In the last fifty years forced and unforced migrations have resulted in some of the greatest upheavals and displacements seen in history. Refugees, economic migrants, and political exiles have moved away from their geographical places of origin to settle in foreign places, carrying with them (in multiple forms and to different degrees) memories of their past, tensions in the present and aspirations for their future.

While such movements have very often resulted in permanent dislocations, rapid developments in communication technologies and affordable transportation have provided some members of these dispersed communities the opportunity of “looking back” or returning (temporarily, repeatedly or permanently) to their homelands—to places “left behind” in the course of their migration. Through a reading of selected travel texts in the French language, this paper will examine how the affective consequences of such diasporic returns are textualized.

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