Article Under Review: Please do not cite or circulate without permission.

Title:

Négritude's Contretemps: The Coining and Reception of Aimé Césaire's Neologism

Author:

Brian J. Reilly

Abstract:

Even if debates continue over the meaning and legacy of Aimé Césaire's négritude, current scholarship seems secure about the origin of the word: Césaire coined the term in 1935 from the word nègre and the suffix -itude. But this simple story masks a complex lexicology beset by contretemps. Césaire purposefully syncopated temporalities in creating the word négritude, and the present article provides a fuller account of its etymology, bringing to light texts Césaire may have been alluding to in his coinage. It also disputes some misconceptions about the word's provenance, in particular that the word was invented by Benjamin Rush.

Keywords:

Negritude, négritude, Aimé Césaire, etymology
Négritude's Contretemps: The Coining and Reception of Aimé Césaire's Neologism

Brian J. Reilly

S'il est un mot qui a de quoi réjouir le lexicographe, c'est bien celui de « négritude ». [If there's a word that has what it takes to delight the lexicographer, it's the word négritude.]
—Michel Hausser

The full meaning of négritude may always defy reduction to a dictionary definition. As Souleymane Bachir Diagne has pointed out, négritude "poses many questions" in domains as varied as ontology, aesthetics, epistemology, and politics. Other scholars say much the same: It is a "whole complex of attitudes" (Irele liii), "something more than ... unambiguous affirmation" (Nesbitt 22). The delimitation of négritude's possible meanings nevertheless depends on answers to certain basic, seemingly tractable lexicological questions: Does the term derive directly from the Latin color term niger or from the French racial and racist term nègre? Why the choice of -itude and not -ité for its suffix? Who coined négritude, Aimé Césaire or Léopold Sédar Senghor? When did he coin it? And when did we know? As both men used the term, are there then two négritudes, as Maryse Condé once proposed (409)? Or is this a "specious" distinction, as Abiola Irele asserts (liii)?

At some point, nearly every one of négritude's lexicological elements has been disputed: definition; etymology; date of coining; and person responsible for coining. But even if debates continue about négritude's definition, we think we at least now have a handle on the rest. Whereas previous scholarly consensus had been that négritude first appeared in 1939 in Aimé Césaire's poem Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (Notebook of a Return to My Native Land), we now seem to know that Césaire coined the word earlier, in 1935, in a prose piece titled "Conscience raciale et révolution sociale" ("Racial Consciousness and Social Revolution"; C. Miller 743a). And yet, reactions to two recent events—the 2007 coining of bravitude and the
2008 publication of négritude's earliest extant use—reveal that our knowledge belies lingering reverberations in the present of négritude's past history as a word. Some such contretemps inheres in the word itself, arising from Césaire’s intentionally syncopated neologism. But scholarship has unwittingly created additional syncopations, errors about négritude's temporal unfolding. These contretemps hinder our understanding not only of the word but also of the idea that it names. Filtering out the interfering reverberations of the present will allow us to hear Césaire's syncopated négritude anew as it was in the past at the moment of its coining.

2007: The Echoes of Négritude

It is not every day that we get to witness the coining of a new word. Indeed the moment of birth for most words is lost to time. And yet, during the French presidential campaign of 2007, the neologism bravitude appeared for all to see in France within hours of its first utterance in China. An on-line article of Le Monde quoted the words of then Socialist candidate Ségolène Royal, who spoke them on a cold winter day from atop the Great Wall: "'Comme le disent les Chinois, qui n'est pas venu sur la Grande muraille n'est pas un brave. Qui va sur la Grande muraille conquiert la bravitude' (sic)" ("'As the Chinese say, if you don't go to the Great Wall, you are not brave. Whoever climbs the Great Wall conquers bravitude' (sic)"; "La 'bravitude'"). As the editorial sic warned, and as the remainder of the sentence argued, Royal had used her own word bravitude instead of the expected bravoure, 'bravery' ("utilisant ce néologisme de son cru au lieu du mot 'bravoure'"; "using this neologism of her own making instead of the word 'bravoure'"; "La 'bravitude'"). Scandal ensued—that a possible president could so mangle the French language! Royal had her defenders, of course, arguing (correctly) that everyone has the right to coin a new word and (dubiously) that bravitude had a meaning other than bravoure in this instance and so was a needed neologism.² But it was the patronizing response by former
Prime Minister Édouard Balladur that was most revealing not only of *bravitude's* meaning, but also, quite unexpectedly, of the lingering lexicology of *négritude*.

Feigning incomprehension not of the new word but of people's reactions to it, Balladur was quoted as saying: "Je ne comprends pas qu'on ait tellement critiqué Mᵐᵉ Royal. Je vous rappelle que Léopold Sédar Senghor, qui était, je crois, le premier Africain à devenir agrégé de lettres et qui a été président du Sénégal, avait inventé la négritude. Et tout le monde a trouvé ça très bien" ("I don't understand why Madame Royal has been criticized so much. I remind you that Léopold Sédar Senghor, who was, I believe, the first African to be *agréé de lettres* and who was President of Senegal, invented *négritude*. And everyone thought that was perfectly fine"; qtd. in Mandraud). Despite somehow managing to patronize both Royal and Senghor, Balladur's ironic analogy was otherwise spot on: Royal's use of *bravitude* was both sciolistic, showing only a smattering of learning, and pretentious, attempting to elevate her candidacy by elevating its lexicon, while, by contrast, *négritude* was a scholarly and genuine coinage. Royal was not alone in presidential pretension: Her opponent, Nicolas Sarkozy, did much the same, though he was far less criticized for his own *fatitude* (for *fatuité*, 'fatuousness'; Belhadi). Such unnecessary coinages reveal a pretension not endemic to, though also not uncommon among politicians, who cannot help performing what the linguist Jean Véronis noted as "un jeu d'acteur" ("an actor's pretense"; qtd. in Jarrassé).

But the pretentiousness of *bravitude* or *fatitude* goes beyond their being unnecessary synonyms for existing words (*bravoure*; *fatuité*). The -*itude* suffix calls attention to their *latinitude* in a way that the equally latinate -*ité* does not. While both suffixes create an abstract noun from either an adjective or another noun and are *a priori* semantic equivalents, their meanings diverge due to their use (Koehl and Lignon 354). In Latin, the ending -*tūdō* (>-*tude*)
was primarily a vogue of the pre-Classical era (Daude 241), and the French language inherited the Classical and post-Classical preference for Latin's -tās (> té), making -itude ever more rare and rarefied. Bravitude and fatitude, in their latinate pretension, expose this differential meaning, and both were used by Royal and Sarkozy to se présidentialiser, "make themselves more presidential." Their attempts fell flat, of course, because such neologisms exposed not sophistication but uncouth gaps of vocabulary. And these gaps were made more salient by the suffix -itude, which created the expectation of erudition.

But what then of the other -itude mentioned by Balladur—négritude? Does it too deserve to be lumped in with these failed attempts at latinate sophistication? The early reception of the word certainly indicates that some people did indeed judge négritude as severely as we judge bravitude and fatitude. As Jacques Coursil recently wrote in only slightly exaggerated terms: "En 1948, le mot écorche les oreilles de Sartre comme celles de tout Francophone" ("In 1948, the word hurt [lit. 'flayed'] the ears of Sartre as for all French speakers"; "Négritude : la grammaire de Caliban" 16). Coursil is referring to the 1948 publication of the most important condemnation of négritude as a word, which came ironically from a text often used by dictionaries to define it: Jean-Paul Sartre's preface titled "Orphée noir" ("Black Orpheus") to Senghor's Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française (Anthology of New Black and Malagasy Poetry in French). Although often credited with being "le premier à définir conceptuellement la Négritude" ("the first to conceptually define Negritude"; Treffel 397-8), Sartre did not like the idea's label: "Le terme assez laid de « négritude » est un des seuls apports noirs à notre dictionnaire" ("The rather ugly term négritude is one of the only Black contributions to our dictionary"; xviii). Here, Sartre's lexicological commentary complements his agenda for négritude as a movement and a philosophical concept. By supplementing négritude's origin with
his own essay, Sartre hoped to make it a movement that was always already passé. His impatience with the word is palpable, expressing a desire not to define it, but to dissect it, to find the more fundamental lexemes it comprises: "Mais enfin, si cette « négritude » est un concept définitionnable ou tout au moins descriptible, elle doit subsumer d'autres concepts plus élémentaires et correspondant aux données immédiates de la conscience nègre : où sont les mots qui permettent de les désigner ? ("But in the end, if this négritude is a definable concept or at least a describable one, it must subsume other more elementary concepts that correspond to the immediate givens of Black consciousness: Where are the words that will allow us to designate them?"; xviii). Lexicology and ideology get conflated, with antipathy for the idea aggravated by a natural aversion to its name.

Sartre thereby implicitly explains his distaste for the word négritude within his apologia of its concept. The word is "ugly" because it is a French word whose very "light" has been altered: "avant même qu'il [le noir] songe à chanter, la lumière des mots blancs se réfracte en lui, se polarise et s'altère" ("before a Black person can even dream of singing, the light of white words refracts within him, becomes polarized and altered"; xxi). The word négritude is thus performative: Its ugliness owes to the ugliness of the French language's arrogation of naming and defining the Black Other. On Sartre's account, Césaire accepts the white gambit in the opening moves of a dialectic that will ultimately eliminate the need for négritude. History has made the Black Other's entry into existential dialectic linguistically heteronomous, and so the first step towards autonomy involves the ugliness of appropriation. Because accepting that white gambit means accepting the pre-existing lexicon of the French language, with its morphological rules for new coinages, the appropriation is named by "the rather ugly term négritude."
Nevertheless, however in keeping with Sartrean existentialism this explanation may be, it is also post-hoc, a just-so story. Sartre's aversion to the word is confirmed by dialectic, but it originates in lexicology. As Senghor noted, "Le terme de négritude a été souvent contesté comme mot avant de l'être comme concept" ("The term *négritude* has often been contested as a word before being contested as a concept"; "Problématique" 5). Indeed, other reactions to *négritude* from its early history show that it was often rejected because of its perceived lexical ugliness. In 1956, for example, the linguist Robert Le Bidois wrote a piece for *Le Monde* in which he passed judgment on certain neologisms. While harsh on many of the new coinages and admitting that no one could know which ones would last, he was particularly severe on *négritude*:

Mais que dire du mot négritude, qui semble très en faveur auprès de certains écrivains d'outre-mer ? … Félicitons Jean Guéhenno d'avoir dénoncé ce néologisme incongru : "Négritude ! Il ne faut pas plus que ce mot … pour que nous soyons médusés…." Et le critique range ce terme parmi ces mots mystérieux grâce auxquels on s'enivre de ce qu'on ne connaît pas. "On ne sait pas bien ce qu'ils signifient, mais ils sont d'autant plus chargés de poisons et de maléfices."

[But what to say about the word *négritude*, which seems to be rather in favor among certain writers of the outre-mer? … Congratulations to Jean Guéhenno for having denounced this incongruous neologism: "Négritude! We need no more than this word … to become fixated…." And the critic classifies this term among those mysterious words thanks to which we become intoxicated by what we do not know. "We don't know quite what they signify, but they are all the more filled with poison and sorcery."]

Le Bidois is quoting Jean Guéhenno's 1953 article in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* "Si j'avais à enseigner la France …" ("If I had to teach France …"), which inveighed against "cette philosophie et cette poésie de croquemitaine" ("this boogeyman philosophy and poetry"; 578) named *négritude*. Guéhenno's conclusion was ultimately lexicological: "Il faut rayer des dictionnaires, des langues, ces grands mots qui sonnent comme des tam-tams de guerre" ("We must erase from dictionaries and languages these big words that sound like the tom-toms of
war"; 578). Audaciously appropriating Césaire's own language (the anaphoric "tam-tams" of 
*Cahier* §61), Guéhenno asserts that Black students—Césaire was indeed a student when he 
coined the term—had learned to abuse the French language from "les Blancs" ("White people"; 577). Just as for Sartre *négritude* was a Black refraction of the White French lexicon, here 
*négritude* as a word was something taught or enabled by White colonial pedagogy. Guéhenno's 
criticism of *négritude* as philosophy and as poetry thus coincides with Sartre's dialectical critique 
in their mutual condemnation of its lexicology. Modern Philamintes, they proclaimed that the 
then present word *négritude* already belonged to the past and certainly did not belong to the 
future, neither as concept nor as word.

Beyond Guéhenno's racially tinged condescension—calling his imagined African 
students "grands garçons noirs que si peu d'années séparent de la brousse ou de la forêt natales" 
("young men [lit. 'big boys'] only a few years out of their natal bushes and forests"; 577)—it is 
his "reasoning" that also links his reaction to *négritude* to Balladur's reaction to *bravitude*. In a 
remark curiously elided in Le Bidois's quotation, Guéhenno attributes our fixation with *négritude* 
("que nous soyons médusés") to its suffix *-itude*: "cette longue syllabe pleine d'échos qui le 
termine" ("this long syllable full of echoes that ends it"; 577). Although both *-itude* and *-ité* have 
the same syllable count in French, the extra phoneme /d/ in *-itude* somehow conveys a sense of 
*sesquipedality*, that a longer word is being used where a shorter one sufficed. For a word like 
*bravitude*, the suffix reinforces its supernumerary syllable (three to *bravoure* 's two). But even for 
*fatude* vs. *fatuité* and *négritude* vs. *négrité*, identical syllable counts come with different senses 
of size. And the bigger the word, the more erudite it seems. Sometimes this can be useful: The 
tension between simplicity and sesquipedality inheres in the very ideal Aristotle in his *Poetics* 
called "mixed diction"; it allows us to be "clear without being common" (1458a). At other
times the use of a big word can expose not erudition but the strain of pretension: As Royal and Sarkozy inadvertently found out, "big words can often have a humorous effect" (Garner 737b).

In French as in Latin, words ending in -itude are less common than those in -ité and so are able to convey a sense of size beyond their semantic equivalence. Their rarity and rarefaction are thus interrelated.

This feeling that there is something excessively long about -itude words is not limited to their detractors. It explains, perhaps, Coursil's curious and insistent\textsuperscript{12} analysis of the suffix, which sees it not as making an abstract noun from an adjective or noun but from an adverb or verb:

Le suffixe (-itude) de (« négr-itude ») est de type adverbiale (gérondif) et suppose un temps subjectif. À l'opposé de cette expérience symbolique de la durée telle qu'on la trouve dans sol-itude ou serv-itude, le suffixe nominal « ité », (african-ité, german-ité) désigne une essence, une idée. En d'autres termes, « -ité » est nominal et « -itude » est verbal. Dans la langue française, le suffixe « -itude » contient un sème du temps ; chez Césaire, c'est une durée de « souffrance ». (

"Négritude" 117)

[The suffix (-itude) of ("négr-itude") is an adverbal (gerundive) type and supposes a subjective time. Contrary to the symbolic experience of duration as one finds in sol-itude or serv-itude, the nominal suffix "itė" (african-ité, german-ité) designates an essence, an idea. In other terms, "-ité" is nominal and "-itude" is verbal. In the French language, the suffix "-itude" contains a sense of time; in the work of Césaire, it is a duration of "suffering."]

Coursil's morphology is inventive, but not in keeping with other linguistic studies of the suffix in either Latin (Daude) or French (Dubois; Bourquin; Koehl and Lignon). Nevertheless, it is symptomatic of négritude's lexicology, which seems everywhere based on contretemps, on confusions of temporality. Coursil's explanation of -itude is post hoc, for it depends on his understanding of négritude's meaning. The lexeme comes to define its suffixal morpheme rather than the other way around. But again, this is a contretemps in the full sense of the word: a confusion based on temporal syncopation. The Césairean neologism négritude may have given
subjective, historical, verbal /adverbial resonances to -itude, but these resonances were not there prior to the act of coining. Although Coursil claims to base meaning on morphology, his (perhaps correct) interpretation of négritude's meaning is thus as supplemental an origin of its lexicology as Sartre's dialectic or Guéhenno's black magic.

Sartre, Guéhenno, and Coursil, each in their own way, succeed in showing how Césaire made the sound of -itude an echo to the sense of négritude. Because the suffix preexists the neologism, they convince themselves that it is -itude that is making the sound and creating the echoes. They may not be wrong about what they hear, but they have mistaken the reverberations of négritude for the originals echoes of its suffix. Part of Césaire's greatness as a poet was his ability to bend the temporality of meaning, making his word responsible for the meaning of its parts. He chose the suffix not because it came with any previously established sense of adverbiality (pace Coursil), or concreteness (pace Senghor14), or ugliness (pace Sartre and Guéhenno), but to give it such new meanings. He took the echoes of -itude and with his plangent poetry made them reverberate into new sounds and new meanings. Césaire, like Royal decades later, inherited a suffix that conveyed latinity and risked monstrosity. Balladur's analogy allows us to hear the original echo of sound to sense anew for négritude's suffix—echoes that "flay" our ears when we hear bravitude, just as they flayed the ears of Guéhenno, Le Bidois, and Sartre upon hearing négritude as they make explicit in their lexicology of the neologism. This original echo of -itude has gotten confused for its later reverberations wrought by Césaire upon French morphology in a trope of auto-supplementation he named négritude.

Today, words ending in -itude have proliferated precisely because of négritude and, then in turn, bravitude—the former giving rise to terms of identity (e.g., arabitude, celtitude, corsitude, féminitude, québécidade),15 the latter to ephemeral terms of mock highfalutitude


(e.g., bécassitude, normalitude). But the sense of -itude relevant to négritude is not that of recent neologisms like arabitude. Rather, the inheritance that Césaire tropes is both the rarity of -itude words (in decline prior to négritude) and their rarefaction, i.e., their sense of erudition, indeed of a specifically scientific erudition. Although négritude was not a common term of a racist science, it sounds like one, and this is in part due to a genuine echo of -itude. In a recent study of words ending in -itude found in the Trésor de la langue française informatisé, Aurore Koehl shows that "Les AitudeN les plus anciens renvoient pour la plupart à des notions scientifiques [...] ("The oldest AitudeN [deadjectival -itude nouns] refer for the most part to scientific ideas [...]"; 1312). Prior to 1934, the suffix -itude was used primarily for measurable physical properties (e.g., amplitude), or for physical or mental states (e.g., décéritude, certitude).

Césaire thus created a term, négritude, that would sound not just like servitude, but also like the preponderantly scientific terms of the French -itude lexicon as well. This context inflects the term, suggesting that négritude is part of a racist scientific vocabulary: the perhaps measurable blackness of skin, like that of the Black man ("nègre") on the tramway whose blackness is being whitened like the leather of Martinique’s colonial tanneries ("sa négritude même qui se décolorait sous l'action d'une inlassable mégie"; Cahier §52); or a racial category indicated phrenologically ("un indice céphalique"; "a cephalic index"; Cahier §89) or corporeally ("ou un plasma, ou un soma"; "either a plasma or a soma"; Cahier §89). Such racial science was not invented by Césaire, but by inscribing négritude into its lexicon, he is able to trope it, transforming négritude into something instead "mesurée au compas de la souffrance" ("measured by the compass of suffering"; Cahier §89). This inscription is made possible by his use of the -itude suffix, which then makes possible the transformative anagnorisis of the poet. In the knowledge of his growing self-recognition, we come to see the ironic ignorance (agnoia) of
colonial science (*scientia*) in its attempts to define the Black Other and name that Other in the French language—proleptically putting the lie to Guéhenno's claim of the intrinsic "gentillesse" ("gentility") and "honnêteté" ("honesty") of the French language. Césaire's *négritude*, as both a word and an idea, is thus syncopated at its origin: It is the contretemps of a new term that tropes its prior meaning—a prior meaning that comes into existence only in the moment of coining. *Négritude* is a neologism, but its suffix helps make it seem like it had always already been part of the French lexicon. Césaire's appropriation is thus not just of the French language, but of its opening gambit, which becomes the poet's gambit.

This understanding of *négritude* based on its -itude suffix also comes to inflect how we see its other etymon, *nègre*. To say as the *Grand Robert* (2nd edition) does that *négritude* comes "de nègre et -itude" ("from nègre and -itude") is to tell only part of the story. It is rightly said that, as a word, *nègre* really only took off with the slave trade, especially during the eighteenth century, and Césaire reappropriates it to invert its pejorative valence. Whether he formed *négritude* from the noun *nègre* or the adjective *nègre* is indeterminable, and perhaps unimportant, as the -itude suffix can form an abstract noun from either. Once appended to its base, the suffix opens the closed *nègre* syllable, giving us an é from an è. Et voilà, *négritude*. But for the *Grand Larousse de la Langue Française* (1975), *négritude* is just a respelling of *nigritude*, a word already in the French scientific lexicon. Both lexicographical stories are valid and contribute to the meaning of the word. By changing *nigritude*’s *i* to an *é*, Césaire transformed its neutral etymon *nigir* (a color term) into the unavoidably racial *nègre*. In order to supplement French scientific vocabulary with race, he thus supplements the etymological origin of *négritude*’s own etymon, *nigritude*.21
Nevertheless, while *nigritude* was already part of the French language, it cannot be said to have been part of its living lexicon. It is absent, for example, from any of the ARTFL Project's *Dictionnaires d'autrefois*, which range in date from 1606 to 1935.\(^{22}\) Like Chrysale's *sollicitude* in Molière's *Les femmes savantes*, *nigritude* may thus "stink of its antiquity."\(^ {23}\) Or at least it may smell of the leather bound volumes of the library at the École normale supérieure.\(^ {24}\) That library once held a copy (now listed as *introuvable*, 'lost') of the translation by Richard le Blanc of Girolamo Cardano's *De subtilitate* (1550; tr. 1556).\(^ {25}\) Cardano's text was a Renaissance best-seller and a foundation for the age's scientific discourse, and Le Blanc's translation is what the *Grand Larousse* cites for the original French spelling of the Latin *nigritudo*, the ultimate etymon for *négritude*. A student of Latin, Césaire may have seen *nigritudo* directly, perhaps in Pliny's *Naturalis historia* (*Natural History*; 10.52.107) or in a dictionary like *Le Gaffiot*,\(^ {26}\) and been able to imagine its French calque on his own. But *rat de bibliothèque* ('bookworm') that he was, Césaire may have come across Le Blanc's translation and seen *nigritude* directly.

Following Césaire's possible perusals here might reveal more about his word *négritude* than previously realized. Whereas Pliny's reference is to the *lack* of black ("nulla … nigritudo") on a sparrow's beak, Cardano's discussion is of a black touchstone,\(^ {27}\) lydite, that makes other colors appear because of its black color and rarefaction:

> La lydie est noire, de substance fort subtile, resplendissante, & par merveilleuse subtilité elle représente les couleurs des metaux : par lequel moien les orfevres congoissent la pureté de l'or & de l'argent : & ces pierres n'apportent aucun détremtment par leur subtilité, en sorte qu'on peut approuver l'or mille fois sans la perte d'un seul grain: par leur nigritude elles monstrent la couleur du metal : car la nigritude cueilt la splendeur & couleur. (146v-147r)

[Lydite is black, of a very rarefied substance, resplendent, and through a marvelous rarefaction it represents the colors of metals: by which means goldsmiths know the purity of gold and silver: and these stones do not cause any damage through their rarefaction, such that one can make a thousand assays of gold without losing a single grain: through their blackness *[nigritude]* they show... ]
the color of the metal: because the blackness [nigritude] gathers together brightness and color.]

What the *Grand Larousse* curiously gets wrong here is that Le Blanc's *nigritude* does not render *nigritudo* but *nigredo* (185). Nevertheless, what it might have gotten right is to include *nigritude* in the etymology of Césaire's *négritude*. And what a powerful vehicle this passage would be if read metaphorically: A black stone used to assay stones of other colors because it is the more rarefied; a black stone only minimally abraded through use—indeed a specifically economic use; blackness showing the true value of things, inverting the black-on-white of the printed page to become the medium of signification. To be sure, Césaire could have coined *négritude* from *nègre* and -*itude* alone, or he could have coined it from *nigritudo* via Pliny or some dictionary. But we can be equally sure that if Césaire the young philologist did come across this passage from Cardano in his perusals of old texts, he would have seen the potential in lydite's Latin *nigredo* or French *nigritude*.

In the brouhaha surrounding the 2007 French presidential campaign, Édouard Balladur offhandedly invited us to use *négritude* as a touchstone to assay a new coinage. His ironic analogy was spot on in reference to its target, Royal's *bravitude*, but utterly confused about its source, Césaire's *négritude*. Not only did he wrongly claim that the term was coined by Senghor, he also seems to think everyone was just fine with it. Sartre, Guéhenno, and Le Bidois prove otherwise. Moreover, although Balladur proposed a contrast between the two terms, it is precisely what *négritude* shares with *bravitude* that reveals the double-move of Césaire's neologistic auto-supplementation. They share a rarefied and rarefying suffix and a heritage of similar terms composing a predominantly scientific vocabulary. Nevertheless Balladur was right that the difference between *négritude* and *bravitude* remains striking. Unlike the coarse pretense of *bravitude*'s interloping suffix, the seemingly simple lexicological elements of *négritude*—
morphology and etymology—show themselves to be more subtle, more rarefied than realized. Through Césaire's pen, négritude became a term that was at once old and scientific, and yet new and politically urgent.

2008: Contretemps over the Moment of Coining

Balladur's remark came in 2007, the year before Christian Filostrat published Negritude Agonistes, Assimilation against Nationalism in the French-speaking Caribbean and Guyane. As Christopher L. Miller explains, this book made quite a splash, correcting long-standing beliefs about the lexicology of négritude:

For several decades, scholars have believed, for lack of evidence to the contrary, that négritude—one of the key terms of identity formation in the twentieth century—appeared in print for the first time in Aimé Césaire's Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (Notebook of a Return to the Native Land), in 1939. … Lacking physical evidence, the thesis of négritude's birth in the pages of L'étudiant noir—before the first publication of Cahier—was eventually dismissed, condemned as a myth. … But now new evidence has come to light: another issue of L'étudiant noir has been found; it invalidates the consensus about the origins of négritude and raises new questions about the intellectual and political history of the négritude movement.

In 2008 Christian Filostrat published a book that contains negritude's missing link: an article by Césaire in L'étudiant noir, number 3, May-June 1935. (743)

Filostrat's book, for all of its other merits, is most often cited as the source of the publication in facsimile of Césaire's 1935 article "Conscience raciale et révolution sociale." Since 2008, we can now read négritude's first known appearance in print in its original typography (123 and close-up 126). Even if Les Temps Modernes has reprinted the text, one hopes that Filostrat's book will continue to be the source cited in scholarship.

Yet again, however, we encounter contretemps. And not just the obvious one in which the date of négritude's first appearance had long been thought to be later than it actually was. Nor even merely the continued conflation of "first use" and "first known use" of a word, which is
only ever a terminus post quem non: We now know that négritude was not coined after 1935, but an earlier date remains possible. What, for example, was written in L'étudiant noir number 2? The less obvious contretemps latent in accounts of Filostrat's "discovery" or "rediscovery" of Césaire's essay in 2008 is that Filostrat had quoted the relevant text at least as far back as 1980. In his essay "La Négritude et la « Conscience raciale et révolution sociale » d'Aimé Césaire," Filostrat had written: "C'est dans un article paru dans L'Étudiant Noir et intitulé « Conscience raciale et révolution sociale », que Césaire s'est servi, pour la première fois, du néologisme Négritude" ("It was in an article appearing in L'étudiant noir and titled 'Racial Conscience and Social Revolution' that Césaire used, for the first time, the neologism Négritude"; 119). After briefly establishing the context of this journal in relation to another periodical, Légitime Défense, Filostrat proceeds to summarize Césaire's essay (120-1), following its order and quoting from it. All told, almost exactly 4/9 (44%) of Césaire's own words are quoted in the 1980 article, including the only-now-known first known use of négritude: "planter notre négritude comme un bel arbre jusqu'à ce qu'il porte ses fruits les plus authentiques" ("plant our negritude like a beautiful tree until it bears its most authentic fruit"; 121).

At least one scholar, Michel Hausser, was aware in 1995 of this earlier publication, hedging the use of Filostrat's quotations of Césaire's essay with "semble-t-il […] semble-t-il à nouveau" ("it seems […] again it seems") and suggesting that the full essay be published ("Il faudrait que cet article soit enfin republié dans son intégralité"; "This article should finally be republished in its entirety"; 70). Hausser had every right to be skeptical: Filostrat's 1980 quotations are inconsistent in indicating whether and where the text has been edited. Sometimes this is innocent. When Césaire writes "pour faire la révolution—la vraie" ("to start the revolution—the true one"), Filostrat gives us "pour faire la vraie révolution" ("to start the true
revolution"; 121). At other moments, we might feel misled. Without indication of emendation, we read: "La vérité est que ceux qui prêchent la révolte à l'Antillais n'ont pas foi dans le nègre" ("The truth is that those who preach revolt to Antilleans don't have faith in Black people"; 120). But, even if Filostrat is correct that the context here is specifically Antillean, Césaire wrote "au nègre" not "à l'Antillais"; Césaire's redundancy was intended to highlight hypocrisy: Those preaching revolt to the Black man ("au nègre") don't have faith in the Black man ("le nègre"). Or when the text is quietly collapsed through deletion (which I indicate here with italics):

Tant pis pour ceux qui se contentent d'être des Occides, par mépris de ce qu'ils appellent du « racisme ». Pour nous, nous voulons exploiter nos propres valeurs, connaître nos forces par personnelle expérience, creuser notre propre domaine racial, sîrs que nous sommes de rencontrer, en profondeur, les sources jaillissantes de l'humain universel. (120-1)

[Too bad for those who are content to remain Occides, out of contempt for what they call 'racism.' For us, we wish to make use of our own value, to know our strengths through personal experience, dig into our own racial domain, certain as we are of encountering, at bottom, the gushing sources of the universal human.]

While there is no evidence of bad faith here, the 1980 edition as quotation of négritude's originary text was imperfect.

Nevertheless, the essential text was published, and Hausser was able to draw a vital conclusion for our understanding of négritude's "first" use: "L'important est que cette authentique néologie se réalise dans une figure de poésie et dans la figure par excellence : une métaphore. … C'est laisser entendre qu'avant toute chose, avant toute signification, la négritude est poésie" ("The important thing is that this authentic neology happens in a figure of poetry and in the figure par excellence: a metaphor. … This implies that before anything else, before any signification, negritude is poetry"; 70). This observation in no way contradicts Christopher L. Miller's conclusion some fifteen years later that "Overall, the birth of negritude in 1935 was more political, more Marxist, more rational, and less poetic than we thought" (748b). Unlike
Hausser in 1995, Miller in 2010 had access to the entire essay and so could give it the careful reading it deserved—including continued attention to its rhetoric. If the 1935 "birth of negritude" is "less poetic," this is largely because its context is now a prose polemic and not the epic Cahier. Yet Hausser's observation remains important, for just as we saw with Césaire's poesis of the -itude suffix, négritude's neology is inextricable from a tropology. If this is indeed the first use of négritude, then Césaire has made yet another move "prior" to the origin: What may seem like a heteronomous gambit to the likes of Sartre becomes the poet's own construction of a preexisting literal meaning to a word first used figuratively.

In his 2008 Negritude Agonistes, Filostrat provides more than the service of reprinting Césaire's text; he also further nuances négritude's etymology. First, even though "The term négritude was Césaire's own" (129), Filostrat suggests that it is a calque of the English word Negrohood:

"It was from the concept of "the dark-skinned self" [from Langston Hughes] that Césaire formulated his notion of Negritude. Césaire who had studied English with [Léon] Damas in Martinique under Gilbert Gratian and whose thesis was on African American literature probably came upon the term in an American dictionary, perhaps during one of his translations of a black American poet. The term, which did not exist in French, was Negrohood. The noun-forming suffix, "hood" is translated in Latin as "tudo" ... (119)"

While Césaire may have "formulated his notion of Negritude" from the work of Langston Hughes, if the suggestion here is that his word négritude was inspired by or even calqued on Negrohood, the more proximate source may have been Zora Neale Hurston, who in 1928 used the term in her famous declaration: "I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal" (153). We might hear the Cahier's lines about la vieille négritude ("the old negritude"; §§97 and 103) as echoes to this original sound. Filostrat's suggestion thus adds to the richness of Césaire's choices, for Negro-
hood might suggest négri-tude. Still, -hood usually does not equate to -itude in French (let alone -tūdō in Latin): childhood = enfance; likelihood = probabilité; knighthood = chevalerie; etc. Rather, as we would expect, -hood is most often equivalent to - (i)té: brotherhood = fraternité; falsehood = fausseté; fatherhood = paternité; etc. Filostrat's own example of how -hood suggests -itude is "womanhood, the distinctiveness of a woman" (120), but in French womanhood would perhaps be best as féminité. The contretemps of suggesting féminitude (or femellitude) is revealed by the Grand Robert, which gives its etymology as "sur le modèle de négritude" ("based on the model of négritude"; s.v. féminitude).

Nevertheless, Negrohood could be an American etymon for négritude and so participate in a constellation of etymons, all of which contribute to the word's meaning. Filostrat also suggests another American word, however, that probably was not: "Note that Negritude [sic] was a term commonly used in the 19th century. It is mentioned in Ken Burns's Civil War, for example, from texts of the period" (174). While word negritude is indeed spoken in this documentary once (Episode 5 at 01:04:24-42), it is a mistake. The text (not texts) being read aloud is part of the diary of George Templeton Strong dated 14 July 1863 about the racially charged draft riots in New York City. It reads instead: "Many details come in of yesterday's brutal, cowardly ruffianism and plunder. Shops were cleaned out and a black man hanged in Carmine Street, for no offence but that of Nigritude" (337).30 Nigritude thus existed in both French and English prior to Césaire's coining of négritude. We have seen it in use in sixteenth-century France; the Oxford English Dictionary records its earliest use in English in 1654 almost a century later (s.v. nigritude). Negritude does get used on occasion in English prior to 1935: In 1895, one of the "Acid Drops" in the secularist periodical The Freethinker mocked the theory of a certain "Bishop Turner" (presumably Henry McNeal Turner) that the biblical King Solomon
was Black (567a); and in 1930, the historian Walter Brownlow Posey used the term to describe the blackness of a forest at night (172). Still, neither nigritude, nor Negrohood, nor negritude (and certainly not négritude) seems to have been "commonly used in the 19th century."

Equally unsubstantiated is the claim—frequently encountered but never adequately documented—that the "first known usage of 'Negritude' is by Benjamin Rush" (F. Bart Miller 10 n 4). Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was a physician who, in the late eighteenth century, proposed that black skin on humans was the result of disease—a form of leprosy. The claim that Rush "used" negritude to refer to the disease, or that he "called" it by that name is so pervasive, I shall only use one series of references to show how it has gone viral despite being unsubstantiated. In F. Bart Miller's Rethinking Négritude, we read that "Aimé Césaire … reenvisioned the term 'Negritude' … When he first used the term in 1935 …, it was meant to have adopted a new context and meaning" (10). This assertion that "Negritude" preexisted Césaire is supported in a footnote (the text quoted above) with a citation to Tony (misidentified as "Tom") Martin's 2004 article "African and Indian Consciousness." Martin was even more insistent about Rush's use of the word, for such an origin would allow him to argue that négritude was a recapitulation of White stereotyping:

The most incongruous irony of the négritude trap [i.e., "the European pseudo-scientific trap of presenting Europe as the embodiment of science and reason while willingly embracing the stereotype of Africa primarily as emotion and rhythm"] lay in the word itself. Contrary to popular scholarly opinion and doubtless unknown to the movement's founders, the term had been invented over a hundred years earlier by the 'father of American psychiatry,' Benjamin Rush (1746-1813). 'Negritude', for Rush, connoted the disease allegedly derived from leprosy, of black skin colour. (245-6)

For Martin, the irony is that Césaire's neologism was just a repetition of a term of European racist science. My discussion above of Césaire's exquisite syncopation of the scientific lexicon exposes the irony of such a simplistic claim. Moreover, despite the strength of Martin's charge, it
is founded on a misreading of the merely secondary source it cites: Thomas S. Szasz’s *The Manufacture of Madness*. To be sure, Szasz refers to "[Rush's] theory of Negritude," to Rush's belief "that Negritude is a disease," and to "Rush's disease concept of Negritude" (154). But the word *Negritude* is Szasz's *not* Rush's! We can see this in a passage where Szasz uses the term when neither Rush nor his theory is at question: "And have American Negroes not lived blameless lives, helping to build their country—and been lynched for their Negritude nevertheless?" (255-6) If anything, the allusion here seems to be to Strong’s *Diary*, quoted above. Szasz, it should be noted, never quotes Rush as using the term nor embeds the term in quotation marks. Moreover, unlike most scholars who claim Rush called his proposed disease "Negritude," Szasz cites his source: Rush's 1797 address to the American Philosophical Society titled "Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition that the Black Color (as It Is Called) of the Negroes is Derived from the Leprosy." Rush does not use the term *negritude* in his paper, but only "the black color" or "the color of negroes" (289 *et passim*). Nor does he use it elsewhere to my knowledge, although it is hard to prove a negative.

Beyond its falsity, the myth of Rush's *Negritude* drowns out what may have been the American influence on Césaire's 1935 *négritude*, and this influence may go beyond the question of a calque translation of *Negrohood*. Now that we know he used the term in an essay titled "Conscience raciale et révolution sociale" ("Racial Consciousness and Social Revolution"), we can hear new echoes in Senghor's 1971 "Problématique de la Négritude" ("Problematic of Negritude"). At the very opening of his talk, Senghor quotes a 1919 report from the U. S. Attorney General to the Senate:

Rien n'est plus caractéristique, à cet égard, que le document du Sénat américain, publié en 1919 et qui s'intitulait : *Radicalism and Sedition among the Negroes as reflected in their Publications*. On y lit cette phrase significative : « A la base de ces positions principales, se trouve le sentiment de plus en plus accentué d'une
conscience raciale qui, dans nombre de ces publications, s'oppose toujours à la race blanche et affirme, ouvertement et avec défi, sa propre égalité, voire sa propre supériorité. » Je souligne l'expression conscience raciale. (4)

[Nothing is more characteristics, in this regard, than the document of the American Senate, published in 1919 and titled Radicalism and Sedition among the Negroes as Reflected in their Publications. Therein one reads this significant sentence: "Underlying these more salient viewpoints is the increasingly emphasized feeling of a race consciousness [conscience raciale], in many of these publications always antagonistic to the white race and openly, defiantly assertive of its own equality and even superiority." I underscore the phrase race consciousness [conscience raciale].34]

Although speaking in 1971, Senghor could have had in mind those exhilarating days of the early 1930s when he, Césaire, and Damas were imagining the possibilities of L'étudiant noir. Indeed, the Senate report continues: "this boast finds its most frequent expression in the pages of those journals whose editors are men of education" (162). One could imagine Césaire reading this line and thinking: "Good idea!" While he would not have seen the word Negrohood in this text, that expression race consciousness—in French as conscience raciale—may have made as much an impression on him in 1935 as it seems to have (still) made on Senghor in 1971.

Indeed, the coincidence of these phrases seems even less likely when we consider that both elements of Césaire's title—"Racial Consciousness and Social Revolution"—appear in the Attorney General's report to the Senate. Just prior to the section referenced by Senghor, the report quotes the Fundamental Principles of the Union of Russian Workers (Exhibit No. 9), which concludes:

For the attainment of these aims, we consider as of the primal importance the necessity of building up a wide revolutionary organization of toilers, which, by conducting a direct struggle with all the institutions of capitalism and Government, must train the working class to initiative, and an independent action in all its acts, thus educating in its the consciousness of the absolute necessity of a general strike—of the social revolution. (161; emphasis added)
The phrase "social revolution" occurs several times throughout the Attorney General's report. We recall that the man who held that office at the times was A. Mitchell Palmer and that this report came in mid-November (14-15), a week after the Union of Russian Workers was violently suppressed in some of the infamous Palmer Raids. In the last sentence of the Union's creed, we find three of the four main words of Césaire's title. What is missing is race. If Palmer's report is indeed the source of Césaire's title, then Christopher L. Miller's perspicacious analysis of the essay only gains in perspicacity: "Negritude emerged out of a double endeavor. Césaire engaged with Marxism and used its discourse .... But he pushed back against the blind universalism, the assimilationism, of PCF [French Communist Party] communism, seeking a path toward change that embraced the particular within the universal. First, the particular had to be defined and defended: hence negritude" (748b; emphasis added). In the very title of Césaire's 1935 essay we may see the "double endeavor" of supplementing the anarcho-syndicalist Fundamental Principles with the Radicalism and Sedition among the Negroes as Reflected in their Publications.

2017: Notre moindre souci

Inveterate grammarian, Senghor spends some of his 1971 talk "defending" not just the idea of négritude but the word itself: "Je suis d'autant plus libre de défendre le terme qui a été inventé, non par moi, comme on le dit souvent à tort, mais par Aimé Césaire" ("I am all the more free to defend the term, which was invented, not by me, as is often wrongly said, but by Aimé Césaire"; 5). Balladur's comment in 2007 shows just how resistant to correction the attribution of négritude has been, even if he at least gives us the proximate Senghor and not Benjamin Rush. Even within scholarly consensus, there has been resistance to take the founders of the Negritude movement at their word. As Christopher L. Miller notes: "This consensus [that négritude
appeared for the first time in Césaire's *Cahier*] reflects a revision of what the cofounders (with Césaire) of the negritude movement, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Léon Damas, had remembered and stated" (743). But now that we have the coiner and the date of coining correctly determined, why should we revisit the lexicology of *négritude*? Indeed, in response to Senghor's discourse, Maryse Condé dismissed concerns about the grammaticality of Césaire's neologism, accusing Senghor of protesting too much:

> Dirons-nous que c'est là notre moindre souci ? La valeur d'un mot réside dans son pouvoir expressif, dans sa capacité d'éveiller dans l'intelligence et la sensibilité de ceux qui le prononcent et de ceux qui l'entendent les correspondances nécessaires. Césaire aurait-il torturé toutes les règles de la grammaire française pour créer ce mot inhabituel, mais qui sut séduire (ô combien !), que nul ne pourrait valablement le lui reprocher. (410)

[Shall we say that this is our least concern? The value of a word resides in its expressive power, in its capacity to evoke in the minds and sensitivities of those who speak it and of those who hear it its necessary correspondences. Césaire could have tortured all the rules of French grammar to create this unusual word, which nevertheless knew how to seduce (and how!), and no one could reasonably reproach him for it.]

Condé rightly describes where the true value of a word lies. But as we have seen, *négritude* is a rather usual word made by following, not torturing, the rules of French grammar; its expressive power comes from the ways its lexicological parts trope those rules. There are certain contretemps intrinsic to the word—how it creates its own echoes and makes certain "correspondences" seem "necessary," even if they were contingent, chosen and shaped in Césaire's poesis of *négritude*. But we have unwittingly added contretemps, creating false echoes by our confusion of temporalities, of what sound came when. These confusions have turned *négritude*'s echoes into a cacophony of reverberations throughout the scholarly literature and popular imagination. By instead following the twists and turns of Césaire's lexicology, we can
hear more clearly both the echoes that were in his ear as he put négritude onto paper for the first
time and those syncopations that his poetry created.

APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY

1556 Richard le Blanc translates nigredo as nigritude
1654 First recorded use of nigritude in the Oxford English Dictionary
1797 Benjamin Rush delivers a paper to the American Philosophical Society
He does not use négritude in that paper.
1863 George Templeton Strong uses Nigritude in his Diary
First recorded use of negro-hood in the Oxford English Dictionary
1895 Negritude used in The Freethinker to refer to skin color
1919 A. Mitchell Palmer issues report to the U. S. Senate
This report contains the phrases "race consciousness" and "social revolution"
1928 Zora Neale Hurston uses Negrohood
1935 Aimé Césaire publishes the first known use of négritude
1971 Léopold Sédar Senghor refers to Palmer's 1919 report
1980 Christian Filostrat quotes extensively from Césaire’s 1935 article
2007 Ségolène Royal coins bravitude
Édouard Balladur responds with a reference to négritude
2008 Christian Filostrat publishes full text of Césaire’s 1935 article

NOTES

1. All translations are mine unless indicated otherwise.

2. Jack Lang, for example, did both, suggesting that bravitude "exprime la plénitude d'un
sentiment de bravoure" ("expresses the plenitude of a feeling of bravery"; qtd. in
Barotte). In Lang's use of plenitude, however, one might hear a whisper of
Schadenfreude.

3. Senghor might have objected not only to the condescending "tout le monde a trouvé ça très
bien," but also to Balladur's forgetting that he was agrégé de grammaire.

4. Véronis's comment concerned Sarkozy's correct, but comic use of the imperfect subjunctive.

5. Véronis's verb. See Jarrassé.
6. Both the *Grand Larousse de la Langue Française* (1975) and the *Grand Robert de la Langue Française* (2001) quote or cite Sartre's "Orphée noir."

7. Le Bidois also quoted Césaire (*Cahier* §64: "ma négritude n'est pas une pierre" etc.), though without naming him. All quotations of the *Cahier* are to the editions by A. James Arnold. While Guéhenno could have had access to the rare 1939 *Volontés* edition or even the 1947 *Brentano* edition, he could not have seen the 1956 *Présence Africaine* edition. He would probably have been quoting the 1947 *Bordas* edition. Nevertheless, for these lines, no textual critical problems arise as the quoted text remains the same across editions, with the exception of some line breaks and stanzaic groupings.

8. Guéhenno had seen colonial pedagogy first-hand as an *Inspecteur général de l'Éducation nationale*. His article quoted here is a reflection on what pedagogical contribution France should make, in particular to specifically African schoolboys. Importantly, beyond the acknowledged "contradictions" (583) of French history (colonial included), Guéhenno would teach them a taste for the French language in order to keep them forever within its heritage: "qu'ils ne pourraient plus se soustraire à ce que mille années d'usage ont inscrit de gentillesse et d'honnêteté dans la langue de mon pays" ("such that they could no longer escape what a thousand years of usage had inscribed of gentility and honesty into the language of my country"; 585).

9. In Molière's *Les femmes savantes*, Philaminte reacts similarly to a different *-itude* word: "Ah *sollicitude* à mon oreille est rude, / Il put étrangement son ancienneté" ("Ah, *sollicitude* is rough on my ears / It stinks strangely of its antiquity"; 2.7.552-3). Yet further testimony to how the *-itude* suffix has always sounded passé.
10. In some French prosodies, of course, it would be one syllable longer, but even in prose there is a sense of extension, of duration. In Latin, -tūdō created metrical headaches, explaining in part its lack of use in verse and so contributing to its decline and rarity (Daude 241-2).

11. For a discussion of this ideal, see Garner s.v. sesquipedality.

12. Coursil accuses Senghor of a grammatical fallacy: "Par un sophisme connu, Senghor, maître grammaire comme Césaire, n'hésite pas à affirmer, contre toute raison linguistique, que (-itute) est un suffixe d'essence nominalisant" ("Through a known fallacy, Senghor, master grammarian like Césaire, does not hesitate in affirming, against all linguistic reasoning, that (-itude) is an essentially nominalizing suffix"; "Négritude" 119). He claims that this "morpho-semantic fallacy" is "patent" (119-20).

13. Coursil claims that such resonances inhere generally in -itude words: "Dans un tout autre registre, on sait que le suffixe -itude se lit dans servitude, lassitude, solitude, habitude. En clair, le radical pose un concept (binaire) hors du temps en opposition à un suffixe (non-binaire) qui porte une durée. … En clair, -ité est conceptuel (sans temps) alors que -itude est narratif (avec temps)." ("In a completely different register, we know that the suffix -itude is seen in servitude, lassitude, solitude, habitude. Clearly, the radical presents a (binary) concept outside of time in opposition to a (non-binary) suffix that conveys a duration. … Clearly, -ité is conceptual (without time) while -itude is narrative (with time)."; "Négritude: la grammaire de Caliban" 17) But this is cherry-picking. Are latitude, longitude, platitude, rectitude, vastitude more narrative than conceptual? Moreover even the list itself is only seen through a diachronic lens: But can't servitude, etc., be conceptual? Césaire helps us see the liberative diachronicity in the otherwise
oppressive stasis of négritude. This transformation, however, is the power of his trope, not a meaning inherent to -itude.

14. "Tout d'abord, Césaire a dit « Négritude » et non « Négrité ». A juste raison. C'est que le suffixe en -itude a une signification plus concrète, ou moins abstraite, que le suffixe en -ité."

137. In his earlier address to the 1971 Conference on Negritude at Dakar, Senghor at first seems to contradict this: "On n'a pas manqué, il est vrai, de reprocher à Césaire d'avoir choisi le mot négritude au lieu de négrité. Encore une fois, les deux mots on le même sens, formés qu'ils sont avec des suffixes de même sens. Il y a seulement que le suffixe -itude est plus savant." ("To be sure, some have not missed the opportunity to reproach Césaire for having chosen the word négritude instead of négrité. Again, the two words have the same meaning, formed as they are with suffixes of the same meaning. It is only that the suffix -itude is more learned.")
15. There was an attempt to coin créolitude (Legault), but créolité has won out. By the time the latter was coined, négritude had given such stable meaning to -itude as a term of identity that -ité could be heard as a strong semantic contrast.

16. Jean Dubois noted the suffix's "reduced availability" to coiners, and that, in a half century, he could only find négritude as having stuck (39). The distinct change noticed by Jacques Bourquin in the suffix's fortunes after 1960 nevertheless also represents a continuity of use: What he calls "poetic" coinages (hapaxes like céléstitude or omnitude, or ones that lasted like finitude or vastitude—the latter a not-quite-neo-logism; 55) participate in the word's traditional scientifcicty.

17. There are claims that negritude was a term of racist science in English. The absence of evidence for such claims is discussed in the next section.

18. See Arnold xv.

19. See n 8 above. Guéhenno's choice of word echoes Dante's from the Vita nova: "Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare." This is why I have rendered gentillesse as gentility, to capture a sense of refinement and nobility. Its etymology is also being rejuvenated to connote a sense of belonging to the gens, the nation. Though more difficult to translate, honnêteté also conveys refinement (l'honnête homme) and nobility (< Lt. honestus). Guéhenno published his essay in 1953. The following year, Senghor takes up this description in his famous postface (dated 24 September 1954) to Éthiopiques, titled "Comme les lamantins vont boire à la source" ("As the Manatees go to the Source"; 120), although he cites the article's reprint in Guéhenno's La France et les noirs.
20. The in-process ninth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* omits -itude and just indicates that négritude is "dérivé de nègre," "derived from nègre." The eight edition, completed in 1935, did not have an entry for négritude.

21. Césaire reverses this procedure in his "Dit d'errance," writing "nigromance" where one would expect nécromancie. He thus emphasizes the blackness of the term by using i rather than é, or more accurately by using ig rather than éc. Nigromance had existed in French, but was obsolete. For this example, see Hénan 95 and Davis 112.

22. Jean Nicot's *Thresor de la langue française* (1606), Jean-François Féraud's *Dictionnaire critique de la langue française* (1787-1788), Émile Littré's *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1872-1877), and the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* 1st (1694), 4th (1798), 6th (1835), and 8th (1932-5) editions.

23. See n 9 above.

24. Or perhaps the Lycée Louis-le-Grand. Césaire seems to have coined négritude right when he was transitioning from khâgne to the ENS. See Hénane for a description of Césaire as philologist and bibliophile.

25. The Bibliothèque nationale de France holds several copies from different editions. Césaire may have had access to the ENS copy or to the BnF copies.

26. The *Gaffiot*, or the *Dictionnaire illustré latin-français*, was available from 1934. The earlier dictionary by Quicherat also contains nigritudo, like Gaffiot's s.v. negritia.

27. The general discussion is of whetstones (*queux* < Lt. *cotes*), although the use described here is of touchstones. Le Blanc is aware, describing lydite as a touchstone ("pierre de touche"; 146v).
28. Several of the articles and books listed on Google Scholar that cite Filostrat's book use some variation of "discovery"/"rediscovery" when discussing it.

29. The popularity of Filostrat's book, as judged by its citations, far surpasses that of the earlier article, which is nevertheless mentioned on the book's copyright page.

30. I also hear, and the captions agree, "Black men" rather than "a black man" in *The Civil War*.

31. I owe these two examples to the Wiktionary editor Dmh. See the discussion s.v. *negritude*.

32. Or again, "the term's trajectory" is "its translation into French and its retranslation into English" (10 n 5).

33. See also Szasz 156, 158, 170, and 274. When Szasz returns to Rush's leprosy theory five years later in *Ceremonial Chemistry* (95-6), the word *Negritude* is nowhere to be found.

34. *Radicalism and Sedition* is Exhibit No. 10 of United States of America, Senate, *Investigation Activities of the Department of Justice*. The report says, as quoted, "race consciousness."

Senghor's translation is, however, identical to the phrasing in Césaire's title. This also argues against translating *conscience* as "awareness" for that title.

WORKS CITED


Coursil, Jacques. "Négritude." *Césaire et nous : une rencontre entre l'afrique et les Amériques*


*The Freethinker* 15.36 (8 September 1895): 567.


Rush, Benjamin. "Observations Intended to Favour a Supposition that the Black Color (as It Is Called) of the Negroes is Derived from the Leprosy." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 4 (1799): 289-97. [Delivered 17 June 1797.]

Senghor, Léopold Sédar. *Ce que je crois : Négritude, Francité et Civilisation de l'Universel.*


