

French Caribbean Literature and Translation: visit of Maryse Condé and Richard Philcox

Thursday 30th September 2010, 2.30pm

University of Birmingham

Muirhead Tower G15

Birmingham French Studies's opening contribution to Black History Month is the joint visit of Maryse Condé and Richard Philcox. The visit will coincide with special exhibitions of Condé's work at Birmingham Central Library and Birmingham University Library. The visit also falls in the same week as the European Day of Languages and celebrates language learning's essential role in uncovering the rich and diverse culture of other nations.

Born in 1937 and raised in Guadeloupe, French West Indies, Maryse Condé is the most prolific Caribbean women writer of her generation as well as a leading figure in French national policy debates on the commemoration of slavery. She has lived and worked in the Caribbean, Africa, the UK (including a spell at the BBC) and now divides her time between New York and Paris. She served as the first president of the newly-created French Committee for the Memory of Slavery from 2004-2008 and under her leadership, President Jacques Chirac agreed to designate 10th May as the annual day for the commemoration of slavery in France. Condé also campaigned for changes to educational policy and the French school curriculum to ensure the memory of slavery would be better understood. Author, teacher, public figure and critic, Condé engages with questions of exile, migration, European imperialism, identity, African ancestry, notions of home and homelessness, corruption and disillusionment. Her award-winning body of work, written in French and widely translated, is often compared to that of Toni Morrison, Jean Rhys and Derek Walcott.

Condé's talk (in French) will be followed by a translation workshop in English by Richard Philcox, her acclaimed literary translator, discussing practical and theoretical elements of translation. Richard will focus on extracts from Condé's Caribbean rewriting of *Wuthering Heights* and will also discuss his new translation of *The Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon.

For full details see: <http://www.french.bham.ac.uk/research/francopoco/maryse-conde.shtml>
(or find us by Googling FRANCOPOCO)