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(Re)Mapping Masculinity in Northern France: The Novels of Édouard Louis

The French writer Édouard Louis's most recent novel, *Changer : méthode* (2021), is an autobiographical novel in which the author narratively revisits the terrain of his youth in Northern France as well as his earlier renditions of it in *En finir avec Eddy Bellegueule* (2014) and *Qui a tué mon père* (2018), seeking to understand who he is and how he and his parents, specifically his father, came to be who they are. Narrative and writing are the means of this enquiry into gender, and how it intersects with social class, ethnicity, sexuality and geography; a narrative enquiry that reflects on cultural definitions and understandings of masculinity and their lived experience across the narrator's trajectory from Hallencourt to Amiens to Paris in the early 21st century, focusing on how synchronously but differentially available configurations of white masculinity in France inscribe on the body, are incorporated in it, or are rejected by it, as the one (re)makes his body in one of its images (Eddy Bellegueule becoming Édouard Louis) in its performance of it, whereas the other one is destroyed (as in the case of the father) in his performance of it. Revisiting the terrain of masculinity through its social and cultural geographies and topographies, this paper engages with the novels of Édouard Louis as narrative enquiries into the poetics and politics of gender in contemporary France.