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October 1961: On the Past and its Presence

This essay analyses, firstly, how research on the Paris massacre of Algerians in October 1961 is increasingly extending the chronological and thematic approaches through which this violence and its memories might be understood. The multi-layered academic field in which October 1961 can now be situated now arguably mirrors a similarly diverse memorial landscape, the latter being evidenced by the fiftieth anniversary commemorations and other non-academic initiatives from recent years which are discussed in the second half of this essay.

Whereas the number of commemorative initiatives in 2011 relating to October 1961 was higher and more geographically widespread than ever previously, the past few years have not seen a large number of focused historical studies dealing with the events themselves. In the most substantial historical work of recent years relating centrally to October 1961, Emmanuel Blanchard's history of the policing of Algerians in Paris deliberately eschews the 'numbers debate', i.e. attempting to arrive at a definitive figure of how many Algerians were killed by police.¹ Instead, Blanchard's study seeks to situate the violence of October 1961 within a much longer-term series of events involving security forces and large urban demonstrations, whether in metropolitan France, Algeria or other colonial settings. As Blanchard argues: 'la lente constitution du massacre du 17 octobre "en lieu de mémoire" n'a pas été intégrée à une séquence longue de la répression policière et des résistances algériennes aux forces de l'ordre'.² This longer-term focus allows him to 'retrieve' the 14 July 1953 repression at Place de la Nation, when six Algerian nationalists, and one French trade unionist, died after police opened fire at the end of the traditional left-wing march.³ This repression was largely 'lost' to public memory due both to the memorial dynamics of post-independence Algeria with their selective concentration on the period since November 1954 and the successful official French cover-up; there is thus an interesting partial analogy here with October 1961.⁴ However, by suggesting that the 17 October 1961 gatherings constituted principally a boycott of the curfew as opposed to demonstrations in the strict sense, Blanchard shows their relatively unique status in metropolitan France in terms of a street presence.⁵

Blanchard also engages with the complex question that has been raised over the past ten years, regarding the extent to which the Paris massacre can be considered 'colonial', and the essential place of violence within the colonial dynamic more generally.⁶ The argument here is nuanced: Blanchard usefully seeks to situate everyday policing repertoires targeting Algerians in relation to those used towards other stigmatized groups (foreigners, Jewish people, the homeless and urban poor more widely, sex workers and sexual minorities), reminding us of the links between different forms of domination.⁷ Furthermore, Blanchard considers how measures against Communism, and Algerian and other pro-independence

¹ For a recent summary of these debates, and the wider controversies opposing Jean-Luc Einaudi and Jean-Paul Brunet, see Einaudi's afterword in the revised edition of his *Octobre 1961: Un massacre à Paris* (Paris: Fayard/Pluriel, 2011), pp. 563–602.

² Emmanuel Blanchard, *La Police parisienne et les Algériens (1944–1962)* (Paris: Nouveau monde éditions, 2011), p. 130.

³ Blanchard, pp. 129–43.

⁴ Daniel Kupferstein, who has already made documentaries on the memory of October 1961 (*17 octobre 1961: dissimulation d'un massacre*, 2001) and Charonne (*Mourir à Charonne*, 2010) respectively, is completing a documentary on the 14 July 1953 repression for 2013.

⁵ Blanchard, pp. 378–79.

⁶ See Joshua Cole, 'Massacres and their Historians: Recent Histories of State Violence in France and Algeria in the Twentieth Century', *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 28 (2010), 106–26.

⁷ In this respect, see also Sylvie Thénault, *Violence ordinaire dans l'Algérie coloniale: Camps, internements, assignations à résidence* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2012).

nationalisms, were closely articulated in the post-1945 period.⁸

While being nuanced on the extent to which the colonial relation can provide a total explanation for the violence, Blanchard's book nonetheless concludes that the colonial dynamic is central, and here his study goes beyond the Franco-Algerian context to point out the similarities between October 1961 and the repression in Casablanca from 7 to 12 December 1952. In the latter case, Moroccans from shanty-towns and other poor districts challenged official bans on the strikes called by nationalist and trade-union organizations in the Protectorate following the assassination in Tunis of Farhat Hached, a key pro-independence trade unionist.⁹ In both events, the explicit rejection of segregationist power relations by the Algerian/Moroccan protestors, who wanted to assert a political and physical presence in the districts central to European power, drew an extremely punitive response mixing racial, social and political violence. The speed, levels and types of recourse to lethal violence exercised against certain groups, and which Blanchard identifies as being a key defining factor in colonial state violence, underlines once more the need to examine the 'racial' as a key determinant of any colonial context, while seeing this dimension as part of a wider inter-sectional series of power relations: his study also encourages analysis of the specific local contexts in which such violence occurs.¹⁰ Parallels drawn between more recent and previous (colonial) forms of policing, discrimination and segregation (cf. *infra*) can usefully draw upon the empirically-based, and yet conceptually-sophisticated, studies such as Blanchard's.

Blanchard's study also hints at a further way in which the research agenda might evolve beyond a focus on the narrow time-frame, since the book analyses everyday policing of Algerians alongside the peak in violence of September and October 1961. We thus gain a much better idea of the complex interplay of quotidian and 'spectacular', direct and indirect forms of unequal power relations in Paris and how they were challenged in both structured and more informal ways. This also suggests an approach that, in the future, could be used to analyse power relations in a variety of colonial settings. For the moment, other sources provide some further suggestive lines of enquiry: republished in a new edition, Monique Hervo's memoirs of her time working and living in the Nanterre shanty-towns during the period of 1959 to 1962, constitute a powerful if disturbing insight into the way in which the authorities problematized both these shanty-towns and their inhabitants.¹¹ As elsewhere (Casablanca, Algiers), shanty-towns were also sites for various inventive counter-strategies in ways that were both explicitly political—as a base for nationalist activities—and as the material environment needed to be adapted to create a sense of place and home in the face of tight regulation.

In a publishing context in which few new studies emerged to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of 17 October 1961, one exception was Gilles Manceron's analysis accompanying the first publication of Marcel and Paulette Péju's militant text *Le 17 octobre des Algériens* (1962). The Péjus were heavily involved in pro-FLN activities and prepared this text for the Provisional government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) only for publication to be withheld in 1962 due to political conflicts within the Front de libération nationale (FLN). The authors present October 1961 as a paroxysm of police violence, underlining its

⁸ Sylvie Thénault, 'Des couvre-feux à Paris en 1958 et 1961: une mesure importée d'Algérie pour mieux lutter contre le FLN?', *Politix*, 84 (2008), 167–85.

⁹ See Jim House, 'L'impossible contrôle d'une ville coloniale? Casablanca, décembre 1952', *Genèses. Sciences sociales et histoire*, 86 (2012), 79–104.

¹⁰ Blanchard has also overseen a further publication that aims to better understand colonial policing from cross-imperial perspectives ('Ordre colonial', *Genèses. Sciences sociales et histoire*, 86 (2012)).

¹¹ Monique Hervo, *Chroniques du bidonville: Nanterre en guerre d'Algérie, 1959–1962* (Paris: Actes Sud Éditions, 2012), first edition 2001. See also Mehdi Lallaoui's documentary, *Monique Hervo. Nanterre 1961* (2011).

antecedents.¹² Like the republication in 2011 of Michel Levine's *Les Ratonnades d'octobre*—the first, but largely ignored, book-length study of October 1961 (1985)—the Péju text also provides, among many other insights, valuable evidence of Algerian women's participation in the 20 October 1961 demonstrations.¹³

In his analysis, Manceron argues that there was a 'triple occultation' of the massacre, by the French state, the Algerian state and the Communist left. However, the 'triple occultation' term arguably calls for caution: despite Manceron's careful statement that '[l]a principale de ces causes est le mensonge de la version officielle' from the French state,¹⁴ the convenient 'headline' summary runs the risk of implying, alongside a shared causality for the public 'disappearance' of the event, an equality within that causality between French state, Algerian state, and the Parti communiste français (PCF). This position could unwittingly downplay the key role of the official French cover-up.¹⁵ The 'triple occultation' idea might also call attention away from the longer-term processes by which Algerians and their struggle for independence were politically and socially marginalized in France by non-state and non-Communist actors.¹⁶ Manceron's study implicitly highlights the need for more research on the PCF's position on Charonne and October 1961 and the levels of volition involved: in brief, did the PCF leadership forget to remember, or remember to forget, October 1961 in the 1960s and 1970s?

Speaking of the 'moral weight of history still haunting French leftists' regarding the Algerian war of independence,¹⁷ Daniel Gordon's analysis of intellectuals, antiracism and May '68 allows a particular angle on issues raised by Manceron. As is well known, the emergence of a new political 'space' to the left of the PCF constitutes one of the many significant consequences of the Algerian war of independence in France: the critiques of the PCF's actions, or inaction, during this war became more powerfully voiced as a result, a critical voice emerging from the margins of the radical anti-colonial groups and/or disaffected Communists to gain greater prominence during the 1960s, culminating in May '68 and the activist mobilizations thereafter. Gordon usefully reminds us that, while a history of colonial violence will see October 1961 as a paroxysm, it can also be viewed as a 'foundational event of the postcolonial politics of immigration in France',¹⁸ albeit one only taken up once the ideological focus could link events in France to the wider international scene, and the Paris left could see beyond central Paris and into the industrial suburbs: during and after 1968, the shanty-towns would, as in October 1961, symbolize the hardships and exploitation of Algerian and their militant evocation would this time include other migrations. Gordon's book offers an important contribution to the history of political solidarity with Algerians, and the links between different militant generations.

Thus while Blanchard focuses on the causes, and Gordon on the militant afterlives of October 1961, both are keen to situate the event within a longer historical sequence. Their respective work can arguably be set alongside that of other researchers whose careful recent

¹² Marcel and Paulette Péju, *Le 17 octobre des Algériens* suivi de *La triple occultation d'un massacre* par Gilles Manceron (Paris: La Découverte, 2011).

¹³ Péju and Péju, pp. 73–80; Michel Levine, *Les Ratonnades d'octobre: Un meurtre collectif à Paris en 1961* (Paris: Jean-Claude Gawsewitch, 2011), pp. 199–226.

¹⁴ Manceron, in Péju and Péju, p. 114.

¹⁵ These comments are made with the benefit of hindsight, on the basis of reaction to the use of 'triple occultation' during public debates in October 2011: I have, however, used the term myself; see Jim House, 'La sanglante répression de la manifestation algérienne du 17 octobre à Paris', in *Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale (1830–1962)*, ed. by Abderrahmane Bouchène, Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, Ouanassa Siari Tengour and Sylvie Thénault (Paris and Algiers: La Découverte/Barzakh, 2012), pp. 602–05.

¹⁶ Alain Dewerpe, *Charonne, 8 février 1962* (Paris: Gallimard, Folio, 2006), p. 666. Dewerpe adopts a defensive stance with regard to the PCF's position on October 1961 (pp. 646–69).

¹⁷ Daniel A. Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals: May '68 and the Rise of Anti-Racism in France* (Pontypool: The Merlin Press, 2012), p. 29.

¹⁸ Gordon, p. 26.

studies have shown the complex interplay between colonial-era policies, personnel and attitudes and those after 1962 (in the Algerian case). Of particular note here are studies of immigrant hostels,¹⁹ and colonial personnel having influenced a range of welfare and housing provision for Algerian and other postcolonial migrant groups.²⁰ Such studies reveal how, for example at the micro-level, the choice of where, and next to whom, Algerians might be allowed to live in social housing was subject to close regulation, informed by ‘cultural distance’ theory involving a wide range of actors, some of whose professional ‘competence’ came from direct experience in colonial North Africa. Other officials (or those working for associations involved in welfare provision), had always remained metropolitan-based, and yet were also, albeit differently, informed by the colonial encounter at an attitudinal level. Such studies usefully combine analysis of material power relations with a series of (post)colonial representations. The prominence of spatial dimensions in the above-mentioned work is also to be highlighted, as is an approach based on locally-based studies, the latter aspect constituting a development that can be also observed within recent historiography of the Algerian war of independence itself.²¹

Such studies examining the legacies of the war of independence coincided fortuitously with, or immediately followed (without there being any necessary cause and effect), the highly rhetorical use made of the ‘colonial continuum’ thesis since the mid-2000s by groups such as the Mouvement (now Parti) des indigènes de la République who have sought to carve themselves a distinctive niche within left-wing campaigning.²² This group’s claims, often made in deliberately bold terms, were challenged, at times aggressively, as the organization was accused of collapsing both the distinctions between colony and metropolis and those between past and present. From an academic perspective, these highly polemical debates were arguably useful to have: historians of contemporary France interested in colonial legacies examine precisely the ‘space’ that exists between what might be similar—to varying degrees—with previous or indeed simultaneous modes of unequal power relations occurring in different geographical settings (or possibly the same places), and yet what is certainly not identical. These are also important issues raised by the multidirectional memory approach that has, *inter alia*, encouraged a further widening of our understanding of October 1961 by linking anti-Algerian violence, and other forms of colonial-based racism and their memories, to the violence and memory of the Holocaust: such studies also involve a suggestive broadening of the chronological focus.²³

This essay now turns to examine some of the key themes from the fiftieth anniversary commemorations, recent work on the political uses that the October 1961 events have been asked to perform, and documentary film. As with the commemorations of 1981, 1991 and 2001,

¹⁹ Choukri Hmed, “Tenir ses hommes”. La Gestion des étrangers “isolés” dans les foyers Sonacotra après la guerre d’Algérie’, *Politix* (76), 2006, 11–30.

²⁰ Françoise de Barros, ‘Contours d’un réseau administratif “algérien” et construction d’une compétence en “affaires musulmanes”: Les conseillers techniques pour les affaires musulmanes en métropole (1952–1965)’, *Politix*, 76 (2006), 97–117; and her ‘Des “Français musulmans d’Algérie” aux immigrés: L’importation de classifications coloniales dans les politiques du logement en France (1950–1970)’, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 159 (2005), 26–45; Edward W. J. Naylor, ‘The Politics of a Presence: Algerians in Marseille from Independence to “Immigration Sauvage” (1962–1974)’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Queen Mary, 2011).

²¹ See, for example, Raphaëlle Branche, *L’Emboscade de Palestro: Algérie 1956* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010); *La France en guerre (1954–1962): Expériences métropolitaines de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne*, ed. by Raphaëlle Branche and Sylvie Thénault (Paris: Autrement, 2008).

²² See Emma F. C. Rogan, ‘The Mouvement des Indigènes de la République and Political Uses of the Past’ (unpublished MA thesis, University of Leeds, 2011).

²³ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); ‘Nœuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture’, ed. by Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal and Max Silverman, *Yale French Studies*, 118–119 (2010).

those marking the fiftieth anniversary provided a snapshot of the levels of public interest and how that interest was shown. The institutional context is always paramount: in addition to the symbolic importance of the October 2011 anniversary itself, considerable initiatives in France stemmed from campaigners anticipating official recognition of the massacre after the 2012 presidential elections following ten years of right-wing rule that, at national level, had seen the prioritizing of other memory carriers of the war of independence. Should this national-level official recognition be forthcoming, October 1961 might become an interesting case study as to the transformative process by which a counter-memory becomes 'officialized' and institutionalized. Much would depend, naturally, on the political 'work' that such official recognition would be asked to perform, questions that would be linked to diplomatic relations with Algeria as well as the parliamentary left's both current and intended electoral audiences.²⁴

Without that official national recognition, however, the undoubted increasing nationalization of the public memory of October 1961 in France, as evidenced by the wide range of initiatives in October 2011, could paradoxically be seen via what Sylvie Thénault calls the 'célébrations décentralisées du cinquantenaire'.²⁵ The commemorations of 2011, far more than those in previous years, were to be found in towns without significant Algerian communities, in addition to the main cities and Paris suburbs with well-established commemorative repertoires. As previously, however, these events were often driven by the idea that healing the wounds of the past would foster better social relations in the present, just as French society needed to examine the links between past and present forms of racism.²⁶ Where these themes arguably become more controversial and act as a dividing line between moderate and far left, is the implied level of continuities with regard to police racism towards North Africans and their descendants and the willingness or otherwise of the moderate left to raise the more general question of racism within Republican institutions.

This nationalization 'from below', by many grassroots initiatives, points to the role played by a range of political actors, among whom those of Algerian heritage are often prominent, notably as local councillors. Making such an observation is not to adopt an 'integrationist' perspective: alongside high levels of ethnic and social discrimination, there has been the accession of a small minority of people of Algerian heritage to local-level posts of responsibility. This, alongside support from various campaigning groups, has ensured the municipal 'institutionalization' of October 1961 in Nanterre, where this past can speak to a number of local as well as national preoccupations.²⁷ Here, as Vincent Collet's work shows, the political uses of the past are multiple, with associations such as Les Oranges, formed in 2004, situating October 1961 within a broader and longer history of struggles by immigrants over many decades. This association deliberately avoids representations centred upon victimhood to celebrate the agency of the 17 October 1961 participants, against the still-prevalent idea that the Algerians of that period suffered in silence.²⁸ Such associations see themselves as a 'bridge' between different migrant and/or political generations.²⁹ These

²⁴ October 1961 duly figured in the chronology of the war of independence during the exhibition to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of 1962 at the Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel des Invalides, Paris, in spring and summer 2012.

²⁵ Sylvie Thénault, *Algérie: des "événements" à la guerre: Idées reçues sur la guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu, 2012), p. 189.

²⁶ See 'Appel: 17 octobre 1961–17 octobre 2011, 50^e anniversaire', in *Le 17 octobre 1961 par les textes de l'époque*, ed. by Gilles Manceron and Henri Pouillot (Paris: Les petits matins, 2011), pp. 126–27.

²⁷ Vincent Collet, 'Nanterre ne veut plus oublier: De l'oubli à la reconnaissance municipale du 17 octobre 1961', *Métropolitiques*, 4 April 2012, <http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Nanterre-ne-veut-plus-oublier-De-1.html> [accessed 7 September 2012].

²⁸ See <http://www.lesoranges.com> [accessed 2 September 2012].

²⁹ Vincent Collet, 'Les savants "héritiers de l'immigration": un problème? Controverses autour de la mobilisation pour un "collège Abdelmalek Sayad"', *REVUE Asylon(s)*, 4 (2008), <http://www.reseau-terra.eu/article744.html> [accessed 2 September 2012].

themes ensure that the relationship to the local council—or French state—regarding colonial legacies coincides with dynamics internal to various cultural, national and political communities. Such mobilizations call for further work on the double sense in which representations of October 1961 can be understood—as both speaking for others, and speaking after the event—in a new context, and what this means for those former participants in October 1961.

The complexity of such dynamics for Nanterre has also been shown by Muriel Cohen.³⁰ Cohen has highlighted that the prominent role played today by the communist Nanterre council contrasts with a much more ambivalent position that it, alongside many other suburban councils, had taken towards Algerian migrants in previous decades. Since the local popular memory of such ambivalence is not widely shared, she argues, this potentially ‘delicate’ historical role is seldom a public issue for the council: nonetheless, it remains one for those families who feel let down by years of waiting for re-housing, for example.³¹ Cohen also highlights, however, another important process whereby shanty-towns—and those of Nanterre during the October 1961 events in particular—have come to symbolize the housing and wider social and political marginalization of Algerians, whereas shanty-towns were far from the commonest housing type for Algerians in France before, during, or after 1961. Similarly, in the Nanterre case, the long-standing presence of many Moroccans in these shanty-towns risks been obscured. Nanterre was clearly a key site of segregation, repression, and anti-colonial resistance: Cohen’s study usefully points, nonetheless, to a number of unintended consequences of the memory retrieval processes that potentially distort the experiences of other important elements of Algerian and further migrant groups.

Yasmina Adi’s powerful film *Ici on noie les Algériens*, which received considerable publicity when released in October 2011 and was later nominated for a César, illustrates the relationship between levels of social awareness of the massacre and the willingness of former participants to provide public testimony.³² While some of those Algerians interviewed in the film had previously spoken out in public, the fact that they now had their names and photographs displayed on the film website and accompanying promotional literature, arguably marked the culmination of a process by which many Algerian participants had moved from the intensely private to the highly public evocation of such experiences, echoing the increased public visibility of October 1961 itself.³³ Furthermore, the importance of Algerian women in and to this film allows for a better understanding of the role played by women on both 17 and 20 October demonstrations: for example, interviews detail acts of ‘micro-resistance’ undertaken by Algerians arrested during the 20 October women’s demonstrations and detained in ‘social centres’, a context in which late-colonial power relations were played out between these women, the police, and the staff of such centres. We also hear of the pain of family members after the ‘disappearance’ of an Algerian husband or father, and indeed this ‘framing’, with excerpts at the beginning and towards the end of the film from these men’s widows, anticipates the legacies of such violence in the absence of any explicit discussion of such issues elsewhere in the film.

Adi’s film is grounded in these Algerian testimonies, as opposed to using them to complement other sources. There are parallels here with Jacques Panijel’s long-withheld film *Octobre à Paris* (1962), screenings of which were organized in the context of the 2011

³⁰ Muriel Cohen, ‘Les bidonvilles de Nanterre: entre “trop plein” de mémoire et silences?’, *Diasporas*, 17 (2011), 42–62.

³¹ Author’s discussion with Monique Hervo, Paris, 23 June 2011.

³² See <http://icionnoielesalgeriens-lefilm.com/> [accessed 5 september 2012]. This film is due for DVD release in late 2012.

³³ On this process, see Jim House, ‘Leaving Silence Behind? Algerians and the Memories of Repression by French Security Forces in Paris in 1961’, in *Memories of Mass Repression: Narrating Life Stories in the Aftermath of Atrocity*, ed. by Nanci Adler, Selma Leydesdorff, Mary Chamberlain and Leyla Neyzi (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), pp. 137–53.

commemorations and in the wake of the film-maker's death, as the film emerged from the political underground.³⁴ In Panijel's film, we see that some Algerians in the months immediately following October 1961, had already spoken on camera about their experiences, risking their own security in the process, and providing a major exception to the idea that all Algerians at the time sought to preserve visual anonymity. Indeed, from an historian's perspective, Panijel's film helps cast light on the wider repressive context in which the events of October 1961 took place, and, albeit indirectly, hints at the weight of pressure that we know was building up on the local FLN leadership to find some non-violent outlet for Algerians' frustration due to constant police violence and intimidation: one interviewee describes feeling 'comme un sanglier dans la forêt'. Half of Panijel's film is based on testimonies regarding violence having occurred prior to 17 October 1961. Interestingly, in comparison, the chronological focus of Adi's film on one specific moment (the last two weeks of October 1961), marks a return to the narrower temporal frame arguably seen in writing and documentaries relating to the massacre in the 1990s, where the narrative was organized to show the intensity of the violence of late October 1961, an intensity that had yet to be publicly acknowledged at that time.

The vivid and, in many cases previously unseen photographic materials in Adi's film—notably of the holding centres used to house those arrested and the control centre of the Paris Préfecture de Police—bring new life to the events of October 1961. The film's convincing use of excerpts from radio and television news reports also remind us that the war of independence was not restricted to a 'bataille de l'écrit', but it was also one of spoken word and both moving and fixed image. Forthcoming work by Joseph McGonagle and Edward Welch argues suggestively that greater attention be paid to the place of photographs in the shaping of historical understanding of October 1961, and underlines the performativity, and hence agency, of fixed images such as Élie Kagan's clandestine record of police violence.³⁵ There is now surely the need for a history of the cultural memory of October 1961, with, alongside literature and moving image, *bande dessinée*, photography, plastic arts and theatre providing ample material for a fascinating comparative study.

Adi's film also points to the lasting discrepancy between, on the one hand, the relative and increasing social and gender diversity of those having provided spoken testimony of their experiences of October 1961 in documentaries and book-length studies, and the narrower range of Algerian (male) actors having published memoirs. Following on from both Ali Haroun and Omar Boudaoud, former members of the French FLN Federation leadership and key actors in the organization of the October 1961 protests, Mohammed Ghafir, a former senior FLN leader in Paris, has now published his own version of events.³⁶ These books are implicitly or explicitly underscored by the lasting controversies regarding the organization of the October 1961 demonstrations and the intricate networks of nationalist power relations between Tunis, where the GPRA was based, and Cologne, home to the French FLN Federation, and between Cologne and the Paris-based FLN leadership: much remains to be known about divisions over strategy within the French FLN Federation in autumn 1961, and how these divisions have affected who are seen as the key organizers of the 17 October 1961 protests.³⁷

³⁴ This film, with a new introduction by Mehdi Lallaoui, is now on general DVD release.

³⁵ Joseph McGonagle and Edward Welch, *Contesting Views: The Visual Economy of France and Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, forthcoming 2013).

³⁶ Ali Haroun, *La 7^e wilaya: la guerre du FLN en France, 1954–1962* (Paris: Seuil, 2012), first published 1986; Omar Boudaoud, *Du PPA au FLN: Mémoires d'un combattant. Cinq ans à la tête de la Fédération de France (1957–1962)* (Algiers: Casbah Éditions, 2007); Mohammed Ghafir dit Moh Clichy, *Cinquantenaire du 17 Octobre 1961 à Paris: Droit d'Évocation et de Souvenance (Essai)* (Algiers: Éditions Encyclopédia, 2011).

³⁷ See Dahou Djerbal, *L'Organisation spéciale de la Fédération de France du FLN. Histoire de la lutte armée du FLN en France (1956–1962)* (Algiers: Chihab Éditions, 2012). Neil MacMaster is currently preparing a book on the dynamics within the late-war French FLN Federation.

Directly or indirectly, such publications also show that the marginalization of the French FLN Federation during the political crisis within the Algerian nationalist leadership in 1962 continues to inform the memorial afterlives of October 1961 in post-independence Algeria. Indeed, the extent to which this desire for recognition of the part played by Algerian migrants in the struggle for independence drives former members of the French FLN Federation to speak about October 1961 is perhaps underestimated by some campaigners in France and analysts of the memorial dynamics there. These issues continue to frame the politics of memory of October 1961 in Algeria, just as the war of liberation structures the wider Algerian political field. Forms of political and symbolic capital can still be accrued from these debates, both in terms of individuals and groups, and at national level, since keeping October 1961 in the public limelight also strengthens Algerian demands for official French apologies for colonial state violence. Thus while France and Algeria remain linked political spheres, and indeed, to use Paul A. Silverstein terms, constitute a ‘transpolitical space’, that space looks different when viewed from Algiers or Paris, highlighting a further direction that research on the memorial dynamics of October 1961 could take.³⁸

This article has given a brief overview of the broader thematic, chronological and methodological perspectives within which work on October 1961 is increasingly being undertaken, alongside, and often in dialogue with, further commemorative initiatives, broadly defined. The academic afterlives of the event are becoming almost as multi-layered as the event’s causes and the political and wider symbolic uses to which the event has been, and continues to be put. A wider comparative perspective on the memory of colonial violence, whether intra- or cross-imperial (or indeed both), would help us better understand the possible distinctiveness of the various afterlives of October 1961 and the symbolic economies in which they circulate. October 1961 could also be approached as an emblematic example of the solicitation, production and interpretation of oral and written testimony. Similarly, given the volume of writing on the memorial afterlives of October 1961, there is now scope to use October 1961 to illuminate the central methodological and conceptual debates on the history of memory, by comparing and contrasting approaches inspired by Pierre Nora’s sites of memory and the Maurice Halbwachs-inspired social frameworks of memory, among other perspectives: such a discussion would allow for a further meditation on the heuristic recoverability—or otherwise—of the Nora approach for colonial memory studies.³⁹ For part of the significance of October 1961 is that it provides a window onto the very links as well as differences between memory and history, in addition to its interrogation of nation, empire and Republic.

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³⁸ Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).

³⁹ See Charles Forsdick, ‘Colonialism, Postcolonialism and Cultures of Commemoration’, in *Postcolonial Thought in the French-speaking World*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), pp. 271–84; Michael Rothberg, ‘Introduction. Between Memory and Memory: From *Lieux de mémoire* to *Nœuds de mémoire*’, in Rothberg, Sanyal and Silverman, pp. 3–12.

Hidden in Plain Sight: France and Algeria in the Contemporary Visual Sphere

For contemporary observers of Franco-Algerian relations, the symbolism of the year 2012, marking as it does the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Algerian War, has undoubtedly loomed large. The question, of course, has not been whether both countries would commemorate French decolonization and Algerian independence, but quite how, and when. Given the straining of Franco-Algerian relations over recent years, the chances of joint commemorations being organized were certainly slim. From the notorious law voted by the French National Assembly in February 2005 that championed the 'bienfaits' of France's historical presence overseas, especially in North Africa, to the controversial plans to open a series of museums in Southern France celebrating French Algeria, and the unveiling of monuments commemorating the actions of the anti-independence terrorist group OAS (Organisation armée secrète), it is clear that the legacy of French colonialism and the Algerian War continues to resonate widely within both France and Algeria today, and remains a perennial source of tension between them.¹ The fact that, at the time of writing, no joint state-level initiatives have been held or announced for 2012 (and that no French representatives were invited to official festivities in Algiers) will surely surprise few people.²

Unsurprising too, of course, was the contrasting tenor of commemorations in both countries. In France, interest peaked in March 2012 and, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Évian Agreements, it focused primarily on memories of French Algeria and the Algerian War. While media coverage was extensive, acknowledgement of the anniversary among the political class was minimal, distracted as it was with the approaching presidential elections. In Algeria, independence day on 5 July was marked by fireworks, open-air concerts, and the announcement of a year-long programme of state-funded (and therefore state-sanctioned) cultural events. Back in France, the July anniversary passed considerably more quietly, once again remaining conspicuously unacknowledged at state level. Indeed, the headlines in the French media were momentarily grabbed instead by the press itself. Given the Algerian regime's keenness to encourage foreign investment, the symbolism of the 2012 anniversary date presented it with a valuable opportunity to garner global publicity, which it did by means of a series of promotional supplements, published with several international newspapers in July 2012. The sixteen-page version which appeared in *Le Monde* on 4 July 2012 was met with furore, however, by the newspaper's own journalists and readers.³ Featuring a front-page interview with President Bouteflika himself, it was spun politically in Algeria as an official interview conducted by *Le Monde* with the President. The truth was that there had been no scoop: the interview had

¹ Benjamin Stora, 'Algérie-France, mémoires sous tension', *Le Monde*, 18 March 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/03/18/algerie-france-memoires-sous-tension_1669417_3212.html [accessed 23 August 2012]. For a wider discussion of the memorialization of the war and erection of monuments dedicated to it in metropolitan France, see Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 133–56. Other publications that probe the links between memorialization and decolonization include: Jo McCormack, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954–1962)* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2007); Éric Savarese, *Algérie, la guerre des mémoires* (Paris: Éditions Non Lieu, 2007); and *Les Guerres de mémoires: La France et son histoire*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2010).

² Isabelle Mandraud, 'L'Algérie célèbre les 50 ans de son indépendance', *Le Monde*, 5 July 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/07/04/l-algerie-celebre-les-50-ans-de-son-independance_1728861_3212.html [accessed 11 September 2012].

³ See Pascal Galinier, 'Cuisine et (in)dépendance', *Le Monde*, 9 July 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2012/07/09/cuisine-et-in-dependance_1730700_3232.html [accessed 21 August 2012].

instead been conducted solely with the company commissioned to produce the supplement. This misrepresentation only angered the newspaper's journalists further, who were already infuriated by the supplement's blurring of boundaries between advertorial and journalistic content, which had led some readers to mistake it for reflecting the newspaper's editorial line.⁴

The controversy served once again to illustrate the extraordinary sensitivity surrounding the Franco-Algerian relationship fifty years after the two countries went their separate ways, and the extent to which that sensitivity is still played out across the public sphere in both. Not simply a source of antagonism or testiness between two nation states, it continues in important ways to shape and inflect political debate, journalism and cultural production. At the same time, the publication of the supplement not only in France, Algeria's most obvious trading partner, but also in other key economies of the world, served as a reminder to international audiences that the largest country in Africa is very much 'open for business' in its fiftieth year of independence, and a willing partner in the global marketplace. This has certainly been the message that the country has been keen to promote since it emerged from a decade of civil war in the early 2000s, and set out to re-establish a sense of national normality. In short where France's concern over the past few years has remained the legacy of its colonial adventure in Algeria, and the violence with which it came to an end, Algeria is haunted by more recent traumas, from which—in an uncanny echo of France's reaction to the end of empire in the 1960s—its political regime strives to escape by projecting itself into the future.⁵

Predictably enough, those in Algeria who endeavoured to draw public attention to the events of the civil war of the 1990s during official independence celebrations were met with swift repression. The response from state forces on 5 July to a peaceful demonstration held in central Algiers by families of the disappeared and human rights campaigners made this quite clear. Demonstrators were assaulted and thrown to the ground by police; banners and photographs showing the disappeared were seized; and over fifty people were arrested.⁶ Questioning the state's complicity in disappearances during the civil war clearly does not form part of the regime's national narrative of normality during 2012; and its measures to prevent the Arab Spring spreading to Algeria—most notably via the suspension of the state of emergency in February 2011 and the introduction of a series of reforms in 2012—duly continue to outlaw such groups from protesting in public.⁷

Moreover, when campaigners attempt to hold such demonstrations in public, it is not a coincidence that images of the disappeared are explicitly targeted by the police. Indeed, its recognition of the troublesome nature of such images, and their potential mobilizing power,

⁴ For a summary of the controversy, see Farid Alilat, 'Erik Izraelewicz, directeur du Monde: "Bouteflika n'a pas accordé d'entretien à notre journal"', *Dernières nouvelles d'Algérie*, 5 July 2012, <http://www.dna-algerie.com/interieure/erik-izraelewicz-directeur-du-monde-bouteflika-n-a-pas-accorde-d-entretien-a-notre-journal> [accessed 21 August 2012]. Similar promotional supplements were also distributed in Germany, the US and the UK. The version published with *The Times* on 5 July 2012 can be accessed at <http://www.worldfolio.co.uk/archivos/1340793208.pdf> [accessed 21 August 2012].

⁵ Kristin Ross offers the classic account of French decolonization and modernization in *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995).

⁶ See the communiqué issued by the Collectif des familles de disparu(e)s en Algérie: 'Les Autorités algériennes empêchent les familles de fêter l'indépendance en commémorant leurs enfants', 5 July 2012, http://www.algerie-disparus.org/cfdal/images/pdf/cp_50.pdf [accessed 21 August 2012].

⁷ Estimates vary as to how many people have been forcibly disappeared during or since the civil war, but it is believed that they may total as many as 20,000: see Lahouari Addi, 'Disappearance as a Consequence of a Lawless State Power', in Omar D, *Devoir de mémoire/A Biography of Disappearance, Algeria 1992–* (London: Autograph ABP, 2007), pp. 29–37 (p. 35). In the face of the continuing silence from the Algerian state on the fate of the disappeared, initiatives such as the list compiled by the human rights watch website Algeria-Watch containing details of those still missing forms an important resource and challenge to the regime's airbrushing of history: see 'Les Disparitions forcées en Algérie: un crime qui perdure', http://www.algeria-watch.org/fr/mrv/mrvdisp/cas_disparitions/disparitions_introduction.htm [accessed 22 August 2012].

serves to underscore the vital role played by the visual sphere and visual culture in both countries as a means by which particular understandings and narratives of colonial and postcolonial history are asserted. Hence the assistance given by the Algerian state to projects that elide the events of the civil war, and promote a rather different brand of postcolonial Algeria for consumption at home and abroad. A high-profile example here is the lavish book by French photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand, *Algérie vue du ciel* (2006).⁸ Part of his 'vue du ciel' project, Arthus-Bertrand's glossy, full-colour images of Algeria from the air stage its landscapes and urban environments in spectacular fashion, showcasing especially its geological and geographical diversity, ranging from the mountains of the Aurès to the dunes and rock formations of the Sahara.

In his introductory essay to the book, entitled 'Redécouvrir l'Algérie', Benjamin Stora presents Arthus-Bertrand's volume as an object around which different communities with a stake in Algeria can gather and exchange memories, whether they be *pieds-noirs*, Algerian immigrants in France, conscripts who served during the Algerian War or those who went into exile during the civil conflict.⁹ Interpreted thus, the book seeks to promote reconciliation among such different constituencies nationally and transnationally by foregrounding space as a way to mobilize memory and identification. Aerial photography, however, is the perspective and prerogative of the powerful, implying in its very nature an inequality between those with the ability to make visible and those being visualized. Its elevated viewpoint also conveniently disguises the socio-economic problems that plague contemporary Algeria, such as unemployment, corruption and widespread poverty, by smoothing over the tensions that still fissure civil society following a decade of conflict. Consequently, even if Arthus-Bertrand's images might seek to promote consensus and reconciliation, his book's very modalities merely reinforce Algeria's existence as a contested place, and the extent to which it simultaneously remains both a place of election and exclusion.

In France too, visual culture in its variety of forms and modes has emerged as a key arena in which the Franco-Algerian relationship and its complexities have been played out and articulated. Viewers and visitors to the websites of France Télévisions in early 2012, for example, could not fail to miss the extensive publicity campaign for a special season of programmes commemorating the Algerian War, including the flagship two-part colour documentary *Guerre d'Algérie, La Déchirure* (2012), screened throughout March 2012.¹⁰ Furthermore, it was telling that visual culture was central to the structure and organization of the most high-profile exhibition on the subject of the war in Paris during spring 2012. Opening on 16 May 2012 and held at the Musée de l'Armée, 'Algérie 1830–1962, avec Jacques Ferrandez' proved to be one of its most popular exhibitions, and it was predicted that over 30,000 visitors would have attended in total before its run ended on 29 July 2012.¹¹ The

⁸ Yann Arthus-Bertrand, *Algérie vue du ciel* (Paris: Éditions de la Martinière, 2006). Both the extensive list of acknowledgements at the end of the volume (p. 336), and Arthus-Bertrand's personal expression of gratitude to Bouteflika in his foreword (p. 1), highlight just how dependent the project was on the Algerian government's support.

⁹ Benjamin Stora, 'Redécouvrir l'Algérie', in Yann Arthus-Bertrand, *L'Algérie vue du ciel* (Paris: Éditions de la Martinière, 2006), pp. 29–37 (p. 30).

¹⁰ Although praised by French commentators for its objectivity and evenhandedness, the documentary received a more hostile reaction from Algerian commentators, who deemed its presentation of the war tantamount to 'révisionnisme néocolonial': see Jean-Baptiste de Montvalon, 'Guerre d'Algérie: pour une histoire à deux voix', *Le Monde*, 2 March 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2012/03/02/guerre-d-algerie-pour-une-histoire-a-deux-voix_1651223_3236.html [accessed 21 August 2012]; and Ahmed Selmane, 'Cinquantenaire: Le révisionnisme est dans l'ADN du régime', *La Nation*, 13 March 2012, http://www.lanation.info/Cinquantenaire-Le-revisionnisme-est-dans-l-ADN-du-regime_a812.html [accessed 21 August 2012].

¹¹ See: 'Exposition à succès au Musée de l'armée de Paris', *Le Monde*, 5 July 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/web/recherche_breve/1,13-0,37-1199049,0.html?xtmc=exposition_a_succes&xtcr=4 [accessed 21 August 2012]. Intriguingly, this article also revealed that the director of the museum, Christian

exhibition also met with critical praise, with *Libération* welcoming it as a 'salutaire examen de conscience' and *Télérama* declaring it 'totalemt réussi', singling out especially its incorporation of images from Jacques Ferrandez's famous ten-volume BD series *Carnets d'Orient*, which takes readers from the French conquest of Algeria to decolonization in 1962.¹² An affirmation both of the enduring popularity of *bande dessinée* within France and of the renown of Ferrandez's series, the extensive use of his work within such a high-profile exhibition also acknowledged once again the important role that images across visual culture continue to play when Franco-Algerian relations are represented. This was further reflected by the inclusion of a wide variety of other visual media within the exhibition, such as newsreel footage, popular television series, film and photography, some of which—most controversially—showed French army soldiers torturing Algerian captives.

The exhibition also notably foregrounded the experience of soldiers, both French and Algerian, and in this sense cohered to the wider valorization of conscript experience as a key vector for remembering and commemorating the Algerian War over the past decade. Central to this has been an emphasis on vernacular photography taken by conscripts during their military service, which captures the conflict in its everyday form (such as life off duty in the barracks, and leisure time in Algerian towns and cities).¹³ The conscript perspective is one whose authenticity is guaranteed by its very ordinariness or stereotypical banality, and which is therefore invested with the potential to open up a more honest or critical understanding of the war. At the same time, the recuperation of the conscript perspective is indicative of broader trends in the historiography and memorialization of the Algerian War. To focus attention on the conscript is to reintegrate a view lived as and perceived to be marginalized; and doing so is at once a means to a better (more comprehensive) history of the war, and a step towards settling what increasingly seemed to be a moral debt, namely the collective neglect of a trauma which went unspoken because speaking about it was felt to be impossible. During 2012, indeed, the conscript perspective assumed centre stage in France, from lavish, full-colour photo-books reproducing hundreds of conscript images, to image slideshows on mainstream media digital platforms emphasizing soldiers' lived experience of the conflict.¹⁴

Baptiste, had estimated that 'un visiteur sur six est un Français d'origine algérienne'. Quite how this was measured, however, was not revealed. Other exhibitions in Paris held already or planned for later in 2012 included: 'France-Algérie: dessins de presse' at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (21 March–24 June 2012); 'Juifs d'Algérie' at the Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme (28 September 2012–27 January 2013); and 'Vies d'exil 1954–1962, des Algériens en France pendant la guerre d'Algérie' at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (9 October 2012–19 May 2013). Exhibitions held elsewhere in metropolitan France include 'Engagements et déchirements. Les intellectuels et la guerre d'Algérie' at the Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine in Caen (16 June–14 October 2012).

¹² Thomas Hofnung, 'France-Algérie: l'armée fait son exposition de conscience', *Libération*, 25 June 2012, <http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2012/06/25/france-algerie-l-armee-fait-son-exposition-de-conscience-829025> [accessed 20 August 2012]; Gilles Heuré, 'Algérie, 1830–1962', *Télérama*, 3260, 4 July 2012, p. 62. Jacques Ferrandez's ten-volume series on the history of French Algeria, originally published between 1987 and 2009, has now been collated into two volumes: *Carnets d'Orient: premier cycle* (Paris: Casterman, 2008) and *Carnets d'Orient: second cycle* (Paris: Casterman, 2011).

¹³ Claire Mauss-Copeaux, *À travers le viseur: images d'appelés en Algérie, 1955–1962* (Lyon: Aedelsa, 2003).

¹⁴ Examples include Tramor Quemeneur and Slimane Zeghidour, *L'Algérie en couleurs: photographies d'appelés pendant la guerre* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2011); *France Inter*, http://www.franceinter.fr/dossier-algerie-1954-1962-la-derniere-guerre-d-appelés?page_dossier=2 [accessed 20 August 2012]; *Le Nouvel Observateur*, <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/galeries-photos/les-50-ans-de-la-fin-de-la-guerre-d-algerie/20120313.OBS3687/guerre-d-algerie-les-souvenirs-brules-des-soldats-du-soleil.html> [accessed 20 August 2012]; *Le Monde*, <http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/portfolio/2012/03/17/jean-claude-larroche-appelé-en-algerie-en-1959-1960-1671466-3212.html> [accessed 20 August 2012]; and <http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2012/03/15/la-memoire-refoulee-des-appelés-d-algerie-1669673-3212.html> [accessed 20 August 2012].

Meanwhile, the embrace of the visual image on the French side as a way to a better understanding of the conflict stands in contrast to the seeming indifference towards the visual on the Algerian side, an indifference reflected in the fate of the archive of work by Mohamed Kouaci, official photographer of the GPRA (Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne) in Tunis during the Algerian War, and subsequently of the Algerian government. Since Kouaci's death in 1996, his increasingly frail widow Safia has been left in charge of his boxes of images and negatives, all of which are gently decaying with time due to the lack of proper archival conditions. They are victims of the perhaps surprising failure on the part of the Algerian authorities to take charge of material which might seem to make an important contribution to the history of the war and Algeria's first years as an independent nation. The fate of the archive is highlighted and explored in *Gardiennes d'images*, a video installation by French-born artist of Algerian origin, Zineb Sedira, first shown in Paris in 2010, and subsequently at Cornerhouse, Manchester in spring 2011. Projected on to three screens, footage is shot in the widow's apartment in Algiers, a bright, airy, colonial-era dwelling re-appropriated following the departure of the European population in 1962. It combines interviews with Safia, in which she discusses her husband's work and her own memories of Algerian history, as well as close-ups of a selection of images from her husband's archive, which offer a synoptic history of the war, and Algeria's subsequent role as a leading nation in the non-aligned movement after independence.

In weaving together Safia's memories about her life with her husband, and traces of his activity as a photographer charged with producing a visual record of the emergence and activities of a newly independent Algerian nation, *Gardiennes d'images* foregrounds questions about what history and memory mean in relation to the individual and the collective, and the ways in which photography serves to convey and articulate them. At the same time, and as the pluralized first noun of its title would suggest, the piece itself is conceived as an intervention in support of the archive. The film is a means by which both Sedira and her collaborator, Algerian artist Amina Menia, can attempt to raise consciousness about the archive and the risks posed to it by institutional neglect.

It is nevertheless revealing that the motive force behind this desire to save the Kouaci archive is a French artist of Algerian origin based in the United Kingdom, whose work consistently interrogates the nature and legacy of the relationship between France and Algeria, and the position and history of those living between and across both countries and cultures. Indeed, Sedira is an artist whose success in France (she holds the title of *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, bestowed on her by the French Ministry of Culture) signals the extent to which such issues have gained currency within that country's sphere of cultural production. Yet it is also the case that, at the same time as Sedira aims to draw attention to the fate of the Kouaci archive, and the questions it raises about historical memory in and of Algeria, her intervention in a sense restages and replays the structural inequalities of the Franco-Algerian visual economy, which reflects the extent to which the debate about Franco-Algerian history, culture and memory continue to be instigated from the northern side of the Mediterranean, and in many ways seem to resonate more widely there.

A welcome change in policy on the Algerian side in this regard thus seems to have been signalled by the commissioning and funding of a large series of feature-length films, documentaries and TV programmes as part of year-long anniversary celebrations, along with the planned digitization of Algerian films produced during the war of independence and the 1970s.¹⁵ However, this move alone is unlikely to challenge seriously the image deficit that characterizes Algerian production with regard to images of the Algerian War. Furthermore,

¹⁵ 'L'Algérie ouvre les festivités des 50 ans de l'indépendance', *Libération*, 5 July 2012, <http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2012/07/05/l-algerie-ouvre-les-festivites-des-50-ans-de-l-independance-831274?xtor=EPR-45020> [accessed 21 August 2012]; Fayçal Métaoui, 'Les Gros Sous des festivités du cinquantenaire', *El Watan*, 28 June 2012.

the fact that since 2010, government committees have had the right to scrutinize closely the production of any films awarded state funding, especially those that engage with Algerian history, suggests that a plurality of political perspectives may not be welcomed within the cinema industry. Indeed, reports during 2012 have already asserted that it is this very mechanism that is currently delaying the completion of several such films set during the Algerian War.¹⁶

At the same time, it would be wrong to assume that the representation of the Algerian War and its legacies within the French cultural sphere remains entirely unpoliced, particularly in those parts of the country where memories of, and political sympathies towards, French Algeria and its diasporas remain embedded. Sedira herself has been no stranger to controversy, and in May 2010 was on the receiving end of censorial practices when her exhibition at the Musée national Picasso in Vallauris (Alpes-Maritimes) was suspended for over two months following complaints by *pied-noir* and war veteran associations.¹⁷ Incensed by the translation of the word *harki* as ‘collaborateurs’ in the accompanying subtitles to her video *Retelling Histories* (2003), which featured testimony from her mother detailing her experiences living in Algeria during the Algerian War, their anger led the local UMP mayor, Alain Gumiel, to close the entire museum on the grounds of public order.¹⁸

Meanwhile, around the same time, a few miles south-west in Cannes, another work probing the legacies of the wartime era in France hit the headlines. The world première of Rachid Bouchareb’s long-awaited *Hors-la-loi* (2010) attracted vocal controversy from a number of *pied-noir* associations and political figures in France, especially Lionnel Luca, UMP deputy for the Alpes-Maritimes in the National Assembly, who condemned it as ‘anti-French’ and warned that its uncompromising depiction of colonial conflict risked igniting tensions between communities of Maghrebi origin and the wider population in France.¹⁹ A more consensual film—coincidentally also one that meditated on Franco-Algerian relations—would subsequently win the Grand Prix at Cannes that year. Set during the Algerian civil war, Xavier Beauvois’s *Des hommes et des dieux* (2010) was praised by reviewers for its portrayal of the final months of a group of French Cistercian monks kidnapped from their monastery in Tibhirine in northern Algeria in 1996 and later found dead.²⁰ The film

¹⁶ Amir Akef, ‘Des réalisations et des diffusions incertaines en Algérie’, *Le Monde*, 2 March 2012, http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2012/03/02/guerre-d-algerie-pour-une-histoire-a-deux-voix_1651223_3236.html [accessed 21 August 2012].

¹⁷ Caroline Hancock, ‘Gardiennes d’images’, in Zineb Sedira. *Gardiennes d’images* (Paris: SAM Art Projects, 2010), pp. 19–23 (p. 20).

¹⁸ Michel Guerrin, ‘L’État attaque la mairie de Vallauris pour la fermeture du Musée Picasso’, *Le Monde*, 13 May 2010, http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2010/05/13/l-etat-attaque-la-mairie-de-vallauris-pour-la-fermeture-du-musee-picasso_1350998_3246.html [accessed 24 August 2012]. Further such stories have surfaced in 2012: the artist Christine Peyret, whose current project comprises large-scale embroidered versions of wartime photographs taken in Algeria, has reported enduring similar pressures. A long-planned major exhibition for autumn 2012, intended to premiere her entire series of images in France, has now been cancelled by local authorities, which she discreetly chose not to name, purportedly for fear of the uproar it might arouse in a region where many people are of *pied-noir* origin. See Christine Peyret, *Traverser sans la voir. Se souvenir, broder, là-bas... la guerre!* (Polignac: Éditions du Roure, 2012) and “‘Rien n’est simple dans les images...’ Entretien d’Érika Nimis avec Christine Peyret’, <http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=article&no=10703> [accessed 23 August 2012].

¹⁹ Emmanuel Berretta, ‘Le Député Lionnel Luca en guerre contre le film *Hors-la-loi*’, *Le Point*, 7 May 2010, http://www.lepoint.fr/chroniqueurs-du-point/emmanuel-berretta/le-depute-lionnel-luca-en-guerre-contre-le-film-hors-la-loi-07-05-2010-452497_52.php [accessed 24 August 2012].

²⁰ See, for example: Serge Kaganski, ‘*Des hommes et des dieux*, le film de la grâce’, *Les Inrockuptibles*, 8 September 2010, <http://www.lesinrocks.com/cinema/films-a-l-affiche/des-hommes-et-des-dieux-le-film-de-la-grace/> [accessed 24 August 2012] and Isabelle Regnier, ‘*Des hommes et des dieux*: “Laissez passer l’homme libre...”’, *Le Monde*, 8 September 2010, http://www.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2010/09/07/des-hommes-et-des-dieux-laissez-passer-l-homme-libre_1407837_3476.html [accessed 24 August 2012].

subsequently attracted over three million viewers at the French box office. In contrast, Bouchareb's film received a lukewarm response from critics and, despite the publicity generated during its Cannes premiere, proved unable to pass the half-a-million mark for total viewers.²¹

The virtually simultaneous release of two films engaging with different aspects of the Franco-Algerian relationship, and the contrasting reactions they provoked, attest to the perpetual fascination that Algeria holds in contemporary France, as well as to the political and emotional sensibilities that perennially surround Franco-Algerian relations. At the same time, their appearance served to underscore two further trends. The first is the key role played by visual culture in the representation and articulation of Franco-Algerian history and memory, one which we foreground and examine at length elsewhere.²² Second, they would seem to confirm that in France especially, within the sphere of visual culture, cinema remains the most important vehicle (or more accurately, perhaps, the most dominant, in economic, cultural and institutional terms) for reflection on the complexities of the Franco-Algerian relationship.²³ At the very least, it is cinematic explorations of the Franco-Algerian relationship which have garnered the most attention from critics and academics alike.

Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005) remains the example *par excellence* here. Surely few recent French films can rival it in terms of the critical attention it persistently attracts, a phenomenon further emphasized by its recent inclusion as one of the few French-language films in the BFI Film Classics book series.²⁴ Not only has it quickly become *the* post-2000 film on Franco-Algerian relations, but it has also arguably attracted more sustained critical attention than any other French-language film set in France during the last decade.²⁵ The success of the film can undoubtedly be traced to a number of factors. The first of these is undoubtedly its aesthetic and technical ingenuity, predicated on a series of enigmas which remain largely unresolved by the end of the film: who is watching whom, and why? What is hidden, and from whom is it hidden? Second, the film has as its kernel one of the 'hidden' events of the Algerian War which, over the past two decades, has come increasingly to capture the attention of activists and academics alike—namely, the events surrounding the brutal repression by the Paris police of a peaceful protest by Algerians on the night of 17 October 1961.²⁶ Teasingly, of course, the event is itself evoked only briefly and indirectly in the film, and its significance may well escape those unfamiliar with the wartime massacre.

Finally, the film's central themes, not the least of which are the ways in which France's colonial past is at once disavowed by, yet returns persistently to haunt, the

²¹ <http://www.cinefeed.com/index.php/box-office-2010> [accessed 24 August 2012].

²² See our forthcoming book, *Contesting Views: The Visual Economy of France and Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013).

²³ Recent examples, reflecting a diversity of genres, moods and approaches, include Mahmoud Zemmouri, *Beur blanc rouge* (2005); Djamel Bensalah, *Il était une fois dans l'oued* (2005); Rabah Ameur-Zaimèche, *Bled Number One* (2006); Mehdi Charef, *Cartouches gauloises* (2007); and Nicole Garcia, *Un balcon sur la mer* (2010).

²⁴ Catherine Wheatley, *Caché (Hidden)* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

²⁵ A special dossier on *Caché* was published in *Screen*, 48 (2007), 211–49. Some of the many other articles and books that have analysed Haneke's film include: Guy Austin, 'Drawing Trauma: Visual Testimony in *Caché* and *J'ai 8 ans*', *Screen*, 48 (2007), 529–36; D. I. Grossvogel, 'Haneke: The Coercing of Vision', *Film Quarterly*, 60.4 (2007), 36–43; Giuseppina Mecchia, 'The Children Are Still Watching Us, *Caché/Hidden* in the Folds of Time', *Studies in French Cinema*, 7.2 (2007), 131–41; Libby Saxton, 'Secrets and Revelations: Off-screen Space in Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005)', *Studies in French Cinema*, 7.1 (2007), 5–17; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); Max Silverman, 'The Violence of the Cut: Michael Haneke's *Caché* and Cultural Memory', *French Cultural Studies*, 21.1 (2010), 57–65; and Jennifer Burris, 'Surveillance and the Indifferent Gaze in Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005)', *Studies in French Cinema*, 11.2 (2011), 151–63.

²⁶ Ground-breaking work on 17 October 1961 was done by Jean-Luc Einaudi. See *La Bataille de Paris* (Paris: Seuil, 1991). The most authoritative historical account to date is Jim House and Neil MacMaster's *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

postcolonial present, both accompanied and illuminated a distinctive confluence of events in France during 2005, defined as the year was by two key watershed moments: on the one hand, by the passing in February of the law (subsequently repealed by Jacques Chirac) recognizing the ‘benefits’ of France’s historical presence overseas, and calling for them to be taught in the nation’s schools; and second, by the riots which swept the country in November following the deaths of two teenage boys in Clichy-sous-Bois north of Paris, and led to the declaration of a state of emergency in metropolitan France for the first time since the Algerian War. While not a direct response to the passing of the law, the riots nevertheless crystallized the increasingly tense mood in relation to France’s postcolonial realities among both the country’s political classes and the marginalized population of its suburbs—a mood reflected in the concept of the *fracture coloniale*, which has gained wide currency since it was coined by historians Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire.²⁷

Perhaps what *Caché* serves to do most of all is highlight the degree to which the relationship between France’s colonial past and its postcolonial present, and the persistent legacy of its Algerian past in particular, remain simultaneously hidden and present in the contemporary public sphere. Such concerns are, we might say, hidden in plain sight, a structuring presence in filigree which continues to determine how both France and Algeria try to plot their future and understand their past. At the same time, the film underscores the central role played by visual culture in all its forms in signalling, articulating and allowing us to understand that presence.

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²⁷ *La Fracture coloniale: la société française au prisme de l’héritage colonial*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire (Paris: La Découverte, 2005). On the 2005 riots and their implications, see also *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, ed. by Charles Tshimanga, Didier Gondola and Peter J. Bloom (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009).

BOOK REVIEWS

Rewriting the Return to Africa: Voices of Francophone Caribbean Women Writers. By ANNE M. FRANÇOIS. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2011. 111 pp. Hb £37.95. ISBN: 978-0-7391-4826-6 (Hardback); ISBN: 978-0-7391-4828-0 (E-book)

This volume analyses representations of the metaphorical, physical, and/or spiritual return to Africa in a selection of novels by three Guadeloupean women: Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, and Miriam Warner-Vieyra. The author identifies the pivotal role of these three writers in the transition of thought on Caribbean culture and identity from *négritude* to *antillanité* and *créolité*. These writers, whose subversion of the mythical connection of *négritude* to an African past is shown to be fundamentally tied to their gender, contest not the idea of a shared history and culture between Africa and the Caribbean, but rather the notion of an essential Black experience or racial affinity as expressed by *négritude*. In the texts selected for analysis, François identifies the ways in which Condé, Schwarz-Bart, and Warner-Vieyra challenge the idea, predominant in works by male Franco-Caribbean writers, of the return to Africa as a necessary step in the quest for a strong sense of Caribbean identity. One of the ways in which they are shown to do this is in deconstructing the image of Africa as a nurturing yet abandoned mother figure, which is revealed to be a construction that serves neither the interests of Caribbean women, nor of Caribbean identity and culture as a whole. In its place, these female writers represent Africa as a disappointing father figure, an allegory that allows them to explore the dynamics of sex, gender, motherhood and womanhood, and their role in the construction of Caribbean identity.

In the Introduction, the author reviews the history and development of the discourse of the return to Africa, nuancing the female allegorization of Africa by the *négritude* movement as a strategy evoked by male writers to counter the disempowering effects of slavery, diaspora, and the erasure of history. In identifying a rejection of the representation of Africa as a female entity despoiled by European colonialism by Condé, Schwarz-Bart, and Warner-Vieyra, François furthermore highlights a shift away from a previous generation of female writers who were more preoccupied with supposed racial inferiority and its cultural and psychological consequences, citing writers such as Capécia, Lacrosil, Chauvet, and Manicon. In the three chapters which form the main body of this work, this study examines how each of the three writers questions different aspects of the myth of the return to Africa.

In the first chapter, the author analyses how two of Condé's texts (*Heremakhonon*, 1976, and *Une saison à Rihata*, 1981) interrogate the problematic gendering of allegories of Africa, drawing on Klein's psychoanalytic theory of object relations. As well as the return to Africa, Condé also problematizes the trope of the return to the native island, positing instead the idea of drifting, crossing, and re-crossing as key to Caribbean identity. The second chapter focuses on Schwarz-Bart's rediscovery of Caribbean culture and language in *Ti Jean l'horizon* (1979). Here the author argues that the apparent failure of the return to Africa as a strategy for building a sense of Caribbean identity leads Schwarz-Bart to re-centre on Caribbean history as a more effective strategy for the structuring of identity. François also shows how Schwarz-Bart's linguistic strategies, which emphasize Caribbean oral culture and incorporate Creole expressions, both counteract the dominant status of the French language in the region and reinforce Creole culture and language. Warner-Vieyra's representation of female subjectivity in *Juletane* (1982) is the subject of the third chapter. For Warner-Vieyra's female protagonist, subjective reaffirmation through writing replaces the myth of the return to Africa as constitutive of a sense of self. Her experience of Africa is

shown to highlight cultural differences between African and Caribbean culture, rather than reinforcing Africa as the focus of the quest for origins.

One of the main strengths of this study lies in its identification of the significant, yet hitherto overlooked, influence of these three writers on the reconceptualization of Caribbean identity. Situating their texts in relation to Glissant's vision of Caribbean identity, the author demonstrates how these writers echo his warning against fostering the illusion of a singular identity rooted in African genealogy at the expense of exploring the multiple and fragmented reality of Caribbean identity and culture. François convincingly argues that these writers further Glissant's thinking by complicating his rejection of the return to Africa through an examination of the role that gender plays in such a myth. However, the ongoing gendering of geographical spaces—of Africa as a disappointing father figure, and the Caribbean as the restored mother figure—are perhaps more problematic than allowed for by this study.

François's thesis that Condé, Schwarz-Bart, and Warner-Vieyra transformed the myth of Africa as motherland to which Caribbean cultures must necessarily return provides an insightful and original analysis of the role that these now canonical writers have played in Caribbean identity construction. Offering a more complex vision of any Caribbean identity, François shows how these three writers advocate global nomadism over mythical return, and an appreciation of *métissage* and the local over the celebration of Africa, thus postulating a transnational identity, particularly where women are concerned. The first study to bring together these three Guadeloupean writers, and to identify their pivotal role in the development of Franco-Caribbean discourse, this is a useful addition to Caribbean literary studies. *Rewriting the Return to Africa* will be of interest to scholars of Caribbean, Francophone, and women's writing, and is accessible to an undergraduate as well as a scholarly readership.

KATE AVERIS
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Islanded Identities: Constructions of Postcolonial Cultural Insularity. Edited by MAEVE MCCUSKER and ANTHONY SOARES. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. 243 pp. Hb £49.00. ISBN: 978-90-420-3406-8

The cross-disciplinary *Islanded Identities* features ten essays, eleven contributors, and studies numerous islands, including Mauritius, Martinique, Ireland, Cyprus, and Monserrat. The book's fundamental argument is, perhaps, best framed as a question: what specific charge (meaning both 'responsibility' and 'allegation') does the island take on when read in a postcolonial context? The answer provided by *Islanded Identities* is to map out, analyse, and attempt to transcend a certain Western gaze—which is enslaving, genocide-prone, colonial, and imperial. That gaze, the book argues, has been active in conceiving, unfavourably, and/or abusing various islands around the world from ancient times to the twenty-first century.

Yet, editors (and contributors) Maeve McCusker and Anthony Soares resist the reduction of *Islanded Identities* into a diatribe against the West, preferring instead to problematize the postcolonial island as a space of geographical liminality, diverse politics and cultures, as well as one imbued with overlapping and fragmented histories. For example Soares's essay, 'Western Blood in an Eastern Island' (pp. 169–88), suggests that within Timor-Leste (formerly 'East Timor') 'West' can signify, at once, ethnicity (e.g. the *Kaladi* of the West vs. the *Fikaru* of the East), geography (Indonesian West Timor, Mozambique or

Angola) and ideology (Portugal, the former colonizer, or Australia as representative of the Western global economy). *Islanded Identities* is indeed an excellent attempt to break new theoretical ground in Island Studies, not least because '[t]oday, in a supposedly postcolonial context, islands offer perhaps the most potent, distressing, and anomalous images of the neo-colonial project, and can thus be seen to exemplify the complex afterlives of empire' (p. xv). Theoretical engagement with these intricate post-imperial residues, at play in various ways throughout the book, literally or metaphorically, is particularly useful in the following three examples: the work of Antillean writer Patrick Chamoiseau, *séga* performance in Mauritius, and the notion of Europe as an aggregate of islands.

McCusker's bold theoretical re-appraisal of Chamoiseau's work (pp. 41–62) posits insularity as so ingrained in the colonial mindset that it is presently 'naturalized as part of the Caribbean self-image' (p. 49). Indeed, for Chamoiseau, the concept of insularity is a Western fabrication and the word 'island' does not exist in Creole; the latter point in particular explains his overall position on insularity, one which favours 'country' and 'place' over 'island' while at the same time advocating an understanding of the island through land but also, and fundamentally, through the underground (*le souterrain*) from where one can excavate collective memory.

Séga performance is a particular combination of dance, lyrics and music, which Burkhard and Cornelia Schnepel use to study matters of contested identity and difference within Mauritius. This island is postcolonial only supposedly for, as the Schnepels argue, until the arrival of African captives in the seventeenth century, Mauritius had no human inhabitants. Thus, the Schnepels go on to argue convincingly, Mauritius possesses neither a pre-colonial past nor an actual indigenous human population: it is an aggregate of diasporas struggling to find effective symbols of (hypothetically postcolonial) national unity.

Last but not least, Paulo de Medeiros's essay, 'Impure Islands' (pp. 207–22), expertly guides readers through a seemingly eclectic range of subjects: takes by Jacques Derrida and by Friedrich Nietzsche on the idea/future of Europe; the London 2005 bombings and the ensuing police shooting of an innocent Brazilian migrant, Jean Charles de Menezes, who was targeted because of his so-called 'Mongolian eyes'; and migration-related matters in Lisbon. In so doing, de Medeiros argues that 'there is no Europe, there are only islands' (p. 211): Europe needs to be imagined as a post-imperial collection of islands. Put another way, de Medeiros believes that Europe must be 'islanded', i.e. that it must become impure and forsake its fear of migrants and any pretensions to moral supremacy.

Islanded Identities is an incisive, scholarly-yet-accessible, and clearly-argued book indeed. Thus, this reviewer's only minor critique of it is that, for all its cross-disciplinary positioning, the book neglects cinema studies. Given that to date cinema, which incorporates a wide range of new digital media, is arguably one of the most important media for articulating insularity across cultures and nations—as well as a discipline known for its penchant for inter-, multi-, and cross-disciplinary collaborations—its neglect in *Islanded Identities* must be mentioned.

SAËR MATY BÂ
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Shifting Subjects: Plural Subjectivity in Contemporary Francophone Women's Autobiography. By NATALIE EDWARDS. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011. 171 pp. Hb £37.95. ISBN: 978-1-61149-030-5

Developed from her doctoral thesis written at Northwestern University, Natalie Edwards's study explores the ways in which selfhood is reformulated in Francophone women's literary autobiography. The author defines plural subjectivity in her introduction as 'non-unitary, fragmented, and mutable, as opposed to static, coherent, and unitary' (p. 14). Dedicating chapters to Gisèle Halimi, Julia Kristeva, Assia Djebar, and Hélène Cixous respectively, Edwards explores the work of these four writers, from very different cultural backgrounds, who each play with the 'I' of their autobiographies to write their plural subjectivity.

Born in Tunisia to a Jewish family, Gisèle Halimi moved to Paris at the age of eighteen. Halimi's early life in a French colony forms the focus of her autobiographical works, which each tell the same story in a different way and from a slightly different perspective. Thus, over a series of volumes, Halimi writes what Edwards describes as 'a series of "I"s that respond to and contradict each other rather than one single all-knowing identity' (p. 24). In the second chapter of *Shifting Subjects*, Edwards's analysis of *Les Samourais* (1990) reveals that although France is also the country adopted by Julia Kristeva and French the language in which she writes and teaches, Kristeva's Bulgarian origins are a salient factor of her sense of her selfhood. Falling between the boundaries of fiction, biography, and autobiography, *Les Samourais* comprises two separate and distinct strands of narrative, the 'I' and 'she' creating a doubling of the author's identity.

This same blending of genres is found in Assia Djebar's *Vaste est la prison* (1995), the focus of Edwards's third chapter. Djebar is of Algerian origin and chooses to write in French, drawing attention to the colonial period and postcolonial events in her writing as she describes her experiences as an immigrant in Paris and elsewhere. In *Vaste est la prison*, Djebar represents the shift between individual and plural subjectivity; a series of different 'I's presented as distinct identities, but which are also a composite part of the author's construction of her self. Hélène Cixous also grew up in Algeria, born to a German mother and a Sephardic Jewish father, and since her move to France has been haunted by memories of Algeria and her sense of being an outsider. Edwards' analysis of *Les rêveries de la femme sauvage* (2000) in the final chapter of *Shifting Subjects* highlights the ways in which Cixous brings together the voices of different characters with the narrating self in a plurivocal autobiography.

The multiplication of the narrative voice in these texts results not only in a questioning of the limits of autobiography, but also breaks open existing notions of female selfhood and indeed the very formulation of 'the self'. Edwards contends that, while the complex narrative strategies of these writers do not lead to any resolution of the trauma on which the texts are founded, taken together they create a third space for the female autobiographical self. If there is a weak point in this book, it is a tendency to overemphasize discussion of plural subjectivity at the expense of other potentially interesting avenues, such as the implications of this plurality in the postcolonial Francophone world. Overall though, this is a clearly written and engaging analysis of the work of Halimi, Kristeva, Djebar, and Cixous, which will be of interest to scholars in gender studies and literature, but also those with a more general interest in questions of subjectivity and its expression.

CHARLOTTE BAKER
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BFI Film Classics: Caché. By CATHERINE WHEATLEY. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 96 pp. Pb £10.99. ISBN: 978-1-84457-349-3

The British Film Institute's 'Modern Classics' series aims at offering an argument for a film's 'classic' status, documenting its production and reception history, its place within a genre or national cinema, its technical and aesthetic importance, and the author's personalized and individual response to a film. Catherine Wheatley executes these aims with aplomb, especially considering the vast amount of literature and criticism—both journalistic and academic—that swarms around Michael Haneke in general, and *Caché* (2005) in particular. Indeed, the film, and its director, seem to have cemented their 'classic' status with Haneke's recent second Palme d'Or win for *Amour* (2012) as well as *Caché* being named by *The Times* as the best film of the decade. This is the first BFI monograph on Haneke, and Wheatley is uniquely qualified to write this book, as she is credited with the first English-language monograph on Haneke, *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image* (2009). Readers of *Sight and Sound*, the BFI's monthly film journal, will also be familiar with Wheatley's frequent and insightful contributions to the magazine.

Wheatley opens with a personal reflection on the feelings of discomfort Haneke's cinema aroused in her, a confidential approach that she maintains and cultivates throughout the text; indeed, the book begins with a consideration of one of her friend's reactions to the film: 'what the hell?' (p. 12). This statement seems to resonate throughout the text in Wheatley's willingness to linger with the mysteries, uncertainties and doubts which lie at the heart of the film. In my view, this is the greatest attribute of Wheatley's approach, and she likens the film to a Rorschach inkblot. While the structure of her chapters acknowledges the various interpretations that critics and journalists have offered, and occasionally imposed on the film (genre concerns, the home and family, political and postcolonial interpretations, and concerns around mediatization and the image), she never strays too far from her own fundamental conviction that the essence of Haneke's film lies in its lack of an essence.

While recognizing the importance of each of these individual strands, she suggests that an over-investment in one particular interpretation leads to the exclusion or annihilation of another, for example, in a reading of the closing scene, which could be interpreted as either the hope and amicability of a new generation, or the guilty complicity of Pierrot in the tormenting of his father. The book also demonstrates a clever eye for detail in the many close readings; of particular note are those of the opening scene and the 'problematic' final scene. She also highlights the appearance of Mazarine Pinget on Georges's literary review show, thus drawing a fascinating parallel between two sets of forgotten children, Majid and Mitterand's formerly unacknowledged daughter. The depth of Wheatley's cinematic scholarship is also evident in the links she draws to other films and filmmakers, particularly to less obvious candidates such as John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957). She also consistently situates the aesthetic and thematic concerns of *Caché* within the wider context of Haneke's *œuvre*.

Nevertheless, from a postcolonial perspective, it could be argued that Wheatley unduly downplays the importance of the Franco-Algerian conflict and the events of 17 October 1961 to the creation of Haneke's film. While she rightly recognizes Haneke's reluctance to read the film as a direct reflection upon the 1961 massacre or the position of French-Algerians in contemporary Paris, the director himself has elsewhere suggested that the film was conceived in response to a documentary he watched on ARTE in 2001: Brook's and Hayling's *Une journée portée disparue*. Indeed, in Wheatley's book these events are placed alongside questions of genre and 'family', which seems to overlook the fact that a majority of academic criticism of the film focuses on precisely these politicized issues. Thus Wheatley's account might risk underestimating what, for many viewers, both academic and individual,

remains the most important strand of the film: its treatment of a forgotten history and contemporary French postcolonial guilt.

Nonetheless, this wide-ranging focus may be due to the demands of the monograph form, and Wheatley's text is an invaluable contribution to both Haneke scholarship and to Film Studies in general. The book offers a brilliant synthesis of the swathes of criticism around *Caché* and will serve as a vital reference point for the debates central to critical discussion of the film. This book will be useful to students of French and European cinema and Postcolonial Studies as well as established academics and researchers.

MARIA FLOOD
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Writing Tangier in the Postcolonial Transition: Space and Power in Expatriate and North African Literature. By MICHAEL K. WALONEN. Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. 163 pp. Hb £55. ISBN: 9781409433811

The city of Tangier, which stands at the northern tip of Morocco, closer to Spain than Rabat, is an extremely complicated literary space. It is mainly known to the outside world as a kind of headquarters of the American and European avant-gardes who clustered here in the 1950s and 1960s: indeed it may well be argued that from Paul Bowles to William Burroughs to Jean Genet, who all spent long periods of time in the city, that Tangier in the mid-twentieth century helped provide the aesthetic and political shape of the counter-culture that would spread across the Western world in the 1960s. All of this is of course well-known and has long been a focus for celebration and analysis.

What is refreshing about Walonen's book is that he revisits this aspect of Tangier's history with a cautious and sceptical twenty-first-century eye. He is informed by the fluid complexities of postcolonial theory and experience and therefore able to pick apart in forensic detail not only why these writers came to Tangier, but also how they functioned within this plural and hybridized space. Most importantly he is alert to the multi-layered identities of Tangier in literature—English, Spanish, and French of course, but also Darija, Amazigh, and the other creolized languages of the city. From this starting point, he sets the Anglo-Europeans in opposition to contemporary non-Western visions of the city, aiming to splinter our preconceived notions of what 'Tangier' represents in the Western literary imagination.

He focuses particularly on the representation of space in the literature of the city and the way in which the city had been written as both a map and a palimpsest: this works well not only for the fictions of Bowles but offers a new way in to reading Burroughs's 'Interzone' as an hallucinated but decipherable version of the city. The structure of the book is determined by theme rather than chronology and focuses not only on the well known trajectories of Bowles, Burroughs, and Brion Gysin, but also investigates the works of Janes Bowles and Alfred Chester, both of whom seem to read the city as the site of an unnameable sexual trauma. It concludes with readings of Tahar Ben Jelloun and Anouar Majid, who offer what Walonen calls a 'counter-discourse' to the expatriate writers of the city.

Walonen also brings us up to date with contemporary Moroccan scholarship on the city in fiction, quoting for example the critic and academic Mohammed Laamiri who has done more than anyone else of his generation to inscribe Moroccan voices into the polyphonic sound of the city.

If there is a fault it is that the book could be longer and more detailed attention focused on the linguistic varieties in Tangier; perhaps most appositely, Tangier sets a severe challenge to the postcolonial theory which Walonen embraces for much of this book, precisely because it was never strictly speaking a colony but an International Protectorate. Even now, in the Moroccan imagination, it is not quite part of Morocco, nor anywhere else; and perhaps that has also been part of its appeal to writers from East and West.

This book is an admirable and skilful attempt to chart the fictions of Tangier, but for all its close argument and careful scholarship, the sheer depth and denseness of the literary history of Tangier mean that it is really only a beginning.

ANDREW HUSSEY
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Writing Postcolonial France: Haunting, Literature and the Maghreb. By FIONA BARCLAY. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011. 196 pp. Hb £39.95. ISBN: 978-0739145036

Drawing on a range of fictional texts that span a variety of different genres, this monograph sets out to examine the ongoing legacy of decolonization and its effects on and in contemporary France. Mobilizing questions of spectrality and haunting, the study interrogates the often difficult relationships between French cultural consciousness and the consequences of its colonial past. It examines the manner in which ciphers of France's past may re-emerge through literary narratives as a 'ghostly presence, a palimpsest whose marks remain distinguishable beneath the surface of the present' (p. xx). The premise of this volume is that literature functions as a privileged space in which the latent, repressed, or otherwise avoided issues that haunt contemporary France can surface. The study of ghosts opens a virtual space in which such questions may be explored and reconsidered.

Situated within current debates regarding the commemoration and inscription of colonial histories within French postcolonial models, the book draws parallels between contemporary society and politics and the spectral reminders of colonialism identified in the texts under consideration. Barclay cites the 2005 riots and the ensuing debates about the adequacy of the republican model for citizenship, for example, as symptomatic of the subjacent tensions in contemporary France between the present and the past. She points to how literary works articulate the similar haunting resonances.

The varied corpus addressed in this volume comprises literary texts from genres such as *Beur* literature, travel writing, detective fiction and women's writing. It offers a vision of the relationship between France and its former colonies in which plurality is key, thus avoiding the dangers of over-determined categories of identity. In addition, the heterogeneity of the sources studied seems to echo the varied responses that questions surrounding colonialism may elicit, 'from nostalgia and loss, to frustration at the perceived irrelevance of colonialism, and the resentment of those for whom colonialism continues to be entirely relevant because it generates the racism and violence that they experience' (p. 132). Indeed, Barclay's depiction of the haunting presences of France's colonial legacy is far from uniform, and it amply considers the ambiguity and paradoxical nature of the effects of this haunting.

The monograph comprises four chapters which examine various instances of postcolonial haunting. The first, 'The Return of the Colonial in Le Clézio, Bona and Sebbar', deals with the spectre of colonialism and the effects of these spectral returns on contemporary French social models. Questions of exoticism and neo-colonialist recuperation

of the Maghreb are foregrounded as the female protagonists of these three authors at once reprise and renegotiate the orientalist imagery associated with the colonial period, suggesting the manner in which the exoticized (female) subject may disrupt contemporary discourse. The chapter that follows, '17 October 1961: Haunting in Kettane, Sebbar, Maspero and Daeninckx', focuses on the unsettled ghosts that arise from the notorious massacre of Algerian immigrants. Barclay analyses both the way in which a voice has been given to the victims and how these narratives reinscribe the atrocity in the cultural consciousness. The ghosts evoked in this chapter speak out against the silencing of colonial acts of terror, but also draw attention to the ways in which their testimonies can be appropriated for other ends and the ethical imperatives that all works pertaining to acts of haunting must respect.

The third chapter, 'Writing from Algeria: Haunted Narratives in Cardinal and Cixous', considers the writing of these two authors through the shared optic of their childhoods in a country which was then French Algeria. As a consequence of their forced emigration, Algeria becomes a recurring motif that haunts the texts as a space of plurality which is ultimately irretrievable. Barclay's analysis focuses on the linguistic alterity and the creative possibilities opened up for both Cardinal and Cixous by the multiplicities of their experiences of nation, language, and identity. The final chapter, 'Abjection: The Stranger Within in Prévost and Bouraoui', offers a reading of these two writers alongside the works of Kristeva and Deleuze and Guattari. The theoretical notions of the foreigner and roots enable an optimistic view of literature as a space in which the ghosts of the past may be welcomed and reinscribed, in both individual and collective narratives.

Barclay's careful and persuasive analysis makes for a fascinating study of a range of different texts. The volume articulates the multiple ways in which the motif of haunting, both individual and collective, may be used as a productive filter through which to consider the interactions between colonial pasts and postcolonial presents. The terminology of ghosts and haunting is elegantly employed to negotiate the postcolonial minefield of identity and memory. Haunting is not presented as pathological but rather as a call to acknowledge the presence of these many ghosts in contemporary France, welcoming them both with a Kristevan hospitality and with an awareness of the productive capacity of their disruptive effect on social categories and order. Barclay's text is a rich and intriguing addition to the research on representations of France's colonial legacy and the unfinished processes of mourning and remembering.

HANNAH KILDUFF
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Francophone Women Writers: Feminisms, Postcolonialisms, Cross-Cultures. By ERIC TOUYA DE MARENNE. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011. 195 pp. Pb £37.95. ISBN: 978-0-7391-4030-7

Eric Touya de Marenne brings together twenty-three Francophone women writers in this lively and ambitious anthology. Each chapter groups writers in one of the following categories: Feminisms; Postcolonialisms; Cross-Cultures; Counter-Discourses; and Beyond Borders, thus highlighting common concerns in gender studies as well as reflecting the more recent transnational turn in French Studies. A short biography and bibliography accompanies each writer's work, useful to both scholars and students. This anthology aims to 'explore the writing of Francophone women authors from all its locales' with an eye

toward 'remapping' (p. 1), echoing Maryse Condé's preface to the collection, where she writes against the 'erroneous' claim 'that female literature was born in English-speaking Africa' (p. ix). Rather than construct competing genealogies for the origin of literatures written by women, it may be more fruitful to see the exploratory gesture as a pedagogical tool. This anthology could be read next to Anglophone women writers, toward the formation of new comparisons.

Francophone Women Writers is full of passages both in the form of literary excerpts and in the transit between geographic spaces. It is a wide scope, including writers from Southwest Asia, the Caribbean, North Africa, and Canada. The text shuttles between well-known writers who have been translated into many languages, such as Assia Djebar, and writers that may be less well known to Anglophone audiences, such as Déwé Gorodé, Ying Chen, and Ananda Devi. Mayotte Capécia and Isabelle Eberhardt are also included and re-framed. These writers form a transnational constellation—each star connected by the linguistic threads of *la francophonie*. If the point of convergence between these women is that they write in French for various personal, political, and historical reasons, it is unclear whether their translation into English in this monograph disguises the political choice of the language in which to write novels. Furthermore, readers may not be able to gauge experimentation or stylistic choices that may be evident in the French text. Vénus Khoury-Ghata addresses the ambivalence of *la francophonie* and its textual circulation in the final chapter: 'Books which guarantee a change of scene are expected of those writers classed as "Francophones"' (p. 169). Is this 'scene' further displaced in translation?

The critical introductions to each chapter, though suggestive, unfortunately lack a nuanced discussion of the stakes of each theoretical grouping, though the tension between the legacy of Anglophone postcolonial theory and its reception in France is highlighted. These introductions leave readers with a series of questions. If many of the writers included in the collection reflect on the social and political spaces in which women live, why does Marenne supplement this with UN statistics on the 'fate' (p. 2) of women in the world in the Introduction? The inclusion of social statistics leads to questions of access—what is the relationship between UN statistics and these writers? Who are the intended audiences? How do these texts circulate? Where are they published? It is a commonplace that writing offers women a free space of expression that may not be available otherwise. In this case, however, the discussion of 'women' writers substitutes the particular for the universal. A prescriptive application of terms such as 'women', 'Francophone', 'feminist', and 'postcolonial' hinges between celebration and relegation, simplifying complexities that are left unpacked.

In addition, why are these Francophone women writers read through the holy trinity of so-called French Feminists—Kristeva, Irigaray, and Cixous? This gesture risks imposing 'Western' feminist theory on writers who may reject such categorizations. As Marnia Lazreg writes in *The Eloquence of Silence* (1994), on writing about women in Algeria: 'My project is not to entertain readers with one more exotic tale or shock them with another astounding revelation about womanhood from a faraway place. All I wish to do is to communicate another mode of being female. But this is more easily said than done' (p. 6). Although Marenne cites Chandra Mohanty, and questions notions of a universal feminism in the Introduction, the danger of relying predominantly on western feminist discourse may defer to a universal subject position that does not exist. Significantly, 'alterity' is highlighted in relation to women's writing, but the notion of agency is not. The broad stroke of women without agency may be unintentionally reinforced by some of the turns of phrase Marenne uses to introduce the writers, as well as the excerpts he chooses. In Chapter 2 a series of photographs by Assia Djebar is described as a 'reportage [that] portrayed the contemporary female condition in the Arab world' (p. 45). Her writing is described as illustrating 'the status of women in post-colonial Algeria living behind the veils of Islamic society' (p. 44).

Marenne writes on an excerpt from Nina Bouraoui: 'The passage selected here introduces the reader to a universe of cloistered women' (p. 18). These descriptions not only conjure up notions of Orientalist harem fantasies and going behind the proverbial veil, but also present a monolithic 'Arab world', authorizing the stereotype of the oppressed Arab/Third World Woman, oppressed in this case by Islam, specifically. This gesture through description of one woman writing for all women of a particular location, religion, or social status works against Marenne's more careful work in Chapter 3, where he argues for hybridity and multiplicity, following Homi Bhabha's work. Though the excerpts from these Francophone women writers are separated across five chapters, many share common tropes, and are sites of pathology and abjection. The following themes recur over and over, with the risk of reducing Francophone women writers and their work to the abject: vomit, blood, silence, rot, tears, deformities, suicide, corpses, mothers, shame, and unknown origins.

In conclusion, the text leaves readers wanting more of everything. If the short passages allow the reader to 'explore' writing from these women, many are not long enough or contextualized in such a way that they can be read without more background. The book is well-organized and the five themes are well worth exploring, but in greater detail. A more nuanced analysis of the ways feminisms, postcolonialisms, and cross-cultures intersect, and how some of these terms, such as 'Francophone' are rejected by the writers themselves, may have enabled the 're-mapping' and comparative work the anthology promotes. This book ultimately situates itself in a World Literature or Global Literature context in English, without revealing what the stakes of that might be.

MEGAN MACDONALD
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Passes et impasses dans le comparatisme postcolonial caribéen: Cinq traverses. By KATHLEEN GYSSELS. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2010. 440 pp. Hb 88€. ISBN: 9782745319883

Comparative studies of any kind are notoriously difficult (or should be so) because of the necessity of respecting differences between subjects while at the same time maintaining cohesion and authority. The question remains open as to the value of these studies for current academic dialogues. Should one attempt to transcend one's specialization: to study multiple subjects from multiple angles, sometimes initiating awkward conversations around the water cooler after seminars, and risk the proposition of appearing completely inept? What I refer to here as the 'water cooler scenario' addresses an endeavour which is perhaps at the core of what interdisciplinary studies risks and hopes to reap: the relevance of a particular approach across time and across categories. In this context, the question can then be posed in regard to comparative postcolonial Caribbean literary studies: to what extent can readers observe resonances and gaps between the Anglophone and Francophone dimensions of this field? In exploring this question, the aim of Kathleen Gyssels's *Passes et impasses dans le comparatisme postcolonial caribéen: Cinq traverses* is to edge closer to the understanding of what elements produce what could be called 'Caribbean literatures'.

Noting the relative paucity of comparison between Caribbean literatures across languages, Gyssels investigates this question through five case studies, which each compare two authors (one Anglophone and one Francophone). Chapter 1 treats Toni Morrison's *Jazz* (1992) and Maryse Condé's *Célanire cou-coupé* (2003); chapter 2 examines issues of

emasculatation in Léon-Gontran Damas's *Black-Label* (1956) and James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (1956); chapter 3 focuses on the complete opposites of Haitian writers in exile, Edwidge Danticat and Dany Lafférière; chapter 4 remarks the relative levels of finesse of Madison Smart-Bell and Jean-Claude Fignolé in their representations of the Haitian Revolution; finally, chapter 5 bravely delves into the intellectual insularities of Wilson Harris and the late Édouard Glissant.

Though the range of themes covered in *Cinq traverses* is broad, the work is remarkably balanced in terms of the respect given to the differences between locality and gender of the characters and narrators discussed and analysed. In this sense, it is a resounding success. For example, Damas's narrator in *Black-Label* is analysed in terms of the representation of the erasure of gender in the face of colonialism, alongside the narrator in *Giovanni's Room*. In Baldwin's work, Gyssels reads a certain 'vertigo' in the representation of homo-eroticism, an emasculatation which ultimately concerns a much broader scope of the psychologically disabling dominance of colonialism, represented by 'la verticalité de la Tour' (p. 133). A similar emasculatation via colonialism is observed in the representations by Damas in *Black-Label*, notably with the alcohol-induced hallucinations of the narrator that revolve around a woman who derides him and represents 'désirs comprimés' (p. 142). Limited intertextuality in the works of authors is also discussed, as in the cases of Wilson Harris and Édouard Glissant (p. 345): the question is thus posed as to why they have seemingly ignored each other's work.

There are a few elements of *Cinq traverses* that could be clearer. While the second chapter's focus is partially upon *Black-Label*, a few pages in succession refer to *Pigments* (pp. 113–17). The intention is most likely to connect Damas to a wider tradition of the Harlem Renaissance (a necessarily transnational phenomenon), but some further explanation is needed to deduce similarities between *Pigments* and *Black-Label* if this is the case. Additionally, *Black-Label* merits a summation, as it is not read extensively, even among scholars of Damas and of the Négritude movement. Also, in chapter 3, Dany Lafférière seems to be so diametrically opposed to Edwidge Danticat that it is clear that Gyssels intends to expose the indiscriminate consumption of migration literatures, regardless of their divergent 'littérarité' (p. 163). There is a relevant question here, however, that pertains to postcolonial literary criticism: if one affirms that Lafférière comprises part of the 'postcolonial lowbrow' (that is, he displays a lack of originality and serious topics in his works, which subject their value to question (p. 181)), as Gyssels does, does his writing merit substantive and sustained criticism? Ultimately, these questions of canon and comparison are questions of genre, which literary critics must discern as either worth their attention or not. Discussion of this broader issue, however, has the potential to inform future criticism.

The conclusion affirms the value of these kinds of dialogues: that it is impossible in the information age not to compare authors across localities and languages. It also suggests that literary criticism can achieve pertinent advances through interdisciplinarity if certain bounds of discipline are respected: those of language and of genuine parallels between the content of works compared. Gyssels's eschewal of non-dialogue between postcolonial Caribbean literatures continues to be relevant to understanding literature as a sometimes insular endeavour (Glissant and Harris); equally, the exegesis of those dialogues which are unacknowledged, e.g., between Damas and Baldwin, illuminates what can be transnational about literatures. Through its excavation of these dialogues, *Passes et impasses* contributes to postcolonial criticism in its serious consideration of what unites and divides Caribbean literatures in Anglophone and Francophone traditions.

BART MILLER
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Frictions et devenirs dans les écritures migrantes au féminin. Enracinements et renégociations. Edited by ANNA ROCCA and NÉVINE EL NOSSERY. Saarbrücken: Éditions universitaires européennes, 2011. 258 pp. Hb £68. ISBN: 978-3-8417-8146-8

This book brings together contributions from some twelve scholars (one profile, Lisa Connell's, is missing from the 'Collaborateurs' list) from universities in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

The various articles fall into three parts: 'Le questionnement identitaire'; 'La violence de l'exil'; 'La mémoire fragmentée'. The Introduction outlines the aims and objectives of each of the chapters and sets out a comprehensive survey of the field, wide-ranging in time and space as befits the topic; it also helps make clear the key impact of Québécois writers and scholars on the migrant literature debate.

The work would have benefited from the close attention of a copy editor. Beyond infelicities or grammatical mistakes, misinterpretations or mistranslations occur in a number of papers at the risk of betraying the intentions of their authors or misleading the reader: 'offusquer' for 'obscurcir' [la réalité]? 'l'éradication' for 'la perte de leurs racines' [re. women writers]? 'se déplie' for 'se déploie'? 'gourmandises' for 'cupidités'? These detract from the wealth of reading and material presented. More editorial discipline could also have applied to referencing, repeats, and style, and perhaps also have questioned the unwarranted and frequent assumption that the voices of the narrator and the author are one and the same. A number of contributions, intent on forcing the texts under scrutiny into the same migrant-postcolonial moulds, seem to illustrate Sten Pultz Moslund's contention that: 'Over the years, the "migrant turn" has in fact become so successful that the very term "post-colonial" is often used as a synonym for transcultural migration literature and analysis', partially quoted in the Introduction (p. 9).

Under the general heading of 'Questionnements identitaires', the 'au féminin' of the book title is interpreted loosely in Amy L. Hubbell's paper which sets out an interesting theoretical and general background, though not specific to *Françaises d'Algérie*. The author has published a number of articles on *pied-noir* visual journeys which included references to the same authors: Camus, Cardinal, Cixous, Derrida... and theoretical references from Michel-Chich to Stora. Here the focus is more specifically on written texts, though the visual does get a look in. Evelyn Accad, both a contributor and the object of her own article (together with Andrée Chedid, Vénus Khoury-Ghata, Etel Afanan, Assia Djébar), illustrates the fact that the main focus of the book is fiction by women writers from a variety of horizons, though her uncritical, flowery and repetitive eulogies of the writers cited—including herself—are at odds with the intended scholarly discipline of the book. Adrienne Angelo gives an interestingly perceptive and comprehensive account of Nina Bouraoui's work. 'Écritures' does not always refer to fiction: Samia L. Spencer contrasts two women—Chahdortt Djavann and Djemila Benhabib, the former an Iranian, the latter an Algerian—who have both fled their countries and are activists in Paris and Montreal respectively. Indeed Benhabib is not yet a writer as Spencer points out.

Opening the second part, 'La violence de l'exil', Alison Rice also looks at two of Djavann's publications in her chapter on 'nouveaux horizons francophones', which, in addition, focuses on Nathacha Appanah (Mauritius) and Julia Kristeva. Kristeva may no longer be considered as 'new' on the Francophone horizon, but her experience remains commonplace. Rice does not seem to exploit or explain Djavann's reference to Montesquieu to whom the Persian female narrator addresses a number of letters in her *Comment peut-on être français?* Although the works she looks at (essays, fiction, theory) are very different, as are

their authors, there are interesting rapprochements. Ying Chen and Marie-Célie Agnant are considered by Eric Touya de Marenne, and Malika Mokeddem by Névine El Nossery.

Elegantly written, illuminating, sympathetic to the author and her characters, Lucie Lequin's essay on Abla Farhoud stands out, setting the tone for the third section, 'La mémoire fragmentée'. Other chapters focus on Clémence Boulouque (by Jane E. Evans), Gisèle Pineau (by Lisa Connell) and Lalia Essaydi (by Anna Rocca) before concluding on Fatou Diome's *Le ventre de l'Atlantique* (in a chapter by Moïhamédoul Amine Niang). Rocca's chapter on Lalia Essaydi, an artist for whom 'écriture'/writing serves as her personal watermark showing through her photographic work or various installations, illustrates the generous interpretation of 'Écritures' as justified by the editors in their Introduction. This final part of the book seems to focus on un-belonging and is particularly enlightening on the poetic rendering of dis-locating experiences.

The publishers offer only a PDF version of the book for review; their material gain is the reviewer's practical loss and has the unwanted effect of accentuating the separateness of each component of the book. Yet, although the only common experience shared by the women (artists or writers) under consideration is that of migration, the disparity of contexts—historical, cultural, geographical—both in terms of where the authors come from and where they are now is precisely what makes the book as a whole interesting. It also lends meaning to the notion of a 'world literature' in French.

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Postnationalist African Cinemas. By ALEXIE TCHEUYAP. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011. 269 pp. Pb. £15.99. ISBN: 978-0-7190-8336-5

Postnationalist African Cinemas distingue les différentes formes du cinéma africain de la période postcoloniale, plus particulièrement des films projetés sur les écrans ces dernières décennies. Il ne fallait pas moins de sept chapitres pour démontrer la richesse du cinéma africain, protéiforme et irréductible à une définition unique. Par l'étude approfondie de sept catégories originales—à savoir la comédie, la danse, le film policier, le mythe, l'épopée, la sexualité, et l'ésotérisme—Alexie Tcheuyap fait émerger les nouveaux genres du cinéma africain contemporain. Ce cheminement méthodique plonge le lecteur au cœur de la production cinématographique africaine jusqu'alors dominée par des considérations culturelles, historiques et politiques.

Prenant comme point de départ les années quatre-vingt-dix, Tcheuyap se lance avec brio dans une exploration novatrice des courants de la critique cinématographique ainsi que des ouvertures dans le cinéma africain contemporain. Se faisant, l'auteur démontre comment les différents cinéastes de son corpus d'étude saisissent les préoccupations actuelles de la société africaine.

Le premier chapitre examine la structure, la sémantique et les formes du comique des films africains et la façon dont des cinéastes tels Mikhaïl Bakhtin, Jean-Pierre Bekolo, et Henri Duparc négocient la vision primaire des films africains des années soixante au profit de la comédie sociale, une forme plus adaptée à la société actuelle. Rappelons comment, dans le contexte immédiat de l'indépendance, les films divertissants et populaires, bien que jugés futiles et peu conformes à la réalité, servaient d'instruments pédagogiques, placés au service

de la transformation sociale. Aujourd'hui, cette notion de 'mission' prêtée au film est mise au défi par Mweze Ngangura pour qui l'avenir même du film africain serait en jeu si les cinéastes africains persévéraient dans cette voie.

Tout en interrogeant l'opposition au film de divertissement en faveur des films à caractère politique, le deuxième chapitre de cet ouvrage met en exergue la place de la danse dans le film africain en prenant pour exemple certains films comme *Xala* (1973) de Sembène Ousmane, *La vie est belle* (1987) de Mweze Ngangura et *Karmen Geï* (2001) de Joseph Gaï Ramaka. Depuis les années soixante-dix, les films africains regorgent de scènes de danses. La trame de ces films semble contredire une opinion répandue selon laquelle le film africain serait avant tout à visée politique. Ostensiblement présente, la danse apparaît dans ses trois aspects: rituel, populaire, et social. Reproduisant la perception négative des colons à l'égard de la danse africaine et prenant en exemple l'assertion de Léopold Sédar Senghor dont la pensée essentialiste se résume à 'L'émotion est nègre, comme la raison est héllène' (*Liberté I*, p. 24), Tcheuyap s'interroge sur les raisons qui amènent les cinéastes à intégrer de façon récurrente dans leurs films des scènes de danse et la critique cinématographique à ignorer obstinément ce phénomène.

Suite à la danse, mise en scène d'une passion extravertie, passons au meurtre, expression d'une passion frustrée, car c'est bien la passion des hommes qui nous amène au chapitre trois lequel redécouvre et revalorise le film policier africain. Alors que cette catégorie de films s'apparente généralement au film occidental, Tcheuyap montre, preuves à l'appui, comment le corpus cinématographique africain a intégré ce nouveau genre, en citant des films tels que *Inspecteur Sory*, *le Mamba* (2005) de Mamadi Sidibé, *Samba Traoré* (1992) d'Idrissa Ouedraogo, et *Les Saignantes* (2005) de Jean-Pierre Bekolo. Ce chapitre bat en brèche le préjugé selon lequel le film policier africain est mission impossible.

Au chapitre suivant, l'auteur fait le lien entre le mythe, la tragédie et le cinéma africain. Les formes africaines du tragique se font plus tangibles avec une accentuation particulière sur le drame œdipien dans les familles en crise, les tensions entre ses membres, ce qui n'est pas sans nous rappeler les mythes grecs et les histoires bibliques telles celles de Caïn et Abel, de Jacob, et d'Esau. Le terrain était prêt pour aborder en chapitre cinq le lien entre le film et l'épopée, tout particulièrement dans la narration. Toutefois, on sent ici l'attachement de l'auteur à vouloir isoler une catégorie épique, alors que ce thème pouvait rejoindre la catégorie précédente du mythe, tant l'épique est inhérent à ces intrigues où se mêlent passion, anéantissement, et reconstruction.

La nudité est presque inexistante dans le film africain, en ce sens que la parole l'emporte sur l'image de la sexualité. Le chapitre six explore le lien entre la sexualité, le corps et les restrictions culturelles et politiques qui persistent dans ce domaine et comment les cinéastes africains réhabilitent le corps. L'intérêt pour les pratiques occultes est développé au septième chapitre sur lequel se referme l'ouvrage, laissant un goût d'infini. Tcheuyap s'efforce de démontrer non seulement le caractère novateur de l'occultisme sur l'écran africain donnant à voir l'invisible, mais aussi les différentes représentations des pratiques occultes et comment ces films les interprètent.

De façon originale, cet ouvrage revisite les axes culturels, politiques, et historiques qui ont orienté la critique cinématographique africaine ces dernières décennies ainsi que les différents courants représentatifs. Tcheuyap est allé à l'encontre des idées reçues et simplificatrices sur le 'cinéma africain', s'efforçant de déconstruire la catégorie réductrice dans laquelle on l'emprisonne trop souvent, entretenant l'idée trompeuse qu'il définirait un genre en lui-même. En réalité, ce dernier s'est épanoui en une telle variété de genres qu'il n'est pas déplacé de parler d'une pluralité de cinémas africains, comme le revendique déjà le titre de l'ouvrage. La singularité des films africains et leur complexité n'ont pas effrayé Tcheuyap qui s'en est emparé d'une main de maître. La remise en question de ce que constitue la quintessence du film africain et les nombreuses références à la critique cinématographique

font de *Postcolonialist African Cinemas* une œuvre en soi qui invite les chercheurs à approfondir ce domaine. Mais d'ores et déjà, ce manuel apporte au lecteur une connaissance actualisée de la critique et de la scène cinématographique africaine et donne matière à réflexion sur le devenir du film africain. Nul doute que cet ouvrage sera un outil utile aux chercheurs.

LAURENCE RANDALL
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CONFERENCE REPORTS

Algeria Revisited: Contested Identities in the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods University of Leicester, 11–13 April 2012

The 'Algeria Revisited' conference, a joint venture between the universities of Leicester and Southampton, took place at the University of Leicester from 11 to 13 April 2012. Held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence, the conference was attended by more than seventy academics from universities across the globe and we were particularly pleased to welcome a number of Algerian delegates. There was a strong postgraduate presence, facilitated by a range of competitively awarded bursaries and travel grants. During the conference, these scholars engaged with the complex questions surrounding the creation and contestation of identities in the colonial and postcolonial periods, as well as with different aspects of the Franco-Algerian relationship from a range of perspectives. Contributions were organized into parallel sessions with panels constructed around the broad thematic groupings of literature, history/politics, and culture/visual arts. Plenary sessions were given by Dr Sylvie Thénault (CNRS, Paris), who shared her most recent research on the role of internment camps in colonial Algeria, Dr James McDougall (Oxford), who spoke on the subject of 'culture as war by other means', while Professor Martin Evans (Portsmouth) concluded the conference by encouraging us to broaden our conceptual horizons and consider Algerian history in comparative contexts. These papers were complemented by contributions from the author Mabrouck Rachedi, who spoke about processes of identity construction among descendants of Algerian immigrants living in the *banlieues*, and by a performance from the Algerian singer Samira Brahmia. In response to the news on 11 April 2012 of the death of Ahmed Ben Bella, the first president of Algeria (1962–65), a special roundtable discussion was held to reflect on his contributions to the Algerian nation and the legacies of his presidency. We are grateful to the plenary speakers for leading this discussion. Overall, we feel that the scale and diversity of the conference, alongside the quality of all the papers, makes it one of the most significant scholarly gatherings on Algeria being held in 2012. The intention is now to build upon these exciting intellectual exchanges with publications planned to disseminate the research presented. During the conference a meeting was also held to discuss the possibility of founding an Algerian Studies network. There was much enthusiasm for such an endeavour, as well as many valuable suggestions for ways in which to take this project forward, all of which are being considered. We would like to thank the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies for their generous support which, alongside support from the University of Leicester, the University of Southampton, the Institut Français, the Society for the Study of French History, the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies, the Modern Humanities Research Association, the Society for Algerian Studies, and the Royal Historical Society, helped facilitate an intellectually stimulating and uniquely interdisciplinary gathering of academics in this major anniversary year.

RABAH AISSAOUI, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
CLAIRE ELDRIDGE, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Study Day in Honour of Alec Hargreaves:
Culture, Politics and Society in Postcolonial France
Institut Français du Royaume-Uni, London, 22 June 2012

This study day, organized by David Murphy and Charles Forsdick, brought together academics and students working in Francophone Postcolonial Studies. The day was supported by the ASMCF, the SFPS, the Winthrop-King Institute for Contemporary French and Francophone Studies, and the *Institut Français du Royaume-Uni*, and was convened to honour the outstanding contribution of Alec Hargreaves to studies in this field. Academic discussion was laced with personal and fond memories of his career. Roger Célestin likened the format of the day to a ‘roast’, the American practice of paying public and irreverent tribute to well-known figures.

The various papers reflected the wide-ranging impact Hargreaves has had on French Postcolonial Studies, with presentations covering everything from literature and cinema to politics via sport and *bande dessinée*. The theme of boundaries, physical and figurative, recurred across the papers. Each panel grappled, in one form or another, with this concept: the ways in which Postcolonial Studies tend to cross boundaries and blur the limits between previously separate and disparate disciplines; the fluidity of boundaries, identities and representations; the removal of the boundaries that exist between national identities, leading to hybridized identities (such as that of the Afropean, outlined by Nicki Hitchcott and by Dominic Thomas); and the opening up of French culture generally, and academia in particular, to other cultures. Given the current climate, the question of the future of French Studies departments in universities led to discussion about the shape of the discipline of Francophone Studies itself. Reflections on the most appropriate term for this transcultural field suggest further moves towards inclusive discursive practices.

One highlight of the day was a lively and warm roundtable, chaired by Bill Cloonan, between Alec Hargreaves and Azouz Begag. Hargreaves and Begag were informative and entertaining in equal measure as they shared their memories of working together over a number of decades, as well as several anecdotes arising from the close friendship they have established in this time. In keeping with the unofficial theme of the day, Begag praised Hargreaves for having been the first to break the boundaries of ‘traditional’ French literary studies, and credited him with starting the movement to reconstruct the memories of *les enfants d’immigrés*, remarking on the peculiar fact that it had been left to an Englishman to get this journey underway.

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Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies

Contributions on any topic related to Francophone Postcolonial Studies are invited for inclusion in future issues. Authors should submit electronically two copies of their article, 4,000 words maximum, in English or French to a member of the editorial team. Articles should conform in presentation to the guidelines in the *MHRA Stylebook*, providing references in footnotes, rather than the author-date system. All articles submitted to the *BFPS* will be refereed by two scholars of international reputation, drawn from the advisory and editorial boards. To facilitate the anonymity of the refereeing process, authors are asked that their manuscript (other than the title page) contains no clue as to their identity. Book reviews (between 600 and 1000 words in length) and conference reports (500 words max.) should also be sent to the editorial team.

The deadline for the receipt of articles to be included in the spring 2013 issue is 15 January 2013.

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