

in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and by which Murano seems to set so much store, in fact ended with French defeat. That defeat set in motion an era of French imperial disintegration worldwide, culminating in the Algerian debacle, which lasted from the mid 1950s to the early 1960s. There is of course nothing in the historical circumstances in which Constant sets her work that resembles the bloody episodes of French Indochina and Algeria. What is clear, though, is that in the context of *Ouregano*, both Murano and Beretti are part of a declining colonial order which, to recall once again Tiffany's feelings towards her white adult tormentors, is nothing more than 'la première apparition de la pourriture sur la viande, de la blanchaille, pas grand chose'; an order which, to put it another way, lives and breathes its own rot and demise.

A closer look at Dubois in his capacity as chief bearer of imperial power in *Ouregano* perhaps best illustrates this point. In point of fact, Dubois abhors taking decisions, leaving Alexandrou the Greek trader to preside over the administration's day-to-day transactions. Indeed we noted earlier that Dubois and the judge Bonenfant choose not to take any action against Beretti for murdering N'Diop for fear that such action might disturb the tranquillity of their colonial fiefdom. Dubois' shirking of his responsibilities in fact springs from an underlying administrative procedure grounded in a world-weariness inspired by an irredeemable pessimism that he feels about the utility of action in the Africa that he governs. The germ of his pessimism and the style of governance it engenders lie, in fact, in his personal and professional situation itself. That situation is perhaps best summed up by the word sterility, in the face of which he has developed a self-deprecatory sense of irony and a resulting indifference to, or rather calm acceptance of, the inevitability of failure. Indeed as the narrator has it :

Il avait de l'ironie, l'Administrateur, rien qui ne le touchât vraiment, il savait rire de tout, rien qui lui appartînt. Il n'avait jamais rien enfanté qui ressemblât à la vie, ni un enfant, ni une loi, ni une décision. Rien. Absolument Rien. Il avait la conscience tranquille, il ne l'avait pas fait dévier d'un pouce de son chemin, la mort. Il ne se souvenait même plus d'avoir ressenti un autre sentiment que celui de la mort entière et consentie, la chérie! Pas un corps entre lui et le néant, il ne se sentait pas exister (*Ouregano*, p. 54).

Little wonder that all that Dubois sees, feels and hears around him is emptiness, despair and desolation, about which his watchword is do nothing. The newly arrived Captain Murano, veteran of the Indochinese conflict and who has delusions of grandeur, finds in *Ouregano* a dire health situation requiring a new form of heroic intervention. But the ever-calm Dubois is there to allay the doctor's fears, dampening in fact his enthusiasm. Waxing philosophical, he tells him what he had told other doctors before him: he should not be carried away by appearances, for in Africa:

La mort, donc la maladie et la souffrance n'avaient pas le même sens qu'ailleurs. Il ne fallait pas se prendre à l'aspect des choses. Tout était bien plus simple au fond. Il n'y avait aucun scandale ici parce que tout appartenait à un ordre immanent qui sécrétait ses mystères. Rien n'était logique mais tout s'acceptait, tout était accepté. N'était-ce pas justement le but de la logique? Il devait veiller mais ne rien bouleverser. Il aimait ce rôle de témoin tendre et complaisant de la fatalité (*Ouregano*, p. 137).

This role of a calm, detached, or rather, resigned observer of the spectacle of African misery that Dubois assigns himself and seeks to assign to other European actors on the African scene is indeed central in understanding his relationship with the schoolteacher Albert Refons. Refons had been a student activist with left-wing ideas and sympathies. He and his wife's arrival to run the schools of Ouregano creates a moment of anxiety and fear for Dubois. Seeing in the husband a kind of person '[qui] vous semait le désordre pour le plaisir, cela revendiquait pour la forme, tout agité d'insatisfaction' (*Ouregano*, p. 42), he quite uncharacteristically moves to assert his authority. He spells out exactly what he requires Refons to do, which is nothing other than 'repandre la lourde machine [of colonial governance] et la faire rouler sans se préoccuper de ses tenants et de ses aboutissants. Le reste était l'affaire des responsables' (*Ouregano*, p. 42). In other words, Refons' role as Dubois conceives it is that of 'un exécutant, un simple exécutant [...]'. Voyait-il une autre solution que celle de se soumettre? On fait ami-ami, Refons, et je vous promets de vous aider...dans la mesure de mes moyens, ou alors, la guerre, et là, croyez-moi, je vous casserai les reins' (Ibid).

The point here is that in a world shaped by the heavy administrative machinery headed by Dubois, initiative and innovation are an anathema and are stamped out immediately they rear their ugly heads. What one is left with is an endless round of receptions, with the Dubois, the Bonenfant and the Muranos taking turn as hosts. The frequency of the receptions leaves the impression of a world moving in circles: a dead end where the so-called representatives of France expend their energies into daily encounters that are at bottom a playground for rivalries, vanities and jealousies over and about trivialities.

Admittedly, Dubois does go on tour, visiting places under his administrative control. But such visits, as sterile as the endless receptions held by him and others in Ouregano, yield nothing,

being no more than a formality. As the inhabitants of the villages he tours need first, in his view, 'd'être logiques avec eux-mêmes' (*Ouregano*, p. 52) in formulating what they want, Dubois feels under no obligation to do anything. Always in a hurry to visit the next village, he cuts the figure of an administrator whose powers, as the narrator notes, 's'exerçaient toujours ailleurs. Il était l'homme des "plus loin", des "plus tard"' (*Ouregano*, p. 51), never present when and where needed. Given Dubois' style of colonial governance, the narrator logically observes that Ouregano does not need an administrator. Indeed ironically, by his passivity, pessimistic cast of mind and preoccupation with death, this agent of the *mission civilisatrice* does nothing to alleviate the hunger, disease and death that he sees around him. In this way, he becomes part and parcel of the human misery he observes – the misery being the only thing that gives meaning to his existence and which ultimately is a secretion of his own morbid imagination. The death-obsessed colonial administrator is indeed a symbol, or more accurately, a purveyor of death in the Africa he rules.

Hence his attitude to Beretti's crime. To Dubois, by killing N'Diop Beretti simply does death's bidding; he is a mere agent in the latter's triumphant and irresistible destructive grip on man. He is thus accountable for nothing and such matters as court trials and culpability are nothing other than 'de monstrueuses manœuvres humaines' (*Ouregano*, p. 206), which steal the dignity and sanctity with which death invests its 'victims. As an administrator fascinated by death's awesome power and inevitable triumph, Dubois promises himself to do all he can to ensure that nothing disturbs N'Diop's repose, in the same way that he leaves untouched the generalised misery with which he associates the entirety of his district, and over which he gloats.

Racial and Cultural Stereotyping?

One might still ask whether such a withering indictment of

colonial oppression does in fact translate in the novel into a positive image of Africa and Africans. I have examined so far the way in which *Ouregano* unmasks the ugly realities of Europe's colonial relationship with Africa. I will now consider images of difference that seem to be a logical and necessary outgrowth of the collective self-denunciation the novel enacts. These are images of an indomitable Africa; an Africa that disrupts the veneer of foreign dominance to assert, if momentarily, its will and authority and, in so doing, shows the shaky hold the bearers of imperial power have on it.

This may sound like a contradiction in terms, as the Africans that inhabit Constant's fictional world are basically colonial underlings. Indeed, the most important African character in the novel, N'Diop, is certainly no figure of strength and power. Caught between an elite colonial training and his African heritage, he is at ease neither with the white colonial overlords that he serves nor with the natives of Ouregano, from whom he in fact recoils, seeing in them an inferior cast of humans whose mode of life and disease-laden environment are at variance with life as lived in his native Senegal. Alienated as he is from his surroundings and seeking refuge in poetry that glorifies an original Africa now adulterated by Europe's corrupting presence, N'Diop is ill equipped to face up to and survive the brutalities of colonial oppression. He offers no resistance in his confrontation with Beretti and goes meekly, even willingly, to his death in a final, as it were, suicidal gesture of submission to white supremacy.

The largely faceless black underlings that fill Constant's Africa and the alienation and ill fate that befall the most individualised of them are, however, not so much a reflection of the author's inability to portray Africans in positive terms as a function of the social and psychological realities of the colonial world she revisits and questions. For it is evident in the novel that the essence of Africa as she conceives it lies not in the dehumanising effect of colonial control on N'Diop and others as in their continent's

potential to overturn its condition of servitude. This point is dealt with symbolically in the novel and leads us to the great fire episode where the natives of Ouregano, in performing their annual hunting rites, set alight large stretches of forested land. The episode is presented mainly from the narrator's perspective and its force lies in African and European differing reactions to the event. The fire has a liberating effect on the Africans, allowing them to hunt down in the space of a single night all the game that had eluded them in the course of the year and to hold in check the encroaching vegetation. More importantly, their skill in handling the fire, in forcing it to follow a pre-determined trajectory, carries a message tinged with political overtones. Their supremacy over the fire transforms their situation of victims into that of victors. The fire is theirs and symbolises their power: they know it, control it, and feel no fear. Indeed, as the narrator has it, 'le feu qui était passé cette nuit était le feu des hommes de l'Afrique. Seuls ceux qui n'avaient jamais dominé le feu avaient eu peur' (*Ouregano*, pp. 177-78). The narrator's celebratory view of the ceremony is heightened by Tiffany's response to the event. Like the Africans, she relishes the fire, seeing it as a force of good, a source of excitement. She feels the exhilarating effects of 'le miracle de ce feu qui avait jailli sans que rien l'annoncât comme un Noël que personne n'aurait attendu, le premier Noël, une fête qui ne serait pas commémoration, un événement et non une célébration' (*Ouregano*, p. 178). Tiffany's parents' and the other European adults' reaction to the fire is, by contrast, one of deep anxiety and fear. For a moment they feel that all is over and that it is time to leave. The narrator sums up this reversal of roles between the rulers and the ruled in these terms:

Alors que les hommes qui dirigeaient les hommes s'inquiétaient, se troublaient, ramassaient leurs biens, prêts à capituler, les hommes qui commandaient au feu les épargnaient tous selon

une tactique qui n'était plus celle du chasseur
mais celle du guerrier en sa clémence
(*Ouregano*, p. 178).

The magnanimity of those who command the fire, seen in their steering it away from the homes of their frightened white masters, is indeed proof of their moral superiority and profound humanity.

Conclusion

Through a close reading of Constant's *Ouregano*, I have described a certain response to Europe's colonial relationship with black Africa. This has meant drawing upon Said's concept of representation and invoking *Ouregano* as a corrective to it. The point is not so much to discredit Said's perspective as to broaden it in view of elucidating the collective self-distantiating thrust of *Ouregano* and a resulting celebratory response to difference that the novel offers. For far from being an exercise in collective self-congratulation, the novel revisits a cross-cultural encounter judged to have been marred by the tensions and antagonisms generated in a society fractured along the lines of race and culture. The main location of that denunciatory stance is the interplay of character and narrative viewpoint. The attitudes, actions and, indeed, reactions of the child heroine Tiffany contrast with and contradict those of the adult protagonists – the racially and culturally bigoted judge Bonenfant and the passive, death-obsessed administrator Dubois. The denunciatory stance is heightened by the narrator's own attitude to the colonial situation; an attitude that endorses and complements Tiffany's. The child and adult protagonists' conflicting reactions to the Africa they inhabit and the critical voice of the narrator add up to a sustained hostile view of the imperialist project. The ambition and arrogance that inspired the project are undercut by the ugliness of its outcomes, in race relational and colonial administrative terms. Indeed, in *Ouregano*,

Constant makes no case for her country's honour and prestige. What stand out instead are contrary qualities: the intolerance and pettiness of those who embody and act out that country's imperial will in a supposedly backward and barbarous Africa. What also stands out is Africa's capacity to undo the forces of oppression as it reasserts its authority – and quite magnanimously so – over its so-called rulers.

Today, in a polarised and dangerous world characterised by the fear and violence generated by mutual distrust, the existence and value of the collective self-criticism exhibited in *Ouregano*, and its attendant celebratory response to difference, need to be recognised. This brings to mind the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the latter's subsequent military riposte in Afghanistan and Iraq; a polarised world of fear and violence which the distinguished African writer Wole Soyinka described in last year's series of Reith lectures in these memorable words: 'I am right; you are dead'.²² Tiffany and Moïse's relationship – described, as we have seen, as 'une marche vers quelque chose de plus loin, une nécessité charnelle, un apaisement. Car il y avait de la tendresse à être là ensemble, et à n'être rien que d'être l'autre, le complément et le but' – holds the possibility of an alternative cross-cultural encounter. It is an encounter founded not on fear and violence that intolerance to difference engenders, but on reciprocal respect, love and understanding.

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²² Significantly, the lectures themselves carry the general title of 'Climate of Fear', which captures appropriately the general mood of terror unleashed by the events of 11 September 2001 and their aftermath. For details of the lectures, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2004/> [accessed 31 May 2004].

Orientalist Other and Postcolonial Self: The Troublesome Case of Paul Smail

Introduction

Whilst Levinasian ethics emphasises the essential unknowability of the Other, Foucauldian constructivism discusses the social formulations which create and maintain Knowledge of social members, most particularly those archetypal others, the criminal, the woman and the child. It is possible to see Levinas's philosophical project as a direct reaction to the kinds of processes analysed by Foucault (though there need be no explicit link between the two). What is certainly clear is that Levinas wished to break with a tradition, which he believed attempted always to assimilate the Other to the same. His is not a practical, empirical and historical project in the sense that Foucault's archaeology was supposed to be (at least to a certain degree), but instead a reformulation of the ethical relation, an ideal rather than a critique. It can be argued that there is a radical incompatibility between these two kinds of thought; or rather, that they simply fail to intersect in the Venn diagram of current intellectual preoccupations. In the field of postcolonial studies however, where intellectual premises are an intentional patchwork of incompatible scraps, rival readings within these two schools have been made of the same works. One might cite Edward Said and Colin Davis's very different readings of the work of Albert Camus for instance.¹

¹ From Said, only in passing it must be said. In *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1985) for instance, he taxes Camus with his 'colonial mentality' (p.312); whereas Davis, in *Ethical Issues in Twentieth Century French Fiction* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 64-85, sees Camus's texts as staging the inherent danger of the encounter with alterity.

It is certainly the case that while a Levinasian reading of Paul Smail's novels would yield some interesting insights, it would tellingly fail to deal with much of the historico-social detail that underpins these novels. In just the same way, a purely Foucauldian analysis would have nothing to say of the primacy of ethical questions within the texts, not least the presence of four cases of archetypal altericide as analysed by Davis.² A reading that draws upon the ethical insight of Levinas but which also uses the tools of analysis provided by Foucault would go some way to counteracting the particular failings inherent in any single approach. In the first part of this essay, I shall therefore sketch out an analysis that draws on both Foucault and the philosophical work of Ian Hacking to analyse the particular schemes of knowledge that mould the self in these four novels. In the final part I shall draw on Davis's critical work to outline the problematic ethical dilemma that fails to be resolved by 'archaeological' analysis. There is no space here to explore the particular difficulties inherent to these texts in any depth, but I hope to go some way to sketching out the various problems that they pose for a unitary theoretical reading within postcolonial studies.

Orientalism and Immigration: The Problem of Identification

The approach I intend to take to a kind of post-Foucauldian constructivism owes more to the philosophical project of Ian Hacking than to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* or *The Order of Things* as foundation texts in and of themselves.³ In particular, I intend to draw upon Hacking's elaboration of the kind of relationship that binds the holders of knowledge and the known as originally outlined by Foucault. Hacking suggests that while the

² *Ethical Issues*, pp.12-30.

³ Ian Hacking, 'Making Up People' in *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 2002).

solar system, gravity, probability or the private life of plants are largely unaffected by the kinds of knowledge we hold about them (issues of environmental damage and so on not having a theoretical bearing on his argument), human beings are peculiarly susceptible to authoritative forms of knowledge. Hacking narrows Foucault's sweeping analysis of the Western epistémè to particular forms of description by authorities under particular sets of circumstances and to specific actions and reactions on the part of the described. He considers the kind of symbiotic relationship between particular classes of people and those who characterise them, and remarks that, while there may be no one story about descriptions and the described:

If we wish to provide a partial framework in which to describe such events, we might think of two vectors. One is the vector from above, from a community of experts who create a 'reality' that some people make their own. Different from this is the vector of the autonomous behaviour of the person so labelled, which presses from below, creating a reality every expert must face.⁴

This notion is an explanatory one in the present context because it allows for a dynamic relationship between coloniser and colonised, between Orientalist and postcolonial, the absence of which has caused considerable theoretical problems within postcolonial studies. Ever since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, postcolonial critics have been troubled by the lack of representation given to oppositional writers on both sides of the colonial divide. If Orientalism is the enveloping monolithic discourse suggested by Said, then how is any space for contestation to be negotiated? Although various answers to this

⁴ Hacking, *Historical Ontology*, p. 111.

conundrum have been suggested, I would argue that Hacking's dynamic nominalism provides an elegant and simple solution that need not invoke the sometimes convoluted psychoanalytic pronouncements of postcolonial critics. An authoritative description need not preclude a contestatory reaction, which might take a number of different forms, some not necessarily palatable to postcolonial sensibilities.⁵

This helpfully clears a space for the critical consideration of the writings of the children of post-war immigration. A dynamic nominalist approach allows for an analysis of the particular forms of knowledge and institutional practices that surround the Beur generations in contemporary France. Within a metropolitan context this is particularly important given that questions of ethnicity and community are such a persistent taboo within the French State. Neither Maghrebian nor acceptably French, the Beurs linger in a troubled no man's land of 'insécurité' and suburban disenfranchisement, yet their texts cannot be simply read as a straightforward rebellion. On the contrary, they develop a constant tension between the accepted forms of French life and an awareness of difference. This is even more markedly the case in the four Smaïl novels, which, though ostensibly the semi-autobiographical narratives of a young Beur, are in fact the work of an established (white, middle-aged, middle-class) metropolitan writer, Jack-Alain Léger.⁶ This, in and of itself, is a problem for postcolonial studies, which has some difficulty in coping with texts that do not possess the legitimacy of lived experience. And yet, thematically at least, these novels do deal with the lived reality of the French-North-African and an outright rejection of them fails to contend with their success (in terms of sales) and their (relative)

⁵ Much of the writing of V.S. Naipaul, for example, might fall into this category.
⁶ *Vivre me tue* (Paris: Balland, 1997), *Casa, la casa* (Paris: Balland, 1998), *La Passion selon moi* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1999), *Ali, le Magnifique* (Paris: Denoël, 2001).

popularity amongst Beur readers. However questionable their validity as testimony, these texts convey the complexity of the relation of identification to dominant French norms felt by a (fictional) Maghrebian youth. The terms of dynamic nominalism offer a useful reading of this troubled identification.

The reader of these novels is confronted by a background of French racism that is seen to take various standard Foucauldian forms. The first of the novels, *Vivre me tue*, opens with an unsuccessful job interview over the telephone where the Arab applicant is rejected when his race becomes clear to the interviewer. This is followed by a spate of racist insults directed by the first person narrator against himself and underlining the various forms of prejudice that surround him. As well as discrimination when trying to gain employment, the protagonist Paul faces police controls, repeated ticket checks on public transport and an in-depth application form that questions his personal hygiene. The fourth Smaïl novel goes further. In *Ali, le Magnifique*, the protagonist Sid Ali is subjected to a battery of social control techniques: IQ tests, medical checks, examinations and interviews from school teachers, social workers, child psychologists and ultimately from a prison psychiatrist. One of the central symbols of the novel is Sid Ali's hefty dossier, which follows the teenager from home to school to prison. He is constantly held under a grid of expert opinion and explanatory data. However, whilst the novels do confront these racist controls, they do not do so through an outright rejection of French social norms. On the contrary, social and self-acceptance is channelled through a (not untroubled) *identification* with French authority.

The most immediately noticeable form that identification with the 'colonial' other is seen to take in the novels, is the open and uncritical admiration for the traditional canon of writers. This admiration takes several forms, though most explicitly it is found

in repetitive allusion and open quotation.⁷ The first of the four novels, *Vivre me tue*, opens with the words 'Appelez-moi Smaïl', a reference to Herman Melville's 'call me Ishmaël'. In case the ignorant reader were to miss this literary allusion, the narrator makes it quite clear a little later both in the nickname he gives his younger brother (Queequeg) and by pointing out his own adaptation indirectly.⁸

Melville is far from being the only allusive literary presence, however. Where *Vivre me tue* opens with an adapted line from Melville, *Casa, la casa* draws on the author's Francophone roots and borrows from Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, opening with the words: 'Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure'; the Melville intertext is not long forsaken however, and on the very same page there is a long translated citation from Moby Dick where the narrator claims that he quotes 'à peu près de mémoire'.⁹ The familiarity with canonical literature is a constant thematic touchstone. The omnipresence of the Melvillian intertext is leant thematic credence through the narrator's university record. Paul has completed a DEA in Comparative Literature on the very subject of Herman Melville. At the side of Melville and Proust, the novels draw on allusion and citation from (notably and in no particular order) Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Stendhal, Gide, La Fontaine, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Hâfiz, Dante, Chekhov and Jean Genet (and this is by no means an exhaustive list). Literature,

⁷ Michel Laronde in a recent article, 'Prise de Parole du Roman de la Postcolonialité en France', in Freeman G. Henry ed., *Beginnings in French Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002, pp. 169-180), has suggested that the Smaïlian use of citation and allusion opens a space of postcolonial contestation. I would argue, however, that taken against the background of Liberal political values supported in the novels, what contestation there is largely nullified.

⁸ *Vivre me tue*, p. 81. Further references to Melville occur periodically in *Vivre me tue* (pp. 14, 32, 46, 51, 86, 100, 141, 150, 172, 187), and continue into the second and third novels *Casa, la casa* and *La Passion selon moi*, eg pp. 11, 12, 26, 74, 87 and 22, 52 respectively.

⁹ *Casa*, pp. 11-12.

and most particularly 'great' literature is a constant mediating presence within the novels, to the point where the narrator's existence is episodically contained within moments of reading and moments of writing. 'Ce que je vis, je l'écris, ce que j'écris, je le vis', he remarks laconically on the opening page of *Casa, la casa*, and later 'Ce que je lis, oui, je le vis'.¹⁰

The relationship between reading, writing and 'witnessing' from the point of view of the first person narrative is incestuously close. What is all the more striking, is that literature, and specifically canonical authors, are not 'Orientalist' in anything remotely resembling Said's sense within these novels. The texts contain no critique of any of the more troubling aspects of the cited authors within a postcolonial perspective but instead use citation and allusion as if they acted as limpid, and untainted, moral assertions. In *Vivre me tue* for instance, Shylock's speech from the *Merchant of Venice* is re-interpreted to voice the intrinsic humanity of the mistreated Beur:

Si vous nous suspectez continuellement, est-ce que nous ne sommes pas offensés? Si vous nous tutoyez, est-ce que nous ne sommes pas vexés? Si vous nous demandez nos papiers pour un oui ou un non, est-ce que nous ne sommes pas exaspérés? Si vous nous traitez de rats, de melons, de bognoules, est-ce que nous ne sommes pas humiliés?¹¹

Whatever the theoretical position of Shakespeare within postcolonialism, his presence here ought to raise certain doubts.¹²

¹⁰ *Casa*, p.22.

¹¹ *Vivre me tue*, p. 185.

¹² In 'Orientalism and After', in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), Aijaz Ahmad has remarked that, in a strict Foucauldian sense, there can be no Orientalism that begins with the Greeks and continues to

There is however, not the least sense of contradiction or discomfort in the Smail texts with the use of this particular literary allusion as moral demonstration. Literature begins to play the role of external moral exemplar without the least corrupting touch of Orientalist thinking. This is made eminently clear by the omnipresence of Melville as an intertextual touchstone. The character of Queequeg in *Moby Dick*, the faithful, tattooed cannibal, must surely be considered problematic within any postcolonial critique worthy of the name, and yet, in Smail, *Moby Dick* is a morally uplifting adventure story with no orientalist (or homoerotic) subtext whatsoever.

What becomes increasingly clear is that the literary canon provides the 'pure' exemplar of humanist moral authority within these texts. This perhaps unexpected humanism is expressed through the vociferous rejection of stereotype and group identification and the ever more lyrical celebration of the individual's moral choice. In a telling passage at the end of *La Passion selon moi*, the narrator responds to a newspaper article about Michel Houellebecq:

J'ai lu ce matin dans un article consacré au *Particules élémentaires* que les notions de dignité humaine et de liberté étaient de vieilles lunes. Mais nous, mon amour, nous voulons toujours marcher main dans la main au clair de ces vieilles lunes, dans les jardins du Retiro, ou place de la République. Liberté! Liberté! Liberté et dignité! Pour avoir vécu quelques mois au Maroc, j'ai su ce qu'était l'absence de liberté

the present day (pp. 164-66). In Foucault's careful formulation, the Western epistémè only comes into being between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (see Ahmad pp.165-67). It is perhaps one of the more questionable features of Said's book that it assumes a monolithic Orientalism that presumably does include Shakespeare.

individuelle; pour avoir grandi à Barbès, je sais ce que signifie de se voir dénier sa dignité d'homme...¹³

In the light of this particular assessment of humanist, literary celebration, the special status of canonical authors is more readily explained. Authors like Baudelaire and Rimbaud, and even Melville, are the exemplars of this brand of individual liberty and dignity. Their aesthetic journey sets them apart from the common herd. They embody the romantic ideal of the autonomous, *artistic*, self. Against this background of great (male) writers, the emphasis on the salvation present in the act of writing itself equally becomes ever more grandiose and absorbing.

Much of the moral force attributed to authors in the novels stems from the romantic ideal of the great man standing above and outside society and commenting with prescience and acumen on the goings-on within it. Paul (and to a great extent Sid Ali) interject citations to illustrate their status as social outsiders, but equally to show that, even if society rejects them, they do belong to this small group of romantics paragons. The writers and the poets are those who pre-eminently fail to belong but whose non-belonging is itself the ultimate mark of merit. We have already seen that Paul finds his salvation through his pen and in the fourth novel, the murderer Sid Ali finally achieves peace of mind in his prison cell through writing. The act of writing reconciles the outsider, the criminal, to himself, and indeed, by the same token, inscribes the writer within a brotherhood (and it is a *brotherhood*) of common souls. The archetypal writer/outsider, the poet Rimbaud, functions in the Smaïl books as yet another recurrent intertextual marker. In Morocco Paul remarks: 'Rimbaud était ma seule consolation'.¹⁴

¹³ *La Passion selon moi*, p. 169.

¹⁴ *Casa, la casa*, p. 83.

On the aeroplane out to Morocco, he has already recognised his kinship with the poet:

Puis, j'ai ouvert au hasard *Une saison en enfer*, que j'avais glissé dans la poche intérieure de mon blouson. À toutes les pages, il s'agissait de moi, de ce que je ressentais.

Je lisais ceci, que je vivais:

Ma journée est faite; je quitte l'Europe.

Et ceci:

Si j'avais des antécédents à un point quelconque de l'histoire de France!

Mais non rien.

*Il m'est bien évident que j'ai toujours été race inférieure.*¹⁵

The citation from Rimbaud here illustrates the importance of the idea of stricken artistic souls, outside the pale of normal society, whilst, in the same breath, the notion of an inferior race to which both Paul and Rimbaud belong is asserted with romantic self-confidence. This race may be inferior in the eyes of a certain branch of society perhaps, but then in the Smaïl novels society is nothing but a backward force enslaved by the mass media, hardly a worthy judge. These inferior beings, Smaïl and Rimbaud, belong to a band of brothers, Stendhal's happy few perhaps, the clear-sighted holders of an esoteric (joyous, libertarian) knowledge. This particular knowledge, which in the novels plays the part of artistic truth, is contrasted with the small-minded, racist stereotyping of society at large. In a move which, however unexpected, is anything but ironic, canonical literature has become the saving grace of the disenfranchised Muslim minority of France.

¹⁵ *Casa, la casa*, p. 47.

Within this romantic conception of the role of the writer, Paul's cry on his return to France from Morocco that he has come back an 'écrivain français', despite its self-mockery, reads as an assertion of moral authority. Clearly his speech is intended to demonstrate an 'I'm as good as the next man' postcolonial bravado but it is more than simple bragging. This is evident not least in the choice of writers to whom he compares himself. Once again, we have a list of male canonical authors including the two most famous 'lumières' writers of the eighteenth century, Voltaire and Diderot. The filiation present in the act of writing transcends all boundaries and, in ever more grandiose terms, begins to be theorised as a process of salvation. Paul's friend Sami, for example, remarks grandiloquently: 'Merde, tu es un écrivain, Paul! Tu es sauvé.'¹⁶ Paul is saved by writing (and by reading) and this in direct contrast to his brother Daniel who was not saved, who dies in the first novel through his inability to find spiritual (and racial) equanimity. Writing transcends mundane existence, provides an instantaneous band of brothers and is the source of spiritual salvation. Writing is the transcendental art-form *par excellence*: 'Dans un roman tout est permis...'.¹⁷ This further strengthens the romantic trope running through these books. Writing cannot betray, it can only reveal. The postcolonial reader might question whether the assertion that successful white male writers form a spiritual brotherhood is a groundbreaking revelation, but within the context of these particular novels it is at least given a slightly unusual twist.

However, the incongruity between the ostensibly postcolonial thematics of these novels and the deeply conservative view of literature that they develop problematises any critical reading. This incongruity is further complicated by additional instances of identification with 'Orientalist' or 'colonial' influences

¹⁶ *Casa, la casa*, p. 44.

¹⁷ *La Passion selon moi*, p. 83.

culminating in the final Smaïl novel with an openly imperialist worldview. Identification with a certain kind of literary influence might, at a push, be incorporated into a postcolonial critique precisely because of its affiliations to romanticism rather than humanism. The development however of a thematics that openly rejects any easy recognition of communitarian self-understanding but instead places self-creation and individual difference at the heart of an ethical social life begins to look like an increasingly unapologetic, and increasingly elitist, form of humanism. And yet this brand of humanism continues to be developed within a postcolonial plot that stages an overt critique of socially divisive categorisation. The possibility of a structured network of power/knowledge-like structures is therefore implicitly accepted but is combated explicitly through humanist principles. The basic incompatibility of this position is left entirely unexplored. Léger has an eminent precursor for this particular approach in the person of Edward Said. Aijaz Ahmad's remarkable essay 'Orientalism and After' succinctly and effectively analyses this particular flaw at the heart of the Said structuralist project.¹⁸ What is certainly a weakness in a work of theory is, at the very least, disconcerting in a work of fiction.

The Smaïlian identification with colonial norms goes further than allegiance to humanism however. *La Passion selon moi* begins to develop an aesthetics of action that owes more to notions of aristocracy and elitism than to the lyrical humanism of the previous novels. The Spaniard Iñigo for instance:

...se lance dans une défense véhémement de la corrida: affirmation de notre dignité humaine selon lui [...] il dit qu'il ne veut pas vivre dans un monde privé de rites et sans virilité, infantile, asexué, non fumeur, sobre; un monde où tout

¹⁸ Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory*, pp. 159-219.

compliment à une jolie femme devient délit de harcèlement, où toute entreprise de séduction est interprétée comme un prélude au viol... Et le duende, tenu pour une manifestation condamnable, parce que forcément antidémocratique, du génie.¹⁹

What has thus far only been intimated in the literary theory of Great Men, propounded through citation and allusion, begins to be explicitly manifested in open argument. The neutered *Société du Spectacle* is opposed to a virile, aristocratic world where men are men and can seduce women to their hearts' content; where animals know their place and democracy does not intervene too closely into men's desires. This particular theme is developed in more detail in the final Smaïl novel, *Ali, le Magnifique*. The protagonist of the final novel, like Paul, pledges allegiance to the Great Literary Hero but he also goes further. *Ali, le Magnifique* develops a kind of aesthetics only hinted at in the previous novels in the character of Iñigo, an aesthetics of virility. Sid Ali identifies with a series of 'virile' role models whose aristocratic mien he yearns to imitate because it is beautiful. His is a kind of post-Nietzschean world order in which the beautiful and the good are hopelessly intertwined. Although notions of virility are developed throughout the novel, the two final model aristocrats are most interesting for the purposes of this essay because they are the ultimate exemplars of an unabashed imperialist colonialism. The first is Sid Ali's Spanish lover, a character not dissimilar to Iñigo: 'il est beau, généreux, viril, élégant, bien élevé, très spirituel et, en toutes choses, grand seigneur'.²⁰ This grand seigneur is also an Old World Spanish aristocrat deeply resentful of the rapacious Portuguese to whom he must sell his sherry:

¹⁹ *La Passion selon moi*, p. 122.

²⁰ *Ali, le Magnifique*, p. 578.

Les Portugais, à l'entendre, étaient sans dignité, sans générosité, sans énergie, sans élégance, sans civilité, sans virilité! De foutus hypocrites – à preuve, leurs corridas, où ils ne tuaient pas le taureau dans l'arène mais, honteusement, dans les coulisses –! peureux! pleurards! sales avec ça [...] obsédés *par la pasta, la pasta, la pasta* – non, pas ce qu'on croit, pas *la pasta* des Italiens, mais: le fric, en espagnol –! toujours à vous forcer la main au restaurant! jamais n'ayant un geste! n'offrant jamais quoi que ce soit! Maladivement radins et méfiants dès qu'il était question de sous...²¹

The Portuguese peasants cannot live up to the standards of the Spanish aristocrat. The colonial subtext of the Spanish aristocracy is not explored in any detail in the character of Manuel but the last exemplar of seigniorial virility is deliberately placed against a background of colonial exploitation. This last figurehead is Sid Ali's lawyer, Maître Hélier:

Tout ce qu'il y a de plus vieille France, Me Jean-Charles Hélier de Hocquencourt! Cépage d'origine, sans coupage, Me Jean-Charles Hélier de Hocquencourt! Pas de l'alliage, hein! pas de mésalliances chez les H de H! du pur jus, du fort, du titré, du roudi premier choix de souche de souche! Baron de père en fils depuis les Croisades, et assez noble pour ne jamais faire étalage de sa noblesse.²²

²¹ *Ali, le Magnifique*, p. 586.

²² *Ali, le Magnifique*, pp. 524-25.

This pure aristocrat is subjected to a degree of criticism in the early part of the novel, by its final stages however, he has risen to the rank of colonial paragon. Maître Hélier also happens to be a landowner in Morocco, in this he is perhaps the novel's only genuine Orientalist. It is in the 'luxe du dépouillement' of his Moroccan holiday home that he spends the summer. It is to this same holiday home that Sid Ali follows the Hocquencourts when he is himself in Marrakech:

Là, lointain mirage dans la brume de chaleur, ocre rose du crépi sablé des murailles, blanc neigeux des jasmins en fleur, rouge feu des flamboyants, rouge violine des bougainvillées, élégant balancement lascif, baudelairien, des palmes – on devine le ksar. Là tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, luxe, calme et volupté...²³

Sid Ali in yet another direct confrontation with postcolonial sensibilities is seen to aspire to a French orientalist past and this through a direct quotation from an orientalist poet. This colonial understanding of the exoticism of the east is directly contrasted to Sid Ali's own disappointment in Marrakech when he is faced with poverty, dirt and servility. Paul's Moroccan descriptions in *Casa, la casa* have the merit of sounding false to his own ears.²⁴ Sid Ali

²³ *Ali, le Magnifique*, p. 207.

²⁴ Raised on Orientalist literature, Paul inevitably sees North Africa through the eyes of the colonizer; it is the literary fantasy that he wishes to emulate not the tangible everyday reality of life in Morocco. Later on in *Casa, la casa* however, having met many sympathetic Moroccans he concludes: 'Je n'étais rentré en France que depuis peu, trois semaines à peine, mais déjà toutes les impressions s'estompaient, ou m'apparaissaient aussi fausses que le reste. Des chichis de romancier à la con: la touffeur, le ciel en feu, les aloès et les bougainvillées, le chant du muezzin... Pacotille exotique. Toc. Aussi toc que les trésors des

on the other hand, believes in the colonial fantasy and desires only to experience it from the colonial perspective. Indeed, in his internal dialogue with a taxi driver he places himself directly in the role of disparaging former colonist:

Mais ouais, pourri! Prends-nous pour des gols, en plus, nous les anciens colonisateurs qui vous avons apporté l'ordre, la propreté, la justice, la santé, le protectorat! Dix dirhams, tu auras, mon z'ami, l'équivalent de six francs! on ira jusqu'à quinze! neuf francs! ce sera notre manière de te marquer notre mépris: on est des seigneurs, on ne discute pas avec la racaille basanée locale!²⁵

Sid Ali, through his identification with the seigniorial paragons Manuel and Maître Hélier begins to perceive Morocco as a lost colonial asset. The veneer of postcolonial sensibility of the first three novels is entirely broken through and humanism itself is abandoned in favour of an openly imperialist aristocracy. The universalism of individual difference gives way to the élitism of an imperial band beset by a host of nauseating, servile and effeminate others.

As I hope this brief overview has shown, the worrying thematic of the Smaïl novels are resolved with difficulty within any traditionally postcolonial socio-historical approach. The particularities of discrimination in contemporary French society may be analysed ad infinitum without providing a means of assessing these texts. It is eminently clear that France retains an allegiance to a political liberalism that informs much of the humanist thinking that recurs throughout the books, but even the

déballages de Barbès. Littérature!' (*Casa, la casa*, p. 160). Thus the spell of literary Orientalism is broken.

²⁵ *Ali, le Magnifique*, p. 188.

conservative and pervasive nature of that liberalism fails to account for the kinds of colonial identification that they depict. A simple rejection of the books on the grounds that they purport to portray an experience that their author simply does not have, fails in a singular way to tackle their particular complexity. Ian Hacking's dynamic nominalism offers a way of overcoming these hurdles within a Foucauldian methodology. The characters of Paul Smaïl and Sid Ali Benengeli may be seen as teasing instantiations of social practices confronting autonomous reactions in a uniquely postcolonial manner through the social pressures of immigration. Both characters are examples of situated selves bounded by incompatible knowledges struggling to develop some kind of acceptable identity and in this they are postcolonial par excellence. Whilst postcolonial critics may deplore the particular results, they cannot reject the attempt. The Smaïl novels show that there is no simple postcolonial ethics that can be easily divorced from the less palatable ideologies of colonialism. The historically postcolonial subject may well identify with the Orientalist.

Converting the Other to the Same: The Embattled Ethics of Paul Smaïl

Although offering a means to analyse the interaction between forms of knowledge and autonomous behaviour in the Smaïl novels, dynamic nominalism has little to say on the matter of ethical reading. And yet these texts demand an ethical reading, not least because they stage dramatic scenes of murder that are drawn in part from reality. This is not the place to consider the particular difficulties inherent in the fictionalisation of a real life tragedy, but I would like to sketch out a possible means of approaching these novels ethically by using the work of Emmanuel Levinas. I shall not explore Levinas's theory in any great detail here, instead drawing on Colin Davis's succinct definition:

The encounter with otherness is a fundamental ethical moment; the generosity or violence of our response, the degree to which we welcome or reject the proximity of the Other, will determine our standing as moral subjects.²⁶

This particular approach seems appropriate not only because it offers a means of surveying the text without resorting to the very humanist commonplaces that it so problematically asserts, but because something approaching Levinas's conception of the Other is voiced in an unexplored aside in *La Passion selon moi*:

Dire à quelqu'un: « Tu es mon semblable », ce n'est pas s'intéresser à lui, le respecter, l'aimer ; c'est lui faire violence parce que c'est lui dire : « Tu es quelqu'un de bien puisque tu me ressembles », c'est l'assommer sous son narcissisme à soi, sous sa vanité.

Nahan, mon pote ! je ne suis pas ton semblable. Je n'ai pas de semblable, et si je m'intéresse à toi, si je te respecte, si je t'aime, c'est parce que tu es différent de moi – parce que tu n'es pas moi.²⁷

What is interesting about this particular claim is that, like so much in these books, it bolsters a republican conception of the self. Paul makes this speech in order to back up his condemnation of 'communautarisme', of any notion of communal belonging. In Smaïlian terms, the particular benefit of Levinasian theory is that it

²⁶ Colin Davis, *Ethical Issues in Twentieth Century French Fiction* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 1.

²⁷ *La Passion selon moi*, p. 73.

amounts to an extreme form of individualism. What is even more interesting is the extent to which these books fail to put this proclaimed belief in absolute alterity into practice. Paul continually surrounds himself with the like-minded, whatever their race, colour or sexual orientation, in other words he absorbs external difference into internal similarity. In contrast, the absolute otherness of religious affiliation symbolised by the figure of the committed Muslim is simply rejected.

The rejection of communal belonging is contested throughout by Paul's own group affiliations. Community groups are the symbols of imposed identities, which, in the Smaïlian world, are nothing less than weapons of social control. In contrast his own loose group affiliations are 'chosen' and are ostensibly free from any neutralising similarity. In practice these groups are defined by an identical series of likes and dislikes and by a humanist worldview that proclaims the freedom and dignity of the individual. They have the same tastes in books and music, they are to a man either agnostic or atheist, they condemn the contemporary world of the mass media, they drink, they smoke, they dance, they show each other unquestioning support, in short, they are friends. Heart-warming though this depiction of friendship is, it fails magisterially to contend with alterity. Friends, by their very nature, are like me. In Davis's words:

What a friend cannot be is totally alien to my world and values, and his or her friendship will not require me to experience something shockingly unexpected.²⁸

The omnipresence of understanding friendship rather than autonomous alterity is most in evidence in Paul's encounter with

²⁸ Colin Davis, *Ethical Issues*, p. 8; though here Davis is talking about books as friends.

Morocco. Rather than meeting with an incommensurable otherness, he is surrounded by a nurturing society of kindred souls. His host, Mme Solal, is a psychiatrist who speaks an exact literary French and who offers him only a reflection of his own beliefs. His later acquaintances turn out to be a yet another group of free-spirited humanists battling against the obscurities of religion. Instead of encountering the dangerous incomprehension of alterity, Paul is wrapped in the warm embrace of the same. His geographical presence in the darkness of Africa is not enough to give him even a glimpse of anyone disconcertingly other, instead, he finds his own beliefs reaffirmed.

If there is a place of blank alterity in the 'autobiographical' Smaïl novels, then it is the marginal and fleeting figure of the religious believer. There is no character to enact this role, but its very absence is signalled by the repeated condemnations and rejections of organised religion. Paul's own views are counterpoised against his obscure and allergic response to religion and religious affiliation. Islam is a manifestation of fascism 'ou tout comme'; the bullies who insult him in front of his brother at the beach are wearing 'l'un un crucifix en or massif au creux de ses pectoraux épilés, l'autre l'étoile de David'.²⁹ Mme Solal's psychiatric patients suffer 'de ne plus avoir la foi dans un pays où l'apostasie est toujours un crime'.³⁰ Religions persecute the irreligious and plunge their adherents into the blackness of superstition and obscurity. Far from respecting and loving this difference, Paul is horrified by it and remarks explicitly upon its error. In other words, he desires only to convert the other to the same and therefore fails in his ethical responsibility.

Ali, le Magnifique raises rather different ethical issues. Most centrally of course, it stages a series of altericides, all of them murders of women. Women do not feature as a distinctive category

²⁹ *Vivre me tue*, p.48.

³⁰ *Casa*, p.59.

in the first three novels but the particular concerns of the last ensure that they emerge as the vulnerable face of Otherness. The dialectic of virility that is developed throughout these novels is counterpoised by a scorned effeminacy and servility. It is not women, however, who are the primary target of explicit accusations of effeminacy but Sid Ali's clients in Paris and the native Moroccans in Marrakech. The role of the Other is unstable, it encompasses the sexual abasement of the client whose pseudo-rape is orchestrated by the rent boy, and the servile desire for money on the part of the Moroccan worker. The Other is he or she who admits Sid Ali's superiority through fear or desire. The ultimate Other, however, is she who does not desire, who does not fear, but whose stare judges and humiliates. The murdered women are ultimately Other and ultimately vulnerable because they fail to absorb Sid Ali.

Before each of the murders, Sid Ali is subjected to a perceived humiliation. Before killing Cécile Rénal he tells her: 'j'ai une mauvaise nouvelle pour toi, Cécile, je suis venu pour te violer et te tuer *puisque tu me méprises*' (my emphasis).³¹ Cécile in her rejection of Sid Ali shows her failure to understand him fully. If she had understood him, she could not have rejected him. If the murder of Donata is preceded by a more indirect humiliation at the hands of the train conductor who catches him out in a lie, the recounting of the murders of Angéline and Julie are closely intertwined with an internal monologue of reaction to their imagined scorn:

Putain! Ce noir regard que ses yeux bleus me jettent! Et la manière dont elle plaque entre ses jambes son fils comme pour le protéger d'une agression plus que possible! Probable!³²

³¹ Ali, *Le Magnifique*, p. 348.

³² Ali, *Le Magnifique*, p. 506.

And :

Qu'est-ce t'as, taha? Ma chetron te revient pas? C'est la première fois dans ta vie que tu croises en chemin un bougnoule? Tu avais jamais vu de beur avant de me voir? Y en a pas au zoo?³³

What is evident here is that it is Sid Ali's own rejection that he cannot bear, the perception that he is himself irredeemably Other. If he kills it is to reassert his own subjectivity. Alterity, far from compelling a generous responsibility, condemns the self to a world of misunderstanding. It is quite clear that Sid Ali wants above all to be accepted and further to be absorbed into a brotherhood of literary and aristocratic elitism not too far distant from that depicted in the first three novels. The battery of knowledge machinery that has surrounded him all his life has failed to comprehend him, but Manuel, Maître Hélier and the Portuguese psychiatrist make right these failures in the novel's final section as Sid Ali is at last understood. With this understanding and the novel's happy ending, all hope for an ethical encounter with alterity is irrevocably lost. Far from staging a Levinasian respect for the Other, the Smail novels condemn alterity to conversion to the same. Imperialist thematic strands meet imperialist ethical concerns. The discomfort engendered by the incongruous intertwining of postcolonial thematics and humanist aspiration, under a Levinasian analysis, becomes the ultimate ethical failure.

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³³ Ali, *Le Magnifique*, p. 536.

Sport and Algerian Nationalism in the 'Global' Era: Within and Beyond the Nation-State

The aim of this essay is to discuss the influence of nationalist ideology on sport as well as the influence of modern sport's nationalist nature in the construction of nationalism within 'Third World Countries' in general, and Algeria in particular. The paper firstly discusses the Western definition of nationalism and the challenges that nations are facing due to the increased influence of global interconnectedness. The latter consequently resulted in the generalisation of the Anglo-Saxon (American), liberal and individualist conception of social ties. This is characterised, according to Naïr, by the spiritualisation and essentialism of the particular (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious) sense of belonging.¹ The second part of the paper examines the contemporary history of nationalism in 'Third World Countries', with a further emphasis on Algeria. The third and last sections seek to link the debate on nationalism in the Arab world and the *Maghreb* region to the field of sport, focusing again on Algerian football. In conclusion we claim that the crisis of modernity in the Arab states, resulting from the decline of the so-called *progressiste* and secular ideologies (e.g. the one party-state, socialism, pan-Arabism, pan-Africanism, etc.), and the imposed definition of nationalism in the sense of 'imagined community', have also been felt in the sporting fields. After being used as a tool — sometimes as a privileged instrument — for nation-state building and for the gathering of masses around state ideology, with its essentialist definition of national unity, sport is becoming today the focus for all forms of regionalist and nationalist antagonism.

1 Sami Naïr, *L'Empire face à la diversité* (Paris : Hachette, 2003), p. 84.

Sport plays a key role in the alleged era of 'glocalisation', which names the tendency towards regionalisation, where the centralised nation-state is giving way to both supra-national and sub-national institutions,² as well as 'translocalism', or the sense of living on the borders, namely 'being neither here nor there, neither one nor the other'.³ Sport is also participating in the reconstruction of a new, hybrid sense of solidarity that goes beyond the conventionally recognised territorial frontiers of the nation-state. This is illustrated by the 'reverse migration' of football players, from the so-called third generations of immigrants in Europe, to their parents' country of origin.

Introduction: Sport and the Nation-State, between Globalisation and Localisation

There has been considerable debate between sociologists, economists and political commentators concerning the role and definition of the nation-state in the New World System. Bauman, in a similar way to Giddens, defines the state using a Weberian approach as an agency claiming the legitimate right to violence and boasting sufficient resources.⁴ The latter includes administrative and hierarchical organisation. Therefore, the state's role is to set up and enforce the rules and norms binding the running of affairs within certain 'recognised' territories, i.e. recognised by other states and by supra-national organisations such as the United Nations. The other conditions of state formation are concerned with the following:

2 Rolan Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. (London: Sage Publications, 1992).

3 Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Re-imagining the Umma*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 98.

4 Zigmunt Bauman, *Globalization: the Human Consequences* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 60. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (London: Polity Press, 1990), p. 73.

- proper laws, taxes, school system, currency, and civil service;
- police and armed forces;
- a strategic geopolitical involvement with other states;
- an economic and cultural foundation.

According to Gruneau, the state's principal role consists in the embodiment of collective values and the people's interests in any given society.⁵ Yet, the conception of collective values and interests changes in relation to the ideology on which the concept of the state has been built. Today, in the alleged era of globalisation and 'the triumph of liberalism', the state's task is argued, not without criticism, to be serving the sole interests of international organisation and trans-national companies.

It is argued that nations are formed by groups of people united by a common sense of belonging to the same culture, history, language, race and religion. Nationalism is also defined as the assertion of the primary significance of national identity over other forms of identity (class, gender, religion etc).

An important distinction should be made here between different approaches to nationalism. For instance, modernist interpretations have tended to describe nationalism as the ways in which states and their elites have sought to organise populations to deal with the increasingly complex nature of modern societies. For the Germanic tradition of nationalism, derived from writers such as Herder (1744-1803), national identity was the historical product of the relationship between language, consciousness and territory. According to the French 'universal' principles of 'Human Culture', it is not the organic community of blood and the land, or that of customs and history, which binds individuals to a particular

nation or people, but rather the purposeful will or '*association volontaire et libre*' of individuals who build nations and construct national identities. The postmodern approach, on the other hand, stresses the fragmentation of national identity in the era of global political and cultural (dis) order. In the so-called epoch of 'the end of history', concepts such as translocalism come to replace the traditional or modernist definition of national identity.⁶

A nation can take the form of a nation-state, if the bond of nationalism coincides with the boundaries of the state. The nation-state is also defined as an entity with sovereignty. This sovereignty has to be applied within pre-defined borders and dominated by a single nation. It should be noted, however, that linking a nation to a distinct state (to borders) does not occur without challenges. If the nation is to be regarded as a population bound together by a shared history, culture, language and ethnicity, then there are a considerable number of nation-states with ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous populations. Furthermore, there are a considerable number of so-called stateless nations (e.g. the Scots, Kurds, Chechens, Tibetans). There are also members of the same ethnic or tribal groups for instance in Africa or the Arab peninsula living in separate nation-states. One can argue that notions of common heritage are often the result of constructed myths of shared history, or to use Benedict Anderson's phrase, an 'imagined community', rather than a real product of nature or a given truth.⁷ Similarly, if nation-states are to be regarded as the bearers of sovereignty, the rise of supra-national entities has led some authors to claim that the significance of the concept of the nation-state is in serious decline. This is most clearly exemplified by the European Union, even though it is going through a political crisis today. The

6 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

7 The state as the repository of our best hopes or our nation's best self. See Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile, and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta books, 2001).

5 *Sport, Culture and The Modern State*, ed. Richard Gruneau and Hart Cantelon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) p. 6.

reason put forward is that the nation's ability to act independently has been lost. Such a loss is viewed negatively by those who mourn the distancing of national governments from local political control, and viewed positively by those who approve of the weakened ability of nation-states to systematically oppress minorities within their populations without scrutiny from the outside world. Arguably, the nation-state system of governance today faces serious challenges as a result of processes of globalisation and increased interconnectedness between societies and cultures. Well-established nation-states, such as Canada, Belgium, Spain, are facing 'separatist' claims.⁸ Catalonia in Spain, Wales and Scotland in Britain, and Quebec in Canada (or more recently Kurdistan in Iraq) set up their own parliaments or political assemblies and claimed a unique political, cultural and economic status. Millions of people are on the move because of ethnic, religious and political conflicts. This movement has set in motion what Delbrück calls a 'denationalisation process', which has made the meaning of borders literally and geographically less significant.⁹ Featherstone points out that:

More people are living between cultures, or on the borderlines, and European and other nation-states, which formerly sought to construct such exclusive sense of national identity, more recently have had to deal with the fact that they are multicultural societies as the "rest" have returned to the west in the post 1945 era.¹⁰

8 Jost Delbrück, 'Global Migration-Immigration-Multi-ethnicity: Challenges to the concept of Nation State', *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 2.1, (1994): 45-64.

9 Ibid., p. 16.

10 Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalisation, Postmodernism and Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), p. 10.

Modern sport, in the same manner as modern theories of nationalism and nation-state, is argued to be the product of Western modernity. The values of national identities are perceived to be the core values of modern sport. Moreover, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sport has become the vehicle par excellence for national sentiment because sport involves a competition that is based on the very system of the nation-state.

Sport can serve different and sometimes contradictory aims. It can be used for the promotion of separatism between communities based on religion, nationality and ethnicity, for example football games between Celtics and Rangers, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, Bastia and PSG, Sakhnin and Maccabi Tel-Aviv, etc; or as a vehicle for a sense of togetherness, with the goal of promoting shared cultural experiences, for example the French National Football Team, *black, blanc, beur* and its claim to symbolise the French nation.

Modern sport has always been mobilised for politico-ideological endeavours. The Nazi regime found in the 1936 Olympic Games an ideal opportunity to celebrate the greatness (the Roman heritage) and supremacy of Nazi Germany (and the Aryan race). The same is true for the Soviet Union (and its satellite socialist countries), which employed the international sporting arena to reinforce its position as the new emerging super-power after World War II. Having said that, the mobilisation of sport is not unique to totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.¹¹ An example of a truly global event, in terms of the number of participants, spectatorship and media coverage, is without doubt the Olympic Games. It is proclaimed to be the space par excellence for the expression and celebration of national and cultural 'diversities'. Although it should be noted that apart from the opening and the closing ceremonies, nationalist considerations overcome the

11 Philip Liotard, 'Le Sport, affaire d'état ou question national ? Le Sport au Secours des Imaginaires Nationaux', *Quasimodo*, 3-4, (1997): 9-31.

multicultural constituent of the Games. Both the host nation and participating athletes become, willingly or not, at least for the time of this sporting event, the ambassadors of their countries, sometimes soldiers in the service of their states' ideology. The former seeks to prove to the world a sense of unity, responsibility, and organisation, as well as the state's capacity in mobilising its national resources (human, financial, technological) for the success of the Games. As for the latter, the competition is an opportunity to win medals, synonymous with access to the restricted club of nation-states that can compete at the highest level. For the so called 'peripheral' countries the Olympic Games it is an occasion to compete against economically and technologically advanced countries, and for developed countries it is another occasion to reassert their hegemony in all domains. Thus, the Olympic Games are an occasion for athletes and nation-states to maintain or to reverse the world's geo-strategic map.

One can argue that sport, despite the challenges of globalisation, remains a constituent of the identity construction of social groups. Thus, whether through nostalgia, mythology, invented or selected traditions, sport still contributes to the quest for identity, be it local and global.¹²

Sport and Nationalism in 'Third World' Countries

As a reaction to the Eurocentric and essentialist view of nationalism and also as a direct result of the history of colonialism, a new 'Third World' form of nationalism has emerged.¹³ The

12 Grant Jarvie, 'Sport, Nationalism and Cultural Identity', in Allison Lincoln (ed), *The Changing Politics of Sport* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993): 58-83.

13 The nation is here a form of public culture and political symbolism, and ultimately of politicised mass culture, one which seeks to mobilise the citizens to love their nations, observe its laws and defend their homeland. Neil Smith, 'Geography, Difference and the Politics of Scale', in Joe Doherty, Elspeth

objective of this 'accepted' or 'necessary' nationalism, as described by Said, was to bring to light those long deferred and denied identities, and mobilise them around the nationalist cause for independence. As a result, 'black' and 'Arab' cultures previously viewed by the colonial intellectuals and politicians as features of a subordinate race',¹⁴ fit only for colonial and subaltern status, became celebrated as the features of national and supra-national unity and resistance against imperialism, for example pan-Arabism and pan-Africanism.¹⁵ This call for self-determination expressed in political and intellectual terms, took the form — due to the scale of the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence — of an endeavoured rupture with the colonial society (historically, geographically, and ideologically).¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that the political determination of separatism from the coloniser did not go as far as to completely refute the epistemological foundations of nationalism, and particularly its homogeneous (most of the time imposed) notion of national unity. The Western philosophy of identity and its definition of nationalism, or nationhood and nation-state (considered in the literature as an invention of modern and secular Europe), were completely assimilated by the newly independent states. The

Graham and Mo Malek (eds.), *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences* (London: Imprint Basingstoke : Macmillan, 1992): 57-79.

14 'Even the distinguished and humanistic writer Albert Camus, who was a native member of the French settler population, embodied the Algerian in his fiction as an essentially nameless, threatening creature' (Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile*, p. 395).

15 Ibid., p. 395.

16 'After the liberation of Algeria in 1962 one of the principle tasks of the FLN was to re-establish the integrity, the centrality, and the sovereignty of the Muslim Algerian identity. With the creation of a new governmental structure of Algeria came an educational programme focused first on the teaching of Arabic and on Algerian history. Formally either banned or subordinated to programmes stressing the superiority of French civilisation' (See Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile*, p. 365).

process of assimilation, which happened most of the time at the expense of regional and sub-national (ethnic, linguistic or religious) identities, was considered as the 'supreme' solution for the preservation of national sovereignty, interest, and security from external threats (such as neo-imperialism).

The top-down nationalistic polity of identity previously discussed, usually imposed by the governing party, has quickly proved itself to be insufficient for the ensuing period. Today, particularly in the Arab world, the collapse of socialism and the absence of a convincing new secular ideology has played a role in the appearance of other forms of nationalism. As a result, national identities based on religious as well as regionalist solidarities, such as Kurdish, are replacing 'secular' nationalism.¹⁷ The Arab nations are hesitating between the options of becoming a political entity according to the Western model of the nation-state; of forging a cultural identity shared with the rest of the Arab nations that constitute the Arab world; or assuming a larger identity, that is as part of the Islamic (*Umma*) community.¹⁸ As an outcome of the (imposed) new world system, single national identities, political and economic interests, have taken the place of 'single all Arab nations' and considerations of unity and co-operation. Formerly constructed around the secular values of political and cultural regeneration, moral and political origins, and more importantly on

17 Islam is a refuge for societies' identities and ethno-cultural groups, which were scratched out of their structures and traditional values by material modernity; it is also a reference for all social forces which are unable to express themselves politically elsewhere, outside their spaces protected by religious immunity; finally, it is a tool for those who want to take power. See Mouhamed Arkoun and Yves Goussault, *Religion, pouvoir et société dans le Tiers Monde ; entretien avec Mohammed Arkoun* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990).

18 Mahmoud Hussein, 'L'individu postcolonial', in Luc Barbulesco and Abdelouaheb Meddeb (eds.), *Postcolonialisme: décentrement déplacement, dissémination* (Paris: Débale, Maisonneuve and Larose, 1997): 164-174.

'historical legitimacy', the notion of national unity is itself being questioned today. This is reflected too in the sporting domain.

In the aftermath of independence, the appropriation of the dominant model of sport by newly independent countries was seen as inevitable, taking into account the multiple uses of sport as an element for political, social and cultural recognition. One can nevertheless suggest that the adhesion of formerly colonised nations to the international sporting community did not happen in a straightforward manner. The newly independent countries have also used international sporting events, and particularly the media coverage that such events attract, as a space to express their regional, political and ideological concerns (such as anti-imperialism and pan-Africanism), which had led sometimes to a real situation of crisis (for example, the struggle over the GANEFO games in 1965;¹⁹ Black September at the Munich Olympics in 1972; and the boycott of the Olympic Games to denounce apartheid in South Africa in 1976).

As for today, in the alleged era of globalisation, sport is an ingredient of the general strategy of transformation from socialism or controlled liberalism to the market economy and thus openness toward the 'liberal' world.²⁰ This is clearly evident in the Gulf region. Indeed, large investments are being poured into the Gulf countries in staging and sponsoring the world's leading sporting events as well as building sports' infrastructure. The aim is to open

¹⁹ The games of the New Emerging Forces were founded by Indonesia to challenge the hegemony of the International Olympic Committee. The first and last Asian GANEFO games were held in December of 1966 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in which 15 nations participated.

²⁰ Lamine Sfeir, 'The Status of Muslim Women in Sport: Conflict between Cultural Tradition and Modernisation', *International Review for Sociology of Sport*, 20.4 (1985): 283-303; Youcef Fates, *Sport et Tiers Monde, Pratiques corporelle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994); Ian Henry, Mahfoud Amara, Mansour Al-Tauqi, 'Sport, Arab nationalism and the Pan-Arab Games', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 38.3 (2003): 295-310.

the Arabian Peninsula to the world of business and finance and to establish a global reputation as a leading destination for international sporting events.²¹

In the Arab world, the same sense of 'regionalisation' expressed at political level is also present in the sporting arena. Sport, which was put in the colonial and post-colonial era at the service of Pan-Arab solidarities (demonstrated in the staging of regional games such as Pan-Arab Games aiming at strengthening unity between nation-states that share the same history and the culture), has become a space for ultra-nationalist sentiment and popular chauvinism. In some cases it has become the direct cause of conflict between Arab nations.²² As a result, this has transformed the sense of unity expressed in political speeches, at the Arab league circles, to an illusory objective. This is hard to achieve even in the field of sport. The search for glory and international recognition at any cost has provoked in many sport competitions the development of certain regrettable tendencies that seriously threaten the solidarity and the sense of unity. Sometimes these arise amongst the population of the same country and even within the same city. The tendency towards fragmentation for political and economic reasons has transformed sport into a source of violence and annihilation rather than fraternity and social emancipation. The incidents which occurred in the 2004 African Cup of Nations in Tunisia,²³ before and after the quarter final between Algeria and Morocco, or the Kurdish rioting which broke out in *Qamishli* (Syria) in March 2004 at a football match, remind us of the gap existing in and off the sports field between the state's discourse of unity and tendencies toward localism and division.

21 Mahfoud Amara, 'A 'Modernization' Project from Above? Asian Games - Qatar 2006', *Sport in Society*, 8.3 (2005): 495-516.

22 An example of this would be matches between Egypt and Algeria, known in football arena as 'enemy brothers'.

23 'L'officiel sort de son mutisme', *La Coupe d'Afrique a fait 2.500 blessés algériens*, *Le Quotidien d'Oran newspaper*, (17/02/ 2004), Oran.

This is applicable to both the local nation-state level and the regional level.

In the subsequent section of the paper, we will discuss the transformation of Algerian nationalism in the global era, after more than 30 years of a one party-state, of populist and Arab-centric nationalism, and how this alteration is reflected in the sporting arena.

Sport in the service of Algerian nationalism and nation-state building

According to Stora, nation-state building in the post-independence era operated according to two principles: authoritarian centralisation and the dissimulation of differences.²⁴ The FLN state in the same manner as other populist states in the Third World in general and the Arab world in particular, presented itself as a liberating, centralising, and unifying force. Furthermore, it posited itself as the guarantor of popular sovereignty and national integrity, as well as the defender of the country's frontiers, which were designated by the colonial power. Bennoune suggests that the new state presented itself as a socialist state (against neo-imperialism), oriented towards development, and modernist, though this was modernity without modernisation or democratisation. In other words, a key agent, or rather the sole agent, of technological, economic, social and cultural transformation.²⁵ El-Kenz goes a step further by claiming that the (FLN) state, drawing its legitimacy from the springs of the national liberation movement, became the prime mover of society. It was a

24 Benjamin Stora, *Algérie, Formation d'une nation* (Paris : Atlantica, 1998) , p.33.

25 Mahfoud Bennoune, 'Socio-Historical foundation of the contemporary Algerian state', in Ali El Kenz (ed.), *Algeria: The Challenge of modernity* (London: CODEBRIA Book series, 1991): 41-89.

highly centralised establishment, depriving all other institutions of significant power. This was explained by Santucci as the relation between the unity of state power (*l'unité du pouvoir d'état*) and that of nation's unity (*l'unité de la nation*).

The achieved unity of state power consecrated to express the nation's unity, was used to justify the totalitarian power of a ruling system [*d'un appareil dirigeant*], as well as to subscribe its action within a unified and stable framework in relation to religious, civil and military aspects (translated from French by the author).²⁶

In other words, it was the FLN's responsibility to ensure the hegemony of the state over society. One of its assignments was the co-ordination and orientation of the activities of the 'masses', defined as 'the social force of revolution', which included workers, peasants, the army, youth and the executive strata:

There were the individual citizens entitled to claim different rights, but these rights, were exclusively social, the right to work, education health, housing etc. On the other hand there was the state, with the panoply of monopolistic powers it had reserved for itself, starting with the power of command, but embracing also a monopoly over organisation expression, etc. Thus a sort of tacit social contract was established between citizens, who seemed to have abdicated their political right to the state,

26 Jean, C. Santucci, 'Etat, légitimité et identité au Maghreb: Les dilemmes de la modernité' *Confluences Méditerranée* 6, 1993. Available online at <http://www.confluences-mediterranee.com/> accessed 2002.

which would compensate by guaranteeing them their social rights (security in exchange of freedom).²⁷

At the political level, Bensmaïa argues that everything happened in a such way that in Algeria there should be a system without incompatibility, contradiction or opposition.²⁸ The foundation of the Algerian regime was based on the negation of political conflicts, what Bensmaïa describes as a 'unanimity mode of thinking' or '*la pensée unique*'. Pluralism was thereby considered as synonymous with division, and criticising the FLN State was regarded as a way to criticise the national revolutionary movement and its historical legitimacy. In other words, the state party was, until 1988, a tool and place for the fabrication of unanimity. It should be noted, however, that unanimity in the Algerian context did not completely correspond, according to Césari, to 'monotheism', since the organisation of the state was founded on one regime but divided between three systems of power: party, administration and Army.²⁹ El-Kenz gives another explanation for this 'Troika' in the power structure, which in his view had three dimensions: oil income, which is the first source of Algeria's export income, a strong centralising state, and a single party.

Together [*party, administration and the army*], they constituted a system of power that

27 Ali El-Kenz (ed.), *Algeria: The Challenge of Modernity*, p. 17.

28 Réda Bensmaïa, 'Les médiateurs Fantômes, de la nature de la violence en Algérie. Postcolonialisme, Décentrement, Déplacement, Dissemination', in Luc Barbulesco and Abdelouaheb Meddeb, *Postcolonialisme: décentrement déplacement, dissémination* (Paris: Débale, Maisonneuve and Larose, 1997): 142-158.

29 Joceline Cesari, 'L'Islam en Algérie, objet de toutes les convoitises,' *Mouvements*, 1, (Novembre-Décembre, 1998): 42-49.

conceived itself as a continuation of the liberation movement, identifying itself with 'the revolution', was the self-appointed guide of the people defined as a revolutionary force, and related to the society as if it were a military headquarters commanding an army on the battlefield in a new species of war called, for the moment, development.³⁰

On the ideological level, the early nationalist formula of Muslim reformists, which was led by *Ablehamid Ben Badis*, claiming 'Algeria is my homeland, Arabic is my language, and Islam is my religion', was combined with socialist values to found what is described as 'Islamic-socialism'. This was Islam in the service of socialism.

The Algerian regime was founded legally, "constitutionally", on popular sovereignty, "People's Democratic Republic of Algeria", "From the people and for the people". At the same time Islam is the state religion, and the head of state declares his oath on the Koran even regarding the affirmation of his loyalty towards socialism (translated from French).³¹

In comparison to other Maghrebian states, Algeria picked a militant and revolutionary type of socialism largely inspired by the soviet model, emerging within an ideological atmosphere of third-

30 Ali El-Kenz, *Algeria: The Challenge of Modernity*, p. 14.

31 Samir Hadjeres, 'L'ascension contradictoire des processus démocratiques', in *Algérie, comprendre la crise*, G. Manceron (ed.), (Brussels: Interventions, 1996) p. 119.

worldism.³² El-Kenz speaks about this 'specific form' of socialism in Algeria as opposed to the 'scientific' socialism of the eastern countries. For example, people did talk of social struggle but they took care not to see it in terms of a struggle between social classes.

It was not so much intended to describe an existing social structure in precise scientific terms. What it was meant to do was to help to organise the public perception of social reality in a simple, bi-polar schema entirely accessible to everyday common sense attitudes, with the virtue of combining in one potent brew facts as well as values, ethical and economic considerations, politics and history, revolution and reaction, good, evil, black and white.³³

After 1988, with the collapse of the 'Algerian model for development', the debate around national identity (cultural and linguistic) took a brutal turn. The right to formulate the nature of Algeria's national identity, autonomy and unity, previously reserved to the FLN-state, is contested today at all levels, and so in political and ideological terms. As consequence of the loss of the state's capacity for ideological mobilisation, Algerian society has become divided into three predominant social groups:

- a group calling for an assimilation of the new economic environment, culturally and ideologically;

32 The example of Tunisia which opted for a reformism based on two sequences, first socialist and then liberal, or Morocco which adopted a non-contested, but tolerated liberalism by the presence of an important public sector. For more information about the Algerian socialism (see Santucci, 'Etat, légitimité et identité au Maghreb: Les dilemmes de la modernité').

33 Ali El-Kenz, *Algeria: The Challenge of Modernity*, p. 12.

- a group rejecting the new environment as a source of social exclusion and looking instead for other existential references (essentially through Islam);
- a group of conservative (economists) within the state spheres which opts for technological assimilation but also stresses the necessity for dealing with the West through hard bargaining.

Bearing in mind Pan-arabism, secularism, Islam, Islamism, modernity, tradition, historical legitimacy, *arabophone*, *francophone*, *berberism*, Algerians are asked today, perhaps more than ever before, to decide between: a) *post-revolutionary-state*, or civic nationalism based on cultural unity and historical legitimacy; b) *ethnic nationalism*,³⁴ or a (declining) supra-nationalism (secular and Pan-Arab), or; c) an *Islamic nation*, which would comprise a much larger form of nationalism based on the religious definition of belonging to the larger community of Muslim believers (*Umma*).

These oppositions existing in the definitions and applications of nationalism and the nation-state in Algeria, situated between civic (*voluntarist*) nationalism, organic nationalism based on *el Assabiya el Arabia* (pan-Arabism), and religious identity based on Islamic solidarity, have also been reproduced in the sporting context.³⁵

In Algeria, in the same manner as in other colonised nations, sport was completely assimilated to serve the following purposes, despite being perceived as the 'heritage of the colonial presence'. It symbolised:

34 Both forms of nationalism, ethnic and civic nationalism, have failed to include the multi-linguistic (Berber) realities of the Algerian space.

35 We have to distinguish here between Islam as a political Ideology (Islamism) and Islam as a civilisational project for humanity.

- *in the colonial era*, the right of Algerians for self-determination, exemplified in the role of the FLN football team;
- *in the early years of post-independence*, nation-state building around the values of the Algerian revolution: Pan-Arab nationalism, Pan-Africanism and socialist ideologies.

As an example of the use of sport, and particularly football, the most popular sport in Algeria, through which the 'imagined community' of fellow nationals may be reached and unified,³⁶ the Minister of Sport and Youth declared that the Algerian team victory (2-1) against West Germany in the 1982 football World Cup in Spain, did more service to the nation than the work of any other Algerian ambassadors around the world. The FLN-state determinism for the institutionalisation of (homogeneous) Algerian civic nationalism was also reflected in the sporting reforms initiated by the government in 1977.³⁷ The reforms aimed at abolishing the sub-national identities (regionalism) by: first, attaching the name of the clubs to the (socialist) values of the sponsoring companies, rather than to the old (pre-colonial) ethno-regional solidarities;³⁸ secondly, replacing the historical and regional names of sports' clubs, by the (socialist) symbols of national corporations which were in charge of the clubs' financial and human resources.³⁹

36 See *Football Culture: Local contests, Global visions*, ed. Richard Giulianotti and Richard Finn, (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

37 Djamel Saifi, *Le Football Algérien, au coeur du mondial* (Algiers: Enap, 1993).

38 The existence of different regional identities was used by the colonial administration as an argument to deny the existence of an Algerian nation, prior to French colonialism.

39 Mahfoud Amara and Ian, P. Henry, 'Between Globalization and Local 'Modernity': The Diffusion and Modernization of Football in Algeria, *Soccer and Society*, 5. 1 (2004): 1-26

The cracks within society's ruling bloc provoked a real crisis, which ended with the tragic riots of October 1988. On October 5th 1988, and on the days that followed, very serious riots took place in most Algerian cities. Symbols of the FLN state's authority and ideology (socialism) were targeted by rioters. Public buildings, state vehicles were set on fire. As a result, the president declared a state of siege, and hundreds of civilians were killed, injured, or incarcerated, whilst important infrastructural damages were recorded. In an attempt to appease the tension and to rebuild the social contract, reforms concerning political pluralism, freedom of speech, and progress towards economic liberalism, were introduced. In Stora's terms, the riots of October 5th, 1988 appear to be the founding date in the writing of the new Algerian history, in a total rupture with the era of the FLN state.⁴⁰

Previously abolished because of their reference to regional identities, which according to the FLN's discourse was a sign of national fragmentation and 'dis-unity', the collapse of the one party state system was followed by the re-emergence of the old (regional) names of sports clubs, such as *Itehad el chaouiya* (Union of *Chaouia*⁴¹), *Itehad beniMezab* (Union of *BeniMezab*),⁴² *Itehad El Assima* (Union of the capital),⁴³ *Chebab el Kabail* (the youth of *kabylie*).

Subsequent to the end of the FLN state's monopoly upon politics, culture and history, there was a clear will by major political parties to mobilise sport, particularly football, in the

40 Benjamin Stora, *Le Transfert d'une mémoire: De l'Algérie française au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: La Découverte - Cahiers libres, 1999).

41 Representing another Berber minority in Algeria, living mainly on the *Aurès* Plateau of the Atlas Mountains in Northern Algeria.

42 Beni Mezab is the name given to the Islamic *Ibadi-Berber* minority in Algeria.

43 Arabic name for capital. The reference to Assima has more than a geographic or administrative connotation. It is the claim for a specific culture, proper to those living in the capital, named *les algérois(es)*.

service of their political agenda.⁴⁴ Between 1988-1991, stadiums have become arenas for political mobilisation (demonstrations of force for electoral campaign meetings) and a space to display symbols in favour of ideological and cultural claims. This includes the pursuit of the recognition of *Amazighia* (the Berber language) as an official language, and thus the re-writing of Algerian history. This is exemplified in the fans' chanting '*Imazighen, Imazighen*' ('we are all Berbers').⁴⁵ On the other hand, '*Alyha nahya oua aliha namout*' ('in the name of Allah we live and we die'), '*Qala Allah Qala Errassoul*' ('no charter, no constitution, God said, the Prophet said'), usually used by the sympathisers of the *FIS* (*Front Islamique du Salut*) in their public demonstrations, was adopted by football fans, most of whom were unemployed, and hence keen to provoke those in power. The underlying message to those in power was: improve our socio-economic conditions or we will vote for the FIS. The stadiums were also employed to protest against the state's repression of October 1988 riots. '*Beb El Ouad ...Beb El Ouad Al chouhada*' ('the martyrs of *Beb El Ouad*'), has become an anthem in honour of the young *chouhada* of post-independent Algeria. Football supporters' claims were extended from rejecting social inequalities to an uprising against the regime's official discourse on morality and history (i.e. *thawabit el oumma* or the foundations of the Algerian nation). This occurred sometimes in the presence of senior state officials and the president himself. '*Babor l'Australie*' ('we want a boat to Australia'),

44 What Giulianotti and Finn (2000) regard as the appropriation of football in the service of counter (regime) cultural resistance.

45 'JSK is a great club. It has always transmitted the noble values of the Kabylie region and has taken very high the struggle for identity. It is about time for JSK to regain its vocation as a torch holder of the region' (translated from French). Khalifa Mederrès, the first box coach of JSK after the independence, in a conference '*La JSK et le combat identitaire*. Double célébration du 'Printemps de Kabylie': Le sport et le combat identitaire en débat', *Liberté Newspaper*, Algiers, (18/04/05).

'*Manrouhouche El l'army*' ('we don't want to go to the Army'), '*Mawtini Italie*' ('my nation is Italy'), '*l'artane...temesta...6-15*' (psychotropic substances), all these chants show how the stadium became the place where they could wear out and recreate a world according to their desires.⁴⁶

Political violence, which flared up after 1991, affected all sectors, including sport. Some well-known personalities within the sports' media and administrative fields, as well as ordinary football fans, became the direct victims of daily assassinations and bomb attacks. Examples of prominent football personalities, who were victims of the bloodshed include, Mr. Haraigue, the president of the Algerian Football Federation, the President of *Bourdj Mnail* Football Club (East of Algeria), and '*Yamaha*', a well-known football fan of the *Belouazded* Football Club (ex-CRBelcours).⁴⁷ The list of victims also included ten young supporters of USMA Algiers, who were killed while celebrating the success of their team in the 1997 National Cup Final. This happened in *Bouzérah*, in the heart of Algiers, in one of Algiers' most popular streets adjacent to the 5th July Olympic Stadium.

The chanting of fans in stadiums has continued to replicate the political situation in Algeria. You can hear for instance, '*Ya Ali Ya Abbass El Djebha Rahi Labass*' ('to Ali Belhadj and Abass Madani, in jail, the Islamic Front is fighting fit'), in other words, the FIS still exists despite the state's court decision to ban the party; '*Flicha, Napoli*' (nicknames of two leaders of the GIA, Islamic Armed Group, in Algiers); or '*Seminov...Boufarik Patriotes*' ('*Boufarik* are all behind the patriots, groups for civil defence').⁴⁸ One can argue that football fans were torn between, on

46 Abdelkader Ensaad, *Echoes from the stadium*. Documentary, ARTICLE Z production, 1998.

47 Vincent Colonna, *Yamaha d'Alger* (Paris: TRISTRAM, 1999); Rachid, Boudjedra, *La vie à l'endroit* (Paris: Lgf, 1999).

48 Seminov is in reference to SKS Russian rifles. Boufarik is one of the first areas to establish groups of civil defence (under the leadership of ancient

one hand, challenging the state's authority, going against what they name *El hogra* (injustice), and defying the terrorist logic of armed groups on the other.

Football, a case for 'reverse migration'?

In contrast to the tendency of regionalisation and disintegration discussed above, a new (trans-local) form of solidarity is taking place in the sporting arena. It concerns the immigrant community in Europe, particularly from North Africa, which seeks to reconnect with the motherland. This is evident in the steady increase in the number of young players from the third generation of immigrant communities in North African national teams. Encouraged by the new FIFA rules concerning the selection of nationals or dual nationals resident in foreign countries, the number of players *issus de l'immigration* in Algerian national football has increased in a significant manner. They are principally from France and Belgium, which are known for the concentration of their Algerian immigrant communities, but also from other countries such as Holland, Denmark, and Canada (recent destinations for Algerian immigrants).⁴⁹ Following in the footsteps of their predecessors in the 1980s (Dehlebe, Kourichi, Bourouba, Mansouri), players such as Ziani, Cherrad or Yahia are becoming today the symbol of reconciliation between young generations of

combatant of the National Liberation Front), to oppose the GIA's deadly attacks against civilians in the region of Metidja (situated in the west of Algiers, notoriously known as the triangle of death).

⁴⁹ For the category of under 19, the number of selected players from the Algerian community in Europe has reached 16, as for under 23 the number of selected players are 6. The policy of selecting players from the Algerian community to play in the national football teams was extended the women team. Two players — Mefflah (Com-Bagneux/FR) and Laouadi (Celtic de Marseille) — have been selected to play in the Algerian national women's football team. (Source Algerian Football Federation, <http://www.FAF.dz>).

Beurs with their countries (and culture) of origin (see table 1). Wherever you go in France (Paris, Lyon, Marseille, etc.) you will see young *Beurs* with the official kit of the Algerian national team. This explains partly the reasons behind the interest of the French sportswear company *Le Coq sportif* (the symbol of French triumph) in associating its brand with the official kit of the Algerian national football team. By signing its endorsement contract with the Algerian Football Federation, *le Coq sportif* recognised the (business) impact that participation of talented athletes *issus de l'immigration* could have in the re-building of a strong sense of nostalgia among the Franco-Algerian community (the same business incentive was sought by ex-Khalifa Airways in sponsoring l'Olympique Marseille, a city known for its important Algerian community). The increased popularity of sport kits, representing the Algerian national team and the Algerian flag, among young *Beurs*, can also be seen as a new form of expression and protest. It is an expression of their particular (hybrid) identities and a protest against their marginalisation and discrimination in the host society (and French national consciousness). The 'friendly' football match between France and Algeria on October 6th, 2001 and the recent riots, in October 2005, in the major suburbs of France, remind us of the gap between the official state's discourse on integration and the reality of minorities in European societies. Bancel and Blanchard go so far as to state that:

Sport is not presented any more as a space par excellence for integration. The gap between the 1998 declaration – "la France qui gagne", "la génération Black-Blanc-Beur", "Zidane Président" – and the choc of the France-Algeria

match clearly show the ambivalences in French society.⁵⁰

The phenomenon of 'reverse migration' is taken as another dimension, with the signing for the season 2005-2006 of the defender *Bouzid Ismail* (from Nancy, France), of a professional contact with *Mouloudia Club D'Alger* (one of the most popular football clubs in Algeria). This new experience will open the door for a new market for both Algerian football clubs, in search of young talent, and professional footballers of Algerian origin, in search of new destinations.

We should also note here the impact that the increased access to North African media space (TV, newspapers, Radios, internet) is having in the diminishing of geographical distance and cultural differences between the diaspora (across the generations) and the society or culture of origin. Access to the media has contributed to strengthening the connection with Algerian local and national sport teams, which is apparent in the development of online forums of Algerian fan clubs around the world (such as Dzfoot.com).

Table 1. List of players born or raised in Europe selected in the Algerian football national team (source: <http://www.dzfoot.com>).

	<i>Date and place of birth</i>	<i>Season 2006</i>
LARBI Kamel	20/02/1985, Antibes (Fr.)	Nice (D1, Fr.)
BENHAMOU Mohamed	17/12/1979, Paris (Fr.)	Paris SG (D1, Fr.)
YAHIA Anthar	21/03/1982, Mulhouse (Fr.)	OGC Nice (D1, Fr.)
MENIRI Mehdi	26/06/1977, Metz (Fr.)	Metz (D1, Fr.)
ARRACHE Salim	14/07/1982, Marseille (Fr.)	RC Strasbourg (D1,

50 Nicolas Bancel and Pascal Blanchard, 'L'intégration par le sport? Quelques réflexions autour d'une utopie', *Migrations*, 22.2 (2003): 50-59 (my translation).

		Fr.)
BOUDARENE Fabien	05/10/1978, Saint Etienne (Fr.)	FC Sochaux (D1, Fr.)
MIHOUBI Hemza	3/01/1986, Oran (Alg.)	FC Metz (D1, Fr.)
BOUGUERRA Fouad	07/05/1981, Montélimar (Fr.)	FC Nantes (D1, Fr.)
SENNAOUI Mehdi	05/05/1986, Pertuis (Fr.)	RC Strasbourg (D1, Fr.)
AÏT ALIA Malek	15/08/1977, Mulhouse (Fr.)	Laval (D2, fr.)
MANSOURI Yazid	25/02/1978, Revin (Fr.)	LB Chateauroux (D2, Fr.)
ZIANI Karim	17/08/1982, Sèvres (Fr.)	Lorient (D2, Fr.)
CHERRAD Abdelmalek	14/01/1981, La Tronche (Fr.)	Bastia (D2, Fr.)
BOUTABOUT Mansour	20/09/1978, Le Creusot (Fr.)	Sedan (D2, Fr.)
TABET Sabri	17/08/1977, Rognac (Fr.)	Clermont Foot (D2, Fr.)
BAKOUR Salah	15/04/1982, Rouen (Fr.)	Caen (D1, Fr.)
BELHADJ Nadir	18/06/1982, Saint Claude (Fr.)	CS Sedan (D2, Fr.)
RAMDANI Kame	21/11/1980, Décines (Fr.)	Gueugnon (D2, fr.)
BOULEBDA Ali	21/08/1980 à Souk Ahras (Alg.)	Créteil (D2, Fr.)
ZARABI Abderraouf	26/03/1979, Algiers (Alg.)	FC Gueugnon (D2, Fr.)
AKROUR Nassim	07/1974, Courbevoie (Fr.)	Grenoble (D2, Fr.)
KEHIHA Amor	05/09/1977, Martigues (Fr.)	Istres (D1, Fr.)
AMIRECHE Samir	28/06/1972, Paris (Fr.)	US Créteil (D2, Fr.)
MEDACI Halim	20/04/1983, Nanterre (Fr.)	Le Havre (D2, Fr.)
MENASSEL Nasser	06/01/1983, La Tronche (Fr.)	Grenoble (D2, Fr.)
HEBBAR Malik	06/10/1973, Bondy (Fr.)	Reims (D2, Fr.)
YACHIR Ali Sami	02/01/1985, Tizi Ouzou (Alg.)	Montpellier (D2, Fr.)
KHARROUBI Khaled	11/02/1984, Lyon (Fr.)	Valenciennes (D2, Fr.)
HIMA Yacine	23/03/1984, Lyon (Fr.)	Châteauroux (D2, Fra.)

KACEM Mehdi	08/08/1986, Mantes-la-Jolie (Fr.)	Amiens (D1, Fra.)
YEBDA Hassan	14/05/1984, Saint-Maurice (Fr.)	Laval (D2, Fr.)
KRAOUCHE Naserdine	27/08/1979, Thionville	Charleroi (D1, Bel.)
FELLAHI Karim	31/10/1974, Epinay-sur-Seine (Fr.)	Mouscron (D1, Bel.)
MAMOUNI Maamar	28/02/1976, Tours (Fr.)	La Gantoise (D1, Bel.)
BELOUFA Samir	27/08/1979, Melun (Fr.)	Westerlo (D1, Bel.)
BRAHAMI Mohamed Fadel	14/04/1979, Bondy (Fr.)	La Louvière (D1, Bel.)
ZAABOUB Sofiane	23/01/1983, Montereau-Surville	FC Brussels (D1, Bel.)
SOFIANE Youssef	08/07/1984, Villefranche-sur-Sao (Fr.)	La Louvière (D1, Bel.)
MADOUNI Ahmed Réda	04/10/1980, Casablanca (Mor.)	Leverkusen (D1, Ger.)

After nearly twenty years of interruption,⁵¹ for political and economic reasons, the sports federation's policy of recruiting from the Algerian community in Europe has been extended to other sports disciplines such as basketball, weightlifting, fencing, and skiing.⁵² One noticeable example is the newly founded Algerian

51 The participation of top athletes from the Algerian immigrant community, particularly in France, reached its peak in 1970s, thanks to the close partnership of the Algerian Ministry of Youth and Sport and *l'Amicale des Algériens en Europe*. However, the death of President Boumedienne and the beginning of president Chadli's era, announced a new period of relation. Marked, according to Gastaut (2003: 47), with problems related to the accomplishment of national service and the emergence of *Beur* movements. Yves Gastaut, 'Sport et retour au pays: l'exemple de l'émigration algérienne en France 1973-1978', *Migrance*, 22. 2 (2003): 40-49.

52 Algeria participated in the first time of its history, in the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin with two athletes, Christelle Laura Douibi (Seyssinet Pariset, France) and Noureddine Maurice Bentoumi (Grenoble, France),

Rugby Federation, which is going to participate in the 2007 Rugby (Union) World Cup (France), with a national team formed mainly of Franco-Algerian players.⁵³

It also is true that for these athletes, participating with Algerian national teams in different sports disciplines represents their only chance to compete at international level.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the crisis of modernity characterised particularly in the Arab states by the decline of *progressist* and secular ideologies (for example of the one party-state, socialism, pan-Arabism, pan-Africanism,) and the imposed meaning of the 'imagined community', in the sense of a uniform nationalism (denying all particularism), has also been sensed in the field of sport. After being excessively instrumental in the service of nation-state (or party) ideology, sport is becoming today the bearer of fragmented and regionalist identities, and an object for all forms of regionalist, nationalist and local conflicts. On the other hand, in the era of 'glocalisation' and 'translocalism', which celebrates the 'hybridisation' of identity, sport is playing the role of a unifier between the second and third generations of immigrants and their cultures of origin. Hence, it reinforces their positive or accepted sense of belonging to a plural cultural identity. This allows them to travel, at least in the sporting fields and for the time of a football game, between the culture of the host society and the culture of origin, without being stigmatised as 'outsiders' or 'others'.

respectively in Ladies' Downhill, Ladies' Super-G, and Men's 50 km Free, Mass start.

⁵³ 'L'Algérie au Mondial 2011 du rugby', *Liberté Newspaper* (30/01/06), Algiers.

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BARDOLPH, JACQUELINE
Études postcoloniales et littérature
Champion, 2002
73 pp., €12.20, ISBN 2 7453 0341 4

It is not surprising that this excellent French account of postcolonial theory should have been produced by a specialist in English-language literatures. For many French commentators, postcolonialism remains an unwelcome, alien, 'Anglo-Saxon' import, applicable to Anglophone texts emerging from the colonial encounter but somehow unsuited to the purported specificity of Francophone material. This attitude not only ignores the French-language roots of much postcolonial theory – emerging, as Jacqueline Bardolph makes clear (p.49), from the work of Césaire, Memmi, Fanon, Sartre, Glissant, Khatibi – but also the wider applicability of theoretical reflection on colonial or postcolonial conditions.

Bardolph was, until her death in 1999, one of the principal French critics of postcolonial literatures in English. This, her last work, is a model of concision, achieving a broad sweep of reference and outlining not only the historical emergence of the postcolonial field but also its epistemological implications for contemporary scholarship. Other French-based scholars might – usefully and necessarily – have offered comprehensive accounts of postcolonialism and its principal thinkers, but there is a risk that these contribute more to the processes of anthologization, classed by Bardolph as a 'dérive narcissique' (p.62), that tended to characterize postcolonial criticism in the later 1990s. Despite the brevity of her text, Bardolph's intentions are more clearly innovative, for she sketches out the implications of Bhabha, Said, Spivak *et al* for French-language material whilst also underlining the need for a comparative postcolonial approach. The book articulates a double frustration, both with the assumption amongst English-language scholars that postcolonialism is an Anglophone

enclave and with the refusal amongst their French-language counterparts to acknowledge 'l'étrange étanchéité de deux domaines de recherche' (p.9). The book's aim is to place 'un pont provisoire entre les versants francophone et anglophone' (p.8); its method begins with the elaboration of a more complex genealogy of the postcolonial, encompassing colonial texts, before proceeding to explore postcolonial theory in the light of Franco-Algerian relations (p.33), French literature by authors of immigrant origin (p.34), creoleness in the Francophone Caribbean (p.53), the role of Berber in France (p.64). The study is rich in references to secondary sources, and consequently seems aimed particularly at French-language readers unfamiliar with the principal strands of postcolonial thought. Its contribution to that field is nevertheless considerable, for in sketching out what is increasingly called Francophone Postcolonial Studies, Bardolph's text stresses both the openness to non-Anglophone cultural traditions and the associated need for comparatism on which postcolonialism depends for its future development.

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THACKWAY, MELISSA

Africa Shoots Back: Alternative Perspectives in Sub-Saharan Francophone African Film

Bloomington/Oxford/Cape Town: Indiana UP/James Currey/New Africa Books, 2003. 230pp., £16.95 (pbk) ISBN 0 85255 576 8

It is not often that a book satisfies all the criteria for *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*. But Melissa Thackway's book seems to press all the right buttons: an in-depth, critical and authoritative, survey of African cinema from the French-speaking sub-Saharan region of Africa, which also includes chapters on immigration and women's cinema and which is amply illustrated, including bilingual transcriptions of interviews with better and lesser-known directors as well as an excellent filmography, all tied up within a broad postcolonial theoretical perspective. What could be better than that?

Thackway's main point is that, since the emergence of 'World Cinema', African cinema has suffered (paradoxically) an economic exclusion, to the extent that Africa is ignored (still, once again) in cinematic terms. Thackway's aim then is to help redress this imbalance and correct an injustice by showing the richness and diversity of African cinema from Francophone sub-Sahara, from its earliest days to the present-day, without losing sight of the political, aesthetic and ideological challenges that it imposes on film debates. So she presents African film from Africans' point of view, but couches her arguments in distinctly European post-colonial terms. She performs close readings of a range of films and filmmakers, from Senegal to Cameroon, from women directors to those living and working in France. Interestingly, she suggests that the latter form a distinct 'French' genre, with Africans 'rooted' in France producing a cinema radically different from those operating in and from Africa.

Thackway clearly knows her filmmakers well, covering the usual suspects (Sembène, Faye, Hondo, Ouedraogo, Cissé, Diop

Mambety) and lesser-known agents such as Bouna Medoune Seye (two films in the 1990s from Senegal), Anne Laure Folly (documentary filmmaker from Togo), David Achkar (another documentary maker from Guinea), or Jean-Pierre Bekolo (from Cameroon). All of the lesser-known filmmakers treated here emerged in the 1990s, and one of Thackway's strengths is to have brought a wide range of artists, working in fiction and documentary, and in a range of Francophone countries, to critical and public awareness.

The most convincing chapter however is that on 'orature' in which the author gestures towards the 'authenticist' interpretation of African cinema, showing how the oral tradition lives on, albeit in modern form, in the screen griots' deployment of narrative and cinematic tropes. Indeed, Thackway is keen to stress that if modernism is to be used of African cinema then it must be 'decolonised'. She questions attempts to link, say, Hondo with Godard's 'Brechtian' style, given the historical dates in question, but primarily because 'Eurocentric' film criticism is too quick to attribute modernist techniques found in African cinema to the European canon, rather than consider digression, multilayered narrative and fragmented plot as part of African oral tradition. In order to counter this critical tendency, she follows Mbye Cham in calling for a critical practice that is 'dialogic, nomadic and transient'.

The firmness in her critique of Eurocentric film criticism is as trenchant as her account of historical tendencies in African film (broadly, 1950s the decade of discovery and independence, the 60s of revolt, the 70s experiment and social critique, the 80s the pivotal decade given over to stagnation and compromise, finally the 1990s as the period of newly emerging cinema dealing with micro, or day-to-day subjects rather than the big political issues.) This is as sweeping as it is useful for an introductory account of African cinema.

Now for the drawbacks. Other than one or two annoying and inexplicable typos and errors, there is nothing on the Francophone *versus* the African, no discussion of what *is* a Francophone film. Is it to do with language (to be quantified)? In which case, a fair number of examples here slip away. Or is it linked to place of birth of the director, or to the funding source? Just as 'World Cinema' is a slippery concept so is Francophone and by extension African. There is a danger, without this discussion, of the 'authentic' Africa melting away. Finally, the interviews, though varied and well formulated, are hardly 'fresh' (mainly from 1995), and suggest the book has a time-limit.

There is no question that this is an extremely useful textbook for undergraduate courses in both Film and Francophone Studies. But not only is the timescale severely limited - what about post 9-11 in Africa and its cinema? What about the 'new scramble' for Africa? How has African cinema since the new millennium responded to what Jean-Pierre Chrétien writing on African cinema in *Esprit* (August/September 2005) has recently called 'une rage' for 'un changement radical'?

Finally the study appears distinctly uncritical in its attempt to put forward an 'authentic' African voice in cinema: the danger here is that we return to a cultural nationalism, a hermeticist pan-Africanism, which is as slippery (and dangerous) as the 'World Cinema' into which African cinema is (apparently) dying to be properly incorporated.

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KELLY, DEBRA

Autobiography and Independence: Selfhood and Creativity in North African Postcolonial Writing in French

Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005.

400pp., £50 ISBN 0 85323 659 3

Debra Kelly's *Autobiography and Independence* is an informative and well-conceived discussion of the particular difficulties and loopholes of autobiographical writing in the postcolonial context. The work uses both postcolonial theory, and theories of autobiography, to conceptualise the life-writing of Mouloud Feraoun, Albert Memmi, Abdelkébir Khatibi, and Assia Djebar, and seeks to delineate how the aftermath of colonialism raises particular issues for these writers' construction of a self in writing. The theoretical introduction explores both the intellectual and historical context of the selected writers, and raises the interesting and fraught question of the appropriateness of an autobiographical model for writers from an Islamic, rather than a Western background. Many commentators perceive autobiography, and its associated individualism, with Western modes of thinking, but Kelly perceptively unsettles any binary opposition between East and West, communitarianism and individualism, by tracking the history of subjective writing in the Arab world. This introduction is as a result the most innovative and useful part of the book, as it sifts through various types of scholarship on Arab literature. While it concedes that there are shades of difference between 'Western' and Arab conceptions of the self, this does not rule out life-writing in North African postcolonial literature. The introduction also considers the question of the position of the Western critic in relation to this material, and Kelly claims not to overcome her situatedness, but to feed this in to her theorisation of postcolonial autobiographical criticism. After the introduction, however, the chapters specifically dedicated to postcolonial writers are less theoretically ambitious. The historical perspective in the chapters

on Feraoun and Memmi provides a nuanced framework for their analysis, and the section on Khatibi cleverly manages to link the more abstruse parts of his work with the context of colonial domination in Morocco. The sections on Djébar also integrate an exploration of style, language and metaphor, with an understanding of the works' historical background. These analyses will be highly useful to those not particularly familiar with the works, and will certainly serve as a helpful introduction. The theoretical questions of the introduction are not always developed, however, and at times these chapters read as descriptive summaries. Nevertheless, the comparative structure is a useful one, and the volume opens up a potentially rich and fruitful field of enquiry. It hinges on an important and perplexing idea, and should serve as a crucial springboard for further research in this area.

Jane Hiddleston
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Conference Report: *Crossing Places*

The Department of French and Francophone Studies at Nottingham University hosted a conference for graduate students in African Studies on 26th and 27th January, 2006. The conference was sponsored by Routledge and supported by the Department of French and Francophone Studies.

Selecting and developing a theme for the conference was no small task. As co-organisers with research interests in Anglophone and Francophone African writing, certain themes automatically came to mind, but we wanted to choose a topic which would appeal to a wide audience and solicit interesting and varied scholarship. The aim of the conference was to provide a forum in which postgraduates could present their research and meet other students in African Studies across the disciplines, with the intention of establishing a basis for future collaboration. After much reflection, we decided that 'Crossing Places' was a suitably broad topic, which was open to interpretation from graduate students working in many different areas. The Call for Papers solicited a large response; we received a substantial number of abstracts and had to turn down many excellent proposals. We selected twenty-seven papers, which addressed a fascinating range of topics. Contributors included graduate students from nineteen different universities in the UK, Europe, Africa and the US.

The resulting panels focused on different aspects of 'Crossing Places', including literary crossings, crossing between identities, negotiating communities, crossing between spaces and places through the processes of travelling and immigration, as well as generational and metaphysical crossings. Some panels focused on specific forms of representation. For example, the panel 'Literary Crossings' saw Ayako Aihara (SOAS) present her research on colonial encounters and border-crossings in *Nehanda* and *Jikinya*. John Masterson (Essex) presented a paper on the recent work of Nuruddin Farah and Gita Mohan (Salford) spoke about literal and

figurative crossings in postcolonial Maghrebian literature. Other panels were structured thematically, inviting a wider range of disciplinary approaches in the papers. The panel 'Domestic and Commercial Spaces' brought together researchers in the areas of cultural anthropology, gender and immigration studies. Emily Venables (Edinburgh) presented a paper on sex workers in Ziguinchor, Senegal, Abigail Dumes (Yale) spoke about the system of mutual trust and gift exchange within women's Rotating Savings and Credit Associations in Cameroon and France, and Marie Rodet (Vienna) presented her research on migrants in French Sudan and gender biases in the historiography.

Keynote speaker, Kadija George Sesay, took up the topic of Crossing Places, relating her own experiences as a publisher and writer, and drawing together many of the broader themes of the conference. The result was a conference which reflected the depth and breadth of new research in African Studies, bringing graduates together from many different disciplines including English, French, Comparative Literature, Film Studies, International Development, Law, Anthropology, Bioethics and Translation Studies. An edited volume of papers from the conference will be published by Cambridge Scholars Press in late 2006 and it is hoped that further research collaboration and events will result from this project.

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However, as we move towards a new future, we are also keen to make our back catalogue of work available to both individual scholars and university libraries: 25 issues of the *ASCALF Bulletin* (the first 3 issues are no longer available), and 5 issues of the *ASCALF Yearbook* (issues 1 and 2 are no longer available) were published. These publications include articles by prominent scholars in the field as well as interviews with writers such as Tanella Boni, Azouz Begag and Ahmadou Kourouma.

Individual issues of both *Bulletin* and *Yearbook* can be purchased and their prices are listed below. However, we are also proposing a **special offer of £60 (inc. p&p)** for individuals and libraries purchasing the entire back catalogue (21 *Bulletins* and 3 *Yearbooks*). Cheques, made payable to 'Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies', should be sent to: **Dr David Murphy, School of Modern Languages, French Section, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA, Scotland.**

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