

Acclaimed French author visits Birmingham

Posted on Wednesday 29th September 2010

Internationally acclaimed and award winning Caribbean author Maryse Condé, first president of the French national Committee for the Memory of Slavery (2004-2008), will be giving a special lecture on *The Personal Journey of a Caribbean Author*, at the University of Birmingham on 30th September 2010.

The lecture, organised by Louise Hardwick, specialist in Francophone Caribbean culture in the Department of French Studies, forms part of the University's programme of events marking Black History Month, and highlights the role played by the University's language departments in uncovering the rich and diverse culture of other nations.

Maryse 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 Philcox 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.

Jennifer Birkett, Professor of French Studies, says: "Many members of the Caribbean community in Birmingham will be familiar with the name of Maryse Condé, and her novels on the Caribbean heritage, slavery, and especially the role and perspective of women. For the University's Department of French Studies, and the School and College of which it is part, colonial and postcolonial questions are now a major theme for research and teaching. In line with the University's great tradition, our research effort involves engagement with the local community, so we hope this will be a very important visit not only for the University, but also for the Caribbean community in Birmingham."

The visit is being celebrated by exhibitions of Condé's writing at Birmingham Central Library and the University of Birmingham Library, and it falls in the same week as the European Day of Languages on 26th September 2010.

Notes to Editors

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.

Programme:

Muirhead Tower G15 - 2.30pm

2.30 pm - An Introduction to Maryse Condé, grande dame of Caribbean literature - Dr Louise Hardwick, University of Birmingham

2.45 pm - G. V. Banks Memorial Lecture (in French) - Maryse Condé, 'Itinéraire d'un écrivain caribéen' - Maryse Condé will discuss her award-winning literary career, which has taken her to Africa, France and the US

3.45 pm - Light refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits) in Ashley Foyer

4pm – 5.30 pm - Mireille Best Memorial Lecture (in English) - Richard Philcox, 'Translation Workshop: Translating Maryse Condé and Frantz Fanon'

5.30 - 6pm - Questions, comments and general discussion

6pm – Close

This event is organised by Dr Louise Hardwick through the University of Birmingham FRANCOPOCO (Francophone Colonial and Postcolonial) Network.

This event also forms part of the Postcolonial Birmingham initiative, a programme of interdisciplinary events supported by the University of Birmingham Conflict & Security Studies Network.

The event is free and open to the public.

For further information contact Kate Chapple, University Press Officer 0121 414 2772.

[Privacy](#) | [Legal](#) | [Cookies and cookie policy](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site map](#) | [Website feedback](#) | [Charitable information](#)

© University of Birmingham 2015

