow the purely textbook usage of French grammar. The substantive "sentence" is also an outstanding feature of Maran's style, appearing frequently enough to be significant.

The presence of numberless examples of the simile, the metaphor, personification and animism implies an attitude toward the material of the novel which goes beyond questions of mere style, character, plot, or milieu. It is indeed possible that the figurative treatment of the literary data may reflect a continual bias of the author. However, it is certain that such a treatment fits the raw data on which he was working: primitive peoples habitually express ideas and stories in such forms. The same assertion is true for the use

of repetition, which is one of the principal techniques in primitive folklore.

Batouala is not a socio-political novel. It is not permeated with the closely related strands of systematic philosophy. The natives complain about the colonialist aims of the French, but this is because the presence of the invader overlies their entire existence and has produced momentous changes in the traditional pattern of their lives. They can not escape the demands of men armed with rifles. However, such abuses were not the target of Maran in the novel. It should be remembered that it is only in the Preface to Batouala that colonialism is directly attacked. It is as a work of the literary imagination that the novel is to be judged; the attributing of any extra-literary concern to the author is a mis-reading and an injustice. It is the fact that he is an homme de lettres tout pur which makes the following statement of Delavignette so appropriate:

> René Maran est à nos yeux l'écrivain noir de l'Afrique. Mais est-ce vraiment un africain? ... Né pour écrire, il aurait pris, si l'Afrique lui avait manqué, n'importe, quelle autre partie du monde, et n'importe quel sujet. Je me trompe peut-être; mais quand j'entre dans l'oeuvre de René Maran, j'ai le sentiment que je suis dans la pure tradition de notre vie littéraire, et dans cette universalité qui est au-dessus des terres et des races. Oui, René Maran est noir par l'origine; il est d'Afrique par son oeuvre; mais son art classique voit dans le continent africain et dans la race noire, non pas une matrice mais un support.[1]

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[1]Robert Delavignette, "L'Accent africain dans les lettres françaises," Nef, II, No. 12 (1945), 63.

Le Livre de la brousse

The only one of the nine works under consideration which uses human protagonists besides Batouala is entitled Le Livre de la brousse. It was published in 1934, following the autobiographical Le Coeur serré by three years, and was thus the fifth prose work by Maran. The setting in this novel of 287 pages is fundamentally that of Batouala but in a more recessed area where the influence of the white man has not yet penetrated. The chief of the small village near a tributary of the Nioubangui River is named Krébédjé. The latter has become chief on the abdication of Doutomikoh, father of the protagonist of the novel, Kossi. The boy Kossi is first seen on the night of his birth as his mother Yamanga, third wife of Doutomikoh, nurses him. Mourou the panther is prowling around the hut. He smells the boy child--soft and tender--but does not dare attempt to satisfy the wish to eat him.

Kossi grows slowly into manhood surrounded by the loving care of the three wives of Doutomikoh, Yamanga, Bidima and Yeunou, and of two captured slave-girls, Mounou and Toutoulé. His closest friends are Yassi, the daughter of Krébédjé and completely devoted to him, and three companions, Kizikani, Alaouala, and Djékédé. The five of them are continually together. His only enemy is, from earliest youth, Tougoumali, his most direct rival for the affections of Yassi.

He is outrageously spoiled by the five women and Yassi.

But Kossi grows into the most agile and supple youth in the village. It is he who seems to attain the ideal in the minds of the elders who educate the youths in hunting and warring pursuits. He remembers the greatest number of stories told at the palavers; he can ask and solve the hardest riddles, interpret the knottiest parables and allegories. He makes friends easily and becomes the standard by which even older boys are judged. Since the adult warriors spend more time with him, he is the best runner, hunter, tracker, dancer, and most intelligent boy in the village. After passing through the rites of initiation into manhood, changing from the status of an "ndoulou" to that of a "somalé," he becomes renouwned for almost mystical powers of sorcery, of soothsaying and of physical prowess. The only shadow over his life remains that of the rivalry with Tougoumali for the hand of Yassi, who has always remained constant in her scorn of the latter.

At the appropriate time Yassi becomes the wife of Kossi who pays for her dowry in several installments: thirty chickens, seven ducks, twenty well-turned hoes, thirteen iron spears, eleven large baskets of manioc, as many of millet, seventeen goats, of which five are about to give birth, and a present of native soda. It is also about this time, however, that his father Doutomikoh is stabbed through the lung by Tougoumali on the occasion of the latter's asking Krébédjé for his daughter's hand. Kossi, naturally, wishes revenge and it is due him according to the traditions. However, through his powers as a

native doctor, he is able to save his father, and the charge is reduced from that of murder although Doutomikoh is fated to die from his wounds later. Tougoumali saves himself from the traditional fate by the payment of bribes and also because of help given him during the private consideration of his punishment by certain of the Elders, who had become jealous of the growing power and prestige of the young Kossi.

That year of the stabbing of Doutomikoh the rains came earlier than usual, immediately after the great fire-hunt when the natives set fire to the bush to get meat. The rains became a series of storms and deluges which surpassed in violence and destruction any in the memory of living man. It was obvious that Ngakoura, the chief god, was angry, as otherwise such weather would not have prevailed. Kossi and his friends spread the story that the storms were due to the lack of punishment given Tougoumali by the Elders. As the storms continued unabated except for the short period when Doutomikoh was buried, the Elders became alarmed: one day the hut of Tougoumali was discovered empty and bloodstained. This should have ended the storms; but such was not the case. The downpours continued in intensity, and in their wake came starvation, dysentery, pneumonia, floods, death of the live-stock, destruction of the small farms, ravages by hungry animals who returned during the rainy season and invaded the villages, cave-ins of the thatch-covered huts, invasions of ants, beetles, snakes, frogs and toads, and similar catastro-

phies. Obviously, began the rumor. Tougoumali was not at fault, else it was plain the calamities would have ceased. This time the blame turned around upon Kossi, who had in the meantime left the village to set himself and his family up a short distance away at the time of his father's demise because of the failure of the Elders to sentence Tougoumali. His friends, Kizikani, Alaouala and Djekede, and their wives had moved out with him. As the village suffered more and more and the rumors became more venomous, his friends deserted Kossi and moved back with the majority. His wife and mother advised him to make his peace with the Elders and to rejoin his people. Finally, one night when the rain had momentarily ceased, Kossi came to the village and signified his willingness to stop pursuing his independent way by dancing more vigorously and stirringly than ever before. At the height of the delirium a voice came thunderously out of the jungle and demanded that he expiate his sins by giving up his pregnant wife, Yassi, to Ngakoura. Kossi withdraws again to his hut and refuses to consider the idea. At last, under the social pressure, his blood-mother and his two foster mothers, Yamanga, Yeunou and Bidima, abandon him. Yamanga, however, can not stay away from her son, but knowing his choleric nature, she is afraid to revisit what is left of her family and merely watches his hut all day in the rain-soaked jungle. During a lull in the storm, when Yassi lies big with child alone in the hut, and Kossi is away hunting with his dogs Poueupoué and Pieurrorr,

Yamanga steals into the cabin and persuades Yassi to leave with her to give herself up to the god Ngakoura so that Kossi and the village may return to their former prosperity. Kossi returns at the end of the day with meat and finds that his wife is gone, but also that his cabin has been ransacked. He does not go to pieces at this further sign of the enmity of the village:

> Il ne se laissa point abattre par ce nouveau malheur qu'il avait tout fait pour éviter et qui le prenait au dépourvu.
> Il était banda et, bada, l'un des plus hauts dignitaires de la caste des somalés. Il se devait comme tel, de demeurer stoique meme devant la mort.
> Du reste, contre qui se serait-il révolté, puisqu'il ne se passe rien, ici-bas, qui ne doive s'y produire de toute éternité?[1]

The next day, he sees around his hut paw marks that might have been made by a fabulous animal called Bakanga. It appears, however, that with Kossi's intimate knowledge of the ways of the Elders, he realizes that they have to do with this sign; for he merely thinks: "Il était évident que ça se corsait. On en voulait maintenant à sa peau."[2]

Toward the end of the day, however, Kossi finds a most horrible manifestation of the hate and fear of the villagers: Yassi's body lies in the path leading to the village with her dead baby in her arms. Kossi goes into his house with his dogs and spends the night moaning funeral chants.

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[1]Rene Maran, Le Livre de la brousse (Paris: Albin Michel, 1934), p. 264.

[2]Ibid., p. 266.

The next morning, despite the whipping rain and wind there are clamors of sound from the village. When Kossi finally goes out, he finds that the bodies of his wife and future child have disappeared, and there is something in their places which makes him panic immediately and flee into the jungle without taking trouble even to call his dogs--the talisman above all others, a simple but uniquely carved hatchet, which said that his death was near. He could now only prepare to die like a man, like a Banda, like a somalé.

But, after reflecting, Kossi realized that he did not wish to die: life was good and beautiful and he loved it now more than ever. He decided not to let himself submit supinely to the various tortures that tradition required in his case. He would leave the region. On hearing a monstrous racket from the direction of Krébédjé's village, he looks back and sees that a herd of elephants has poured down upon the village and has done the remainder of damage that could be done after the storms: the houses are ruins and the last plantations are destroyed.

Kossi goes to the river and bails out a canoe left by his down-river acquaintances, who have come upstream to trade even in the rainy season. He lets the river carry him along with it as he is not a river man. He sleeps along the bank and continues without food for two or three days. As he is nearing the thundering sound of the Zongo Falls he decides to stop for the night. He has just beached his pirogue at a deserted point when he is wounded and captured by natives.

He is carried to the village, whose language he does not know; but he does know from the preparations and the dancing and palavers that he is to become the pièce de résistance of the next day's menu. In fact, after the men hold their palaver, each comes over and marks with red coloring the area of Kessi's body which he will claim.

Despite the danger Kossi watches with interest the dancing that reaches a fever pitch that evening. He even resents his capturers' not allowing or inviting him to dance with them as he is proud of his ability to mimic or interpret the significant aspects of any natural or otherworldly creature. Towards midnight or later, everyone falls asleep from exertion and Kossi realizes that this is the time for him to attempt an escape. He draws himself cautiously to a fire and burns away the thongs on his ankles. Then he does the same thing with his wrists. He begins to creep silently among the sleeping forms of his enemies, going toward the river bank. He drops to the ground and listens with his ear to it. For the first time in his life he hears a strange trumpet-call. He suddenly understands that this is the call of the white gods of whom he had heard. In his excitement he ceases to crawl and goes running heedlessly to the water amidst cries and shouts from awakened sleepers. He sees that the pirogues are too far left for him to reach: there is nothing but to continue ahead. In the water he sees a log that he imagines he could use to escape. He jumps to the log which turns out

to be an old enemy he had once wounded years before: Moumeu the alligator. He is dragged gurglingly under water to the sound of the first notes of "Au Drapeau!"

Of the setting nothing need be said other than that it is a replica of that found in Batouala. Of the characters, however, there is much more to be said in comparison with the first novel. Our statement concerning Yassiguindja, Bissibingui and Batouala, to the effect that they are flat character-types and have no roundness other than their exoticism for the Western reader, is not applicable in Le Livre de la brousse. Kossi, Yamanga and Yassi ("wife") are better conceived as persons, and the number of characters who intrude into the action is greater than in the Goncourt Prize novel of some fifteen years earlier. In physical appearance Kossi grows into the epitome of Banda manhood, as had the earlier Bissibingui, but his life is traced, although not in consecutive years, from before birth to his untimely death. Thus, one gets the impression of knowing Kossi more intimately than Batouala or Bissibingui. Moreover, he is placed against a background of friends so that differentiating characteristics are much more easily observed. Audacious independence, one of his most striking attributes, is depicted during his youth in scenes with Doutomikoh, his father, with his own mother, Yamanga, and with his foster-mothers and servants as well as with his friends Kizikani, Alaouala and Djékédé. It is shown again just before his initiation rites when he is

wandering in the forest with his friends and Yassi discovers Moumeu the alligator sleeping on a sand-bar in a part of the river far removed from his usual hounts. That time Kossi leads his companions in spearing Moumeu, though the reptile is not killed; the reader finds later that Destiny made Moumeu the instrument of Kossi's death. This quality of independence and his courage make Kossi one of the tribes outstanding men, young or old, and the fear-inspiring upstart in the eyes of the Elders.

Perhaps the greatest illustration of these qualities is found after the stabbing of Doutomikoh, the father, when Kossi opposes the will of the entire tribe and, at first, actually succeeds in effecting a tribal split. His tenacity in the face of the displeasure and penalty exacted by Ngakoura and his flight and voluntary renunciation of the tribe in refusing to be killed by the traditions form the apogee of his expression of independence. Kossi thus becomes a more strongly individualized figure than Batouala.

As for the other characters, however, there is little or no increase in psychological complexity. It must be added that there is little need, since the story theme is the rebellion of Kossi against the will of the tribe as expressed by the Elders, whether right or wrong. Yassi, therefore, is a lovely, adoring, obedient, ever-faithful girl who remains the same, neither more nor less well-defined, throughout the book. Yamanga is typified as "mother-love," even when she

becomes the means by which Yassi and her unborn child are killed and Kossi is dealt the harshest defeat until that time. The three friends are little more than foils to show the superiority of Kossi in everything the four undertake and as a leader. The Elders are unsympathetically depicted as wily, deceitful, envious and oilily arrogant, jealous of their prerogatives, but hesitating to fight openly against the popular hero. The remainder of the tribe exists only as scenery and is never brought forward except in groups when hunting, warring, feasting, gossiping, lamenting, or in similar group activities.

One may point again to Batouala to mention a prominent aspect of the present novel which may not appear from the summary of the plot: the description and personification of animals and other natural phenomena. Thus, the novel begins with the unfolding of daylight over the bush country, with the sounds of awakening animals and fowl given in onomatopoetic terms. Then the first character appears and seems for eighteen pages to be the protagonist of the book: Doppélé the vulture. There is, in fact, no human character other than Kossi who occupies center stage for nearly so long a time. Doppélé is not to be confused with just any buzzard of his species: he is, like Kossi, an individual, and we find him still in the region of the Tomi long after his fellow-vultures have quitted the country:

> Bien vieux ... était Doppélé. La vieillesse l'avait rendu de caractère difficile. Sa renommée,

> sur ce point, n'était plus à faire. La gent ailée ne le savait que trop, personne n'ignorant qu'il était rapace, vorace, coriace, hargneux, quinteux, querelleur, rancunier, de bec cruel et de serres acérées, ni que ses congénères ne frayaient que fort peu avec lui.[1]

Doppélé is individualized as a vulture who no longer migrates during the rainy season with his confreres and who, consequently, lives a somewhat different life for a vulture. Maran further gives a reader a closer inspection of what it might mean to be a vulture by calmly accepting without disgust and with an air of discovery and faint surprise what Everyman knows about them:

> La charognard était sa seule faiblesse. Il n'était pas, à son avis, de friandise qu'on peut comparer à ces belles chairs putréfiées où grouillent les larves et bombillent les mouches. Rien n'égalait leur saveur et leur tendreté. Rien n'était plus sain, plus onctueux, plus succulent, ne dégageait odeur qui rappelât davantage promesse tenue aussitôt que faite.[2]

There is even an air of humor about such a passage akin to that quiet air of amazement that things could be any different, found often in Candide: the author speaks as though this most disgusting thing, from the human standpoint, is perfectly natural, and of course it is from the vulture's point of view.

It is through the eyes of Doppélé that we first see Yamanga and the new-born Kossi, on the day after the latter's birth. This is the way the vulture thinks of the two people:

> Doppélé se rappelait à présent les plaintes, les incantations et les cris qui avaient troublé son sommeil.

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[1] Ibid., p. 14. [2] Ibid., p. 19.

> Voilà pourquoi il avait passé une si mauvaise nuit. Un petit d'homme était né, un de ces dangereux petits êtres verticaux qui n'ont pas d'ailes, un de ces vilains singes sans pelage qui ne sont même pas capables de grimper aux arbres. ...[1]

After a brief mention of Moumeu the alligator and Mourou the panther, Yamanga becomes the center figure, as she goes about her work after the birth of Kossi:

> Selon les us et coutumes de la tribu, Yamanga reprit, en guise de relevailles, le surlendemain memedeses couches, la plupart des travaux qu'elle accomplissait auparavant.[2]

The author details the type of life she lives with the other two wives of Doutomikoh and the lavish care that is given to Kossi, the satisfaction of his every want despite the inconvenience to the lives of all others.

It is only with page 44 that Maran introduces Kossi as the principal figure of the novel. In some twenty pages his early youth is covered and the main traits of his character are manifested. The fourth chapter shows us Kossi at the age of eighteen. Instead of showing the young man in the exercise of some feat of physical prowess, Maran first gives him a scene in which his sleep has been disturbed and ended by worry. He does not understand why he cannot sleep, why he should have such vague worries when he is the most outstanding young man in the village. Suddenly, after having run through many ideas concerning life and death in the bush-country, he stumbles on what has troubled him: the affair

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[1] Ibid., p. 25. [2] Ibid., p. 34.

with Yassi, and the necessity to do something about his rival Tougoumali. He finally falls asleep with the idea of vengeance against the latter on his mind.

From this point on the story deals with the life of Kossi and with his adventures. He inflicts a wound on Moumeu the alligator, who later is the instrument of his death. He takes part in a raid on a rival village from which human victims are dragged to be devoured, in order that their merits be incorporated into the attackers' bodies. He undergoes the rites of manhood, which are not detailed in the novel.

Part II opens some four years later. Once again we see Kossi lying on his mat. This time he is really asleep, but he relives in a nightmare a scene of some months before when a man and his daughter were punished by very horrible deaths for the crime of incest. On awaking he wonders why the scene haunts him so that he dreams of it time and time again:

> Après tout, c'était bien fait pour eux. Ils avaient manqué aux traditions. Les traditions ne les avaient pas manqués.[1]

The reader is not, of course, aware of the significance of this dream, which is a harbinger of the position in which Kossi will later find himself for an entirely different reason. Throughout the novel Maran shows that Kossi is a thinking man who considers and reasons. It is not to be

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[1] Ibid., p. 128.

expected, however, that the philosophy which he expresses has anything in common with ordinary Western philosophy, except in its most laissez-faire and individualistic manifestations. There is definitely nothing of the Christian, Judaic, or Mohammedan ethic; this was evidenced throughout Batouala but Le Livre de la brousse contains far more explicit expressions of philosophy:

> Il était évident pour lui qu'on ne pouvait vivre sa vie qu'en se faisant craindre de tous. Peu importaient les moyens employés pour y parvenir. Il fallait s'imposer à tout prix, la force devenant, de droit, le droit, la loi, la tradition.[1]

> La mort se tenait toujours à l'affût de la vie. Tant pis pour qui se laissait frapper par elle.[2]

> Or, dans la vie, tout s'aplanit devant celui que l'on redoute.[3]

This is the type of idea that one would expect in the environment inhabited by Kossi and his co-villagers, who form a fabric of savage life with the animals and other creatures that live in the bush country. The acts of cannibalism and of the punishment of culprits lends to Man there a ferocity and cruelty not shared by other inhabitants of the jungle, but his higher nerve centers show their importance by the fact that he is the most dangerous of his fellow creatures: Moumeu the alligator is well aware of this fact:

> L'homme à peau noire est un animal plein de ruse. Il en est de plus forts que lui, de plus monstrueux, pas de plus redoutables.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 69. [2] Ibid., p. 70.

[3] Ibid., p. 186. [4] Ibid., p. 94.

Furthermore, the increased complexity of Kossi's personality over that of the earlier Batouala is shown in the reversal of ideas which the author has him undergo. During the early years of his youth and up to the stabbing of his father, Kossi had been very proud of the way he had succeeded in becoming the ideal of a Banda young man. He had learned faster and more thoroughly than any others, than even some of the older men, what is expected of the ideal Banda:

> Il personnifiait ... de façon parfaite, sa race et sa tribu. ... Il vivait en banda, pensait en banda, méprisait tout ce qui n'était pas strictement banda. ...[1]

He is bound to the wisdom of the Elders by links which seem unshakeable for he has almost been created by them:

> Les anciens sont la sagesse même. Ils ont beaucoup vu, beaucoup appris, beaucoup retenu. Rien ne leur est étranger des faits et gestes de l'homme noir.
>
> La vie du village est leur chose. Educateurs en même temps que justiciers, ils la dirigent de manière inflexible et plient au culte des ancêtres les profanes qui se fient à leurs leçons.
>
> Le moindre manquement aux disciplines de la tribu, les plus légères infractions aux lois dont ils ont la maintenance sont le plus souvent reprime avec rigueur.
>
> Le plus souvent, mais pas toujours. Sinon, a quoi leur servirait d'avoir jadis hérité de leurs vieux maîtres la raison et la prud'homie?[2]

One finds, therefore, that there are situations in which the rigor of the traditions is mitigated by further reasoning on the problem at hand by the Elders. All of this has gone into the training and education of Kossi, who has

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[1] Ibid., pp. 68-69. [2] Ibid., p. 112.

become the light of the younger generation in the village:

> Ses maîtres les meilleurs n'avaient plus rien à lui enseigner. D'aucuns, même, s'inclinaient déjà devant ses lumières. Nombre d'anciens se portaient garants de son savoir. Il incarnait, d'après eux, les traditions bandas dans ce qu'elles avaient de plus strict.[1]

His elders felt that they could pass on, content with the person who would later lead the tribe in the old traditions. He was thought to be able to transport his thoughts across distances, and to cast evil spells. He had tortuously gone from grade to grade of the somalé hierarchy and had become a member of the elite who serve Ngakoura as interpreters. His dancing was legendary already, and members of the tribe often begged him to intercede with the great God for them. "Tout marchait donc pour le mieux."[2] And so it was for Kossi until the day he returned from the hunt and found his father stabbed. The tribunal of Ngakoura formed of the Elders did not judge that Doutomikoh's attacker, Tougoumali, be punished. They scarcely made him pay amends: eight chickens and ten kids!

It is at that moment that Kossi begins to question the education he had been given so assiduously:

> A quoi servaient, alors, ces fameuses lois de la brousse qu'on lui avait si durement enseignées, qu'il connaissait sur le bout des doigts et dont il était l'un des mainteneurs?[3]

He wonders why he had not been consulted as one of the leaders of the tribe and thinks that perhaps he should see in

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[1] Ibid., p. 113. [2] Ibid., p. 136. [3] Ibid., p. 168.

this occurrence a warning from the Elders that he had climbed too high:

> On voulait l'abaisser, le reduire à la commune mesure, lui rappeler, quelque grand qu'il se crût être, qu'il n'était qu'un banda parmi des bandas.[1]

He then realizes that it was probably by means of bribes that Tougoumali was able to escape the penalty for his act as well as the trials of poisons which he would have to undergo if there had been doubt of his guilt. Such musings, together with the physical hardship of the fight to save his father's life by dancing, conjurations, medicinal herbs and magic, finally disgust Kossi and he leaves the village with his family to live a short distance away.

Through the course of these pages, one sees Kossi turn from the obedient Banda warrior and upholder of tradition into an embittered rebel against the partiality and jealousy of the Elders he had once revered. All might have been well when his mother and wife persuaded him to return to the village and seek reinstatement among his people, except for the voice, supposedly that of Ngakoura, which came from the jungle and asked for his pregnant Yassi as price of his repentance. Even then Kossi attempts to talk to Krébédjé, chief and father of Yassi, to ask that he be refunded the dowry. The Chief is, however, too cunning to be caught in the trap and blames Ngakoura as the one who must do any remitting of the price Kossi paid for

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[1] Ibid., p. 169.

Yassi. Then Krébédjé offers to convene a council of the Gbangavas, Elders. Foaming with rage Kossi enters the final phase of disillusion with Elders:

> ... Les Anciens, les Anciens! Il en avait jusque-là, des Anciens! Et s'il regrettait quelque chose, c'était d'avoir perdu les belles années de sa jeunesse à s'initier aux disciplines qu'ils enseignaient.[1]

His isolation from the life of the village becomes complete, and the story runs swiftly to its end, summarized above.

The plot of this novel is thus more complicated and more interesting than that of Batouala. There is more human interest in the conflict of Kossi against the injustice, which is made evident, of the Elders, as when Krébédjé smiles at him in a fashion "mi-narquois, mi-patelin" while accusing him of attempting to turn the traditions to his own advantage. There is one element of the plot which jars because of its incongruity with the story's realism: that of the voice of Ngakoura coming from the jungle in a booming rumble of sound. Maran does not attempt to explain this phenomenon, and it seems an unworthy intrusion of the supernatural into a story which does not need it. Even the appearance of Moumeu the alligator at the end as the destroyer of Kossi, who had previously wounded him, is not without its resemblance to the toll of Fate.

The style of this work is essentially that of Batouala; consequently, one finds many instances of enumeration, such as:

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[1] Ibid., p. 253.

Mourou le panthere allait, venait, s'arrêtait, repartait, se mettait à l'affût, reprenait sa marche féline, découvrait ses babines, se faisait des grâces, pourléchait ses moustaches, s'étirait, se détirait, essayait sur un morceau de bois le fil de ses griffes rétractiles, se battait les flancs de sa longue queue, prêtait l'oreille, flairait la case où elle sentait, où elle savait qu'il y avait de le chair fraîche.[1]

Une simple indication des trompettes en bois ou des balafons;
un roulement des maillets de bois plaquant, le tam-tam de leurs accords différents sur le double abcès des li'nghas béants de vide;
un clappement de langue,
un battement de mains,
une note,
un cri,
moins encore at,
les yeux etincelants,
possédé de l'ivresse de la cadence,
en proie à l'enchantement des rythmes--pas,
voltes,
entrechats,
mômeries,
changements de pied--
il dansait à corps perdu et mimait toutes les danses.
toutes les "yangbas":
la danse de l'éléphant,
la danse du rhinocéros acariâtre et coléreux,
la danse de l'hippopotame,
la danse du boeuf sauvage, aux cornes en forme de couteau de jet,
la danse de l'antilope-cheval,
la danse du lion;
la danse de Mourou, la panthère,
la danse de l'hyène,
La danse du phacophère dans une plantation d'ignames ou de patates douces,
la danse du cynocéphale saccageant une bananerie,
la danse du pangolin,
la danse du fourmilier,
la danse du rat palmiste,
la danse de la mangouste en quête de serpents,
la danse du serpent python fascinant des poules ou des macaques,
la danse du charognard,
la danse de l'ciseau mange-miel,

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[1] Ibid., p. 33.

la danse du moustique,
du fourou,
du taon et
de la tique,
la danse du cancrelat,
de la punaise et
du termite,
la danse de la fourmi rouge et
de la fourmi-cadavre,
la danse du pou,
la danse du ver,
la danse de l'araignée aux longues pattes,
la danse du margouillat et
celle de son frère grand, le caïman.[1]

Such passages of extreme length are, however, placed effectively within the general stylistic framework. Maran can use the short, succinct sentence, or as we have seen, the substantive sentence that resembles a stage direction:

> Pas une étoile, au ciel couleur de charbon. Au loin, pas un feu.[2]

As in the passage just quoted, one notices the continued use of parallelism and of chiasmus giving an oracular quality to many passages. Another contributor to this quality is found in the use of exclamations in the form of indirect discourse, which we have already seen to be a favorite technique of Maran:

> Les animaux! ... Les animaux! ,,, Il y en avait! ,,, Il y en avait! ,,, On les voyait. Et là! Et puis là! Et puis la encore.[3]

Speaking as the author, Maran is also capable of lyrical metaphors of great vigor and intensity:

> ... Les arbres dont les branches sifflantes flagellaient l'air de gesticulations désespérées,

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[1]Ibid., pp. 134-35. [2]Ibid., p. 32. [3]Ibid., p. 208.

> lacéraient leurs feuilles, les déchiquetaient, les arrachaient avec rage, cependant que la brousse, prostrée de terreur, gémissait longuement comme un esclave qu'on supplicie.[1]

The words of chants and songs are more profusely used in this novel than in Batouala. The ga'nza or dance of circumcision is not described again, but there are several occasions on which such lyrics are used: Yamanga singing to her child, the death-song of the father killed for incest, the chants of the villagers as he is put to death:

> Homme-chien, qui crèves là-bas,
> Sont-ils beaux, vraiment, sont-ils beaux,
> Les champs noirs de Koliko'mbo?
> Les champs noirs de Koliko'mbo,
> Sont-ils beaux, vraiment, sont-ils beaux,
> Toi, né d'un homme, et pourtant, chien?[2]

Kossi's song on the death of his father is given, as is Yamanga's memory of the song she used to sing to him which she recalls while waiting in the rain outside his hut.

Maran also uses interjections and sounds from the native tongue in appropriate places:

> Des jurons, des exclamations s'entrecroiserent.
> --Dène-dzam!
> --Iche!
> --Ya-ba!
> --Ngákoura!
> --Io![3]

Native names are given to animals and other creatures, as in Batouala; the list is lengthened by these new ones:

Yébrr, le cabri	Doppélé le charognard
Koumba, la pintade	Moumeu, le caïman
Bokoudouba, la tourterelle	Doddro, la perdrix
Bokorro, le serpent-python	Konon, l'hippopotame

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[1] Ibid., p. 31. [2] Ibid., p. 122. [3] Ibid., p. 164.

Bourihiyou, le scarabée
Kolo, la girafe
Donvorro, la tornade
Zaingué, le lézard
Namo, l'autruche
Taha'mba, la fourmi-cadavre
Gato, la poule

There is one element of ideology which was discussed on several occasions in the earlier novel on Batouala, but which is not found in Le Livre de la brousse. This is the place of the white man in the life of the bush country. None of the colonizers appear for they have not yet come so far upriver. At the end of the book, the dying Kossi hears their trumpet calls. Thus, the present novel does not contain the acrid observations concerning changes brought about by the policy of French colonialization, which the adults in Batouala had expounded.

In this novel René Maran shows increased mastery of the novel form through the greater development of the protagonist's personality and the greater complication of plot. He thus does not depend so much upon the local color exoticism of the setting. Insight into the characters takes place also among the animals of the story: the alligator, the panther and the vulture; whereas, in Batouala only the dog was delved into psychologically. Of the ceremonies described in Batouala, the only repetition here is that of the burial rites of Kossi's father; and other rites are depicted for the first time. Finally, one sees the mounting importance of the animal as a vehicle for the novel as shown by the number of passages that portray them. They are still treated with personification, as were Djouma the dog and the and the ducks in Batouala:

> Les poules clossaient d'admiration aux "kekerekes" de leurs coqs. Yebrr et ses chevreaux jouaient a ce jeu stupide que les cabris prisent par-dessus tout et qui consiste, dresse sur ses pattes de derriere, a donner de toute les forces de son front cornu, contre le front cornu de son partenaire.[1]

If any indication had been needed of the fact that the work of Maran is to be judged on its literary merits and that it is not intended for sociological propaganda, Le Livre de la brousse would be the proof. Although the setting and characters are similar to those of Batouala, there is not a hint of the influence of colonialism. Insofar as this story is concerned, it does not exist. It is to be regretted that Maran's detractors would not see the inclusion of the natives' ideas on French incursions of their territory as inevitable and natural in the earlier work. One would hardly expect the people who suffer from colonialist persecutions to be content and happy with that fact. Kossi shows a three-dimensional subtlety which contrasts with the relative simplicity of Batouala, and which indicates Maran's growth as a delineator of personality. This means that the stylistic techniques of Batouala have been placed at the disposal of greater artistic creativity since, in general, one can say that the creation of characters is one of the greater contributions of the novelist. Kossi does not have the stark ferocity of Batouala, but he is more human. His revolt against injustice and the status quo is one that fills the novels of Stendhal, Balzac and othe great writers. If comparisons are to be made, Le Livre de la brousse is a better novel than Batouala.

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[1]Ibid., p. 24.

CHAPTER III

LE PETIT ROI DE CHIMÉRIE

After writing Batouala and seeing it win the Prix Goncourt of 1921 amidst terrific furor, Maran intended to write another Roman d'un nègre. However, the project was not satisfactorily accomplished. Instead, Maran took one year to write Le Petit Roi de Chimérie, "sans hâte et sans préoccupation que de s'enchanter aux mots rares de sa fantaisie de poète."[1]

The work was also written during his African sojourn, following a year's vacation in France. It is radically different from Batouala. It is somewhat shorter, about 170 pages, and the author classes it as a "récit." The title, The Little King of Chimeria, places it immediately in the realm of the folk tale, the fairy tale, mythology, and legends. One recalls titles such as Le Petit Prince, Le Petit Chose, Le Petit Chaperon rouge, Le Petit Poucet, etc. The word "chimérie," coming obviously from "chimère," or "chimera," brings to mind the legendary monster and has come to refer to any idea or notion that is vain, fanciful, illu-

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[1]René Maran, Le Petit Roi de Chimérie, Préface de Léon Bocquet (Paris: Albin Michel, 1924), p. 59.

sory or utopic. The beginning words of the story re-affirm this impression: "Il était une fois un pays merveilleux, qu'on appelait le royaume de Chimérie."[1]

Maran gives first a short description of the countryside and the cities, reminding one strongly of Voltaire's description of Eldorado as a utopia, except that there is more variety in the exactness of detail with which the latter spins out the wonders of Chimérie, as befits an author of the early 20th century whose literary nourishment has included the great realists and their descendants. Maran pictures a land of perfect contentment except that the inhabitants inveigh against "des peuples que l'exégèse et les compilations les plus énormes plongeaient dans le ravissement."[2] In order that this paradise not be too pallid or bland, the author allows phenomena to exist that furnish piquancy and even a sense of uneasiness. One of them is found in the description of a perfect evening during which the following phenomenon is perceived:

> Seuls, étouffant parfois de trop douces harmonies, des aboiements formidables signalaient aux ténèbres que basilics et que tarasques veillaient aux mauvais génies, quelque part, on ne savait où, sur les terrasses.[3]

All gods are assuaged because they all have temples; and man envisions death as a return to participation in vegetable beauty.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 59-60. [2] Ibid., 69. [3] Ibid., p. 68.

In the capital city, Onirinour-sur-Hermose, lives the king of Chimérie, Miragine, with his queen, Moinelle. The resemblance of his name to "mirage" is hardly unintentional; her name might conceivably be related to "moineau" (sparrow). The King believes in chiromancy, rhabdomancy, hypnosis, the philosophical stone, necromancy, magic knocks, telepathy, levitation, and ectoplasmic phenomena as well as astrology and fortune-telling; but he prefers flowers, animals, trees, stones, the wind, fountains and all that through which visible or secret life makes itself felt.

Miragine and Moinelle had one regret: that they had no child. But that was later resolved by the birth of Mimeuse.

Miragine had three remarkable friends: Pausole, King of Tryphème, Gralon, King of the City of Ys, and Ubu. The first had an immoderate love of cherries, and a very independent daughter, Aline, who traveled unchaperoned everywhere. Gralon was king of the fabled city Ys-in-danger-from-the-sea. Ubu is taken by Maran from the satirical farce by Alfred Jarry that appeared in 1896. Maran calls him the last king of the former kingdom of Utopia. He also makes him the "frère de lait d'un des arrière-petits-neveux de Grangousier, chef d'une maison puissante apparentée à celle de Chimérie."[1] Ubu no longer had a kingdom and lived with Miragine. His

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[1] Ibid., p. 77.

description fits the one for Jarry's Ubu: loud-mouthed, insolent, carousing, liar, braggart, pilferer, whore-mongering, drunkard, mocker. "Il conservait sa raison au milieu des pires débauches, mais aurait cru se déshonorer en ne la formulant pas en phrases les plus ordes."[1] Because Miragine wished to spend his time in reveries, Ubu was given the former's authority. Because Ubu wished to spend as much time as possible carousing, he delegated the authority to the first passerby. Maran reveals one of the ironical aspects of this paradise in the next lines:

> A chaque nouvelle régence d'Ubu, le peuple grognait. Faut-il ajouter que ces grognements ne duraient guère? Tout le monde, avec raison, était persuadé qu'il n'y avait pas de pays sous le ciel qui put valoir celui de Chimérie. Et cette certitude à elle seule suffisait à ramener au calme tous les esprits. ...[2]

This is another reference to Candide where Voltaire has the young man's tutor, Pangloss, proclaim this earth as the best of all possible worlds. It is obvious to the reader that Ubu Roi must have been a far more harmful Regent than the simple-minded Baron Thunder-ten-Tronckh of Westphalia. The people of the country, however, were blithely unaware and heedless of the consequences.

We find out soon after that the small indications of possible imperfections in this fairy world are more than accurate. We are told that the neighbor of the king of Thule

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[1] Ibid., p. 78. [2] Ibid.

(famous in Greek and Roman accounts as the land farthest north is Rouge II, king of the Trolls (supernatural beings in Germanic and Scandinavian folklore, either dwarfs or giants, inhabiting caves) as well as emperor of the Kobolds in German folklore (a mischievous gnome who lived underground). We can see that the portents for the future relations between Chimérie and Troll-Kobold are not good. Unfortunately, Thulé is on the opposite side of the latter kingdom, although bound by friendship to Chimérie.

At this stage of the story, one already begins to see that Maran is writing more than a simple fairy tale. Or perhaps it is more nearly accurate to say that, like myths and legends in any culture, the story is used to explain and to make vivid certain symbolic or underlying truths whose narration as ideas would not be colorful or memorable enough to serve as lessons for mankind. It is a psychological commonplace that a person often remembers the example when the truth it was to illustrate has been forgotten. The diplomatic situation described in these pages is actually a fanciful representation of that existing in Europe at the eve of the First World War. Chimérie is France; Thulé is Scandinavia; Allemonde is not Germany, but Denmark; Troll-Kobold is Prussian Germany; Austres, ruled by "un vieil archiduc," must refer to the Austro-Hungarian empire. Later names are added to complete the picture: the Dunsinanique kingdom may be a play on the word "Dunsinane" Hill close to Birnam

Wood, famous in Shakespeare's Macbeth (in the prophecy on the downfall of the protagonist) and signifying, therefore, England-Scotland. "La neutralité bienveillante du roi des Hadrians" may refer to Italy in the person of one of the greatest of her emperors.

In the court of Miragine there were three physicians who are consulted by the king and queen, who wish to have a child. Nosobale spent 250 days examining the royal pair with the aid of all the alchemical knowledge he had accumulated, and failed. When he appealed for help to Pantocurante, the second doctor, the discussion became so acrid that the court was divided into the Nosobalians and the Pantocurantists. Quinquengrogne, third physician, attempted unsuccessfully to draw attention back to the queen, whose condition had been rather interesting for some nine months past. However, the divided wranglers could not be diverted. It was after a year's pregnancy that Moinelle gave birth to a son.

> La longue gestation qui précéda la naissance de Mimeuse ne paraîtra étrange qu'aux gens par trop déraisonnables. Il est très regrettable pour les mécréants que notre époque ne soit plus riche en événements pareils. Jadis il n'en était pas ainsi.[1]

The author goes on to connect this birth with that of Gargantua, narrated in Book I, Chapter 3 of Pantagruel. Gargamelle is said by Rabelais to have carried the baby for eleven months and to have brought him forth from the left ear.

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[1] Ibid., p. 95.

He also mentions the Virgin Mary and Minerva as further instances of extraordinary births.

There follow pages on the rearing of Mimeuse and the things he learned. "On lui apprit tout ce qui était inutile: l'honnêteté, la franchise, la dignité, la bonté, la gratitude et la politesse."[1]

About this same time the king of Thulé had a daughter whom he named Kovléna; she was affianced to Mimeuse from the time of her birth.

At the age of eighteen, Mimeuse was given the throne by his father Miragine, who abdicated. From that day, each night, a star shone brightly over Onirinour: sign of the happiness of heaven. Emperors, maharajahs, princes, kings, samourais, pharaohs, princelings and podestas were invited to celebrate the abdication. Merlin the Magician, the fairies and their people were also invited One regrettable omission, however, was Carabosse the Evil Fairy. This neglect was to be almost fatal for Chimérie. In the manetime, however, the Magi--Gaspard, Melchior and Balthazar--left their countries and made the trip to Chimérie, unknown to each other. They spoke, when they arrived, of the other occasion on which they had followed a star to Bethlehem. The comment which follows this account is notable for its reflection of the ideas the narrator attributes to Mimeuse after listening to the Three Wise Men:

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[1]Ibid., p. 99.

> Emerveillé, Mimeuse les embrassa longuement, les yeux rouges de larmes, ayant compris que l'étoile du temps jadis, hélas! était morte, et avec elle un immense espoir, et que celle qui éclairait sa propre destinée elle aussi mourrait, parce que les étoiles, comme les hommes, vivent et meurent.[1]

On the surface, the final line would appear to repeat only what is known to astronomy and physics, but the significance is more than this. The sadness which accompanies his observation is a comment on the frailty of human existence, but it is also a denigration of the Christian belief that makes the appearance of the Star and the journey of the Magi a capital event in man's history. By accepting the story on its literal level without question, and then by explaining it away in the manner above, the narrator, or Mimeuse, makes the Christian story seem even more insignificant than if its reality had been denied.

The guests continue to arrive and a list of their names is a roll-call of mythological and legendary annals: la reine Pédauque, Pelléas, Mélisande, Balkis queen of Sheba, Ahasvérus the Wandering Jew, the Begum of Koh-I-Noor, and dozens of others with their retinues and accoutrements which the narrator fulsomely describes. At the climax of the description, the river Hermose (cf., Spanish "hermosa") which runs through and around the city is suddenly filled with flowers, trees and a bridge. Naiads, fauns, dryads, nymphs, gnomes, imps, sprites, elves, pixies, demons,

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[1] Ibid., pp. 107-08.

pygmies, ondines, sylphs, goblins--all the fairy folk come to the celebration. Birds of all kinds sing and soar through the air. Saurians of all descriptions swim in the river waters. At the sound of music, the inhabitants of the world's most famous fairy tales appear, as well as the great lovers of history. The fairies are led by Merlin and the fairy sister of King Arthur, Morgan. Oberon, Queen Mab, Urgèle, Lady of the Lake, Titania, Alcuin, the Phoenix and the Roc--all are present.

Finally the last of the host has gone and the fairy river-garden, called Brocéliande, is closed. Others come to the festivals, such as Don Quixote de la Mancha and Dulcinea and Sancho Panza. At the height of the dancing and feasting, the voice of the Blue Bird of Happiness is heard. As the Blue Bird is singing, the sky darkens, lightning flashes, the wind begins to howl, and a storm rages, drowning out the Bird's voice. The frightful laughter of Carabosse the Wicked Fairy is heard. She has come to punish Mimeuse and Chimérie for having neglected to invite her. She takes away the king's shadow and reflection. She says that she will rescind all punishment, to which she has added the threat of giving Troll-Kobold the riches of Chimérie, if Mimeuse consents to marry her. He is repelled by the idea, and she gives his shadow and reflection to Rouge II, her godson, a condition of which the narrator says:

> Et celle-ci dura longtemps, si longtemps, que les chroniques de l'époque n'ont jamais pu savoir si elle

> excéda quarante-quatre semaines, quarante-quatre mois ou quarante-quatre ans. ...[1]

Thus ends Part One of the "récit." Part Two takes up the dire results of the curse of Carabosse. Nature refuses to flower as before; vampires and werewolves begin to take their toll of children and unsuspecting adults. Tombs are opened and dead bodies disappear, to be replaced by ghosts which take over houses and the night roads. On the sea, giant octopi and squids swallow up vessels; in far-off countries huge carnivorous plants devour men. Everywhere there are earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, waterspouts, cyclones. It is during such an uproar that Atlantis disappeared, says the narrator.

> Qu'était devenue cette contrée merveilleuse, où l'age d'or continuait de florir? Avait-elle, sous les flots, été rejoindre le Jardin des Hespérides? L'éther l'avait-elle dissoute? On n'en savait rien. Et de n'en rien savoir, la terreur augmenta.[1]

After setting this scene, the story reaffirms the resemblance to the history of World War I mentioned previously. Troll-Kobold resents the coalition, soon to be strengthened by marriage, of Thulé and Chimérie, and foments rebellion and revolt. The killing of Pelléas and Mélisande by Golaud was the ostensible cause of the war. The Ksar of Thulé wished to avenge Arkel le Vieil, king of Allemonde, and he knew that Golaud was supported by the Archduke of Austres, who had promised to dethrone Arkel and make Golaud king.

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[1] Ibid., p. 154.

> Le roi des Trolls exultait. Son plus secret désir était exaucé. Avant de mourir, il avait sa guerre. Et il la prévoyait courte, fraîche et joyeuse.[1]

All of Chimérie girded itself for combat and every segment of the population exerted itself to achieve victory. Yellow- and black-skinned men arrived from colonies overseas; Dunsinanique also took up arms; the kingdom of Hadrian remained neutral; Lusitania offered men and munitions. Discoveries in better munitions were made. The generalissimo of the armies was named Croquemitaine. His outstanding qualifications for the position were well-attested by the title of an authoritative treatise: "The Defensive Role of the Spear in an Offensive Retreat"!--the irony of the author is conspicuous throughout the account. To show their patriotism women banished luxury, elegance, jewels and, for the first time, swore fidelity to husbands and lovers. Pausole of Tryphème had to give up cherries, and even more prodigious was Ubu's forsaking revelry and debauchery, except on occasion. Cabinet ministers began to work at their jobs, but as this was something entirely new for them, they were not very successful at it, doing little to aid the war effort.

Events were precipitated. Croquemitaine directed his armies against the Trolls, whose defeat was forecast without exception by necromancers, pythonesses, diviners, gypsies, sleep-walkers, sorcerers, etc. The Trolls were not, however,

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[1] Ibid., p. 158.

aware of their imminently foretold defeat and launched a successful attack against Ys with projectiles and airplanes. City after city fell until the capital itself was besieged. Its fall was the final knell for the country and the debacle began with whole populations fleeing to Chimérie. The comment of the narrator on the terror of those in flight might be applied to any similar crisis of humanity:

> Ces jours-là tout ce que tu avais construit disparait, le masque tombe et ta laideur foncière est révélée. Ces jours-là, toutes les races se rejoignent, et se comprennent et se confondent. Plus de clans, plus de castes, plus de familles. Le seul instinct règne. Il n'y a plus que des animaux, de force inégale, qui veulent vivre, quand meme; qui luttent pour vivre, et qui mordent, et qui tuent, et qui, ayant tué, passent, sans un regard derrière l'épaule, sur le corps de ceux qu'ils ont tués.
> Adieu les rêves! adieu l'illusion![1]

During the late summer, however, the Chimerian troops reached their homeland and the bulwarks erected there and started a counter-offensive that took the Trolls by surprise. In addition, the king of Ys and some of his units had succeeded in escaping; and the Ksar of Thulé managed to gain some victories in his country. Thus, the climate looked far better than formerly. However, just at this time there occurred a loss of confidence in their leaders among the Chimerians at home. All those who could, including cabinet ministers, abandoned the capital Onirinour to go to Ausonelle, a city of leisure and vice. Ubu Roi had deteriorated completely and was now avoided even by his friends. However, Mimeuse, Don

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[1] Ibid., p. 176.

Quixote, Sancho Panza and the old general San-Rafaele, who had assumed the defense of the city, remained in Onirinour with the astrologer Nosobale. Finally, Mimeuse saw the star that had blessed his birth shining very brightly. He took this as a portent of victory and sent San-Rafaele into the field with all the men he could gather. The next four pages describe the battle as though Chimérie were a beautiful woman fighting against a band of brigands whom she finally overwhelms with the help of her family who have heard her cries. The narrator says:

> Telle fut cette victoire anonyme, que seuls les historiens appellent victoire de la Matrone, du nom, du fleuve qui passe à l'endroit où les belligérants se livrèrent bataille.[1]

This is obviously a reference to the Battle of the Marne in early September, 1914. Maran places the time of the battle in the revolutionary month of Fructidor, i.e., August 18th to September 21st, further underlining the allusion to the Marne. It could hardly be to the second Battle of the Marne, on July 15, 1918, that he refers since the Chimerians continue to fight for several months more. On the other hand, however, it is not perhaps necessary to press too closely analogies between the fiction here and the real battles, which probably served only as a springboard for the writer.

For months the war dragged on without complete victory or defeat on either side. Back in the cities the

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[1] Ibid., p. 188.

attitudes of the early days of dedication changed. People began to rationalize a return to infidelity, to selfishness and to forgetfulness. Mimeuse himself wanted only to be left alone with his reveries, although he realized that he had to infuse his generals with the spirit to persist which they lacked. More months passed. Almost a year later, the Trolls launched a massive attack to wipe out Chimérie. After a moment of panic, the Chimerians stiffened their resistance and fought the Trolls to the exhaustion of the latter. There was a reshuffling of the generals to assure more victories; as a last resort, Mimeuse called on the devotion of Ubu and his energy. He accepted without hesitation. From that moment everything changed for the Chimerians. Ubu became a dictator and controlled every office and aspect of public life. Generals were deposed again; Harimata, famous spy (Mata Hari), was finally "suppressed." Ubu succeeded in rekindling the flames of patriotism and the Chimerians fought as never before.

There was another moment of interest in which the king of Thule, because of whom the struggle had originally been started, abandoned the Chimerians and broke off the engagement of his Kovléna and Mimeuse. General Foulque was placed in supreme command of armed forces and led them to victory. The Trolls, in order to avoid the pillaging of their own country, humbly requested peace terms. The month is Brumaire (October 21-November 22).

After the peace treaty is settled, the generals and ministers are at the acme of joy and self-congratulation. They are also the idols of the populace. Mimeuse, however, wanders the battlefield immersed in thought or rather as though he were listening for something. He hears a low growling sound which is that of a river of blood. This is of course an illusion, and marks the first time in many pages that the fantastic is again described. In addition to the river bearing the terrible human fruit of the war, he sees before him when the image of the river begins to fade a growing pyramid of skulls. Then the earth tears itself open and throws out millions of cadavers. Mimeuse hears the cries, moans and screams of the men, women, and children who died in that and all other wars. At last he can bear them no longer and begs to be left alone with his dreams which had nourished him for so long. The horrible visions vanish, but Mimeuse faints on hearing these words:

> Petit roi de Chimérie, nous croyons comme toi que tes rêves valent mieux que la réalité. Rappelle-toi cependant qu'ils ne sont que des rêves. Et, surtout, n'aie pas l'ingratitude d'oublier que nous n'avons consenti à mourir que pour que tu puisses les poursuivre à ton gré.[1]

When he awakes, the courtiers are mourning his death. He himself is brought up short by the realization that he has spent his life dreaming instead of acting, not realizing his egoism and nourishing himself on utopias. He finds that

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[1] Ibid., p. 224.

the good fairies have saved him, but that his cure, part of which is to stop dreaming for years, depends upon his will power. Moreover, he has now the task of leading his people himself, and he must see that he and his ministers give their best to the tasks ahead. Thus at the end of the war, Mimeuse is brought to a total rejection of the philosophy which he had espoused during his youth before his accession to the throne. At that time action was anathema to him:

> Il était non pas indifférent, mais résigné. Il considérait l'action comme blâmable et lui préférait le rêve, à cause qu'il ne détruit rien.
>
> --Car, disait-il, rêve ou action, venue la mort, tout s'enlise au meme neant. Mais la vie paraitrait bien laide si le rêve n'était là, qui l'embellit toujours.
>
> A sa mère qui peu après lui demanda ce qu'il ferait plus tard, lorsqu'il serait roi:
>
> --Je continuerai à vivre dans le monde des images, répondit-il.
>
> Il n'avait pas encore trois ans.[1]

One of the distinguishing marks of this récit is the mixture of the idyllic and the disturbing. It seems from the beginning that Maran is describing a paradise that will incorporate all the well-known people and objects that mythology has used. At each step, however, a touch of irony or of sarcasm disturbs the utopian image and finally leads us to the conclusion that the author is anti-utopian despite the poetic imagery and far-ranging vocabulary. Some of the statements which prevent one from taking too seriously the

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[1] Ibid., p. 100.

fantastic events, or which make one realize that the author's eye is not clouded by the romantic or exotic are the following:

Speaking of the seriousness of making alliances for the protection of Chimérie against the Trolls:

> Les ambassadeurs s'y employèrent au mieux de leur intelligence, ce qui revient à dire qu'ils conclurent avec le plus grand sérieux des traités insignifiants.[1]

In reference to the disasters which befell Chimérie after the curse worked by the wicked Carabosse on Mimeuse:

> Un savant découvrit midi à quatorze heures. D'aucuns, il est vrai, prétendirent qu'il n'y avait à cette découverte rien d'extraordinaire, toutes les horloges ayant été retardées par ordre gouvernemental. Il y eut aussi mars en carême. Enfin, on put se rendre compte que la semaine des quatre jeudis existait.[2]

Here the narrator speaks of the treatment of soldiers toward the conquered:

> Traquer les femmes et les violer, était un jeu pour ces soudards ... Ils châtraient les enfants mâles ou leur tranchaient les poignets, ils martyrisaient les vieillards. Ils se conduisirent comme seuls peuvent le faire des hommes façonnes par la civilisation.[3]

On that eminent branch of learning called history:

> Les historiens sont personnes éminemment respectables. Une fois qu'ils ont exhumé de leur poussière les plus vieilles archives, brandi après toutes sortes de documents officiels, encore un plus grand nombre d'autres documents non moins officiels, entassé dates sur ordres du jour, inepties sur anecdotes, mémoires sur chroniques, invraisemblances sur inexactitudes, bavardages sur âneries, ils défigurent définitivement de leur précision scientifique tout ce qu'ils prétendaient reconstituer.[4]

On the things that stay-at-homes wrote the soldiers:

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[1] Ibid., p. 155. [2] Ibid., p. 150.

[3] Ibid., p. 172. [4] Ibid., p. 188.

> Ils ne parvenaient à s'abstraire de ces regrets, qu'en lisant les journaux où ils apprenaient, non sans une ironie quelque amère, la beauté des exploits quotidiens qu'on leur prêtait, et la joie que l'on a de mourir à vingt ans.[1]

From the above-quoted examples, somewhat lengthy because of the nature of the author's comment, one can see that the fantastic world of Chimeria is not to be taken as utopia despite the reader's reaction on beginning the work. The work is in some ways a modern allegory to the extent that it attempts to evoke an interest, not only in the events and persons it incorporates within itself, but also in the moral and political significance borne by these novelistic materials. It is not to be thought that each and every element in the recit must correspond exactly to some referent outside the work on a one-to-one basis. However, the entire work may be taken, and individual parts of it in varying degrees, as a commentary on the horror of war and on the escapism practiced by European nations before and during this Great War. I believe that the work was not rigorously planned as an allegory whose every detail should stand for some concept of philosophy or ideology.

The lexical and allusive aspects of the work are far more in evidence than the allegorical. Le Petit Roi ... is replete with hundreds of instances of rare and archaic words and of allusions to creatures of myth, legend, fairy tales and comparative religious texts. The following is a list of

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[1] Ibid., pp. 191-92.

the illusions by proper name found in the short recit; more obvious and familiar references are not explained in the list below; references to current literature are included:

La ville d'Ys--a legendary buried city off the coast of Brittany at Finistere, said to have stood once in the 4th or 5th century on the edge of the sea, protected by a dike with flood-gates of which the king alone held the key. Because of the king's daughter the city was engulfed, but oft on a clear morning its cathedral can be seen rising from the water with its bells tolling and priests entoning. Edouard Lalo (d. 1892) wrote an opera: Le Roi d'Ys, and Debussy's prelude La Cathédrale engloutie celebrates it.[1]

Ubu Roi--a satirical farce by Alfred Jarry written in 1896.

Thulé--a land said to be six days sail north of Great Britain and the furthest north of any land--actually, its precise modern name is unknown.

Trolls: a supernatural being or gnome in German and Scandivian mythology.

Kobold: a gnome held in German folklore to inhabit underground places.

Hamlet:

Plato:

Aristotle:

Claudius: which person of this name is referred to is not certain here.

Olympiodorus: the name of several ancient Greek writers, of whom no one is identified here.

Synesius: (d. ca. 414) bishop of Ptolemais in the Libyan Pentapolis, who wrote homilies and other works.

Raymond Lully (1235-1315): Catalan (Raimon Lull) author, mystic and missionary; espoused teaching of Arabic in the Middle Ages; wrote poetry and a utopian "novel."

Paracelsus: (c. 1490-1541) physician and alchemist. He probably chose the name to denote his superiority to Celsus. With his lofty views of the true scope of medicine it is impossible to reconcile his ignorance, his superstition and his erroneous observations.

Nostradamus (1503-66): French astrologer of Jewish descent, still remembered for his prophecies. Really named Michel de Notredame. Wrote a book of rhymed prophecies entitled Centuries, consisting of quatrains

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[1]Paul Harvey and J. E. Heseltine, The Oxford Companion to French Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 761.

grouped in hundreds, each set of quatrains being called a century.

Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535): German writer, soldier, physician and by common reputation a magician; wrote a defense of magic against the Inquisition, and also a plea for a return to simple, primitive Christianity.

Comte de Saint-Germain (c. 1710-80): called "der Wundermann," a celebrated adventurer. He knew nearly all the European languages. Appears in correspondence of Grimm (who calls him the most versatile man he knew) and Voltaire. Was a musical composer and capable violinist, historian and a chemist who pretended to have a secret for removing flaws from diamonds, and to be able to transmute metals. The most remarkable of his professed discoveries was of a liquid which could prolong life, and by which he asserted he had himself lived 2,000 years. He is mentioned also in letters by Horace Walpole; exercised great influence at the court of Louis XV until 1760; took part in a plot which placed Catherine II as empress; is supposed to have introduced freemasonry into Germany, reports Cagliostro.

Gaspard, Melchior and Balthazar: the three Magi.

Ammonius-es-Sakka (Ammonius Saccas) (c. A.D.175-242): the teacher of Plotinus, was a self-taught Alexandrian philosopher who, according to Porphyry was reported by Eusebius, had been brought up a Christian and later became a pagan. He was also a teacher of Longinus, the rhetorician and philosopher, of the pagan philosopher Origen as well as of the Christian philosopher Origen. He left no writings and his pupils were pledged to secrecy about his teachings, so little is known for certain about them.

Hiéroclès: probably of Alexandria (fl.c.A.D.430), Alexandrian Neoplatonist, teacher of philosophy using a mixture of Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic elements. Photius did an extract from his work which mentions Ammonius Saccas.

Gargamelle: mother of ...

Gargantua: son of Grandgousier and Gargamelle and hero of La Vie très horrificque du gran Gargantua by Rabelais, and father of Pantagruel, whose life was written before his.

Alcofribas Nasier: pseudonym (an anagram of his own name) of François Rabelais (c. 1494-c.1553).

Pantagruel: son of Gargantua. The name is the title of Book II of Rabelais' great work.

La Vierge Marie.

Minerva: Italian goddess of handicrafts who presided over the professions and the arts, commonly identified with the Grecian Athena Nike.

Jupiter: chief Roman and Italian god; the first part of his name (diu, "bright" is etymologically identical with the Greek Zeus.

Sindbad the Sailor.

Midas: a very old royal family among the Phrygians, of many "kings"; one preferred the music of Pan or Marsyas to that of Apollo, who in wrath gave him ass's ears.

Aladdin's lamp.

Gygès: from the story told in Plato's Republic as an allegory of how public knowledge of men's acts impels them to act justly. In it the shepherd finds a ring which can make him invisible.

Goupil: ancient French name for the fox.

Ysengrin: name of the wolf in the Roman de Renart.

Saint Alexis, la vie de: composed ca. 1040, in 125 stanzas of five assonanced 10-syllable lines on life of a hermit of Roman birth.

Roland.

Olivier: one of Twelve Peers of Charlemagne and friend of Roland.

Yvain and Yvoire: from Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion roman courtois of Chrétien de Troyes (ca. 1172). This roman breton is a masterpiece of psychology in Arthurian literature.

Amis et Amile: a 12th-century metrical romance in the form of chanson de geste, which was brought into connection with the Charlemagne cycle, though its source is oriental.

Bélissent; fille du roi Charles: character from Amis et Amile.

Floire et Blancaflour: from Floire et Blancheflor, an early 13th-century metrical roman d'aventure, also treated by Boccaccio. The poem contains a charming

picture of the wonders of the East, the heroine being abducted to Babylon.

La Légende Dorée: Vies de saints known by this name given in the 15th century, by Jacques de Voragine, ca. 1260.

L'Evangile.

Les Contes de Fees.

Les Livres Sapientaux: by opposition to the Books of History in the Bible and consisting of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, Song of Songs, and the Book of Wisdom.

Tristan and Isolde, and Mark.

Humayoun: Mogul emperor of Delhi (1508-56) whose tomb is one of the finest Mogul monuments.

Merlin the Magician: famous bard of Welsh tradition, enchanter and counsellor of Arthurian romance, whose legend is composed of several combined stories or traditions.

Hermès Trismégiste: the Greek name applied to the Egyptian god Thoth as the reputed author or source of the "Hermetic" writings on occult subjects and theology. Trismegistos means "thrice-greatest" in Greek.

Apollonius of Tyana: Greek philosopher of the Neo-Pythagorean school, born just before Christian era, and renowned as magician, mystic, and fortune teller.

La reine Pédauque: name of restaurant in Anatole France's Rôtisserie de la reine Pédauque.

Le roi Pétaud: formerly the chief elected over themselves by beggars in Paris.

Nabou-Koudour-Oussour le Ninivite: perhaps a play on the name of Nabuchodorosor Ier, one of the first kings of Babylon. His namesake destroyed Jerusalem in 587, carrying the Jews into the great Captivity.

La begum de Koh-I-Noor: ("mountain of light"), a famous diamond which was acquired after a long adventuresome history in India and placed in crown of Victoria, originally weighing 191 carats.

Ahasvérus, le Juif-Errant: legendary person supposed-

ly condemned to roam the earth and suffer tortures for having insulted Christ during his march with the Cross.

Le roi d'Yvetot: a song by Béranger included in Chansons morales et autres (1815), about the genial, easy-going ruler of a small contented country.

Balkis, la reine de Saba.

Brocéliande: name of the magic fountain in Yvain ou Le Chevalier au Lion of Chrétien de Troyes, but used here as a magic garden on top of the river waters.

La reine des Korrigans: "un korrigan" is a wicked fairy or dwarf in Bretagne.

Le roi des Aulnes : "des aunes" are also elves.

Le Chat Botte: Puss-in-Boots of Perrault's fairy-tale.

Le marquis de Carabas: owner of Puss-in-Boots.

Le Petit Poucet: Tom Thumb.

La Belle-au-Bois-Dormant: Sleeping Beauty.

Riquet à la Houppe: one of Perrault's contes; also the title of a fairy play (1885) by Banville.

Le prince Charmant.

La Belle aux cheveux d'or.

Cendrillon: Cinderella.

Peau d'Ane: another of Charles Perrault's fairy-tales, with a theme somewhat like that of Cinderella.

Les troupes lilliputiennes: from Gulliver's Travels.

Roméo et Juliette.

Morgane: the fairy sister of King Arthur.

Le Nain Vert Obéron: king of the "genies aeriens" in the novels of the high Middle Ages (Huon de Bordeaux) and in works of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Wieland.

Urgèle: character from Voltaire work modeled on the good fairy Urgande, protectress of knights to whom she

appears either as old woman in rags or as seductive girl.

Mélusine: fairy whom the chivalric novels and legends of Poitou represent as ancestress and protectress of the house of Lusignan.

La reine Mab: character from English fairy-tales whose most beguiling portrait is done by Shakespeare in Romeo and Juliet.

La Dame du Lac: Lady of the Lake from Tennyson.

Titania: wife of Oberon and queen of fairies in Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream.

Ogier le Danois: from La Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarcke, 12th c. part of Doon de Mayence cycle.

Le Phénix: In Egyptian religion, miraculous bird, symbol of sun god, fabled to live for 500 years, to be consumed in fire by its own act, and to rise in youthful freshness from its own ashes--a symbol of immortality.

L'oiseau Rock: from Persian "rukh," a fabulous bird so huge that it bore off elephants to feed its young.

Viviane la fée: wife of Merlin the Magician.

Don Quichotte, Dulcinée et Sancho Pança.

L'Oiseau Bleu: Blue Bird, symbol of happiness. Maeterlinck made a play on the subject in 1909.

Carabosse: the bad fairy in the old tales, who can be counted upon to turn up at christenings with a wand full of misfortunes.

Le Loup-Garou: werewolf.

Le Grand-Veneur: refers to the leader of the devil's pack of hell-hounds.

La Bête du Gevaudan: beast, probably a wolf, that appeared in the forest of the Count of Gévaudan in 1765 in the Cévennes north of Languedoc.

Le Grand Serpent de mer: legendary sea monster.

Atlantide: city of Atlantis reputedly on a continent perhaps between North America and Europe that supposedly sank into the sea.

Hespérides: "daughters of evening," in Greek mythology, clear-voiced maidens who guarded the tree bearing golden apples which Earth gave Hera on the occasion of her marriage to Zeus. The garden was far away in the west beyond where the sun sets.

Pelléas, Mélisande, Golaud, Arkel le Vieil, Yniold.

Lusitanie: one of the divisions of Roman Spain, covering in one part the present territory of Portugal.

La Sibylle de Cumes: prophetess at Cumae, ancient Greek city of Campania, Italy, from whom Tarquin the Proud is said to have bought the Sibylline Books.

There are many other allusions the references of which could not be found. There are also the names of characters in the story which are exaggerations, deformations, derivatives, or almost-homophones. They add to the air of strangeness as well as the humor of the narrative, achieving some of the effect that Voltaire received from similar devices in his contes:

La bataille de la Matrone: Marne?
Guilledine, ministre de l'Intérieur: Guillotine?
Le général Foulque: Foche?
La Roumélie: Rumania?
Ladvocat; ministre des minstres: l'avocat?
Aristée, ministre des Lois: arrêté?
Tournemoule, ministre de la guerre.

Names such as those of Miragine, Moinelle, Mimeuse, etc., have been considered earlier. There are other names which seem to have been chosen merely for the sound although even here a deeper linguistic connection may exist with the role of the person.

Another outstanding characteristic of the language of this récit is found in the use of common nouns of great rareness. Much of the tone of the work is gained from the

number of archaic words and phrases which Maran has incorporated throughout the work. The following are words which could be found in no dictionary nor Larousse reference work available: their meaning is a mystery:

les tals	les nebels
le ranglement	les hamacaires
un barasang	la tintelore
des omphax	l'ambra
les panoliers	les oelaps
les tarabouks	le cicinnurus regius
le diffillode	les brucolacques

Maran used the following words which do not occur in any lexicon consulted; however, the meaning might be called obvious:

Un élaphe: probably an elk since the adjective élaphien does occur in Littré.
Un giroiement: evidently the word comes from the same root as girer and girouetter although it is not found.
Bannoyant: may be a variant spelling of banoier, meaning voltiger or flotter, coming perhaps from the same root as bannière, but even banoier has vanished from use.

This récit is rather brief, and for this reason the large number of archaic words is remarkable. Often a dictionary of Old French was the only recourse:[1]

Au recoi: not found, but "à recoi" means seul à seul.
Un torcenier: person who lives by violence.
Peaussues: skinny, baggy-skinned.
Une escovette: broom.
Se trupher: to have fun.
Rebindaine: (leg) in the air.
La frelore, forelore, freloire: useless effort.
Escamper: to flee in great haste.

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[1]Godefroy, Frédéric, Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française (Paris: Emile Bouillon, 1889).

Un athanor: name given by alchemists of the Middle Ages to the furnace they used.
Une fiammette: a reddish color, like that of flames.
Un corbin: crow.
Un ribleur: a carouser.
Orde: that which excites disgust and horror because of its filthiness.
La bourrelle: wife of the executioner.
Chaloir: importer.
Un raquedenare: Littré sends one to "racledenare" and then lists "racle-denier" as of the 17th c., meaning a miser.
L'eau de naffe: ancient name for water distilled from orange blossoms.
Morgande: Littré gives "morgante": supercilious, proud.
Les gabs: jokes, mockery.
Avue: from its use, should be "avué" from archaic verb: avuer: to follow prey with the eye.
Les psellions: Greek word in antiquity: bracelet for neck, arm or leg.
Les périscélides: word of same era for leg bracelet.
Ameurir: to ripen.
En riole or riolle: a debauchery, orgy.
Les plamussades: from Old Fr. "plamuse": light blow of the hand.

The following words have among them some that are still in current use, others which are so technical as to be little known outside their scientific area, and others whose forms could not be found in French sources available but which resembled the universal Greek-Latin spelling so much that they could be found by consulting American works:

Les aurochs: extinct ancestor of oxen.
Les machaidorus: fossil carnivores.
Les baluchithères: fossil mammal like a rhinceros.
Les mégathériums: extinct sloths.
Les iguanodontes: extinct two-footed lizard.
Les ichthyosaurs: extinct Mesozoic marine reptiles.
Les gavials: Asiatic extinct reptile reaching 50 feet.
Les brachyotes: large, yellow swamp owls.
Les stryx: species of rapacious owl.
Les élédones: type of squid.
Les sarcidiornis: tropical geese.
Les macrorhines: large elephant-seals.
Les cératophrys: horned toads.

Rare, obsolete, scientific and archaic words are not the only, nor the major, portion of Maran's vocabulary of animals, birds and plants. The more usual species or names are found in abundance:

Les chamelles	les éléphants
les boucs	les chevaux
les vampires	les ciseaux de paradis
les girafes	les paons
les colombes	les chouettes
les hyènes	les zèbres
les chauves-souris	les chiens enragés
les rhinocéros	les mouches cantharides
les pythos	les lions
les mandrills	les hérons pourpres
les onagres	les alouettes
les milans	les gibbons
les rhésus	les caïmans
les crocodiles	les tarpons
les baleines	les paradisiers
les crapauds	les couleuvres
les brebis	les hiboux
les loups	les renards

The commonness of the above names is often varied by use of more particular members of the same species:

Un axis: king of Bengalese deer.
Les égagres: wild goats.
Les ibis falcinelles: longbilled waders.
Les foliot-tocols: African type of swallow.
Les bulbuls: Persian nightingale.
Le lophorine: violet-throated bird-of-paradise.
Le sifilet: New Guinea bird-of-paradise with 6 plumes.
Les truxales: type of grasshopper.
Les nyctales: type of owl
Les stryx: type of owl
Les brachyotes: type of owl.
Les kalongs: Javan fox-bat.
Les scops: type of owl.
Les calmars: type of squid.
Les varans: type of lizard.
Les bengalis: type of sparrow.
Les orques: type of small whale.
Les ornithorynques: duckbilled platypus.
Les onagres: wild asses.
Les urubus: vultures.
Les saïgas: type of antelope.
Les hemiones: type of wild ass.

There are many other creatures of the animal and fowl worlds mentioned. It is also interesting, however, to take a look at the vocabulary used to describe some of the human and "humanoid" types, both real and legendary:

les elfes	les farfadets
les gobelins	les gnomes
les nixes	les pixies
les sylphes	les poulpiquets
les ondins	les ondines
les nains	les pygmées
les naïades	les sylvains
les faunes	les dryades
les fées	les lutins: démon familier
les génies	les djinns
les enchanteresses	les ensorceleuses
les magiciennes	les sorciers, -ieres

Among the ranks of nobles and rulers mentioned, one finds:

les rois	les reines
les empereurs	les margraves
les princes	les princesses
les principicules	les vidames
les ambassadeurs	les archiducs
les barons	les comtes
les bégums	les bans (vassal of a suzerain)
les marquis	les sultans
les pharaons	les pharaonnes
les ksars	les daïmos (Jap.)
les émirs	les tyrans
les podestats	les mahradjahs
les ministres plénipotentiares	

Trees and plants and flowers furnish one of the larger categories of vocabulary listings we find in this work:

Trees	Plants and Flowers
le banyan	la rose
l'érable	le jasmin
le baobab	le nénuphar
le sycomore	le henne
l'orangier	les chrysanthèmes
les chênes	les oeillets

les cedres
l'eucalyptus
le palmier
les séquoias
les noyers
les ébéniers
les platanes
les tamariniers
les cycas: sago
les icaques: coco-plums
les mangues: mango
les mangles: mangrove
les corossols: custard apples
les mangoustans: mangosteen
les sapotilles: sapodillas
les myrobalans: type of bitter plum
les troènes: wax-trees; privets
les phlox
les tubéreuses
les violettes
les orchidées
les glycines
les mimosas
les hibiscus
le nard
les héliotropes

Among the many creatures mentioned in Le Petit Roi de Chimérie there are several which belong to the special class of creatures which may never have existed except in the minds of men. Certainly they are fabulous and legendary and belong to the zone of magical powers:

le drac
le rock (roc)
le tarasque
le loup-garou
les chiens fantômes
le cheval noir dont les naseaux crachent le feu
les najas amphisbènes: with heads at both ends
le phénix
le basilic
le licorne
le Grand Serpent de mer

A far larger number of words is given to the description of the alchemists and their phenomena. The story occurs at some distant time in the past ("Il était une fois un pays merveilleux") and several of the characters are interested in occult knowledge: the three official doctors of the court, Nosobale, Pantocurante, and Quinquengrogne, as well as the Three Magi, Gaspard, Melchior, and Balthazar.

La spagyrique ou spagirie: alchemy
La rhabdomancie: divination by wands or rods (rhabdoma)

La nécromancie: calling up the dead to foretell the future
la chiromancie: divination by looking at hands
Les psylles: those handling timed serpents
Les gipsies:
Les astrologues:
Les sibylles: women who foretold future among Ancients
Les pythonisses: women inspired to foretell the future by Apollo Pythien
Les extra-lucides:
Les thaumaturges: person who works miracles
La Kabbale: occult science pretending to communicate with spirits; among Jews, mystical interpretation of the Bible
Les cartomanciens: those who foretell future by the disposition of playing cards--la cartomancie
Les devineresses: fortune-tellers
Un almageste: a collection of astronomical or astrological observations, such as that of Ptolemy
La lévitation: teleportation
Le sommeil hypnotique
Les phénomènes ectoplasmiques
La pierre philosophale
Les diseurs de bonne aventure
Les élixirs maléfiques
les alambics: instruments
La télépathie
les chapiteaux: "
Les raps: magic knocks
les cucurbites: "
le réalgar: red arsenic
l'or mussif: mosaic gold
La poudre de perlinpinpin: powder with magic properties

Throughout the work one finds the use of magic recipes and formulae taken from a list of the great "authorities" in alchemy of the ages:

Hermès Trismégiste
Nostradamus
Paracelsus
Raymond Lulle
Apollonius de Tyane
Zozime le Panopolitain

One might go on to mention lists and numbers of words that describe ships, gems, weapons and other articles, but they would only emphasize what has been shown--that the vocabulary of this work is a treasure house of poetical words consciously utilized by Maran to achieve effects of archaism,

exoticism, the fantastic , and the humorous. It is doubtless true that the studied use of many of the learned words led to a humorous effect, especially in sections dealing with alchemical practices which seem today so patently superstitious. The use of bats' wings, snakes' eggs and the like, mixed with all seriousness by sorceresses, has an air of the comic.

The virtuosity of the language in this récit leads occasionally to instances of preciosity in which alliteration and enumeration are overworked:

> Une longue et large et lourde litière de cèdre et d'or arrivait en effet, portée par quatre-vingt-douze hamacaires.[1]

This does not often occur, but is a definite possibility in the Première Partie in which the greater number of instances of virtuosic lexicography are found. The Deuxième Partie which details the conduct of the war between Chimérie and the Trolls-Koboldiens does not have as many examples of enumeration, repetition, anaphora, asyndeton and polysyndeton and other rhetorical devices.

As in Batouala, anaphora and enumeration remain one of the characteristic techniques of Maran. The Première Partie is even more replete with them than Batouala, perhaps because of its almost purely descriptive character.

> Les raps,
> le sommeil hypnotique,

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[1]Maran, op. cit., p. 116.

la télépathie,
les phénomènes ectoplasmiques et
ceux de la lévitation à distance
l'émouvaient profondément.

Mais bien qu'il eût du penchant
pour les chiromanciens,
pour les rhabdomanciens,
pour les psylles,
pour les astrologues, et en général
pour tous les diseurs de bonne aventure,
il leur préférait
les fleurs et les oiseaux,
les arbres et les bêtes,
les pierres,
le vent,
les sources,
l'automne,
enfin tout ce dont l'entourait la vie apparente ou secrète.[1]

The texture of entire pages is exactly that of the above passage chosen at random. The use of "taches de couleur" in the manner of stage directions for impressionist paintings is found in combination with other devices. The following might be given as a scenario for a "danse macabre":

> Nuit noire. Cimetière. Hôlements de hiboux. Les morts, droits dans leurs suaires, sortent de leurs trous. C'est la sarabande des os sanieux. Secs ou mous, blancs ou verdâtres, vertèbres, tibias, tarses, fémurs, condyles cliquettent, s'emboîtent et se déboîtent. Et les orbites sans yeux sont grouillants de vers. Le vent miaule à travers les cypres; les hyènes ricanent derrière les ifs. Les crapauds coassent et les chouettes frouent. Les corbeaux, les vampires, ivres de pourriture, rament l'air de leurs lourdes ailes velues.[2]

An extreme example of repetition and the impressionistic substantive sentence is found in this scene:

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[1] Ibid., pp. 72-73. [2] Ibid., p. 86.

Il neige. Roses soufre,
roses blanches,
roses rosées,
il ne neige que des roses,
--roses roses,
roses pourpres,
roses incarnadines.[1]

One is again struck in this work by the author's intrusion into it making use of exclamations of wonder, surprise and dismay:

Oh! leurs grands rires extasiés, infinis, puérils, qui riaient aux anges.
Oh! leurs lèvres, roses qui se cherchent et qui, s'étant rencontrées, se séparent, pour avoir le plaisir de se retrouver encore.
Oh! leurs pressions de mains, qui voudraient, mais qui n'osent.
Et ces langueurs!
Et ces paleurs!
Et ces silences entrecoupés de soupirs et de bavardages!
C'est l'amour.
Et ils le savent ...[2]

Of the works so far considered, Le Petit Roi de Chimérie is essentially different because of its subject matter, not its style. The rhetorical and linguistic devices used are not of a different kind; they follow the stylistic development one sees in Batouala. The richness of the linguistic resources of Maran in the earlier jungle story has been noted in Chapter I. Yet, it cannot approach the immense wealth of vocabulary produced by the hundreds and thousands of years that Man has devoted to alchemy and mythology. The first part of the récit is more obviously full

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[1]Ibid., p. 133. [2]Ibid., pp. 73-74.

of allusions, references, studied distortions and homophones involving the worlds of alchemy, legend, and myth. Part Two details the battles riots, defeat, and peace among the rival nations, recalling at times specific incidents of World War I. Even in the latter part, rhetorical devices play a leading role. Maran uses the calendar of the Revolution to describe the military campaigns, adding a note of archaic violence.

There are continuing instances of the technique of piling up words or phrases for emotional effect:

> Les ténèbres flambantes claquent,
> crépitent,
> crachent,
> aboient,
> hurlent,
> clatissent,
> clabaudent,
> dé bordent d'injures,
> de râles,
> de cris.[1]

Maran makes use, for the first time, of the extended metaphor when he describes the attempted defeat and pillage of Chimérie in terms of the attempted rape of a young maiden by a bunch of brigands. The time of year is described in which a young girl is going singing through the vineyards:

> Azur des derniers jours de fructidor, azur lucide et doré, la Chimérie entière était comme un jardin.[2]

The girl is asked for her grapes and refuses. She is attacked and is about to be taken. In the midst of the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 182-83. [2] Ibid., p. 183.

metaphor, Maran's style exhibits certain characteristic uses of language:

> Déjà ils te tiennent presque sous leurs genoux. Déjà ils bavent sur ta gorge, lorsqu'en en suprême effort debout, tu t'évades de leur étreinte.[1]

The auxiliaries or allies who come to help Chimérie are referred to as sons and defenders drawn by the maiden's cries. The battle ends with the victory of the grape gatherers who are singing "Jean-de-la-Lune."

> Telle fut celle victoire anonyme, que seuls les historiens appellent victoire de la Matrone, du nom du fleuve qui passe à l'endroit où les belligérants se livrèrent bataille.[2]

It is only with the above paragraph that one actually knows that the assault on the young woman was intended as a metaphor for the fate of Chimérie. The author had not stated the metaphor as a vehicle for the Battle of the Marne and had thus been able to keep its freshness until the revelation at the end of the passage.

Free indirect discourse is used in the long passage describing a nightmare or hallucination of Mimeuse of Chimérie after the victory. He is walking on the battlefield in the evening in a setting reminiscent of Emile Zola's famous battle scene from La Débâcle; his mind seems to see a vast, black river of death:

> l'étrange rumeur! Un grouillement mou, ininterrompu, fétide, gluant. Un grouillement ... Puis un grand bruit sourd, pareil à ce vagissement que poussent les grands fleuves en

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[1] Ibid., p. 186. [2] Ibid., p. 188.

> traversant les villes et les campagnes, le soir.
>
> Un fleuve était là, à ses pieds, vaste et noir.
>
> Où allait, d'où venait ce grand fleuve noir, qui s'élargissait, s'élargissait, et menaçait de déborder l'horizon.[1]

This flood of guilt and despair is brought on by the sight of the result of the holocaust of war and the knowledge of the tears and moans of mothers who are weeping. His mind begs for release from the pain of these hallucinations in a passage using short fragments of sentences, still in the indirect discourse technique:

> Non! Pas cela! Plutôt rêver. Ah! laissez-moi, cauchemars sinistres, laissez-moi avec mes illusions! Disparaissez, fantômes! ...[2]

Le Petit Roi is answered by a voice speaking "sur un ton faible, ironique et triste," telling him to continue to dream, but to realize that the dreams are an evasion and that those who have died did so only in order that he might pursue his favorite occupation: dreaming. It is a mysterious voice which has said these words:

> Mais il entendit une voix qui lui disait, sur un ton faible, ironique et triste:
>
> --Petit roi de Chimérie, nous croyons comme toi que tes rêves valent mieux que la réalité. Rappelle-toi cependant qu'ils ne sont que des rêves. Et, surtout, n'aie pas l'ingratitude d'oublier que nous n'avons consenti à mourir que pour que tu puisses les poursuivre à ton gré.[3]

Mimeuse faints on hearing these words. After a long illness he awakens to hear the voices of his guardian fairies.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 218-19. [2] Ibid., p. 223.

[3] Ibid., pp. 223-24.

They tell him of having saved him, but only in order that he might, through willpower, redeem himself and save the future of his people. When Mimeuse appears before the astonished court, which had thought him dying, he assays reflectively the worth of each of his courtiers. The result is disappointing:

> Vraiment, de pauvres hommes, ni pires que les autres, ni meilleurs que les autres, de pauvres hommes, pétris de bonnes intentions, mais dévorés de passions, mais travaillés par l'intérêt et la paresse.[1]

He realizes that it will be necessary for him to preach to them by example if their weakness of will is to be redeemed. He speaks to them, promising his example and cooperation, which had been lacking before.

> La paix, vous le savez, ne s'improvise pas plus que la guerre. De même que la bonté, elle résulte d'un patient effort.[2]

The last word that he says to them recalls the advice given at the end of Voltaire's Candide: "Il faut cultiver notre jardin." Mimeuse says one final word to his people: "Travaillons."

The entire work might be said to incorporate an allegorical vision of France as it was before World War I. Chimeria is the utopia envied by all peoples, secure in its dreaming, uninvolved in the less well-conducted lives of its neighbors. Its leaders are content in their personal idiosyncrasies, and the life of the nation proceeds with no

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[1] Ibid., p. 235. [2] Ibid.

conscientious examples from its rulers. The war almost brings annihilation. The faults which had been so lightly regarded in more peaceful times, assume the frightening proportions which their inner necessity would dictate. What had been regarded as small faults are found to be fundamental under the stress of wartime conditions. The end is a call for cooperation among governors and people to work for the greatness of the nation, far less pessimistic than the Voltaire dictum. In Candide, the final admonition seems to apply only to the world of one's private affairs. In Le Petit Roi de Chimérie, the word "Travaillons!" obviously refers to the whole nation and its rulers, or even to the world which this nation could influence.

CHAPTER IV

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

Le Coeur serré

This novel, written in 1931 and published, like most of the author's works, by Albin Michel, borrows from the personal life of René Maran. It can not be said with certainty just how much of the material of these early years is factual; however, the bare data of the lives of Maran and "George Lindre" are the same.

The setting is the region around Bordeaux. Although Maran is from Martinique, the protagonist is from Lima, Peru. His parents are French and they have business interests in South America which require their presence there. For some reason not given, they place their six-year-old son in school in the village of Talence, just outside Bordeaux. The story ends when he is about sixteen, finishing his studies at a lycée in Bordeaux.

George Lindre begins telling the story as a personal narrative in the first person. He is recalling the earliest days that memory can dredge of his infancy in Lima. These recollections are peopled with his nurse Anella, his dog Castor, and his mother and father. There is an earthquake

in the Andes region in which his grandfather perished. Next he recalls a boat trip during which a frightening storm occurred. These are somewhat shadowy events of which mere moments stand out in clear relief. Georges ponders the tricks that memory plays and the seeming inconsistency at times of what the mind seems to "choose" to remember or forget. Of the period between the ages of three and six he remembers nothing. In his sixth year there is the boat trip which he perhaps recalls because of his terror during the storm.

A few months later, in May of 1894, he is living in Paris in the rue de Tournon, close to the Municipal Guard barracks of the Sixth Arrondissement. He is six years old. The veil of memory next lifts to reveal the last days of September. The family leaves the capital for Bordeaux. During the period there, the family goes out to Talence and visits the censeur of a lycée. All of this is meaningless to the child.

It may be noted here that, thus far, the facts of the story are substantially different from those of René Maran's own life, until 1894. In 1890 it was to Gabon in Central Equatorial Africa that Maran's father had taken the family. Rene spent four years, from the age of approximately three to seven, in the capital at Libreville. This territory had been settled on the opposite bank of the Gabon (or Gabun) River only in 1839. The city had been founded in 1894, and

the French were quite new to the hinterland. The climate was that of any dense rain-forest area: stifling heat, high humidity, irritating insects, over-luxuriant plant and animal life. The young René could not become accustomed to this climate, and it was in part for this reason that he was taken to France in 1894. Between the author and his protagonist, there is also the difference of their race. George Lindre is a white child.

Georges' story continues with visits made to Talence with his parents. Like a six-year-old, he is closely attached to them and is only interested in being near them. He notices, therefore, when visits to Talence begin to bring tears to the eyes of his mother and father. After each visit they clasp him closely and kiss him. Finally, a day comes when he is again taken to the school. He is told to stay a moment with the censeur out on the grounds while his parents go to one of the offices. They assure him that they will return quickly. The child does not wish to do so, but he waits rather obediently because assured of the love and soon-to-be-restored nearness of Mother and Father. He knows where the offices are located and watches as they go toward them. However, they continue past the door of the office. The child realizes that something is amiss. He jerks away from his keeper and runs after his parents. They have by now climbed into the carriage which had originally brought the three to Talence. The vehicle drives away quickly as Georges

runs screaming and pleading for his parents to come back to him. He sees his mother and father standing weeping in the rear of the carriage as it fades into the distance. Terror-stricken, but exhausted, he falls in the thick dust of the road.

To the reader this comes as little surprise. He has foreseen the result of the visits of the Lindres to Talence and has wondered how the rupture will be accomplished. To the child of six the experience is traumatic:

> Je trépigne, éperdu et colère, m'arrâché les cheveux, me mords de rage, jusqu'au sang. Mon coeur bat à rompre. Je voudrais mourir. Mes yeux se brouillent. Tout tourne devant moi. Je n'en peux plus. Mes petites jambes fléchissent. Et fatigué de chagrin, titubant de douleur, ivre de désespoir, je bronche contre un caillou et m'affale, les bras en croix, dans la poussière.
> Je n'aurai jamais plus confiance en mes parents ...[1]

This ends the second chapter of the story. When Chapter III takes up, the results of this abrupt severing of the child's familial bonds, Maran has shifted to the third person narrative:

> Aux mois les mois s'ajoutent. Petit à petit, le temps fait son oeuvre. Jo a bien essayé de lutter contre lui. Il lui a fallu y renoncer.[2]

In the course of time the child forgets gradually although he occasionally writes a dutiful little letter. He spends Christmas and Easter at the school. Finally, during the coldest part of the year after Christmas he has another

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[1]René Maran, Le Coeur serré (Paris: Albin Michel, 1931), p. 44.

[2]Ibid., p. 45.

of the dreams which often attend him, and he awakens in the hospital with what appears to be a bad case of pneumonia. He wins the bout with illness after ten days in the hospital and returns to his comrades. Spring comes and June brings the closing of school. He has been informed before that he will not see his parents for three years. He knows he has a correspondant somewhere, but the person has not attempted to get in touch with him at all. The boy prepares to spend the vacation alone. He has long since begun the modification of personality which will enable him to withstand disappointments thrust upon him by others. He is becoming taciturn, shy, overly timid and distrustful, inclined to a love of solitude, yet with a need to be loved that will never be quenched. This need will be rather successfully hidden to the superficial observer but will lie always just below the surface to be revealed by actions if not by countenance.

Four or five days after the distribution of prizes, Jo is delightfully surprised by M. Chartrou, his correspondant, who takes him on a vacation to a town closer to the ocean on the Gironde. The child is still too young to know just what not seeing his parents for two more years means, but he becomes accustomed to not missing them. The memory of a child of seven is not very long.

The next year, he does not hear from his correspondant at the close of school, nor the third year. All this time he is forced to spend all the year long at Talence.

During the vacations there are only the three bonnes soeurs at the infirmary and the cook and two or three other persons. He is usually alone all day. He begins collecting insects, explores the region around the school, and only rarely comes to visit the good nuns when he feels the desperate need of someone to communicate with. He grows to be very robust and learns to make himself respected in the school yard; he is well liked by both students and teachers. His moods of exhilaration alternating with love of solitude and extreme diffidence are attributed to the processes of growing up. He becomes the favorite of the school. Each year he takes prizes and honorable mentions in several categories; but he does not walk to the table to get the awards because of excessive shyness, which is imputed to stubbornness. At the end of the second year, after waiting in vain for M. Chartrou, "Jo comprit que ..., pour la deuxième fois, on l'avait abandonné ..."[1] But, by now, he has almost ceased to cry about such things; he has come to realize that it will do no good. The third year passes in much the same way; and school resumes for the third November with Jo's having spent the entire twelve months at Talence.

One day during the last of November, he is called to the office of the principal. There he is shown a strange man and woman and is told that they are his parents. He does not remember them at all. They realize it and are hurt, but the memory of a boy between the ages of six and nine is

[1] Ibid., p. 88.

not very reliable. Furthermore,

> La famille n'est pas seulement sang et chair, mais surtout faisceau d'habitudes. Qui brise ces dernières, alors qu'elles n'ont pas eu le temps de devenir nécessaires, en s'enracinant profondement en la mémoire du coeur, brise jusqu'à l'esprit de famille.
> C'est ce qui s'était produit pour Jo.[1]

This strange and strained encounter closes the Première Partie of the novel. The second half begins in 1904 when Georges Lindre is sixteen years old. He has seen his family only once since the age of nine: that was in 1900 at the time of the World's Fair in Paris. At that time they brought him up to Paris to spend all summer with them in a comfortable house in the Cinquième in the boulevard de l'Hôpital. He spent very little time at the Expositon Universelle, although this was disappointing to his parents. However, it was really not to be helped since it was just because of their having to be apart that he had developed into the type of personality one now saw. He loved, in fact, preferred it to what is known as reality. He spent his happiest hours in the large library of the house (loaned to them by friends) and read.

> Il préférait vivre en compagnie de Porthos, d'Athos, d'Aramis, de d'Artagnan, du vicomte de Bragelonne, de Mordaunt, de Dom Gorenflot, de Caylus, de Maugiron, de la Dame de Montsoreau, des Quarante-Cinq, du chevalier de Maison-Rouge. Il faisait ses délices du Bossu, de Paul Féval, et de Mam'zelle Flamberge, de Paul Saunière, dévorait pêle-mêle Bug-Jargal, Notre-Dame de Paris et la Légende des siècles, de Victor Hugo, l'oeuvre poétique de François Coppée, Les Morticoles, de Léon Daudet,

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[1] Ibid., p. 112.

> Fécondité, de Zola, Byzance, de Lombard, les Mémoires du baron de Marbot, les guerres de la révolution de l'Empire et les Chroniques de l'Oeil-de-Boeuf, les Messeniennes, de Casimir Delavigne et Les coups d'épée de M. de la Guerche, de Gustave Aymard.[1]

All of life was not, however, in books. From this trip to the capital, Georges brought back only two memories other than bookish ones, but they were to stay with him through the years. One was of the bared breast of a performer seen in a small theater of the Expositon; the other one was the prettily impudent air of a streetwalker who accosted his father one day as the two were returning home.

He saw his parents for the third time in 1903. He found his mother tired and his father aged. This was the year that he learned he had many other relatives, his parents having seen fit to be reconciled with their close relatives. This aspect of the family situation is never adequately explained in the book. One might almost judge, however, that an explanation was not necessary in accord with the utter unimportance that these people held for Jo. His parents wished him suddenly to become one of a large and loving family.

> Cela, jamais. Ce n'est pas le sang qui fait la famille, mais l'affection, le dévouement et la vie en commun.[2]

His parents, who had come to know him better, did not insist on doing things that would vex Georges, so he was seldom disturbed.

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[1] Ibid., p. 122. [2] Ibid., p. 127.

Having decided to remain in France a while, M. Lindre had rented a villa, "Orina," in the suburbs of Bordeaux. The best friends of Georges, Degorde and Segonne, visited him there several times. In the first days of July they came for a last time and Jean Segonne brought with him his cousin Marthe, with whom Georges fell in love. Marthe, four years his senior, also came to like him intensely. The four young people played hide-and-seek after dinner and Jo was able to give Marthe a kiss which stayed with him throughout the year. He composed poems for her and they wrote each other many times.

His parents left in September and he went back to school. By this time he was in the lycée in the city of Bordeaux; the days at Talence were over. He was preparing to pass the first part of the bachot, but the most important thing in his life after Marthe was rugby at which he was one of the school aces. There is an exciting section describing a game for first place in the Bordeaux district which took place during one of the most cruelly cold days of the year. Jo himself was kicked in the head accidentally and later was knocked out by the cold. However, his teammates and coach could not win without him and he was persuaded to re-enter the game. The team won, but as a direct result of the game, Jean Segonne felt deathly ill. He lingered on for weeks, but finally died with Jo at his bedside. Jean had been his very best friend and the loss was a severe one for him. He was received for

the bachot in July and his parents allowed him to spend the summer at the Segonne villa.

There was a servant from Pau, Augusta, very lovely with flashing dark eyes, who was attracted to him, and he to her. However, the presence later in the summer of Marthe drove away any chance of Augusta's promoting a liaison with him. He was so shy and fearful that he had not even visited the small town of Royan, in which the villa was situated, until Marthe came. When she came, she took him out to the surrounding localities and introduced him to people and places he had been too bashful to get to know. They were able to kiss and hold hands as they wished, which rendered Jo both happy and unhappy. Taking refuge in the poetry of Samain, Sully Prudhomme, Verlaine, Rodenbach, Tellier, de Régnier, Emile Despax and Charles Guérin, he wrote many poems. The time sped swiftly and happily for him until the end of the summer. As time went by he had noticed that Marthe became less free in her attitudes towards him and the times they kissed became fewer. It was not until the night before he left that he found out the cause. After the Segonnes went to bed, he and Marthe sat on in the living room, rather silently. He was trying to get up the courage to declare his love for her and to find out why there seemed to be something barring their path to each other. She had foreseen the demand for explanations and felt this was a good time for them to be dealt with. She then gave him a letter to read. It was

from a young man and was a love letter. What was he to do? Immediately his character asserted itself, the habits which continual rebuffs had erected into an almost automatic response to such situations.

> Le sort en était jeté. Tant pis pour lui. Il sacrifierait son amour au bonheur de Marthon. Il lui cacherait sa douleur ...
> Courage, petit Jo! ... Comme autrefois, comme toujours, cache à tous ton chagrin, continue à souffrir en silence.[1]

When Georges could not respond to the questions of Marthe, who was very surprised at his behavior, she attempted to embrace him. He refused and there remained nothing for Marthe except to leave with a disillusioned "bonsoir."

Georges felt satisfied with the way he had acted--he was right to have treated her thus since she had deceived, ridiculed, and scoffed at him. He had had the pride not to complain although "il pleurât dans son coeur comme il pleuvait sur la ville."[2] At this moment Augusta, the servant-girl, comes back. She is intent on seducing him, but he succeeds in putting her off by first kissing her until she is breathless and then escaping as her arms momentarily drop.

Back in school it is his eleventh year of resident school and the last, if he passes the second part of the "bac." He is studying philosophy, but as often happened with Jo, he does not like his professor and is not doing his work. His father writes him after receiving a progress report--the

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[1] Ibid., p. 187. [2] Ibid., p. 189.

first time that this has ever been necessary. In the same letter he is informed that his mother is coming to Bordeaux because of an illness which has worried the doctors. Jo hastens to recoup the lost time and does so successfully until his mother arrives. She is deathly ill for months and he must withdraw from school. Marthe comes to help him with the daily vigil which must be kept at her bedside. Finally, she is cured. Then comes the period of attempting to repair the damage of the time lost so that Georges can succeed in the examinations. Again Marthe is of the greatest assistance and he is received.

The son has an extremely difficult time with the mother all during the illness and afterwards because of the guilt she feels as a mother who has abandoned her son years before. At one time while she is in a lucid interval of the illness, she asks him and Marthe if he would not like to have seen her die. The two are speechless of course, and Marthe attempts to remonstrate with Mme Lindre. The latter cuts her off by telling her not to try to inform her of the type of person her son is. As her condition improves, she continues to insult and humiliate Georges, who has attributed the previous difficulties to her physical condition which might have produced irritability and vexations. Now, he understands just what the trouble is: she has feelings of deep guilt which are expressed by hostility toward him.

The two take an apartment and she seems to become

better. However, Jo feels more lonely and abandoned than ever because he has begun to analyse and see the reasons for his mother's behavior and because, now that he has finished school, there is nothing for him to do: comrades gone, life empty. He spends all day wandering through Bordeaux, returning to the house only at night to eat, kiss his mother's brow and then to bed.

His wanderings through the city usually took him by preference through the dingier and more isolated parts of town. He found himself returning, time and time again, to the streets where he found women of ill repute, especially one in particular who reminded him strongly of Marthe. He was both revolted and attracted by these women. However, because of his need of tenderness and understanding and his more-than-idealistic regard for all women, he could not bring himself to believe that such women were what they were reputed to be.

One day on returning from his walk he heard the voices of his mother and Marthe. His mother accused the girl of having designs on her son, in the presence of Jo who had been called into the room. Marthe immediately saw the possessiveness and vindictiveness of Mme Lindre and said to her in parting:

> --Adieu, Madame ... Vous êtes une mauvaise mère. Vous êtes, qui pis est, une méchante femme! ... Le bon Dieu vous punira ... Il est malheureux que vous ayez un tel fils, et que je l'aime, moi, comme vous ne

l'aimerez jamais.[1]

Marthe leaves and Jo follows her. The rest of the day he spends wandering through Bordeaux. About five in the evening he suddenly hears a voice: "Tu viens, beau gosse?" It is the prostitute who resembles Marthe. He follows her to her room and the two lie down on her bed. He is upset and repelled but too excited and despairing to resist. After she has gone, he takes out the poem dedicated to Marthon that he had always kept with him and reads it. The story ends here:

> J'avais bien prévu
> Qu'elle s'en irait.
> Mais étais-je prêt
> Au départ prévu?
> .....
> Je n'essaierai plus
> D'aimer, désormais.
> Celle que j'aimais
> Ne reviendra plus.[2]

This novel, as the author labels it, has many connections with his own life; in fact, it may be accepted as having incorporated many incidents from Maran's life. In the long introduction to Le Petit Roi de Chimérie, Léon Bocquet depicts the life that Maran led as a lycéen in Bordeaux. He had been placed as a residential student in the school at Talence about the age of seven, just as the hero Georges Lindre had been. From there he had gone on to Bordeaux. However, Maran was born in Martinique, and not in Peru as was Lindre. Also his

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[1]Ibid., p. 244. [2]Ibid., pp. 251-52.

father lived in Gabon at that time rather than in South America. Maran too became a good student and a good rugby player. Whereas, in the novel it is the mother of Jo Lindre who falls seriously ill and comes to Bordeaux; in real life the brother of René Maran died in Bordeaux where he had come to live with him. It can not be said with certainty that the death of Jean Segonne in the novel parallels the death of Maran's own brother. The other incidents also can not be given direct parallels; however, one can say that the loneliness felt by the hero of Le Coeur serré must certainly have resembled that of the young Maran away from home at such an age.

The characters of the novel are the most vivid and lifelike that Maran had done to this time. They are roundly depicted and are not at all the flat types one has found in Batouala. We note, however, that Kossi is also three-dimensional. Not only the child Jo Lindre, but also the persons who surround him in the book are envisioned in a way that makes the possibility of their having been taken from life all the more reasonable. The list of characters is very long and involves students, teachers, people met during vacation periods, friends, opponents in football matches, and people encountered casually in the course of a small boy's growing up. The importance of reading as a prime means of passing time but also of living is stressed several times and finds its original in the real life of Maran. In fact, the longest instance of enumeration in the work of Maran studied

so far is found in this novel, when the young Jo Lindre speaks of the way his dreams were peopled by the things he read and pondered in school. As a result of his voracious reading which took the place of real human contacts, he says:

> Et la nuit il rêvait
> de châteaux forts,
> de barbacanes,
> de herses
> de ponts-levis,
> d'oubliettes
> de souterrains,
> de guêtteurs,
> de machicoulis
> d'échauguettes
> de créneaux
> de donjons,
> de palefrois,
> d'assauts,
> de chevaliers,
> de preux,
> de dagues,
> de hanaps,
> de monstres
> d'ogres,
> de fées,
> d'anneaux magiques,
> de tigres,
> de cipayes (Indian Sepoys),
> de sikhs,
> de requins,
> de krakens,
> de baleines,
> de Sioux,
> de "visages pâles,"
> de poteaux de torture,
> de calumets,
> de dans du scalp,
> de tomahawks,
> de wigmans,
> de squaws,
> de lassos,
> d'eau de feu,
> de rifles,
> de pécaris,
> de mustangs,

de pemmican,
de mines d'or et de diamants,
d'opossums,
de buffles,
de kanguroos,
de boomerangs et d'arbres anthropophages.[1]

Contrary to the trend in Batouala and in Le Petit Roi de Chimérie, enumeration, accumulation, anaphora and other "piling-up" devices of rhetoric are at a minimum in this novel. There are only five other examples in the work of the enumerative device with more than five elements, one a list of some of the authors and poets that he loved. Thus, the style of the work is different from that of the first two prose works. The sentences are generally shorter, though of varying lengths. There is not the repeated attempt to reach through the accumulation of details: the story itself is sorrowful enough and the incidents bear their own weight in imparting emotion and enlisting the reader's identification with young Jo Lindre. The fact that the story relates chronologically the series of shocks and frustrations inflicted among a child's personality by long separation from his family seems to act as a sobering influence upon the language itself. Except for the times when lists are made of books, insects, and other topics which occupy the lonely hours of the child, there is extremely little luxuriance of language. The short, spare sentence, with interpolation of substantive "sentences" recording rapid observations, is very common.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 80-81.

> --Ha! ...
> Me voici parti. Je jette mes bonbons. J'ai compris. Ils me livrent à des étrangers ...
> Méchant papa!
> Je cours en pleurant, je pleure en criant.
> Le Censeur s'est lancé à mes trousses ...
> Trop gros, le Censeur! ... Il ne m'aura pas ...[1]

The above passage is reproduced exactly as it occurs in the text and shows the use of free indirect discourse which is a continually recurring technique in Maran's works. Just as in Batouala, frequent use is made of the device of adressing the person at the center of action:

> Vite au dodo, Jo! Tu as entendu la cloche? Finie, la récréation ...
> Le poêle ronfle de plus belle. L'eau de la bouilloire susurre, clapote et chantonne. Allons, au dodo, et vite, à moins que tu ne tiennes à te faire attraper par Germain ou la soeur Triple Seche.
> Ton papa? ... Ecoute plutôt le chuintement des bûches. Ta maman? ... Tu la reverras dans deux ans, si tu travailles bien et si tu es bien sage ...
> Pour le moment, tu es seul ... Sois fort! ... Chu-ut,petit homme! ... Chuuut, Petit Poucet! ...
> Il ne faut jamais pleurer, meme quand on en a le plus envie.
> Pleurer est une faiblesse; vivre, un métier difficile. Et tu ne fais que commencer à l'apprendre.
> Dodo, Jo ...
> Jo était resté dix jours à l'infirmerie.[2]

Here it is the author who is addressing Jo Lindre although the narrative is told in the third person beginning with Chapter III of the novel. The passage is quoted in this length to illustrate other aspects of the author's style. Onomatopoeia is used in three instances, with addition of an extra "u" in "chut" each time it re-occurs: Chut, Chuut, Chuuut.

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[1] Ibid., p. 42. [2] Ibid., p. 54.

The elliptical sentence is found in the second line: "Finie, la récréation ... " The hypothetical question is also characteristic of Maran, as here: "Ton papa?" ... "Ton maman?" A minor instance of accumulation is found: "L'eau de la bouilloire susurre, clapote et chantonne." The bringing together of three elements in an accumulation is quite common in Maran's work but has not been mentioned before because of the frequent occurrence of accumulation, in which more than four elements are listed. The three-part or ternary construction of words, phrases or clauses has been widely used since Chateaubriand and seems to have a rightness and suppleness without extreme fluidity in French which makes it justly renowned. When this stylistic device is used to bring together words which attempt to express the exact nuance the author wishes to convey, a much more vivid picture is presented. Thus, Maran has said above:

> L'eau de la bouilloire susurre, clapote et chantonne.

An onomatopoeic effect is secured in the hissing quality of the s's in "susurre," the explosive stopped quality of the k and p sounds in "clapote," and the nasalized a followed by the sustained nn of the last syllable. A similar instance occurs on the following page of the novel; here, the ternary predicate with onomatopoeia is followed by accumulation of seven elements:

> De vrai, il y avait beau temps que zonzonnaient
> bourdonnaient,
> vrombissaient
> mouches,

hannetons,
guêpes,
frelons,
abeilles,
capricornes,
"capricornesses,"
et que les hirondelles striaient le ciel de leurs zigzags.[1]

The alliterative quality of the last clause just quoted is indicative of the care with which Maran must have worked orally with his sentences at times.

Writers after Chateaubriand and of the post-realist groups may be cited as examples of searchers after the "mot juste," but it is rather Jean Giono, in such a work as Que Ma Joie demeure of whom one is reminded in passages like the following:

Du lever du soleil à l'orée du crepuscule, on entendait bruire le grinçant sibilement des faulx (sic) balancées. L'odeur d'herbe,
de chardons,
de marguerites,
de bluets,
de boutons d'or,
de flouve,
de gazon,
de coquelicots,
de trèfle et
de sainfoin
dont se compose le parfum des andains, s'engouffrant avec le chant des grillons par les fenêtres larges ouvertes, inondait les salles d'étude,
les salles de classe,
les réfectoires et
les dortoirs.[2]

Opening Giono's work at random, one comes upon a passage of striking similarity:

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[1] Ibid., pp. 55f. [2] Ibid., p. 56.

> Les odeurs coulaient toutes fraîches. Ça sentait le sucre, la prairie, la résine, la montagne, l'eau, la sève, le sirop de bouleau, la confiture de myrtille, la gelée de framboise où l'on a laissé des feuilles, l'infusion de tilleul, la menuiserie neuve, la poix de cordonnier, le drap neuf.[1]

The lyricism of Maran in this work is, however, much more delicate than that of Giono, or even of sections of Batouala describing the jungle and the violent storm that wracked it.

Free indirect discourse remains one of the most thoroughly pervasive techniques of the author. When Jo is called to the office of Father Pivoine, this monologue runs through his mind:

> Que lui voulait-on encore? Il n'avait besoin de personne pour se faire à sa solitude. Mieux valait, pour lui, aller cueillir des avelines que répondre à l'appel qui le cherchait.[2]

Then the author interrupts the discourse with the words: "Il finit, cependant, par se montrer."[3]

The monologue at the interior of Jo takes up again: "On l'attendait, lui, Jo?"[4]

The next paragraph is in the form of free indirect discourse but it takes place in the mind of Father Pivoine, who, in turn, reproduces the questions he is asked by Jo and also his own answers. This creates some degree of ambiguity since the third person in the monologue must be used to refer

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[1]Jean Giono, Que Ma Joie demeure (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1935), p. 104.

[2]Ibid., p. 57. [3]Ibid. [4]Ibid.

both to Father Pivoine and to Jo Lindre:

> Bien sûr qu'on l'attendait, lui, et pas un autre! Qui? Son correspondent, parbleu! Pourquoi? Il ne devinait pas pourquoi? Mais pour partir en vacances, pardi!' ,,, Allons, allons! Il lui fallait s'habiller. Sa malle était deja prête. On n'attendait plus que lui ...[1]

This device of having one speaker report his own words and those of another character in the third person demands a careful reading. It is fortunate that the author included the interjections, exclamations, and words said in echo by Father Pivoine.

Direct quotations and the ordinary third person narrative bear the burden of the remainder of the story. The relative soberness of the writing serves as a distinguishing mark, setting Le Coeur serré apart, stylistically, from Batouala, Le Livre de la brousse, and Le Petit Roi de Chimérie. This does not mean that the style is unrecognizable. It means that the subject of the novel--the almost continuous sadness of the protagonist--demanded a slightly different medium of expression and received it successfully.

Interspersed throughout the work are a number of poems attributed to young Georges. He wrote them often and quotes from them at various times. The general quality of these efforts is not very high, certainly far inferior to those of an earlier teenager named Rimbaud. They do, however, add authenticity to the emotional scenes of the youth,

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[1]Ibid.

They work somewhat like the operatic aria, in which the character ascends to poetry in moments of great joy or sorrow.

Despite the differences between the real and the fictional life of Maran and Georges Lindre, their characters are the same:

> Au fleuret comme au rugby, il s'est révélé tel qu'il a toujours été, tel qu'il sera toujours: un impulsif à retardement et un courageux timide.[1]

The same factors went into the formation of the personality of the author and of the protagonist. The unhappy life of Georges Lindre makes him feel like a "bête traquée qui se ramasse sur elle-même" in the presence of others. He loves solitude but often can not bear it because of the need for the love his parents denied him so early. René Maran, alone in the same region of France as the protagonist and subject to taunts that the latter never knew, developed similar traits of character. Le Coeur serré admirably fills in the spaces vacant from official biographies of Maran, making the reader know him as no amount of mere statistical research could have done.

Un Homme pareil aux autres

In 1924 when Le Petit Roi de Chimérie was published, the page facing the title page announced that a book to be named Le Roman d'un nègre was to appear. This work, renamed

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[1] Ibid., p. 137.

Journal sans date appeared in 1927, the same year as Djouma, chien de brousse. It was revised and the title changed to Défense d'aimer, appearing in 1932. Both as Journal sans date and as Défense d'aimer it had been issued in the Oeuvres Libres published by Fayard. In length it was about 135 pages. Maran reworked it once more, expanding and developing the story into its present form. As Un Homme pareil aux autres it appeared in 1947, lengthened to 248 pages, published by the Editions Arc-en-Ciel. Albin Michel re-issued it in 252 pages in 1962. It is dedicated to Lucien Descaves (1861-1949), one of the five authors who broke away from their master, Zola, and issued a manifesto against le naturalisme in 1887.

Unlike the earlier Coeur serré, Un Homme pareil aux autres is told completely in the first person. The name of the protagonist has been changed to Jean Veneuse, and he is a Negro. A short preface of three pages introduces the reader to the problem around which the book revolves:

> Je m'appelle Jean Veneuse. Le nègre que je suis a peut-être tort de publier les confidences qu'on va lire. On m'a pourtant conseillé de le faire, parce que le moment semble venu d'en saisir l'opinion publique.
>
> Je crois entendre déjà les critiques qu'elles susciteront. Le Français, affirmera-t-on, n'a jamais eu de préjugé de couleur. Quelle erreur est-ce là! Il est indéniable qu'il existe aujourd'hui, en France, des traces plus ou moins profondes de racisme. Or l'on ne réduira ce fleau social à sa plus simple expression que dans la mesure où l'on aura le courage de pénétrer et de résoudre les problèmes qu'il pose.[1]

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[1]René Maran, Un Homme pareil aux autres (Paris: Albin Michel, 1962), p. II.

He continues by stating that the Frenchman does not know the Negro of his colonies but also knows mistakenly the one whom he has formed in his own image--the black Frenchman of the Continent. Jean Veneuse is attempting to "dresser le relevé des dettes qu'il avait contractées envers la civilisation blanche."[1] The present work is not a thesis tract or a statement of a racial position; it is the portrayal of a state of spirit. Only an attenuated idea will be given of the moral sufferings of a sensitive person before the terrible insensitivity of the colonial system. The main story will concern "le voyage d'une race à une autre et d'un coeur à un autre coeur."[2]

From the beginning, therefore, the reader is aware that he is dealing with a love story occurring in the life of Jean Veneuse long after the period of his lycée schooling. He has already served an undetermined time in the colonial service and has been back in France on a vacation. He is now returning to his post in Central Africa from Bordeaux. Although no attempt is made to identify Jean Veneuse with the Georges Lindre of Le Coeur serré, it is obvious that one is dealing with the same personality several years later.

We know that René Maran went to his first African post at Grimari in 1910,[3] leaving the Faculty of Letters

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[1]Ibid., p. 12. [2]Ibid., p. 13.

[3]René Maran, Le Petit Roi de Chimérie, p. 14.

of the University of Bordeaux. He was then about twenty-three years old. At the time of the present story, he would have been between thirty-two and thirty-five, for during the present story he spends no more than two years before his retirement from the colonial service. The present story may be taken as a more or less fictionalized account of a portion of the real-life story of René and Camille Maran.

The novel opens on November 25 as Jean Veneuse is saying good-bye to his friends, Charles Kurtz, Gérard Alcan, and the latter's amie Simone. He is heartbroken and thinks of his beloved Andrée. But there is no time for reflection as the ship leaves. Just before mounting the gangplank, Jean is hailed by another old friend, Divrande, who recommends to his care a Mme Demours, whose husband is in the service in the Tchad region. As Jean leaves Divrande gives the lady a brief description of his parting friend which is essentially the picture the reader already knows from the earlier Coeur serré:

> Un bon garçon, ce Veneuse. Volontiers chagrin et taciturne, mais très serviable. Vous pouvez vous fier à lui. Vous verrez. C'est un nègre comme on voudrait qu'il y eût beaucoup de blancs. Signe particulier: passe son temps à lire ou à écrire. On prétend même qu'il taquine la Muse en cachette.[1]

On board the ship, Jean deplores having to leave France and especially the girl he loves, Andrée Marielle, daughter of a poet. He sees Mme Demours suffering from

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[1] Ibid., p. 19.

seasickness, but is so sick at heart himself that he does not go to her aid. Sleep finally comes, but he awakes early and goes on deck to sleep in a deck-chair. There, some hours later, he is awakened by an old friend, Coulonges, from his lycée days. We then find that our story is taking place some ten years after the period ended in Le Coeur serré. Both boys have entered the colonial service. Coulonges has married a young woman, Mado; however, Jean has not married Andrée because he is a Negro and would not subject her to the fate of the white wife of a Negro in the colonial service. He tells this to the Coulonges and Mme Demours and must be explicit in his explanation since his being a Negro has not made any difference to them. They finally understand, however, why he has not married, knowing the Service.

He writes a letter to his sweetheart's brother-in-law, Rosult, telling him the reason for his sudden departure and detailing a list of books which he is taking with him.

Four days, the ship is abreast of Gibraltar; Mme Demours has become interested in Jean. They desire each other though they are not in love. Although she is willing, he resists the impulse to take her in his arms by thinking of Andrée. Two days later he arrives at the conclusion that it will be impossible for him to escape the attentions of Clarisse Demours without drawing upon himself her contempt and calumny. He therefore arranges with an infirmary attendant the use of a room on the night when a benefit ball for lost sailors is

being held. While sitting on the deck in the evening, Clarisse tells him the story, very short, of her life. She had been a Ministry secretary whose boy friend would not marry her because she had no money. One evening at the movies, she met Demours who was approaching the end of his vacation in the home country--he was a colonial official. Without much ado or forethought, they became rather quickly engaged and then married. As she said:

> Il n'était pas plus mal qu'un autre. Et il faut bien se marier tôt ou tard. On avait décidé tout ça à la diable. Bien sûr, elle ne l'aimait pas ce qui s'appelle aimer. Mais, somme toute, c'était un brave homme. Et comme il était parti le premier, elle le rejoignait.[1]

This young and attractive woman, married for convention rather than for love, was now piqued by Jean's easily apparent love for Andrée Marielle. On the night in question she sleeps with Jean for an hour, but later he falls asleep: "Andrée, bonsoir."

The next day, after eight days of crossing, the ship puts in at Dakar, Senegal, on the western bulge of the continent. Clarisse stays on board; Jean and Mme Coulonges go into the town while Coulonges goes to report to the government office. Jean writes a card to Andrée, which Mme Coulonges takes from him to mail--a good thing, as he might not have had the courage to do so himself.

Later on board, Clarisse Demours reproaches Jean with

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[1] Ibid., p. 63.

the fact that she had hoped he would stay on board with her to repeat the raptures of the previous night. He is thoughtful because Mme Coulonges has told him on shore that Clarisse is really in love with him and will prove a difficult problem as she is a woman guided much too much by her senses rather than her intelligence:

> Ce n'est pas qu'elle soit méchante! Elle est bonne, au contraire, et affectueuse, et dévouée. Je ne lui fais que le reproche de n'avoir, pour raison, que la raison de ses sens. Je crains fort qu'ils ne soient insatiables. C'est bien, les sens! Il en faut, bien sûr, mais pas trop. Mme Demours en a trop.[1]

Later, after dinner, there is a discussion brought on by a friend, Faucheroux, concerning what he calls the postwar predelection of European women for Negroes. Moynac, another friend, defends Faucheroux by saying: "Si le bon Dieu a fait le café et le lait, il n'a pas fait le café au lait"--a strike against the mixing of the races. Jean answers this reasoning: "Le bon Dieu a fait l'homme, il a fait la femme, il n'a pas fait l'enfant." On neither side, however, has the discussion been angry.

The next day, the ship stops at Konakry, Guinée, where Jean sees Coulonges and his wife off to shore where they are stationed. He feels alone now--Faucheroux and Moynat have both left between Dakar and Konakry. Even with Clarisse left, he feels alone. In this short chapter, Maran uses a refrain

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[1]Ibid., p. 75.

for the beginning and end, expressing the sadness of parting:

> Petits départs, larmes nouvelles et nouveaux regrets, rien ne pourra traduire votre tristesse, parce qu'à chacun de vous, dépassée l'escale, on sent qu'un peu plus de France s'en est allé.[1]

The next stop is Tabou in Côte-d'Ivoire. During this time Jean has come to be accepted on board as the lover of Mme demours. There is no animosity from the other passengers, all whites. Clarisse is lulled into believing that Jean has been too sensitive about the racial angle and rebukes him for it. He, on the other hand, remembers the insults and talk which had been their lot before Coulonges and his wife took up their defense so fervently. Furthermore, the boat itself is still a visible symbol of metropolitan France and the mores and customs which the mother country observes. In the extremely remote colonial outpost to which they are going, the aegis of France is too far away to affect the personal feelings, and their outward display, of the colonial types.

The trip continues to Gabon, then up the Congo River. To Jean Veneuse it is a bore, quite unlike the first time he came out to this country. He spends his time reading and does a great deal of thinking on various subjects. He attempts to relive the enthusiasm he had felt on his first trip up this mighty river. Clarisse interrupts his reverie to exclaim on the beauty of the countryside. By some obscure

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[1] Ibid., p. 96.

association of ideas, his mind goes back several years to the time in Bordeaux when he was seventeen and in love with a girl named Jacqueline, several years his senior. At the time he had thought it a love of friendship; only years later did he realize it for what it was: his first love.

They touch land at Brazzaville, French Congo, seat of the governor-general of French Equatorial Africa, at Christmas. Jean recalls a different, colder, but more enjoyable Noël in France. Then a native policeman gives him an urgent message to come to the governor-general's office. Urgency in the tropics, Jean has found from experience, means less than that, so he does not hurry. When he arrives, the official shows him a telegram announcing the death of M. Demours, and says that he is going to repatriate Clarisse. He wishes Jean, because of the latter's being on excellent terms with her, to inform the lady.

Jean finally succeeds in telling Clarisse of the death of her husband. She did not love him and can not feel too distressed. In fact, she now sees the opportunity to become the wife of Jean. In vain he tries to tell her that it is impossible, that she will be repatriated anyway and with money. She insists that she will follow him. Finally he tells her that she knows he loves another, that he had never said he loved her. This makes her angry and she throws repeatedly the words: "Sale nègre" at him in the midst of a storm of rebukes. Within his mind he knows that she is suffering and

therefore forgives her. However, those two words have shown him that she loves him less than she supposed. The next day her "boy" brings him a message from Clarisse saying that she is ashamed of her words and her behavior, that she is already scheduled to leave Brazzaville on the next boat, that she wishes them to part as friends. He goes to bid her farewell.

The next scene takes place at Bangui, in what is now the Central African Republic. From there he is to go to a post in the region of the Shari and Logone rivers, near Lake Tchad. It is this territory which is the setting for several of the novels of Maran, built on his experiences there. While lying in bed he thinks back over the history of colonialization in that region:

> Fonctionnaire colonial! ... Ce métier aurait pu être si beau, si généreux, si noble! Hélas! La colonisation est une déesse âpre et cruelle, qui ne se paie pas de mots et se nourrit de sang. Elle se fonde sur l'injustice et l'arbitraire. ...
>
> La force primant le droit, le meurtre célébré et honoré, c'est ça, la colonisation, c'est ça la civilisation. Il n'est personne qui ne le sache.[1]

During the stay at Bangui, he attends the funeral of one of the artillery officers, the third death in two days. As the officials stand around the grave, each looks furtively at the others, estimating their health and calculating who will be the next to die. This scene ends Part One of the novel.

Part Two opens with a long passage in interior monologue

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[1] Ibid., p. 133.

form addressed to Andrée. Jean speaks of the similarity in background and education of the girl and himself. All that is against their being married is the fact of color. There follow six letters, short in length, from Andrée in which she discusses the color question in their relationship and dismisses it as unimportant. Another letter comes from Coulonges, his old friend to whom he has written concerning his problem. Pierre Coulonges calls him a fool to be disturbed and even more so to think of himself as anything than French of the Continent, where all his formation has occurred. He rebukes him as a friend:

> Mais, me réponds-tu, ma couleur? Ta couleur! Tu commences à m'ennuyer prodigieusement avec elle. Est-ce qu'elle m'a empêché de devenir ton ami? Est-ce qu'elle t'empêche d'être aimé de ton Andrée Marielle à qui, malgré toi, tu es attaché comme la chair à l'os? Car tu l'aimes. Et elle t'aime. Et c'est assez. Elle t'aime. Et c'est tout.[1]

Madeleine Coulonges also writes to him, repeating in a more delicate, feminine fashion the responses of her husband. She also tells him to cease the continuation of thousands of miles of distance between him and Andrée and to return to the mother country as early as possible. This he cannot do at once as he has just been appointed commander of a post further along the Chari River, comprising some 15,000 square kilometers, of around 100,000 people.

He takes a census, cares for the sick, traces out

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[1] Ibid., p. 153.

out roads, presides over palavers, gives orders, visits and inspects villages. He can almost call off the number of victims of leprosy, sleeping sickness, goiter, and other illnesses. He even comes to be able to distinguish at a glance persons of the same large linguistic group but of different small tribes. He has his bearers tell him the histories, customs and mores of their own peoples. Now, however, it is not curious sympathy and amused and sorrowful surprise that makes him learn all these things, it is the desire to forget what he feels to be the hopelessness of his love for Andrée. His only friends, about whom he writes for several pages, are his dog Piter and the books he has brought or ordered from France. Only a small page is given to the native concubine, Adidja, who occasionally shares his bed but never his thoughts. Although of the same color, their entire formation has been so different that real communication and understanding is impossible:

> Elle est si loin de moi par sa formation sociale, ses goûts, son esprit, sa manière de voir, de comprendre, de sentir, et, devant les événements, d'agir; elle est si effacée, si puérile et, pour tout dire, si discrètement résignée qu'elle ne compte guère à mes côtés que pour mémoire.[1]

One is not to gain from this statement, however, that she is an object of contempt as a human being. On the contrary, the narrator becomes incensed on reading another colonialist's opinion of the native women as "un instrument hygiénique."

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[1] Ibid., p. 171.

Despite his anger, nevertheless, Adidja could never be more than an infrequent companion whose racial similarity and cultural dissimilarity are of minor interest because of her satisfaction of his sensual needs.

Finally, in the month of June, the mail arrives. There are all the leading literary magazines of Paris; there are letters from friends; and there are envelopes bearing the names of Clarissa and of Andrée. He opens the former first. In it, the little widow again asks his forgiveness for the harsh words of their final meeting. She goes on to say that if his love for Andrée or the latter's for him have cooled, she will always be waiting.

The more important letter from Andrée was written the previous November, but not mailed until April. She says that she loves him truly and wishes to become his wife. This news overjoys him but saddens him too. In a long letter some three weeks later he explains his ideas.

"Elle fait ma joie et ma joie et ma tristesse. Vous me comprendrez sans peine lorsque vous m'aurez lu."[1] Jean speaks of the love they have for each other, and then points out why he can not ask her to be his wife. His life is to be spent in the colonial service, and the life she would be forced to live in the jungle where she would be hated and despised by both blacks and whites is unthinkable. The opposite solution of her remaining in France during his periods

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[1]Ibid., p. 181.

of years' absence is also out of the question. He continues with a dissection of the racial situation in the Antilles, which are often pointed up as examples of mixing-pot environments that have worked. He rejects the enmity and scorn found in such settings where, among the mixed population itself are found classes or castes erected on the degree of lightness of skin. He mentions the United States where such practices have occurred. He mentions the price that color discrimination handed down from above places upon the possessor of a fair skin, with the consequent pursuit of the white by the darker-skinned person. He even questions, despite his complete upbringing as a white Frenchman at a time when Bordeaux contained only some eight or ten Negroes, whether the fact of her being white might not have spiced the love that he feels for her, enabling him to avenge himself on white Europe for the persecution of his race. Finally, he asks her to forget him, despite their love for each other, saying "adieu."

The story is then interrupted by the account of a palaver presided over by Jean in which a woman separated from her husband for the length of a year, and pregnant by another man, is accused of killing or having the child killed. No disposition is made of the matter.

The next section contains a complimentary appraisal of the literary worth of Andre Suarès, which Jean thinks of converting into a <u>revue</u> article. He points up faults as well ass virtues of his work, going through it chronologically.

Jean and Andrée do not stop writing each other, for him a solace as well as torture. It is now January of the following year, close to the end of his colonial tour. The days of the burning of the bush and the following rainy season pass into one another without variation. He works and inspects as usual. Finally, however, he decides to quit Africa; Andrée's continuous reaffirmation of her love for him and his inability to forget her do their task. His superiors give him permission to leave at any time without awaiting his replacement.

It would seem that the prospect of leaving, on the day his bags and books are packed, would gladden him. But he finds as he faces the assembled natives that he has incorporated a part of himself into the land where he had spent so many years. The chiefs of the tribes beg him to stay, saying that he has been the best commander they had ever had, asking what his replacement might be like. He can only mouth the conventional words to pave the way for cooperation between them and his successor, knowing well that the latter will probably be far worse for them than he had been. As he rests for the night, the natives travel through the dangerous jungle to be at the river which marks the boundary of his territory when he will arrive. There he can hardly withhold his tears at the farewell and the evidence of love and respect they give him. He knows that what he has been forced to tell them about their customs can only lead to the enervation of their way of life, of their

vigor, virility, and character. He learns also that one can end by attaching himself to that which he does not love.

He takes a whaleboat down the river and passes through Nigeria, but he paints a picture of another trip he had taken by train through the Belgian Congo, one far more interesting than the monotonous river passage he now follows.

He thinks of Piter the little dog, that he would have taken with him had he been European. However, as a native of that region, Piter would have succumbed first of all to the bite of the tse-tse fly, and later, if he survived, to the cold climate and restrictions of a European life.

He thinks of Adidja, who laughed and danced and filled his house with gaiety. She had all she could want along with her youthful suppleness and spontaneity. Her heart did not have the complicated pathways that his had learned. She begged him to stay, loving him with all her strength. She will perhaps cry a little, remembering always the ease of life he had elevated her to. He hopes that she will find a good person in the European who will probably be her next lover, for he would not like to see her return to the hard, unremitting life of the tribe.

On board the boat he thinks of the days he spent, abandoned as a child of seven, in the lycée in the middle of the country close to Bordeaux. It was a time of loneliness and frustration which has marked his character for life.

> Mon caractère lui doit cette mélancolie intime et cette crainte de la vie de société qui répriment aujourd'hui encore jusqu'à mes moindres élans.[1]

Even at this stage of his journey, Jean Veneuse is still determined against marrying Andrée, thinking that she would be too unhappy. At the end of this chapter, he does not attribute this attitude to his color, but rather to the effect of the long years of solitude and loneliness which have made him incapable of externalizing his joy or his sadness and cause him to reject that which he loves, turning him away despite himself from what attracts him.

Jean arrives at the mouth of the Gironde and looks forward to seeing Andrée, who may meet him at the station. But his mind turns back to the trip he has taken through Nigeria. He recalls the bush country and the villages scattered through its monotonous, sun-seared expanses. The sounds and sights of the norht, Hausa country with its Moslem calls to prayer, return to him.

From Kano in the extreme north to Lagos, capital of Nigeria, on the ocean, and one sees a complete change of scene. The country is now green and well watered, fresh, cordial and luminous. The city is full of the accoutrements of civilization: hotels, buses, cars, bicycles, cafés. The port gorges itself with traffic from German, French, Italian, English, American and Dutch ships. Finally he leaves Lagos and makes the trip back to Europe.

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[1] Ibid., p. 229.

On arriving in Paris, he expects to be met by Andrée, whom he had advised by telegram of his coming. She is not at the station. The narrative now shifts for the first time to the third person and we are given a description of his going to the house in Rue Guynemer, and their happy reunion. He asks her to marry him and she consents.

Thus ends the second book on the autobiography of René Maran, the first being the Coeur serré of 1931. From accounts written on his work by various persons who were friends of his, one may accept the bare outline of the story--the love affair of Jean and Andrée--as true. The descriptions of the settings of the story are obviously recollections of the time Maran was in the colonial service. He had spent thirteen years in the colonial service from 1910 until 1923, the time at which Un Homme pareil aux autres describes his coming up to Paris to ask the hand of Andrée in marriage. It was at this time that he retired from the colonial office.

In style, the present work is similar to those that have already been discussed, bearing more similarity to Le Coeur serré than to any other. However, the techniques we have noted generally throughout his work are in evidence. There is frequent use of the impressionistic, stage direction, type of construction; it is less frequently used than formerly, however:

> Immensité. Lumière monotone. Silence. Tristesse.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 129.

Enumeration is still one of his favorite techniques--the piling up of names and observations of nature:

> Un foliot-tocol chante tout en haut d'un arbre. Des cabris chevrotent. Des papillons volent de zinnia en zinnia. Les perroquets sifflent. Les gendarmes piaillent. On entend des cris, des chants, des rires.[1]

> RONCES-LES-BAINS, LE VERDON, PONTAILLAC, ROYAN, SOULAC, VALLIERES, SAINT-GEORGES-DE-DIDONNE, MESCHERS, TROMPELOUP, PAUILLAC, BLAYE, BASSENS, LORMONT, BORDEAUX, où êtes-vous?[2]

Maran sometimes weaves out a long, sinuous sentence that ties together many observations of natural phenomena into a Proustian paragraph:

> Lourdes de rosée, de hautes herbes cloutées de vers luisants murmurent aux arbres, qui les chuchotent de branche à branche et de feuille en feuille, les confidences des brises confuses, tandis qu'afin de rendre la nuit plus claire, d'innombrables lucioles nouent, dans tous les points où l'ombre est particulièrement épaisse, de minuscules farandoles vertes, que les chauves-souris dispersent du zig zag de leur vol brusque et velu.[3]

The contrasting technique of the short sentence, containing a single impression, is used, with several of these sentences following each other in hammer-like sequence:

> Il fait doux. Il fait bon. On est loin de France. Tout bonheur que la main n'atteint pas n'est qu'un rêve. Cueillir l'instant qui passe, tout est là.[4]

Maran uses reiteration and repetition to drive across the notion of monotony, of which the book is so full:

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[1] Ibid., pp. 135-36. [2] Ibid., p. 23.

[3] Ibid., p. 113. [4] Ibid., p. 67.

> D'interminables bancs de sable succèdent à d'autres bancs de sable interminables, des rives basses lêprées d'herbe rare remplacent d'autres rives basses lêprées d'herbe rare.[1]

Another previously used technique is found in the combination of the short sentence with anaphora, repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive utterances:

> Elle (la clarté) insiste. Elle fatigue. Elle accable. Hallucination éblouissante. Dormir, ah! dormir. Ne plus rien savoir, ne plus rien voir! Echapper à ce cauchemar torride! N'être plus qu'une loque, n'être plus qu'un lambeau, n'être plus rien, plus rien.[2]

From the examples above, it can be seen that the style of Maran does not drastically change from Le Coeur serré to Un Homme pareil aux autres, nor from that of other books except in the frequency of observed techniques.

The ideas found in this book are also not entirely different from those previously met. However, since the book deals with a time in his life when he was directly involved in the onerous business of colonialism as a working adult and with the consequences of racial attitudes upon his present and future happiness, there is decidedly greater space given to such discussion. He states that the product of the introduction of another culture, one more complex and advanced, into the jungle could have been beneficial to the natives. However, such was not the objective nor the end product of the colonialist, who was intent only on the gold,

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[1] Ibid., p. 223. [2] Ibid., p. 78.

ivory, mangoes, coffee, rubber, silver, precious woods, animals and cheap labor he could get from the defenseless territories. He shows, although not in detail, the lessening influence of French customs and traditions as the traveler gets farther away from the mother country, until the time arrives that the petulant, sunburned colonialist is a little god in his own commandature. Cruelty was even tacitly sanctioned as a means of making more secure the hold of the intruder. Withal, the colonialist felt such a sense of right in what he was doing that he immediately resented and assailed the earliest work of Maran, Batouala, which depicted the effects of colonialism and the ideas of the natives concerning it. The fact that the white man in Africa was an abomination and a desolation to men and animals alike was greeted as the greatest calumny and treachery in the 1920's. The idea has not been completely assimilated even today.

When it comes to the personal experiences of Maran concerning the fate of being a Negro, it must be said that the reader who is an American Negro expects much more and obtains much less from the author's accounts of his difficulty in deciding to marry Andrée and the reasons for the heart searching. This is not to impugn the reality of the assertions and the reasoning. It is merely that the life Jean Veneuse lived in Bordeaux and in Paris lacked any of the daily frustrations and anxieties which mark even today the life of most Negroes in the United States. In continental France,

that which marked his life most deeply was the abandonment of his family rather than his race. It was living on board ship and the prospect of living with a wife in the Congo which presented the difficulties which he encountered and envisioned. For that reason the real pathos of the book is muted in tone, though very real, to one of this reader's background. The authenticity of the experience is, however, unmistakable.

An interesting postlude to this fine work would most certainly have been an account of the author's experiences in wartime France under the German occupation.

CHAPTER V

WORKS WITH ANIMAL PROTAGONISTS

Djouma, chien de brousse

Since Le Petit Roi de Chimérie of 1924 is called a récit by its author, Djouma may be thought of as his second novel, coming after Batouala of 1921. The resemblance does not end there because the protagonist of the later work is the personal hunting dog of Batouala, and the setting is thus the same. Furthermore, Batouala begins with a description of the sounds within his hut which awaken the Chief of Many Villages; Djouma opens with an account of the prodigious reputation of the paramount chief as a sound sleeper. It is said that neither insects, storms, floods, nor fire can disturb his slumber:

> Bouche entr'ouverte et face à son petit feu coutumier, éteint par la pluie cette nuit-là, il admirait intérieurement l'heureux pays des songes, où tout paraît beau, simple, facile, et d'où certains prétendent que l'on peut sans effort apercevoir les plaines de la mort aux populeux villages.[1]

The chief creature sharing Batouala's hut is Mbimé, his dog, who is pregnant as the story begins. She gives birth

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[1]Djouma, Chien de brousse (Paris: Albin Michel, 1927), p. 13.

to four puppies, presenting them to her master at dawn. Later, a scorpion kills one; another is snatched from the hut entrance by a vulture.

The disappearance, without a trace, of the second pup puzzles Mbimé. Batouala, however, suspects the culprit, but since it is physically impossible for him to reach Doppélé, he decides to take his pique out against his least-favored wife. The insults become mutual and Batouala finally beats her "à coups de pied, à coups de poing, à coups de trique, il la battait, fou de rage, comme on ne bat que les femmes ou les chiens."[1]

The real reason for this scene had been that Batouala was courting a village belle named Yassigui'ndja, whom he had promised a pup like the one killed. It was his fear of disappointing the wife-to-be which made him abuse Yassimali, one of his present eight wives.

Three months later the two puppies remaining were already solid, stocky dogs, well-fed and shrewd. The name Djouma was given to one of a yellowish-red color; the other was called simply Yavrr, meaning "dog." He was to be given to Yassigui'ndja, who would give him a name. Maran describes the relations of the two dogs with other creatures of the village: insects, ticks, ants, mosquitoes, goats, ducks, chickens, and finally with Mbimé, their mother who quickly and forcibly weans them.

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[1]Ibid., p. 37.

As the dry season passes into the rainy season, Yavrr is given away to Yassigui'ndja to the accompaniment of the wails of indignation of Batouala's wives. Djouma now has the hut to himself except when Mbimé decides to return to her old residence.

One day Djouma hears two of the native militiamen coming to the village, to the derisive shouts of the people of Batouala. When Djouma attempts to treat the two as enemies, in the manner which the rapid flight of the villagers seems to dictate, he makes his first acquaintance with the whip. His pain is aggravated by the disquieting sight of Batouala playing the obsequious role before the policeman. The latter utters numerous exclamations having little meaning for the dog:

> --Commandant Morokam'ba, ...Pas content, nom di Dié! ... pas content ... Colère trop ... M'bis, tous salauds, tous sales nègres ... Plantations ... Caoutchouc--l'impôt ... Porteurs ... prison ... Chicotte, nom di Dié! ...[1]

After the policemen leave, Batouala calls the villagers back on the drum and tells them pointblank of the Commandant's orders. The chief says that all the tribes of the area can only do one thing: "crever à la peine pour nourrir la lucrative paresse de ces boundjous que Kolikom'bo emporte!"[2]

This raging against the demands of the colonialist is only one recurring incident in the life of the chief's dog.

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[1] Ibid., p. 57. [2] Ibid., p. 60.

He comes to recognize the names of the Commandant and the militiamen, so that he can growl when the men complain and denounce them in the palavers.

One morning Djouma is awakened by an unusual silence in the village. On inspection he finds that everyone has left except Yassimali, eighth wife of Batouala, who is pounding manioc root. While she does so, Bissibi'ngui, a fourteen-year-old warrior known for his personal beauty, comes into the village. He and Yassimali commit adultery before the astonished eyes of Djouma, who thought that Batouala alone had invented such acts.

When the sun sets Yassimali and Bissi'ngui are sitting before the door of Batouala's hut. They hear him coming and act as though nothing were out of the ordinary: Batouala has always befriended the younger Bissi'ngui. As they smoke the talk turns to the Commandant and the ever-increasing demands of the colonialists. From the age of the younger man, we know that Djouma, chien de brousse is placed at a time perhaps three years prior to that portrayed in Batouala, although the latter was published earlier. For this reason one finds the same concern regarding the invasion and forced labor perpetrated by the whites in both books. The natives are forced to go into areas of the jungle where generations of experience with the tse-tse fly have taught them it is unsafe to live. They are forced to labor unceasingly, with no rest and little food, until they collapse. Little thought is given to their

death since the militiamen are continually rounding up forced recruits to replace the ill or the dead. Villages are gradually being depopulated. Taxes are demanded even for the dead and for other villages which can not meet their quota. Batouala advises Bissi'ngui to go join the militia of the Commandant. "Mieux vaut vivre de pair à compagnon avec le lion, que d'être contre lui ..."[1]

Finally the young man tells Batouala the most interesting news item he awaits: Yassigui'ndja has said that she will come to him. Following this conversation the guest and his hosts go to sleep. A storm breaks as Djouma drifts into "le pays que les chiens voient dans leurs rêves."

As night is leaving the bush country Batouala awakes and finds himself unable to sleep any more--a most unusual state for him. The opening pages of the book have told of the legendary sleeping ability of the chief. Wondering what might have disturbed his slumber, he happens to glance at the pile of worn-out baskets used for carrying rubber. Then the light of memory bursts into consciousness. He must go visit the villages of his people, the Banda-M'bis, to supervise their rubber-gathering efforts with the harshness necessary to satisfy the Commandant. It will also be necessary to go farther afield than usual to find enough elephant ivory to complete the tax payment. The creatures are becoming rare in that district.

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[1]Ibid., p. 95.

He sets out almost immediately for the Yabada district to which he has already sent his tribesmen. They were to tap the supposedly plentiful roots, lianas and trees to obtain the rubber latex demanded at the Post. As he advances through the early morning, Batouala is followed by Djouma. The latter is frisky, interested in the country, fresh from sleep, and glad to be with his master. As the sun slowly passes its zenith and begins to sink and Batouala appears to be going at the same pace as before, Djouma little by little loses his matinal enthusiasm. Now he frequently stops, looks for the nearest shade and throws himself in its midst with loud gasps. His dashing bravado is replaced by a querulous dragging as he raises toward Batouala eyes begging to be allowed to rest. The latter goes on adamantly.

After five days in the open, following the chief from group to group, Djouma has become evil-tempered, arrogant, sly and furtive. He cannot understand what has happened in the past few days and remembers the short time before when he was petted, gorged with food and caresses, and spoiled. Now all he gets are blows, curses and rebuffs. Being in strange country he no longer has the freedom to roam about without fear. Proof of this lies in his unexpected meetings with baboons and a porcupine. The first were creatures whose voices he had heard in trees but had never seen.

Through the eyes of Djouma one sees the plight of the men and women of Batouala's village as they gather the

rubber sap in the swampy region abounding with sleeping sickness. Victims of the tsetse fly are described at various stages of the illness with an exactitude of observation that recalls Zola:

> Nombres de ces derniers, incapables déjà du moindre effort, agonisaient lentement à l'écart, abandonnés de tous, même de leurs parents et de leurs amis. Certains autres dormaient sans répit. Rien ne parvenait à secouer leur immense torpeur. En peu de jours, ils fondaient de manière effravante. Leurs corps s'amenuisait, s'amenuisait, s'atténuait, se décharnait et finissait par n'être plus qu'un étrange squelette animé d'une vie imperceptible, qui souffle à souffle allait s'évanouissant.
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> Quand, par grand hasard, ils les remuaient, leurs jambes et leurs bras cliquitaient comme des ossements. Mais, le plus souvent, exception faite pour la trémulation maladive qui agitait continuellement leurs membres, et les rêves délirants et furieux qui les soulevaient, ils ne bougeaient pas, ne parlaient pas, s'oubliaient sous eux et dormaient, souillés de leurs déjections, environnés d'une nuée de mouches à charogne vertes, noires et bleues, parmi l'immonde et visqueux grouillement de la vermine.[1]

However, rubber is worth more than the lives of all the villagers in the minds of the commandants and traders. The even less highly regarded Djouma is hungry for meat. He is driven to do something entirely unlike his normal conduct: He follows some vultures who are circling over a corpse. Unexpectedly he comes upon what seems to be a group of strange and hairy men. This is first contact with baboons, and it causes within him a surprising re-evaluation of man:

> C'est ainsi qu'il fut amené à ne plus voir dans l'homme une espèce de chien vertical à peau noire, mais plutôt une sorte de cynocéphale épilé, préférant vivre à terre, au fort de la brousse, en des cases bien construites, que gambader, du matin au soir, de branche en branche ...[2]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 119-20. [2] Ibid., p. 126.

Continuing his search for food, Djouma comes upon a civet with a small, killed animal. He attempts to frighten the smaller creature away, but the civet escapes with his prey. He next meets a huge python, but prudence tells him that they are not "of the same blood," so he avoids him. Now, suddenly, a dozen fat guinea-fowl fly up in his face; everyone of them eludes him. The day passes; his hunger becomes a continuous ache and growl in his stomach. He limps along, wanting to sleep, but wanting more to eat--anything. Finally he stumbles into a path along which are floating odors that tell him that black men are present in numbers. Although he does not recognize the village, he hopes to be met with only a casual reception. Instead, three dogs of his own species come toward him; however, they are fat and aggressively well-fed. They, with growls, and the villagers, with sticks and stones, decide to reject Djouma, who flees again. This time he finds a broken termite heap just outside the village. Here he falls into exhausted slumber until the cold of early dawn awakens him. When he sits up groggily, he feels his hackles rising and fear coursing through his body. He wants to help but his voice is frozen; his teeth chatter; his eyes turn up their whites; he seems to be suffocating. He smells a wind-borne odor that increases his terror as he tries to pull himself to the shelter of the huts in the village. A short roar tells him what his instinct had already known; he is being followed by a

panther, his hereditary enemy. Just as the beast is going to spring on him, a native comes out of his hut and raises the alarm, frightening the cat away. Djouma takes refuge in one of the thatched houses of the village.

Four days later Batouala returns to his village and is surprised that Djouma has not returned. On the drum he asks for information concerning the dog, but Djouma has found another master. With the latter he goes through the jungle and makes fun of the water buffalo and the elephants they meet. His new master is Pangakoura, a Mandja, enemy of the Bandas, Batouala's people. But Pangakoura decides to send Djouma back to his former master to avoid trouble. When the dog enters Batouala's hut he collapses from fatigue. During his sleep he has nightmares in which he changes from one jungle creature to another while running the dangers inherent to each of the creatures: Djouma-chien, Djouma-singe, Djouma-fourmi, Djouma-civette and Djouma-bousier.

He rises from sleep to watch the antics of the ducks and chickens. His attention is diverted from them by the strong odor of a dog in heat. Djouma violently chastises a would-be rival to enjoy the charms of his newly discovered love.

During all the days of his desire, Djouma does not leave the side of his "amie." He grows ever more lean and weak but does not return to the village. Before the thatched huts the men and women are still beating and refining the

the crude rubber day and night. Tomtoms beat continuously and Bissibi'ngui led a troop of dancers and singers who accompany the work with chants and mimed dances.

The rainy season continues but the work of pounding the raw rubber does not stop until clear weather begins. Then the chiefs and their bearers go to the Post headquarters for the tax accounting. There is a new, young commandant who lightly chides Batouala for having less rubber than the year before. The commandant does not speak Banda and Batouala does not speak French. Sandoukou, the native militia sergeant, takes advantage of the fact to revile Batouala and to demand several bribes and special gifts for himself and the other native policemen. When Batouala claims that the commandant did not say those things, Sandoukou tells the white man that Batouala has insulted the commandant. The latter becomes angry, manhandles the chieftain and has him thrown into jail. Djouma goes with his master.

The next scene shows Batouala before his fire with his friend Bissi'ngui. The latter is fretful and sad because the girl Yassigui'nja has not consented to come to Batouala. When she does come, she will be the chieftain's wife and, therefore, the friend of Bissibi'ngui, who desires her. At present, however, it is whispered that she has become the mistress of the commandant.

The few beautiful days of the end of the rainy season pass quickly and the dry season begins. Each day breaks full

of mist and cold vapor. Finally the sun breaks through and the wind clears away the haze. When the full blow of the sun's heat is felt on the bush country one can see for miles the still verdant freshness of the jungle. This lasts only a few days before the searing heat begins, and it is time for the burning of the bush and the great annual hunt. All the villages empty. The inhabitants forsake the work demanded by the commandant and leave for the chase. Only Batouala must remain behind because he is responsible to the white man for the work in his village. He fumes and curses fate but knows that he too will leave one day to join the fire hunt, despite the punishment and fines such behavior will bring.

The results of the bush fire begin to appear: serpents, rats, ants, antelope, wild pigs, wild buffalo flee the flames. Batouala becomes filled with anger and frustration. Departing for the hunt becomes his fixed idea. People begin to say that he is afraid, or has grown old, that he no longer needs such young wives. His rage grows while Bissibi'ngui silently watches him and more particularly two of his wives, I'ndouvoura and Yassimali. Djouma realizes obscurely that something behind the advancing tongues of flame is calling him--that he and his master should be there. The dog is hungry for blood and killing. With his whines and contortions he begs Batouala to leave. The latter can finally endure inactivity no longer and quickly takes his hunting

equipment and bids his eight wives good-by. Bissibi'ngui remains with the women and old people.

The men and dogs go to the place agreed on previously to begin the burning of their section. They drink the fermented maize beer and sit down to await the fire set by others of the tribe. When it sweeps the creatures of the jungle toward them, they begin hunting, running, yelling, and slaying their utmost. Suddenly the fire roars up to a space by the river bank and dies out as it began. The realization bursts immediately upon the M'bis that the Lam'bassis have cleared ground before the flames to make their own hunting easier. This is a signal for war into which Batouala leads his frenzied tribesmen. They pursue the enemy into the Lam'bassis village where they slaughter the inhabitants, who will also form part of the feast. For three days following the battle there is a surfeit of meat of all kinds for everyone, including Djouma, Mbimé and the other dogs.

Time passes and Djouma grows more cynical toward men of any color. Mbimé has long since disappeared, having been killed and eaten by Batouala and his family. The bones had been thrown to Djouma. Yassigui'ndja has become the wife of Batouala, who showered her with presents. She becomes, shortly after, the mistress of Bissibi'ngui. Each year the rubber harvest is taken to the commandant, who rails against any lessening of the amount and has even chained Batouala in jail. This game of rubber-gathering is one which continues to elude the logic

of Djouma.

As the seasons pass the story of Djouma enters the period covered by the earlier novel Batouala. The scene pictures the dog beside the body of his master, who has attempted to stop the adulterous conduct of Yassigui'ndja and Bissibi'ngui by trying to kill them. He has been mortally wounded by a panther and dies as the two lovers escape through the door of the hut. Djouma thinks of himself alone and without a master and begins howling over the body. The tomtoms beat out the news of Batouala's death to neighboring tribes, but Djouma is chased from the hut. Later when Batouala is buried just outside the village Djouma comes to stay by the grave: he has nowhere to go. At night he howls steadily on the grave of his dead master until one night he is chased away by rocks thrown by the villagers.

At that moment Djouma decides to leave the black world. He goes to the Post, to the room of the Commandant and falls asleep in the hallway. From the next morning dates the period of affluence in his life. He is petted, fed to satiety, wooed by the female dogs, and free to express his dislike of all the natives. Every year or two the commandants are changed, but this does not disturb Djouma's life. He learns to love the complete submission of his new role and the status that accompanies it. His body grows fat and he loses his agility, but he is satisfied.

One day his latest commandant orders the militia to

get porters and prepare to surprise a village containing mutinous elements. Although it is to be a secret march the jungle drums quickly announce the departure. When the militiamen laugh on hearing the jungle telegraph news, the commandant is told that some totally unrelated matter is being relayed through the bush. The party makes camp in the evening and Djouma sleeps as usual by his master's bed. The next morning, however, the commandant is ill with a fever and leaving is delayed. The dog has already noticed the absence of tribesmen in the area, and he suddenly is aware of a tumult of shouts and noises in the jungle. It is the time of the annual fire hunt. Djouma feels the old call of excitement and remembers the frenzied joys of the years with the Bandas and their chief Batouala. He decides to sneak off for a short foray into the jungle to participate in the hunt. He realizes that his reflexes are slower than in the past, but the appearance of an antelope running before the fire makes him abandon all caution. He dashes into the area where trees, shrubs, and tall grass are burning. A sudden shift in the wind causes the flames to veer so that he is almost surrounded by a wall of fire. The thickness and greenness of the foliage indicates to him the presence of a pool of water nearby. He is running in that direction when a pack of wild hogs, disturbed by the crackling roar of the flames, rushes blindly out of the mud wallow beside the pool. Djouma is gored by several of them:

> Ils foncèrent sur lui, non par haine, mais seulement parce qu'il se trouvait sur leur chemin, et l'éventrèrent au passage, à coups de boutoir, comme Mourou, la panthère, avait autrefois éventré Batouala, d'un coup de griffes.[1]

The suffering dog dies as the flames sweep toward him. When the fire simmers down, there is only a smoking, carbonized cadaver left, which the vultures swiftly pounce upon. Later nothing remains but a pile of bones: the jungle has reclaimed the child who attempted to flee from her.

Bêtes de la brousse

This work, which appeared in 1941 after the publication of Le Coeur serré (1931) and Le Livre de la brousse (1934), is not a novel. However, since the protagonists of its four long stories are also animals, it was decided to include it in the study of Djouma, chien de brousse, M'bala, l'éléphant, and Bacouya, le cynocéphale. The principal characters and the length of the stories dealing with them are: Bassaragba the rhinoceros, 53 pages; Doppélé the vulture, 77 pages; Bokorro the python, 61 pages; dog the buffalo and Boum the dog, 44 pages. The last work lends itself to possible confusion in English because of the name of the buffalo, Dog, and the species of his friend, the dog Boum.

"Bassaragba, le rhinocéros" traces the life of the main character over a period of several years. One hesitates to call Bassaragba the "hero" because of the unpleasant traits he manifests. He is monstrous and ugly, but of enormous strength. His eyesight is very poor, and his hearing is little

[1] Ibid., p. 251.

better. The sense of smell is somewhat better developed than the others. His temper is extremely short, but his memory is even shorter so that anger is quickly forgotten.

As the story opens, Bassaragba is roaming the central part of the continent with his two females and his only heir. There are no other animals near because the inhabitants of the jungle have always given him the reputation of being the most unsociable of the jungle's creatures.

> Mourou, la panthère, Mbala, l'éléphant, Bamara, le lion, et Bongo, l'hyène, pensent sur ce point tout de même que les hommes noirs de peau.[1]

The happy peacefulness of the surroundings, nevertheless, surprised Bassaragba, who knew from birth that: "Le monde n'est pas aux animaux de bonne volonté"! When he met a panther, it took little pains to make the latter realize the undesirability of his continued presence in the area. Mourou decided, understandably, not to question the rights of the Bassaragba family.

The rainy season witnesses the departure of Doppélé the vulture before the onslaught of Donvorro the tornadic wind. The weather, however, does not bother the rhinoceros. He and his family wander toward the banks of the Bamingui River, glad of the swiftly growing vegetation which so deeply satisfies their hunger.

On the banks of the Bamingui, the Bassaragbas become acquainted with Konon the hippopotamus and his family. Although

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[1]Betes de la brousse, p. 11.

the two families are not "de même sang," they instinctively know that they may live together in peace. Bassaragba even recalls dimly that he had a hippo playmate in his youth. The only fault of these friends is their positively bizarre affection for the water. All is well, however, until Bamara the lion kills the young heir. The three rhinos leave that country and return toward their original home in the west. One evening the male must defend his mastership against a younger rhino. He whips his opponent, but when he awakes from exhausted slumber after the battle, his females have deserted him. Full of anger he starts to hunt for them but the spoor is cold, and he is never sure during the night's search whether he is looking in the right direction. Their leaving makes him realize how much they were a part of his habits and how he is attached to them. On the way to exact vengeance of the young rhino, should he find him, Bassaragba is distracted by a magnificent growth of euphorbia whose succulence makes him forget his companions. For a week, however, he suffers the pangs of hope and despair. Then this feeling vanishes, but for a long period he suddenly stops in the midst of his trotting to listen for a faintly remembered double trot coming after him. He has never been a model of urbanity but now his character distinctly shifts toward the worse. He wanders about, irritated at everything and nothing, and sleeps with one eye open. From that period he acquires a legendary reputation among the natives. He becomes a sort of fetish animal. This fame is

caused by his vile temper, his success in evading traps, the wide range of his wanderings, and the impartial ferocity of his attacks on men and beasts. The most important aspect of the reputation for Bassaragba is that he is left alone.

One year, however, he notices large migrations of the natives from their usual areas. This does not disturb him since it means more tranquility for him. He could have learned from the gossipy crows why this was happening, but he scorned the language of even his accompanying birds. The crows tell that there is a newcomer to the bush country: a white man who has succeeded in quickly establishing a foothold in the region. For several moons there had been talk of a white man bent on hunting elephants with a thunder-stick. The animals of the Bamingui River region were unconcerned so long as he hunted far away, but he is now approaching their region. The rhino did not hear these palaverings among the birds and animals and moved peacefully on his routine--old age was draining some of the wanderlust from his veins.

One day he suddenly hears the yelping of those creatures "de la race ouah-ouah" who have deserted their fellow animals to live with men. At the same time he is approached by shouting, leaping black men, who do not attempt to kill him, however. As he enters a clearing to follow the men and "reprimand" them, he sees a pale face on a vertical beast for the first time. The creature faces Bassaragba with a stick pointed at him. The latter is going to teach the "singe

manqué" a lesson when a thunderstroke sounds and he feels a horrible pain in one of the bones of his left shoulder. The response of Bassaragba is complete fear as he turns and runs as swiftly as possible until he is utterly exhausted but out of the region. He wonders about the pain which persists but realizes that he is lucky and lies down to sleep. The story ends here.

The second story, "Doppélé le charognard," is the longest, 77 pages. It is really a collection of four folklore tales recounted by Doppele to a group consisting of Bacouya, "le chien à gueule de chien," and Koukouroukou, "le perroquet au plumage gris," and other creatures of the jungle.

Koliko'mbo is the name of the most evil of all the Banda spirits. He is reputed to be so small that no man has ever seen him with the unaided eye. This was the name given by the Bandas to the commandant of the Yangana district, who was small and mean-tempered. Not speaking the language, he never realized that he was made fun of by both the tribesmen and his own interpreters. Believing in the awesomeness of his reputation, he sets out at the beginning of the dry season to discipline some recalcitrant tribes. From the moment of his leaving, the animals of the jungle take over the Post. The baboons install themselves in trees; the wild pigs forage in the manioc plantations; a troop of elephants finishes the complete devastation of the farms in one night.

This was the scene two days later when Doppélé circled

down on his annual return after the rainy season. Talking with his friends, he consents to narrate some of the tales he has heard and the experiences he has had.

The first tale concerns Téré, youngest son of Ngandré, supreme chief of all Banda gods. Téré, "enfant terrible" of the family, possessed all the earth as his domain and was given the supervision of the race of black men. This is at a mythic period when men and beasts share the same villages. The black men were rather industrious so that the farm lands thrived. But the animals, on seeing the ripening crops, immediately began to assuage their eternal hunger for the juicy plants. The story details how Téré finally captures a group of the ancestors of Bacouya, "le cynocéphale à gueule de chien," and feeds them to Bamara the lion. This ends the association of men and beasts in cooperative living.

The second tale treats of an experience that Doppélé had when he was still young with Moumeu, "le caïman." This was a very important stage in his education and took place in the Bangui region. Over a period of time he met and had many conversations with that "lizard tattooed with scales" which is Moumeu. The latter constantly complained about the bad reputation that men and other beasts attributed to him.

> Pché! ...pché! ... Doppélé, pourquoi s'acharne-t-on à me salir ainsi? Je ne quitte l'eau, mon domaine, que pour venir faire chaque jour, sur le sable, ma cure d'héliothérapie. La contemplation intérieure est ma seule joie. Va-t-on me contraindre à y renoncer? ... Tu sais bien ... que je suis incapable de brutaliser une mouche![1]

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[1]René Maran, Bêtes de la brousse (Paris: Albin Michel, 1941), p. 95.

Moumeu is continuing in this vein one day when a canoe, silently paddled by six natives under the leadership of an armed white man, suddenly appears. There is a shot; Moumeu is struck in the right front leg; Doppélé takes hurried leave of the scene.

Shortly before the shot which wounds him, Moumeu has been speaking of the kiss of friendship that he Doppélé should share. He also speaks of the pleasure it would give him to have the vulture sit on his back. Near the end of the dry season when next they meet, Doppélé sees a surprisingly lean, still wounded Moumeu. The latter broaches the same idea as before concerning the expression of their mutual friendship. In the behavior of a typical invalid, Moumeu asks Doppélé to test the flaccidness of his skin. Luckily for the vulture, he does not alight on the ground beside Moumeu, but on his back; for his "friend" attempts to kill him with a powerful sideswipe of the tail. On hearing of this experience with Moumeu, Baingué the wild hog says that such behavior is to be expected from the crocodile. The other listeners, however, are of the opinion that only men could be guilty of such treachery in the name of friendship.

Doppélé's third story, like his first one, is from the folklore of the Bandas. It is the story of why Konon the hippopotamus now lives almost completely in the water. In former times he lived on land, sharing feeding places and bathing sites with M'bala the elephant. It was always noted, however,

that wherever Konon feasted on the grasses and shrubs, a malefic fluid emanating from the hippopotamus skin made plants cease to grow. M'bala spoke about this to Konon, but the latter was even bored by the discussion and refused to spoil his contentment: "Il en a toujours été ainsi ... Que veux-tu que j'y fasse?"

M'bala and his confreres decided upon a stratagem. They challenged Konon's troop to a contest to decide which group could make more noise in the water. While the hippopotami were frenziedly, but with vast self-assurance, making the river water froth and billow, the elephants barred the way to the bank with full-grown trees they had uprooted. When Konon became aware of the deed, M'bala's tribe was standing on the bank with tusks turned toward their erstwhile friends. The latter were forced thereafter to live most of their time in the water.

Doppélé's final story is another episode that furthered his education, this time when he thought of himself as mature. He was living for a while in a rather unpleasant part of the rainy forest where the sun seldom penetrated and trees crowded each other for survival. It was in this region that he first learned to fear the hordes of Feufeu, "la fourmi rouge." It was their favorite terrain, especially at the rainy season.

One day while talking to a bird native to the area and complaining that he did not like that country, Doppélé was

surprised to hear of two creatures he had never known before: N'Djéenna, the gorilla, and N'Tzogo, the chimpanzee. It might also be possible, said the bird, to make the acquaintance of the serpent Python, called Bokorro in the region of the Niou-bangui. Doppélé had heard of the latter and of his ability to hypnotize those who gazed into his eyes, but he was intrigued by the possibility of meeting a python.

As he sat at the top of a tree he heard the noise of galloping and of animal cries. Buffalo, elephants, antelope, wild hogs, birds, grasshoppers, butterflies, crickets, and dozens of other creatures crashed through the jungle below him. He wondered what could be happening and suddenly heard a continuous crackling and sputtering. It was the march of an army of red ants which had set all the animals in flight.

Just as he was reflecting on these myriads of tiny creatures far below, Doppélé perceived the slow gliding of some huge scaly reptile. It was the python. The vulture talked to it and attempted to evade Bokorro's eyes, but their power was too great. He felt himself freezing and yet suppliant as the snake slid nearer when abruptly the power was gone. Doppélé rose into the air swiftly, wondering how he had escaped. On flying back to the area he had just left, he saw that the python had been routed by the climbing of hordes of the red ants.

The moral of all these stories is that life is a continual struggle, complex and multiform, which death only inter-

rupts in appearance. "Triompher toujours, de tout, à tout prix est la loi."[1]

The third long story in Bêtes de la brousse deals with the life of Bokorro the python, one of the more disagreeable of Maran's creatures of the jungle. The scene is the region of the Ouadda, swampy and miasmic. It is not good country for men but the tribe of the Gobous lived there because it was full of game of all kinds.

Bokorro was fifteen feet in length, whitish yellow spotted with brown. He had two occupations in life: eat to live and live to eat, and change his skin at certain periods. Life went along uneventfully for him until one morning he was awakened by Doppélé. The latter told him that a white man had come to the region. Bokorro had never heard of such a being and went to inquire of Moumeu the crocodile. In time he heard the news relayed through the jungle that a white man with a stick that spouted lightning and thunder had settled near the Ouadda. It was shortly the signal for mass concern among the beasts. Mourou the panther quieted their fears for a moment by saying that he would dispose of this creature. He set out to do so but was delayed in the yard of the Post when he saw a young goat tethered to a stake inside a long rectangle. This proved to be his undoing when his right front paw was smashed by a bullet. He left the region to take his shame and weakness elsewhere. More fear was engendered when M'bala and several of his herd

[1]Ibid., p. 140.

were felled by the white hunter. Bokorro began to be alarmed and even more when it was learned that Doppélé the vulture and the crows had deserted their jungle comrades to follow the hunter in his stalking. Food for them was always ample; in fact, the extent of the killing was such as to exceed the gluttonous appetite of the natives. Bokorro himself was spared by a whim of the hunter one day when the python was lying in his tree hole surfeited and allowing his digestive processes to act. In such a condition his presence was easily ascertained by the odor of rottenness which his body emanated, and he could not have defended himself. However, he was not attacked.

The rainy season came and Doppélé left the region with a warning to Bokorro. Mourou, M'bala and Moumeu were now out of the fight and only the python was left to defend the rights of the jungle. The storms and heavy rains made Bokorro seek shelter and delay his half-formed plan to strangle the hunter. Two months of hunger robbed him of his strength and he slept throughout most of the season. He dreamed often of a colloquy held by the creatures of the jungle to discuss the problem and only awoke fully when the sun came out after the rains. After eating a few times, his next concern was to shed his skin. This operation made him feel better and he was glad to see Doppélé return. The latter was still talking of the depredations of the hunter and warned Bokorro that he was liable to be caught himself. Doppélé

admittedly privately to himself, however, that he would greet with joy the disappearance of Bokorro from the region. Bokorro was bored with the continued talk of the white man and went on with life as before. One day as he is killing an antelope, he comes face to face with another python who had attacked the same animal. The two have begun to swallow the still pulsating beast, pulling it into their mouths on their inward curving teeth. There is no way to let the animal out of their mouths once the process has started. It means, therefore, that one of them must swallow both the antelope and the other python. Both snakes coil their tails around the tree farthest away from the enemy and attempt to pull each other from their respective anchors. At last Bokorro, the larger, succeeds in loosening his foe's hold upon the anchoring tree. Then he slowly swallows him alive and whole. During this long, cannibalistic process he lies helpless before any hunter, beast or human, who might pass. Afterwards he slowly makes his way to his accustomed lair and spends more than two months digesting his prey. During all this time it is mere luck that prevents his being discovered and killed. The gossipy crows, flying over the jungle, announced later that Bokorro was once again in the peak of physical condition; but they could not announce also that his days were numbered.

The final story of this collection is entitled "Boum, le chien and Dog, le buffle." It is the shortest, covering only about forty pages. Of all the animal stories it is the

only one which definitely takes place in another jungle than that which usually furnishes the background of Maran's works. This is obvious from a comparison of the countryside itself with that of other stories, and the names of animals and natural phenomena:

English name	Other stories	Present story
Dog	Djouma	Boum
Lion	Bamara	Dout
Panther	Mourou	Kaga
Antelope	Bozobo	Doul
Bull	Gogoua	Dog
Wild hog	Voungba	Gari
Sun	Lolo	Mbang
Moon	Ipeu	Nan
God	Ngakoura	Sou
Devil	Kolikongbo	Kor
Wind	Poupou; Donvorro	Nellmall
Stars	A'mbérépi	KonHio
Hippopotamus	Konon	Ab

The only three human beings named in the story are Randjibaï, Mondjiédi and Yaniédou--names of an obviously different derivation than Batouala, Yassigui'ndja or Bissibi'ngui. The former belong to the Sara-Madji'ngaï village of Kombra, located in the present-day republic of Chad. The rivers forming the boundaries of the region are the Chari, the Bahr Sara, the Lobaye and the Logone, about 300 miles northwest of the scenes of other stories of Maran.

As in Djouma, chien de brousse, the protagonist of the present tale is a small, reddish creature of "la race ouah-ouah," named Boum. Early one morning toward the end of the dry season, which is very severe in that region, he leaves the village to search for food and water. In open bush

country he sees Dog, chief of the buffalo herd, fight a younger rival who wishes to become the leader. Dog is beaten but not killed. Boum rushes out barking and frightens the herd, which has learned to associate dogs with human hunters. The exhausted Dog cannot flee and is surprised to learn that Boum wishes to become his friend. The two spend four days together roaming the bush country. However, they cannot remain together because Boum must have a different food than Dog. Even more important becomes the fact that Boum has been forever doomed to be unable to exist without Man. He grows ever more aware of the need to be with men despite the harsh life they force him to live. He regretfully leaves Dog wandering in the sparse, heat-seared jungle.

Life took up again its slow course for Boum. There were moments when he stopped at the edge of the planted areas to smell the wind and wonder what had become of Dog. Within the village he teased all the animals except the goats who, because of their horns, had become taboo for him, reminding him of Dog. The rainy season passed and the time of the great fire hunt approached. After the feasting and carousing of the harvest time, the village prepared for the hunt. Boum followed his master Randjibaï through the tall grass and tree-grown areas, always aware of the possibility of encountering Dog. The news of a lone buffalo who frequented the area had spread among the natives, and Randjibaï and two comrades were sent out to learn his habits. It was indeed

Dog, who had not rejoined his herd rather than accept the position less than leader which had been forced upon him. He knew that he was being watched, but his decisiveness was so inhibited by the absence of the herd that he could not decide to flee.

In the village Boum had not been allowed to accompany the three trackers. He knew, however, that Dog had been under surveillance for three days. On the fourth day the hunters went out to burn the bush and drive the animals into the open. Their real quarry was Dog the buffalo, and their plan for his death worked perfectly. His indecision gave the shifting winds time to encircle with fire the area to which he had retreated. As the sparks and cinders increased his hairy coat was set aflame and he was blinded. The resolve, half-formed, to kill some of his attackers before dying was forgotten in his despair. Dog stumbled from the burning thickets and was immediately brought down by the spear of Randjibaï. As his eyes filmed over in death he felt on his face the muzzle and tongue of his friend Boum. Vainly he tried to move his tail to show his thanks for this act of friendship.

Mbala l'éléphant

This story is typical of the jungle stories of Maran using animal protagonists. It was written in 1943 and varies from Bêtes de la brousse only in its length. The principal

character is Mbala, the hugest of the jungle beasts and the one most respected by all: panther, python, lion, buffalo, rhinoceros. The setting is again in the region of the Nioubangui, where Moumeu the cayman is the monarch. The latter is called by Mbala: "l'immonde lézard du fleuve, méchant pêcheur en eau trouble." In the air reigns Doppélé the vulture: "technicien du dragage des cadavres." Other characters, such as Bacouya the dog-faced baboon, Bourihi-you the dung-beetle, Kakongo the tortoise, and Dalékéré the snail receive attention in this story.

Mbala, however, is the wisest of the animals; and, because of his size, lives a very placid life. He goes through the jungle like a peaceful hurricane and nothing can resist his wishes. All is contentment for Mbala until Doppélé announces the coming of men. They bring with them Yavrr the dog. However, the greatest terror is pronounced in the jungle during the dry season when the natives burn the jungle to drive the animals before them for hunting. Then, even the army of red ants must flee, and Mbala himself must seek other temporary quarters.

For most of the jungle creatures, the coming of the rainy season is also a bad omen because of storms. But again, Mbala is not disturbed in his peaceful existence.

The storm is his element. Even at its height Mbala and his herd feel no fear from the lashing rain and the rising waters of the streams.

This utopia of the jungle continues until the day that several thunder claps proclaim a new era in the life of the animals. These sounds announce the coming of the white man with the stick which spouts thunder and lightning. It was quickly realized that these men, unlike the blacks, did not only hunt for food: they hunted for the pleasure of killing, laying waste large areas with dead animals. The animals retreated into the deeper recesses of the jungle, but they were followed by the hunters. Along with the latter appeared black men in the red chechias who also had guns. Under the influence of their coming, Mbala's temperament changed for the worse. He once decided to punish the little creatures for their insolence; however, the sight of the desolation they achieved and death of members of his own species made him resort to caution. He decided finally that the best thing to do was to avoid all contact with these creatures. Like the smaller animals he sought refuge in the deeper parts of the jungle: "ni vu, ni connu."

Mbala l'éléphant adds another installment to the series of stories using animal protagonists, a series ending with Bacouya, le cynocéphale of ten years later. The techniques and style of the earlier work are consistent with the other animal stories and will be dealt with in the general discussion at the end of this chapter.

Bacouya, le cycnocéphale

This novel was written in 1953 and is the last of René Maran's fictional works. Like Le Livre de la brousse of 1934, it follows a work of autobiographical importance, Un Homme pareil aux autres. The setting is again the jungle around the Bamba and Pombo Rivers, that Maran has already peopled with the tribes of Batouala's people, the Bandas. The protagonist this time is Bacouya the dog-faced baboon. Sharing the stage with him in minor roles are Doppele the vulture and Koukourou the gray-plumaged parrot. Other characters, besides creatures of the jungle, are Batouala's tribesmen and a white colonial officer and his red-fezzed native gendarmes.

Bacouya, for ten moons a white man's pet, escaped and came to the Pombo-Bamba region. He succeeded in becoming head of a group of nearly one hundred dog-faced baboons, who resisted him because he smelled of Man. As the story begins he has been leader for two years and has four females. He recalls how Doppélé carefully watched over him when he first came to the jungle. He does not suspect the motives of the vulture, who, needless to say, had seen the newcomer, unused to jungle ways, as the almost certain prospect for a meal. Bacouya disappointed Doppélé, but he gave him many amusing moments as the baboon learned his way--avoiding the embrace of Bokorro, the python, and finally chasing from their homes a simian people known as white-mantled monkeys.

This morning, Doppélé and Bacouya notice that the village of Batouala is completely deserted. The baboons find not a really creditable morsel of food in the huts, and they realize that the Banda people have left to begin the fire-hunt which ends each dry season. Some time later Doppélé relays to Bacouya the message of Koukourou, the parrot, that a white man is known to be on the way to the Pombo-Bamba country. Bacouya brings up the matter before his baboon council, in the best tradition of peaceful government (says he), and they palaver senselessly and uninterruptedly as he had anticipated, quite in the manner of baboons. He, however, who has had experience of the whites, knows that the matter will bear careful watching.

Days later, he watches the tumult which arises when the village of Batouala is burned to the ground while the inhabitants are at the hunt. When the question of rebuilding is presented, there is some dissension. Everyone is talking about the proposed new colonial post to be set up on the Pombo and wonders if it is worthwhile to rebuild the village rather than move on to try to escape the white man. They decide to leave and stay away until the rainy season, when they will return to do the planting. The next day the colonial officer arrives with native gendarmes. The village is deserted. But with him he has brought 300 prisoners along with women, goats, dogs, and equipment, all of which has been set up in a jungle clearing. The native policemen are sent

off to bring in more workers; the white man sets out to hunt for food; Bacouya watches all the preparations, cursing the intrusion of the white and of the black men, who are disturbing and upsetting the jungle calm.

In the midst of his interest in these events, Bacouya almosts forgets a warning expressed often by Doppélé: "Mâle qui néglige trop ses femelles s'expose tôt ou tard à des peines cruelles." He rushes back to his "people" and immediately sees that his youngest wife is absent. As he inquires for her, she tries to slip unnoticed into the baboon group. When questioned, she makes an excuse, but Bacouya has seen another male, Mbissi, attempt also to slip into the back ranks of the group. He does not hesitate and ends by beating the rival, who is killed by a shot from the white man's rifle.

During the weeks that follow, the jungle begins to feel the weight of this new intruder. Buffalo, entire companies of partridge and pheasant, eight baboons feel the weight of the "portable thunder" and are killed or wounded. Even Doppélé the vulture is almost taken from his "loved ones," as were a dozen buzzards of all ages. It was then that the bush realized that the hunter did not need to be hungry to kill. When this became common knowledge, the jungle became more or less deserted around the camp, except for Bacouya and his baboons, who remained hidden in the depths of the trees, disappearing at the approach of either white or black men.

A change was noted further in the life of the vicinity; there was no more laughter or singing from the natives. They did not dance anymore. They were overworked all day and had been brought back before the dry-season hunt was finished. In addition, they found it inexplicable that the white colonial should demand also that they go into the depths of the jungle and bleed the rubber trees. They did not understand what he could want with the fluid from the trees, but they did know that those who worked to get this fluid went into the parts of the bush which harbored the tsetse fly and were liable to get sleeping sickness, from which one died. The coagulated juice of a tree did not seem worth all this effort and danger.

These occurrences are taking place toward the end of the dry season. Animals and men are feeling the effects of the incessantly dry, hot weather. Tempers are short, annoyances are omnipresent, calmness of spirit is impossible. Buffalo bellow without reason; elephants rush at everything that ventures in their vicinity; the fez-wearing soldiers serve out increasing numbers of blows.

Finally, the rainy season began. Doppélé took leave of Bacouya the day after the first storm, in order to go toward the places of dry weather and sunshine and plentiful carrion. Then the storms took up again in earnest. Rivers flooded and food became scarce for the baboons, who had taken refuge in a high cave from which rain prevented their exit.

On the day that the weather was pleasant for a short

while, Bacouya talked with Koukourou the parrot, who told him of the danger that the inhabitants of the jungle were unaware of while praising the abundant plantings that the white colonial was forcing Batouala's people to work on. Bacouya had only looked forward to the plentiful supply of manioc, seseame, corn, beans, sweet potatoes, bananas, peppers, etc., which would "belong" to the baboon people. Koukourou the Parrot reminds him that in the wake of the wild swine and other snouted digging animals who would be attracted (and harmless) would come Bamara the Lion and Mourou the Panther. This completely erases the pleasure Bacouya had been contemplating and makes him again curse the two-legged upright creatures, black and white, who were usurping the bush.

One night as Bacouya and the baboons are sleeping in the cave on the hillside which they occupy during the rainy season, panic spreads toward the back of the cave for some cause unknown to Bacouya until he smells the presence of Feufeu the Fire-Ant. He flees with everyone else and finds on returning to the cave the next morning, the clean-licked bones of various animals that had failed to escape the ants' voracity. The baboons were cold, soaked to the bone, coughing and sneezing and feverish, but they had escaped.

By the month of August all the exuberance of Nature had spread itself before the villagers' huts. Wild pigs and kindred rooters, "catastrophe montée sur quatre pattes," resisted all the organized efforts of the natives to keep

them out. When Bacouya also complained to Koukourou and asked his advice, the latter smiled coldly and asked why he should think that the porcine people did not have the same rights as the simians. Bacouya is further enlightened by Koukourou on what to expect from the two tribes of men, white and black--cooperation against all animals, despite their fighting each other. Later Bacouya dreams a fulfillment of his desires as the creatures of the jungle drive out all men with the elephants furnishing most of the power. After Man has gone, Bacouya dreams that he drives Mbala the Elephant out with fire and is left to enjoy the plantations in peace.

In fact, however, it turned out that the only denizens of the forest to put the wild swine to flight were the fellow-tribesmen of Feufeu the Fire-Ant. Bacouya studies them as they go about their work, frightening everyone in their path. He finds that they also seem to relax and even play games at certain intervals. He is unable to discover just how their commands are given so that all obey instantly and concertedly. The supremacy that the fire-ants establish without effort reminds Bacouya that he has to attend to the menace to simian civilization posed by Batouala and his Bandas.

The occasion to attempt concrete action was offered in the month of October when hundreds of other baboons, attracted by the abundance of food in the Pombo-Bamba vicinity, came face-to-face with their congenitors under the leadership of Bacouya. The latter had little trouble in assimilating to

his power the other groups. All the baboons became enthusiastic about his idea of driving the black man out of the area, and only the resumption of the last part of the rainy season prevented this from being realized immediately. When a calm set in, Bacouya placed his plan into motion. He had groups of twelve to fifteen baboons infiltrate strategic points of each plantation, detaching two or three on reconnaissance. It was necessary both to register the extent of damage done by the rooting animals and to estimate the development of still-ripening plants.

A child was the first to come into contact with a group of the simians and ran off frightened to the village, after which the drums began, calling the men to a palaver. However, the inspection work of the baboons continued under constant patrols and supervision. Bacouya surveyed the operation from the crest of a silk-cotton tree, receiving reports from moment to moment on the progress of his troops. Meanwhile, he passed the time talking to Koukourou the Parrot.

Suddenly the clamor tells Bacouya that the palaver has finished and that Batouala's people are advancing on the baboons. The latter had already been told to stage a slight retreat in the center so that the advancing flanks could bring off an encircling maneuver. At its completion, Bacouya gave the signal to attack. Of course, Batouala's people had never expected to have to face attacking simians. They were thrown off balance completely as each clump and bush of a plantation

seemed to erupt with a baboon. Batouala sees the fright of his men, jumps before them and begins the dance of Mbala the Elephant. His men take heart again and advance toward the simians. But Bacouya walks slowly up to Batouala, yawns in a bored manner, showing his huge canine teeth, thumps on his chest, and begins to jump up and down, thumping the ground. As he is about to attack Batouala, the latter flees, followed by his tribe and the fields are left to the dog-faced baboons and innumerable insects.

The exultation of the baboon people was great, but they had committed a tactical error: instead of following and killing the terror-stricken Bandas, they had allowed them to escape. Bacouya foresaw what would follow, and Koukourou bore out this foreboding: the black men would combine against the baboons, and even the white with the "portable thunder" would make war against them. The preparations went on among Batouala's people, who called on the neighboring tribes for support.

The next day the battle began, many baboons being caught asleep among the succulent plants in the fields. The rest immediately ran to Bacouya for advice, and he decided to repeat the encircling movement of the previous day even more logistically, dividing the simians into four groups of which one would be held in reserve. The first simian force succeeded in knocking over the native warriors. But Batouala responded with a block-forming movement of men armed with

sagaies while other warriors pelted the baboons with arrows. Neither side was giving ground as time passed and the two leaders decided it was time for another meeting face-to-face.

Bacouya advanced, surrounded by his wives, and went into a dance whose every leap brought him closer to his adversary. Batouala merely watched as the baboon drew closer, calculating on his part just where he would strike with his spear. Just as Bacouya was going to leap, the sound of a rifle is heard. The oldest wife of Bacouya, who had seen the white man's intention, fell dead, having received the shot meant for the baboon leader, in front of whom she leaped. Other shots rang out from the guns of the native soldiers, and the baboons fled in a panic-stricken wave through the trees. Thus, the word of Koukourou had been proved. However, after they had calmed down far from the scene, the baboons began to look with equanimity on the occurrence. They thought Bacouya too pessimistic when he said that this was just the beginning of the effects of the cooperation of black and white. Finally, knowing the lack of the power of sequential reasoning shared by his congenitors, Bacouya stopped trying to prove his point to them. Koukourou further increases his friend's concern by saying that he would not be surprised if the people of Batouala should intend a sortie against the cave where Bacouya's people slept. That evening he went to spend the night in a tall tree, followed by his females to whom he had not attempted an explanation for abandoning the

communal habitation.

Late in the night Bacouya awoke, cold and shivering from the wind, with the rain beginning to fall. It seemed to him that it should now be safe to go to the cave since the natives would do no hunting until morning. But suddenly he saw a number of moving lights, which became torches carried by men who moved, most unlike Batouala's people, with no sound. Then the night was full of quiet lights moving toward the hill in which the baboon cave was located. The natives built a fire from damp materials at the mouth of the cave, which was in turn filled with a thick, black, choking smoke. As the terrified and sleep-numbed baboons poured from the cave into the night, they were shot; those who were not, fought and escaped as best they could. Fear gained ascendancy within Bacouya and he fled the region, leaving his females behind.

There are many other animals which are mentioned briefly and are not major characters in these works. Comments on them are often colorful and succinct:

> L'immonde petit puant, qu'est Djagoua, le chacal, et Bongo, l'hyène, ce gros puant.[1]
>
> Le scorpion, espèce de méchante écrevisse de terre, qui épuise son mâle avant de le dévorer.[2]
>
> Le phacophère et son frère roux ... catastrophe montée sur quatre pattes.[3]

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[1] Bacouya, p. 141.

[2] Ibid., p. 151.

[3] Ibid., p. 152.

In accordance with the dominant philosophy of the milieu, respect is often present in these portraits. It is especially the ant family which arouses this feeling:

> Les fourmis rouges ont le nombre, qui fait la force et souvent le droit. S'autorisant de ce nombre, de cette force, de ce droit, elles se ruent sur tout ce qui passe à portée de leurs mandibules. Personne ne les égale dans l'art de nettoyer une contrée des incommodités et des fâcheux qui l'encombrent.[1]

Bacouya le cynocéphale contains more aphorisms and observations embodying the philosophy by which the creatures of the jungle live. In general these express the doctrine of "might over right," but they are also flexible and pragmatic enough to contain Machiavellian ideas involving the interplay of shrewdness and audacity where purely physical force could not prevail. Among dozens of examples, the following are typical:

> L'art de gouverner est en honneur chez les singes, bien que peu d'entre eux y excellent. Les grands politiques sont les seuls à savoir qu'il n'est pas de meilleure méthode de gouvernement que de laisser s'entre-haranguer tous ceux qui brûlent de le faire. Personne n'écoutant personne, tout le monde croit avoir raison et chacun est content de soi.[2]

> Quelquefois ... le mieux était de composer avec l'envahisseur. Où la force échoue, la ruse s'impose.[3]

> Qui détient la force a le droit pour lui.[4]

> L'union fait la force. Est indigne de commisération qui méconnaît cette évidence.[5]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 171-72.

[2] Bacouya, le cynocéphale, pp. 31-32.

[3] Ibid., p. 52.

[4] Ibid., p. 95.

> La vie est courte. On vieillit vite. Il faut profiter sans vergogne de ses moindres bienfaits, même si on ne les obtient qu'en empiétant sur les droits du voisin.[1]
>
> De toutes les méthodes de colonisation, faire peur est la seule qui soit efficace.[2]
>
> Chacun pour soi est une des grandes lois de la brousse et de la vie.[3]
>
> Tuer qui vous gêne est une des lois de la nature.[4]
>
> La ruse a souvent raison de la force.[5]
>
> Le mensonge et l'hypocrisie ne sont, à tout prendre, que des moyens d'auto-défense et d'espoir enseignés par l'expérience. Tout être vivant en a plus ou moins besoin, s'il veut continuer à vivre en un monde où la force est maîtresse de tous les matres-mots.[6]

Bacouya, le cynocéphale has a protagonist who is somewhat different from those of Djouma, chien de brousse, Bêtes de la brousse and Mbala, L'éléphant. In the first place, he is naturally more man-like than the other protagonists. He does not live in isolation or in relative solitude with a few of his number. Instead, the band to which Bacouya belongs and in which he holds a position roughly analogous to that of Batouala, is composed of one hundred baboons. He governs them as would the chief of a tribe.

This leads to a second distinction from the other stories: a plot which is worked out with more nearly human actions. The confrontation occurring between the Banda tribe of Batouala and the large company of baboons could not have

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[1]Ibid., p. 150. [2]Ibid., p. 179. [3]Ibid., p. 228.
[4]Ibid., p. 212. [3]Ibid., p. 206. [6]Ibid., p. 186.

been managed with any of the other animals. The settling of the "ideological" differences between baboon and Banda on the battlefield is very unusual and is fundamental to the peculiar plot of the story.

In view of the limited number of "human" actions available to Bacouya, it is perhaps significant that this story contains more aphorisms and philosophical observations than any of the nine works under study. In general, these express the doctrine of "might over right," but they are also flexible and pragmatic enough to contain Machiavellian ideas involving the interplay of shrewdness and audacity where purely physical force could not prevail. Among the dozens of examples varied in length, the following are typical.

There are numerous instances of the type of proverbs one meets in any language, such as: "Rirait bien qui rirait le dernier!" and "Prudence est mère de sûreté." Even more apothegms are representative of the type of reasoning that La Rochefoucauld advances in his Maximes. They point up the reaction to actions and feelings which are on the surface altruistic, but which are seen in a new, if slightly frightening, light by the cynic:

> La paix marque une plus ou moins longue pause entre deux guerres, l'amitié une plus ou moins longue halte sur le sentier de la haine.[1]

> La sympathie, au fond, n'est souvent que la forme la plus courtoise d'une hostilité latente.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 67. [2] Ibid., p. 13.

> On n'en veut jamais a qui nous enrichit et nous ravitaille.[1]
>
> On ne donne rien si libéralement que la peau d'autrui, quand elle contribue à sauvegarder la sienne.[2]
>
> L'oubli est nécessaire au bonheur des êtres vivants. C'est pourquoi la plupart d'entre eux ont la mémoire courte.[3]
>
> Toutes les nations vraiment fortes sont racistes.[4]
>
> Le mépris permet de vivre au milieu des hommes et de les supporter.[5]
>
> On ne perd pas son temps à s'occuper d'autrui quand on est soi-même occupé ailleurs.[6]

These maxims are completed by others on various particular subjects of importance in the life of the baboons, such as, work, Nature, Man, patience, and liberty. Work and liberty are especially relevant to the life of Bacouya:

> Le travail n'est pas naturel à l'homme, puisqu'il le fatigue. Il ne l'est pas non plus aux singes.[7]
>
> Il n'est de bonheur que dans la liberté, de liberté que dans la solitude. Tout le reste est vanité.[8]
>
> Travail et esclavage signifient exactement la même chose. Les singes à gueule de chien savent ça de naissance.[9]
>
> La liberté est un bien naturel ... (Mais) il faut partout la défendre, partout la faire respecter, pour ce partout se montrer plus fort que tous, ou plus rusé.[10]
>
> Profiter de l'instant qui passe, vivre au gré de son libre arbitre, manger, boire, dormir, et s'adonner entretemps, quand on a l'honneur d'être un singe à gueule de

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[1] Ibid., p. 58. [2] Ibid., p. 59. [3] Ibid., p. 125.
[4] Ibid., p. 192. [5] Ibid., p. 90. [6] Ibid., p. 217.
[7] Ibid., p. 152. [8] Ibid., p. 240. [9] Ibid., p. 139.
[10] Ibid., p. 11.

> chien, à toutes sortes de voleries ou d'excès luxurieux, sont les seules occupations avouables de tout être libre.[1]
>
> La liberté vraie engendre toujours le désordre. Liberté et désordre se complètent l'un l'autre. Ou l'ordre règne, il n'est plus de liberté.[2]

Aside from the singes à gueule de chien, the creatures which furnish the major portion of the observations and comments in Bacouya are men, black and white. The greatest preoccupation of Bacouya and the jungle-dwellers is the result of the increased planting done by the natives under the pressure of the white colonialist who comes with a number of native gendarmes. The animals of the jungle had learned through the generations to live with the people of Batouala, but the coming of the strange white man and his followers has upset the rhythm and pace of life of the bush country. He forces the blacks to work in a way that had never been seen before. He goes out hunting and does not kill merely for food, but for entertainment; thus, the animals can not be sure when it is safe to be around him, and find, to their sorrow, that it is never safe. This causes many animals to forsake the region who had formerly called it a good home. It causes Bacouya and his "people" to be extremely careful at all times, as well as to take counsel on how to deal with the problem. Doppélé the Vulture and Koukourou the Parrot warn that he is only passing through, but events prove them wrong. Bacouya had once been prisoner in a white settlement and knew them:

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[1] Ibid., p. 30. [2] Ibid., p. 35.

> Les lieux où paraît l'homme blanc de peau sont malsains ... La fréquentation du deux pieds blanc de peau est pire que celle du chacal et de l'hyène. Il n'est pas d'être vivant plus exécrable. Pour un de ses semblables qu'il daigne soigner et guérir, il en tue cent autres. Distribuer et multiplier la mort est son plaisir. Tous ses pores la transpirent. Mieux vaut pour la santé se tenir loin de lui.[1]

As for the deux pieds noir de peau of Batouala's tribes, Bacouya decides that fighting them will finally be the only way to prove ownership of the fields. The psychology by which the baboons assert their ownership is reflective of the humor that often pervades such passages in Maran's work. Bacouya admits that the natives had done the spading, hoeing, digging, sowing and weeding:

> L'homme noir de peau est à plaindre. Il semble n'avoir été créé et mis au monde qu'à l'usage des singes à gueule de chien. Ce qui lui appartient est leur.[2]

> Ce qui est à lui est nôtre, en particulier ses plantations. Voilà pourquoi, toi et moi, les tiens et les miens, nous devons louer sans réserve l'homme blanc de peau, qui contraint son frère noir à donner plus d'extension à ses cultures vivrières.[3]

For this single thing, Bacouya could give thanks to the white man, but in other matters he was to be execrated and regarded as incomprehensible.

> L'homme blanc de peau n'avait pas besoin d'avoir faim pour tuer. Il tuait pour tuer, massacrait pour massacrer, exterminait pour exterminer. C'était son passe-temps.[4]

> Les blancs de peau ... étaient gens sortant de l'ordinaire. Qu'on pût faire collection de défenses d'éléphants, passe encore! Mais de jus d'herbes coagulé![5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 17. [2] Ibid., p. 78. [3] Ibid., p. 136.

[4] Ibid., p. 106. [5] Ibid., p. 110.

Such considerations lead Bacouya more than once to contemplate the relation, anthropologically, between man and baboon. Of course, the latter are the higher stage of evolution, as one would expect from hearing a baboon discuss the matter. He quotes Doppélé the Vulture as speaking of men as monkeys whose evolution had been stopped by some unknown force. Furthermore, the natives, according to Bacouya, feel this lack of completion:

> Quant à moi, la seule chose que je sache des hommes noirs de peau, c'est qu'ils regrettent tous, actuellement, de ne pouvoir se transformer en singes à gueule de chien. "Bacouya et les siens," disent-ils, "sont nés sous une bonne étoile. S'ils habitaient comme nous, des cases, le blanc de Pouyamba s'empresserait de les faire travailler."[1]

It was obvious to Bacouya that men, both white and black, were ignorant and did not know how life is to be lived. Life is a very simple matter. "Seuls les hommes cherchent à la compliquer ou à précipiter son cours, afin de pimenter les récits qu'ils imaginent."[2] Bacouya continues by saying that neither black men nor white men are worth much. From their behavior and that of certain other inhabitants of the jungle, one could say that the world had certainly been made by someone bereft of good sense. "Le malheur était qu'on ne pouvait le refaire ni le rendre meilleur en le comblant des bienfaits de la civilisation simienne!"[3]

The opinion of Bacouya just quoted is illustrative of another aspect of this novel which is infrequently found in other works: humor. There are numerous observations which are humorous because of the point of view they portray--that of nature and life looked on from the animal's philosophical

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[1] Ibid., pp. 138-39. [2] Ibid., p. 141. [3] Ibid., p. 147.

position. Baingué and Voumba, the boar and wild pig, as they root up and devour the ripened crops, are spoken of as "s'appliquant maintenant à mettre en valeur, selon les procédés les plus rationnels de la colonisation porcine, l'espace vital qu'ils s'étaient approprié."[1] Batouala's men, pointing out one proof of the superiority of men over baboons, see it in the difference in the site of baldness in men and monkeys. Since men think, they wear out the hair on their heads! Bacouya, on the other hand, is as sure of the superiority of baboons. He speaks of the possible conquering of baboon civilization by Batouala's tribe as the triumph of barbarism. Later, in the treatment of the animals' ideas of their own beauty and superiority, we shall see examples of humor, such as that involved in Bacouya's admiration before his portrait in the waters of Pombo. This humor arises from the incongruity in the reader's mind between the animal's idea of himself and the human conception. This contrast between "reality" and the actor's perception of it has always been one of the basic sources of comedy.

Humor is further apparent in many short dicta which are not quite maxims or aphorisms. Sometimes they are popular sayings from wellknown sources which are applied to unusual situations or characters. Marxism furnishes: "Qui veut la fin veut les moyens." E pluribus unum is reflected in "Tous pour un, un pour tous," when Bacouya strives for cooperation among his followers. He calls the warrior ants "l'abomination

de la désolation." Furthermore, to him the natives laboring on "his" plantations are necessary, and "si Ngakoura ne les avait pas créés, il aurait fallu les inventer." This paraphrases the words of some religious skeptics: "If God did not exist, it would have been necessary to create Him." Bacouya looks at his friend Koukourou flying away on a parrot's business and says with resignation: "Les affaires sont les affaires." The obtuseness with which the oppressor regards the oppressed is echoed by Bacouya watching "his" natives working the fields: "Nègre qui chante est nègre satisfait de son sort. Tout le monde sait ça, même celui qui ne sait rien."[1] The biblical parable of the mote and the beam is summed up in this way: "On devrait toujours se psychanalyser d'abord avant de critiquer autrui."[2]

Despite the number of maxims, however, Bacouya le cynocéphale is not in the least didactic. These sayings occur as comments of the characters on their actions and are not part of any complete system of philosophy using the story as a vehicle for its propagation. Their sound of familiarity succeeds in creating interest and sympathy for the animal characters. The relative inaction of Bacouya is thus rendered less obvious by his continual mouthing of these observations. Human talk takes the place of human actions. Although the triumph of Batouala and his tribe with the help of the white man and the rifle-firing gendarmes is inevitable

and to be desired from a human standpoint, one is still able to regret the downfall of the so-human baboons whose pristine environment is being destroyed.

The stories just summarized may be studied together because of their similarities in setting, character, intrigue and style. All use animal protagonists, dealt with in a manner similar to that of Batouala and Kossi, the protagonist of Le Livre de la brousse. The latter are the representatives of the finest type of warrior among the Bandas. Bacouya, the protagonist, is similarly the finest type of "baboon-hood" in the region; Maran depicts his personality in much the way he would that of a human character:

> Qu'on le voulût ou non, lubrique, lascif, vicieux, querelleur, obscène et volontiers exhibitionniste, il était la plus pure illustration de la race simienne. Plus il se regardait dans la Pombo, plus il en était convaincu. Ce port, cet air, cette majesté, cette prestance n'appartenaient qu'à lui. Les singes de son espèce pouvaient s'enorgueillir d'avoir pour chef un mâle de sa carrure! tout, en lui, respirait la perfection: sa tête volumineuse, son corps trapu et cependant délié, sa queue plutôt courte que longue, la forte crête ombrageant ses sourcils, sa face cue, au teint légèrement bleuâtre, sanglée de bourrelets, charnus de même couleur, ses yeux marron foncé, ses oreilles menues, pointues et rouges, les touffes de favoris encadrant ses joues, et, parfaisant le tout, les calus de ses fesses glabres, lisses et violâtres.[1]

> Bacouya s'admirait dans les eaux de la Pombo Son front surbaissé, ses yeux nichés sous le couvert de son arcade sourcilière en corniche et sa machoire proéminente l'inclinaient à se rendre fréquemment ce muet hommage.[2]

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[1] Bacouya, le cynocephale (Paris: Albin Michel, 1953), p. 28.

[2] Ibid., p. 68.

To increase this resemblance to human beings, the animals are given names under which are subsumed all the members of the species. Thus each "named" creature is individualized. This can result in the ability to distinguish between two members of the same species by referring to one as the "named" creature; the struggle to the death of the two pythons needed this treatment.

> Bokorro, dilatant de façon démesurée sa gueule démesurément extensible, le halait littéralement à lui et halait en même temps le python qui s'était greffé, qui s'était soudé au corps de la (antilope) morte.[1]

Similar treatment was used in describing the fight between the two rhinoceroses and between the two buffaloes. One was given the native name as a proper noun, the other was denominated by the common, European noun.

Often, when it is necessary to speak of a family of animals, all are known by the same proper name with qualifiers or substantive substitutes for clarity. Variation is achieved by using terms such as: "le géniteur du jeune mort," "Bassaragba père," "le jeune Bassaragba," "Doppélé, le charognard et ses collègues," "Konon le jeune," "les Konon," "l'héritier des Bassaragba," Mbala, l'éléphant, et ses fils." Thus, without ever using another word to name the creature, Maran succeeds in giving the appearance of variety without sacrificing verity.

All the attributes of the species are assigned to the

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[1]Bêtes de la brousse, p. 204.

animal named, so that there is no distortion of what the reader knows or can imagine to be the character of the animal. However, Maran often iterates facts that are obvious, imparting to the account the naiveté of folklore and making it seem as though a new facet of the animal's character were being discovered:

> Bacouya, le chef des singes à gueule de chien, lui souhaita la bienvenue dans la langue des singes à gueule de chien, et. ... Koukourou, le perroquet au plumage gris, lui adressa des souhaits analogues dans la langue des perroquets gris.[1]

In general when Maran describes a creature other than human, he describes the species in the individual under the native name. Instincts are spoken of as though they were intentional behavior of the animal, thus increasing its individualization in human terms:

> Prakongo (le scorpion) est une bête égoïste et hargneuse, qui gîte habituellement sous de vieilles pierres ou parmi les morceaux de bois pourris. Les animaux de haute brousse et ceux qui vivent asservis à l'homme la haïssent cordialement. Quand ils la voient, ils l'évitent ou latuent. En revanche, comme elle se sait haïe, elle se montre, en toute occasion, d'une susceptibilité piquante à l'extrême et venimeuse.[2]

The illusion of humanity within the animal characters is further sustained by combining the observed facts of animal behavior with interior monologue in human speech. In the example following, Djouma has just entered a strange village and is being examined by three dogs while villagers watch:

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[1]Ibid., p. 69.

[2]Djouma, chien de brousse, p. 24.

> Djouma détourne la tête, ses yeux essaient de fuir leurs regards hostiles. Il se fait petit, tout petit, se roule sur le dos, ferme les paupières, tire une pauvre petite langue humide et rouge, frissonne. Il geint, se ratatine, voudrait disparaître. Il est seul, faible, misérable. Il est venu en ami, non en ennemi. Qu'on ne le maltraite point. ... Il ne veut qu'un abri, pour la nuit ... un abri ... Après? ... Eh bien, après, on verrait ... Tout s'arrangerait. ... On deviendrait bons camarades ...[1]

The jungle world peopled by Maran would be incomplete without the ideas and reactions of the animals to each other and to man. These vary from friendly to indifferent to inimical, depending upon the degree of natural enmity or symbiosis. All the animals regard man with loathing except the dog. One could, however, say that Doppelé the vulture finds "pleasure" in following groups of men during the hunting. The white man is regarded as worse than the black by all the creatures:

> L'homme noir, le fléau des fléaux, avait trouvé son maître dans l'homme blanc. ... Il a la patience et l'industrie du termite, la hargne du taon, la ténacité de la tique. Il surpasse enfin l'homme noir dans l'art difficile de répandre le vide autour de soi.[2]

Bacouya the baboon described man as one of Nature's failures in the evolutionary scale while ascending toward the baboon, the apex of creation. Boum the dog, in a moment of anger, saw man as:

> Cette espèce de chien dégénéré, glabre, noir et vertical, appelé homme. ... Il n'est pas d'homme, qui ne jouisse du privilège d'être tout ensemble, à lui seul, bien plus méchant que le rhinocéros, bien plus redoutable que le lion, bien plus dévastateur que l'éléphant, bien plus cruel que la panthère et bien

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[1] Ibid., p. 131.

[2] Bêtes de la brousse, pp. 48-49.

plus vorace que le charognard ...[1]

Although the crows are depicted in all the works as the most scurrilously mocking of the jungle denizens, their general attitude toward their fellow creatures is typical. When, for example, the attitude of superiority is not explicitly imputed to the creature, it is to be inferred from its remarks concerning others. Thus, the unfriendly attitude of one animal toward another may be revealed in several ways:

> Hurler pour le plaisir de hurler est le propre de l'abominable petit quatre pattes roux de race et de langue ouah-ouah. Qui ne l'a vu s'asseoir sur son derrière, afin d'injurier la lune, n'a jamais rien vu. Il faut aller loin pour trouver bête capable de l'égaler en pauvreté d'esprit.[2]

> Il est du reste de notoriété publique que Mbala, animal nuisible par excellence, a un fichu caractère. Bassaragba, le rhinocéros, ne lui cède en rien sur ce point.[3]

> Le départ de Doppélé toucha peu Bassaragba. Il tenait à mépris ce rapace, sorte d'hyène empennée ne frayant qu'avec les bêtes crevées et se gobergeant de pourriture au point de soulever le coeur.[4]

> Gato, le mâle de la poule, profère ses kékérékés. La stupidité de ce volatile et sa vanité sont proverbiales. Ne lui arrive-t-il pas de crier le jour par les nuits de pleine lune? Il commet la même méprise chaque fois que la rougeur d'une torche troue les ténèbres. Glorieux, avec ça, et d'une superbe![5]

> Je vis émerger du Nioubangui un monstrueux lezard. Je n'en avais jamais vu de plus balourd ni de plus laid. Tout, en lui, était répugnant; sa queue aplatie et verticale, son corps ensemble étroit et renflé, les écailles cuirassant son dos verdâtre et son ventre jaune, ses pattes courtes, trapues et fortes, ses dents aigues, disposées sur une seule rangée, enfin sa démarche pesante et gourde.[6]

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[1]Ibid., p. 243. [2]Bacouya, p. 131. [3]Ibid., p. 184.

[4]Bêtes de la brousse, p. 12.

[5]Bacouya, p. 43. [6]Bêtes de la brousse, p. 90.

Following the law of the jungle that each must look out for himself, the apparent friendliness of the species often has ulterior motives. Doppelé the vulture excites the fears of his friend Bacouya in order to enjoy the latter's distress. He prevails upon another friend, Bokorro the python, to kill the white hunter so that the jungle will be rid of all the great killers: lion, elephant, panther, and python. The first three had already met their defeat. Furthermore, it is not just so he can profit from their possible reduction to his favorite food commodity: carrion. It is rather the insensitivity to the fate of others which is a result of that code. Other creatures may talk to the dog, but all despise him as a traitor who has given his allegiance to men. On occasion each animal makes fun of all the others whom he regards as not favored by the benefits of his own "civilization"; even the dog in his relations with man is not proof against this feeling of superiority.

A parallel and concomitant of the deprecatory attitude toward others is the display of vanity and self conceit. According to his own opinion, each of the prototypes is the finest example of the species:

> Nous, les corbeaux ... appartenons à la grande et noble nation des Kroas. ... Les seuls êtres intelligents qui soient au monde, c'est nous![1]

> La (rivière) Pombo atteinte, il se pencha sur l'immobile miroir de ses eaux mobiles. Celles-ci lui

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[1]Bacouya, pp. 72-73.

> renvoyèrent son image. Il était trop singe de goût pour ne pas l'admirer. Qu'on le voulût ou non, lubrique, lascif, vicieux, querelleur, obscène et volontiers exhibitionniste, il était la plus pure illustration de la race simienne. Plus il se regardait dans la Pombo, plus il en était convaincu. Ce port, cet air, cette majesté, cette prestance n'appartiennent qu'à lui.[1]

That the lion or the panther might regard themselves as beautiful is not foreign to much human thinking. These beasts possess qualities which have entered into metaphors which people apply to other human beings. However, the self-confessed beauty of the baboon, the vulture, the elephant, the hippopotamus, and the rhinoceros strikes one first as humorous. Further thought leads to the conclusion that, if such animals possessed the necessary consciousness of self, then beauty would be naturally in their own image. These works of Maran, therefore, share with the age-old fables of every land the quality of bringing insight to bear upon human behavior.

Although the setting in which Maran places his characters is always that of the central African region, "il y a brousse et brousse." There is the more southern area close to the Ubangui River, full of the primeval lushness of warm swamp life. It is full of game animals, but it is also inhabited by the tsetse fly. For this reason horses and domestic cattle can not be raised there. The jungle area which is the site of the stories on Batouala and Kossi and Djouma is just a short distance to the north, but it is rarely visited by sleeping sickness. It is more efficacious for

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[1] Ibid., p. 28.

human beings although not so rich in rubber-producing plants. Most of the remaining stories also take place in this approximate region. The setting of "Dog the Buffalo and Boum the Dog" in Bêtes de le brousse is still another type of bush country. It is to the north and west of Fort-Sibut area. Trees, lianas and vines do not grow so luxuriantly. Horses are found for the first time in any story. The elephant and hippopotamus are missing. The vast colonies of monkeys are also absent. The animals are represented usually by smaller species. Plants are thick and green only during the short period of the rains. The natives suffer famine during long months when the wind of the desert to the north sweeps across the area. Poorly engineered wells are dug because the streams dry up completely. In the first two regions, there are huge rivers with many tributaries. In the third rivers are few; only during the brief rains is the area comfortable.

The protagonists of Batouala, Le Livre de la brousse, and (to a certain extent) Bacouya, le cynocéphale act out plots which involved the interplay of characters or ideas in conflict. The stories using animal protagonists, however, resemble more closely the picaresque novel than the conventional novel of character interest. There is no development for better or worse in characters such as Doppélé the vulture, Bacouya the baboon, Mbala the elephant, Bokorro the python, Bassaragba the rhinoceros, Boum and Djouma the dogs, or Dog

the buffalo. Naturally the character is soothed and pleased in surroundings which offer plentiful food and protection; but there is no internal character development, nor should it be expected. It was possible for Maran to treat instincts as though they were purposeful behavior, but the attribution of acts of the reason to the animals would have destroyed verisimilitude. This lack of character development is one of the staples of the picaresque genre. Its history is as old as Petronius' Satyricon in literature, or older. It entered European literature definitively with the Lazorillo de Tormes. The pícaro lives among men in much the same manner as the animals inhabit the enemy-filled jungle. The goal of the pícaro, as of Bacouya and the other creatures, is to survive and prosper at the expense of anyone. Any picaresque anti-hero would agree with the ideas of creatures from Bêtes de la brousse, many of which we have seen paralleled in Bacouya:

> Vivre l'instant présent est le comble de la sagesse.
>
> La fuite est le meilleur moyen que l'on connaisse pour éviter courageusement la palabre.
>
> Mieux vaut vivre à l'ombre de la force qu'au soleil de la faiblesse.
>
> Toutes vérités ne sont pas bonnes à dire.
>
> Tu veux vivre en paix? ... Si oui, arrange-toi pour supprimer tous les êtres qui te gênent et fais-toi craindre du demeurant.
>
> Savoir fuir à propos est le comble de l'art et constitue souvent la meilleure des défenses.

> Vivre est notre unique devoir. Tuer pour vivre est donc un devoir.
>
> Le scrupule est vertu de faible. Vertu de faible aussi la modération. Il en est de même du remords.
>
> Le malheur des uns fait le bonheur des autres.
>
> L'égoïsme est la plus grande des vertus sociales. Il sauvegarde l'individualisme et assure sa permanence.
>
> Le plus fort a toujours raison, même s'il a tort, même s'il se trompe.[1]

Characters with such ideas engage in a series of episodes of more-or-less scabrous content by which their fortunes will be affected, but not their character. There are many instances of cooperation and sociability between the animals. The only instance of real friendship, however, is found in the story of Boum and Dog. The remainder of the encounters are motivated by mutual profit or momentary advantage in the face of formidable enemies.

The outcome of the stories is never predictable. Dog the buffalo, perhaps the most sympathetic of the animal characters, dies under the spear thrusts of the natives. Djouma the dog is accidentally gored to death by wild hogs. Bacouya the baboon is defeated in his attack on human beings but flees safely. The extent to which the animal may be abhorrent to many human beings has nothing to do with his fate.

Stylistically, the stories follow the pattern of Batouala with a gradual modification noted in the later works. Thus, there is still the luxuriance of metaphor, the frequent use of accumulation and of enumeration, the poetic profusion

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[1]Bêtes de la brousse, passim.

of description and the interspersal of the short sentence. The latter is often used in a series to imitate the emotion being expressed, being combined with sentence fragments:

> Les animaux! ... Les animaux! ... Il y en avait! ... Il y en avait! ... On les voyait. Et là! Et puis là! Et puis la encore![1]

The substantive fragment or "sentence" is not so widely used in these stories as in earlier ones. Particularly toward the end of the series of jungle stories, one finds a more sober use of vocabulary. Bêtes de la brousse, written in 1941, still contains sentences like the following:

> Les tam-tams tremulaient à droite, à gauche, devant, derrière, grondaient dans la vallée , sur les hauteurs, à l'orée des sous-bois, le long des marigots, tout près, très loin, plus loin, encore, séparément ou tous ensemble, avec une précipitation étonnée et étonnante, une volubilité qui respirait l'effroi.[2]

Such passages are most often found in the description of the frenzied activity of a storm, a forest burning, or a rite involving the tomtoms and dancing. The flight of the jungle creatures before the fires set by the hunters or before the onslaught of hordes of ants seems to inspire passages of accumulated nouns:

> Je rouvris les yeux, Buffles décochant à toute volée des ruades, éléphants aux oreilles ballantes, antilopes effarées, phacochères aux queues en vrille plongeaient droit devant eux, ventre à terre.[3]

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[1] Le Livre de la brousse, p. 208.

[2] Bêtes de la brousse, p. 194.

[3] Ibid., p. 230.

Surprise and the effort one may incur in trying to become accustomed to an idea may be expressed by reiteration and accumulation:

> C'était Bokorro que j'avais devant moi, Bokorro en chair et en os, Bokorro, le gobeur de crapauds et de grenouilles, Bokorro, le mangeur de lapins.[1]

The attempt to list impressively the things one likes or is confronted with may also lead to accumulation:

> Fumées, feux, nattes pailleuses, puits aux eaux natronées, danses, tam-tams, ripailles, disputes, rixes, injures ou sarcasmes de commères qui se harpent, jeux et rires d'enfants, chevrotements des cabris, ruades des chevaux, c'était trop attendre de lui que de croire qu'il pourrait renoncer à tout cela.[2]

The accumulation of short sentences is frequently used in the 1927 work, Djouma, chien de brousse. Instances of its usage are fewer in later works. Maran sometimes uses it to imitate the physical motion described:

> Il est infatigable. La sueur dégoutte de sa langue. Il va. Il vient. Il aboie. Il jappe. Il a l'oeil vif. La brousse est à lui.[3]

Maran may express the monotony of repeated efforts by repetition. Such instances are, however, few in number:

> Les informes pilonnaient, les enfants pilonnaient, les vieillards pilonnaient, tout le monde pilonnaient, même les femmes allaitant leur progéniture.[4]

The following passage illustrates the use of anaphora and accumulation to produce within the reader's emotions the

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[1] Ibid., p. 132.

[2] Bêtes de la brousse, p. 231.

[3] Djouma, chien de brousse, p. 110.

[4] Ibid., p. 172.

feeling akin to the meaning of the words:

> Et c'est ainsi que, de l'aurore au crépuscule, du crepuscule à la nuit, de la nuit à l'aube, de l'aube à l'aurore, pendant des jours, des jours et des jours, malgré la pluie, malgré le froid, malgré le vent, malgré la chaleur, malgré la faim, malgré la fatigue, malgré le sommeil, chants, danses et tam-tams accompagnèrent le morne et monotone vacarme de morceaux de bois ou de blocs de pierre pilonnant des rhizomes, toujours, toujours ...[1]

The modification in the use of the above techniques is definitely seen at work in Bacouya, le cynocéphale. The instances of accumulating figures of rhetoric are not so numerous as in earlier works. The style has not changed in any drastic manner, but it is more unified and seems to reach less for rhetorical effect than formerly. The following passage is, however, proof that the author has not abandoned such devices. The special indentation is used to emphasize the enumerative elements:

> Yabao! la brousse transpirait de pâles nuées.
> On les voyait errer à ras de terre,
> se chercher ça et là,
> s'étirer en se cherchant,
> se trouver,
> s'agréger,
> prendre de la hauteur,
> se répandre de tous côtés
> s'amonceler sans bruit,
> d'un mouvement mou,
> flou et
> continu,
> sans bruit
> envahir la brousse,
> effacer tout ce qui la compose,
> étouffer les naissantes rumeurs de l'aube,
> oppresser celle-ci,
> la rendre presque irrespirable,
> supprimer enfin le ciel,
> comme elles avaient déjà supprimé le sol et l'horizon visible.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 173. [2] Bacouya, p. 43.

In length this sentence compares favorably with any examples in other works. Again it is in descriptive passages on the jungle and climatic effects that Maran employs these techniques.

A stylistic weakness which may be observed in several places in Bacouya is the choice of overly facile alliteration and other sound effects. These may be attributed to hasty writing or the lack of self-criticism:

> Lolo, le soleil, l'éblouissait aux limites de l'éblouissement.[1]

The reiteration of the sounds: "o," "l," and the repetition of the "-blouiss-" is too exaggerated and stands out because of its "poeticalness," as it should not. Another of these infrequent abuses is the recollection of Verlaine's famous poem in the following lines:

> Comme it était doux le bruit de la pluie, et celui du combat que les branches ailées de feuilles livrent au vent![2]

Maran abuses this type of writing again in the phrase: "étouffés par le doux bruit mou de la pluie piétinant la brousse ..."[3] On the next page, one finds:

> De la stillation continue de ses stalactites naissait un chuintement chantant d'une infinie douceur.[4]

The throwing into conjunction of "chuintement" and "chantant" can not be regarded as the most careful composition.

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[1] Ibid., p. 19. [2] Ibid., p. 159.

[3] Ibid., p. 209. [4] Ibid., p. 210.

However, such writing is not typical of Maran's style.

The extensive use of impressionism is one of his characteristic techniques. A study of writers who had an influence on him and who were in the literary vanguard at the time of his own intellectual formation, will make comprehensible the art of:

> Le bruit mou et velu de leur vol, coupé de cris de chauves-souris ou de chuintements de chouettes, montait, glissait, allait, venait et virevoltait.[1]

In such a sentence, the sound seems to attempt to reproduce in its movement the sense of the words and the actions depicted.

A final observation on the style of Maran must omit the two autobiographical works: Le Coeur serré and Un Homme pareil aux autres. The jungle stories make continuous use of repetition, accumulation, enumeration, anaphora, and of variations in similar phrasing. These techniques are often combined in passages over an entire page. The use of such a style imparts often an air of ingenuousness and naiveté which is an asset in tales dealing with such a milieu. The technique of repetition is one of the most common structural characteristics of both primitive and sophisticated folklore. Both oral and written folktales have this characteristic. Maran, however, is writing for a Western audience. He uses a straightforward, picaresque structure rather than the circling, repetitive one of original folklore. This means that

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there is no repitition of incidents in his stories. Even in the short folktales said to be from the Bandas, there is no repetition of situations or questions phrased similarly to several characters. The naivete of primitive story structure was, therefore, unavailable to produce an air of candor. Maran achieves this simplicity, or appearance of it, by the use of linguistic repetition. Onomatopoeia also served to reproduce a flavor from primitive storytelling.

The exotic setting Maran was depicting lent itself easily to richness of vocabulary. He thus placed the techniques of the Romanticists, Realists, and Parnassians at the service of a new milieu. It is to his credit that his work was literary art rather than journalistic propaganda. His just and bitter comments on the evils of colonialism alienated the "empire builders." His lyrical but unsentimental evocation of native and jungle life has infuriated more nationalistic elements. But his artistic sincerity, his linguistic resources, and his ability to vary his technique at the demand of the material are admirable. They mark him as a successful homme de lettres despite opposition and neglect.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Few writers of French origin have been interested in depicting an African setting. The two most conspicuous examples are Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and André Gide. Neither of them, however, elected to do in the novel what must eventually be done: place native protagonists in conflict or cooperation with each other and their lifelong environment. This was the road opened by René Maran, as the first Negro novelist in the French language to use an African setting.

A study of his novels has revealed a lyric mastery of the language in the direct tradition of the Romanticists and the Realists. The lyricism of Jean Giono has been mentioned earlier in speaking of this quality in Maran. However, the pantheistic mysticism of Giono is foreign to the realism of Maran. The latter combines the painterly quality of the followers of Gautier with an enthusiasm for the metaphor. It is as a poet in prose that he excels although his formal poetry does not stand comparison with his prose. Like Rousseau, he needs the larger scope of the paragraph rather than the restricting limit of the line. The depiction of the jungle and its creatures brings into use many varied techniques,

of which the long sentence is the most spectacular. In these units are found anaphora, enumeration, accumulation and repetition; the preceding chapters contain a large number of such quotations. The coordinate elements may be words, phrases, or clauses. He also uses a series of short sentences which give successive impressions in a time sequence. Occasionally these consist of as many as seven short sentences with only a simple subject and verb, often mingled with longer sentence elements in the paragraph. The use of the substantive "sentence" should also be noted. It contains only a noun, sometimes with modifiers, and has no finite verb. This device renders the impression as directly and non-logically as possible. Its use is especially prevalent in the earlier jungle stories.

On the other hand, the lyricism, particularly that of the long sentence-paragraph, is muted and more sober in the two autobiographical works. As the years passed, Maran used the style already evident in Batouala with a surer hand and the fabric of successive works became more unified. Another development may be noted in the fifteen years between Batouala and Le Livre de la brousse. The later characters are less one-dimensional than those of the earlier work--a sign of greater artistic maturity.

René Maran's name has not yet received its due acclaim in the annals of French prose. Despite official recognition of his work by the Academies, it is not generally a famous

name. However, among the growing number of African students, scholars and intellectuals, he is inevitably finding his place. Unfortunately, Maran came at a time when the world was not yet ready to accept the African milieu and character as a field of artistic interest and investigation equal to that of the Occidental setting. There is little doubt that his works would have been more popular had their protagonists been white Frenchmen working under the conditions of the tropics and viewed sympathetically. There is even little doubt that the appearance of his work a century earlier when the exotic setting came in with the Romantics would have aided the dissemination of his work. The romantic Atala and the mythical America of Chateaubriand have remained staples of the anthologies, as have Paul and Virginie.

Batouala and Kossi are not, however, idealized Europeans. They are of a different stamp and must be considered with an insight devoid of sentimentality, but one that also eschews disdain and prejudice. The historical moment and the personal life of the author induced him to compose portraits which confronted the conscience of Europe at a time when that conscience did not yet wish to face unpleasant facts. Readers of the period and since found it, understandably, difficult to consider the artistic enjoyment of a work which rebuked national aspirations. This was quite true at a time when France's superiority seemed to depend so much on the abuses Maran exposes when the "innate incapacity"

of the Negro was often an article of faith. France, in the years from 1921 to 1934, did not yet enjoy the intellectual and moral freedom from the political and economic Establishment of recent decades. Despite the Prix Goncourt, Batouala and Kossi were bombs that it was better to ostracize and ignore. The fact that Maran loved that society and was an integral part of it made the acts all the more traitorous.

It is particularly since the Second World War that the idea of Maran's importance has gained ground. Naturally, this is occurring first in circles interested in African literature, historically as well as artistically. The students of newly-emerged African countries of French language have become more interested in their history--a universal process in the development of any national consciousness. As they prepare an artistic tradition into which their own work will take its place, they consider more seriously their racial predecessors. It is by revolt against or assimilation to the latter's work--or at least by comparison with it--that they will realize their own intellectual and artistic integrity. The present moment is a period of growing quality and quantity in African writers. Présence Africaine, with its specialized appeal, Books Abroad, Europe, Esprit, and other reviews are making the names of Léopold Senghor of Senegal, Aimé Cesaire of the Antilles, and others better known. This is a trend which historically seems to match the stride of the nation toward greater political and economic sovereignty.

It may be expected to continue. In such a setting, René Maran's work looms ever more important. He is the forerunner of writers in the French language whose geographic backgrounds stretch from the Atlantic to the Congo. Every writer who describes the country of these areas outside the city must first read Maran, who preceded him so felicitously. Not only in descriptions of natural settings, but in the portrayal of the native at the time of beginning contacts with the European his work is important. The West will increasingly study the works of the people with whom it must live. For this reason, Maran's works are not only artistic, they are also sociological documents whose fame will spread.

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