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Everyday Mobilities, Urban/Peripheral Cartographies and Practical Cosmopolitanism in Michèle Rakotoson’s *Elle, au printemps* and Alain Mabanckou’s *Tais-toi et meurs*

This paper focuses on the literary cartographies of Paris and peripheral spaces (*banlieu/*provincial towns) in two Francophone African diasporic novels, namely Michèle Rakotoson’s *Elle, au printemps* (1996) and Alain Mabanckou’s *Tais-toi et meurs* (2012). Both novels feature an African protagonist who has recently arrived in Paris and whose life in the metropolis is defined by irregularity. In order to survive in their new environments, the protagonists have to engage in mobile practices by travelling in urban public transports. The cartographies of Paris that the texts produce are based on the detailed descriptions of these everyday mobilities, in the Parisian *métro* in particular. By applying a mobility studies approach to the novels’ cartographies of urban/peripheral spaces, this paper argues that by using mobility as a way to inscribe their migrant selves into the fabric of the metropolitan Paris, Rakotoson’s and Mabanckou’s protagonists embody a practical cosmopolitan attitude to which I refer as *débrouillardise* cosmopolitanism. Both novels draw attention to the uncertain aspects of African newcomers’ mobilities in the postcolonial metropolis – uncertainty that pertains to the protagonists’ irregular conditions and that constantly haunts their attempts to “handle” Paris through everyday urban mobility. This anxiety finds its culmination in spatial terms in the protagonists’ movement away from Parisian urban spaces towards its peripheries and even further to provincial towns. The paper also considers the slightly surreal effect of Rakotoson’s narrative and Mabanckou’s adaptation of the thriller form as literary means that convey the absurd or anxiety-ridden aspects of irregular migrants’ everyday urban mobilities.

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