

about his human rights abuses. Préval's willingness to go along with the dropping of his chosen successor, Jude Celestin, from the second round of the presidential balloting because of ballot-stuffing and other irregularities, speaks well of his commitment to let the electoral rules fall where they may.

In principle, it is difficult to imagine anybody beating Mirlande Manigat, a former First Lady who likes to call herself the "Mother of the Nation"—and who won the 28 November elections with 31% of the vote-- in the second round presidential elections scheduled for 20 March. A proven vote-getter, and a noted constitutional scholar well known to many CSA members, she was elected with an ample majority to the Senate from Port-au-Prince in 2006. Yet, "Baby Doc" has thrown a wild card into Haiti's political equation, and anything can happen.

The rise and fall of Latin American and Caribbean dictators follows a certain script. Few die in office. Most are either toppled and forced to leave the country (like Fulgencio Batista in Cuba or Alfredo Stroessner in Paraguay), or shot at home or abroad (like Leonidas Trujillo in the Dominican Republic or Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua). Lately, the problem for current and former dictators has been their inability to go to London and do their shopping at Harrods. This became a no-no after General Augusto Pinochet did it in 1998 and ended up 18 months under arrest. Universal jurisdiction for human

rights violations and the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), has cramped the travel and the style of many a tyrant.

But the return of Baby Doc sets a new precedent. What to do if, many decades after his mischief, the former strongman returns on his own to the scene of the crime? Isn't it in a way an endearing gesture, perhaps an effort to achieve closure by reaching out to his former subjects and expressing contrition? "I am here for Haiti's reconstruction", Jean-Claude said, upon getting off the plane.

The embezzled fortune (up to US 500 million, according to some) is long gone (partly in a costly 1993 divorce with Michele), a majority of Haitians were not even born when Jean-Claude left the country, and, today the daily life of Haitians is arguably worse than it was then.

Isn't it time to let bygones be bygones?

The answer is no. According to some estimates, between 20,000 and 30,000 Haitians lost their lives at the hands of state agents under Duvalierism. In the nineties, a Truth Commission report of those crimes was shelved. President Préval's main concern ought to be that justice is done and to make sure the second round of presidential elections is seen as legitimate and fair.

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## The Haiti and the Americas Conference

The Haiti and the Americas conference was held at Florida Atlantic University's campus in Boca Raton from October 21st to 23rd, 2010. The event brought together scholars researching Haiti's influence on the hemisphere, both historically and today, in fields such as art history, cultural studies, history, literature, political science, and anthropology.

Participants looked at the many ways Haiti has been represented by outsiders as well as the ways Haitians represent themselves to think about the past, present, and future of Haiti's place in the imagination of the Americas. FAU served as an ideal site for these explorations,

with one of the largest Haitian American populations of any campus in the United States. The conference was co-sponsored by Rice University, and organized by Carla Calargé (FAU), Raphael Dalleo (FAU), Luis

Duno-Gottberg (Rice), and Clevis Headley (FAU).

The first day of the conference brought to-

gether exciting discussions about the influence of the Haitian revolution on pro- and anti-slavery discourses in the U.S. and Europe, contemporary representations of sex, tourism, and class struggle in Haitian literature and film, and representations of Vodou in the U.S. and



*Haiti Conference Literary Evening*

the Bahamas. Highlights of the day's program included the Peace Studies Keynote Lecture by Myriam J.A. Chancy titled "A Marshall Plan for a Haiti at Peace: To Continue or End the Legacy of the Revolution," as well as the screening of the award-winning film "Eat, For This is My Body" followed by a discussion with filmmaker Michelange Quay, whose visit was sponsored by the Florida Humanities Council.

The second day of the conference began with a keynote lecture by J. Michael Dash about Haiti's status as New World site, neither entirely African nor French. Sibylle Fischer's keynote lecture in the afternoon explored how Simón Bolívar's political thought was shaped by the time he spent in Haiti and his diplomatic negotiations with the newly independent Haitian state. The afternoon also brought members of Toussaint L'Ouverture High School for Arts and Social Justice in Boynton Beach to campus to talk about their work with Haitian Americans in South Florida, while representatives of Konbit for Haiti and FAVA-CA talked about projects they have been working on in Haiti since the earthquake. The Digital Library of the Caribbean also discussed their Protecting Haitian Patrimony Initiative, while Florida Atlantic University Ph.D. candidate Susan D'Aloia gave a paper analyzing volunteer work in Haiti. The day was capped off by a literary evening and reception at FAU's Ritter Art Gallery co-sponsored by PUMA.Creative, where Andrea Shaw, Myriam J.A. Chancy, and Rose Rejouis read from their literary work.

The final day of the conference was attended by representatives of South Florida's WLVJ radio station

who interviewed a number of conference participants for their program. The conference finished with two especially strong panels, on the topics "African Americans and Haiti" and "Haiti's Politics." Leslie Alexander of Ohio State University, Bethany Aery Clerico of SUNY-Albany, David Kilroy of Nova Southeastern University, Nadève Ménard of the Université d'Etat d'Haiti, Christopher Garland of the University of Florida, Adam Silvia of Florida International University, and independent scholar Isabelle Airey presented on topics ranging from the influence of the Haitian revolution on African American activism to Wyclef Jean's failed presidential run. These panels produced a wonderful discussion of the issues surrounding Haiti's relationship with the United States, with Faith Smith of Brandeis University, Patricia Saunders of the University of Miami, Jerry Philogene of Dickinson College, Elena Machado Sáez of Florida Atlantic University, and a number of other conference participants raising productive questions about the transnationalism of hip-hop culture, the viability of Haitian sovereignty and citizenship in both the post-Aristide and post-earthquake context, and what an ethical relationship between Haiti and the U.S. might look like. The final day of the conference thus proved the culmination of three days of intensive thought and interrogation of Haiti's place in the hemisphere, and generated a lot of energy and enthusiasm for continuing to think about and discuss these issues in the future. An edited volume is being planned to collect the work presented at the conference and make it more widely available.

*Raphael Dalleo*

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## Fabienne Viala, una excéntrica en Cambridge University: Entrevista

Con cara de interrogación y mucha expectativa, recibieron a Fabienne Viala los alumnos de la Facultad de Ciencias Antropológicas de la Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán. El tema de su especialidad, "Canibalismo cultural", es novedoso en la Península aunque la verdad es que Yucatán está aprendiendo de "eso" en la teoría porque en la práctica es "cosa de todos los días". Fabienne lo estudia en Cambridge University, lo que la hace un ente único: su plaza con esa especialidad, es la primera en la historia de esa prestigiosa universidad.

Fabienne es experta en literatura comparada, do-

mina perfectamente tres lenguas: francés, inglés y español, y fue invitada al Seminario Avanzado Jóvenes Investigadores "Fronteras y espacios en el Caribe y Yucatán", coordinado por Margaret Shrimpton, para una estancia de una semana en Mérida, apoyada por el programa ANUIES-PAFP 2011.

—¿Qué se siente saltar de un país a otro en el Caribe con la agilidad mental que te da el saber qué pasa culturalmente en cada uno?

—Es interesante que me preguntes eso porque es