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Introduction: Colonialism, Islamism, Terrorism

Mustapha Marrouchi

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L'Algérie, c'est le hors champ et le contrechamp, l'ailleurs de cet ailleurs qui vient troubler et contaminer l'ici et maintenant de l'espace. (Safaa Fathy, *Tourner les mots*)

It is always hard to write the history of recent times, and still harder to write the history of the continuing present. Historical events on the other hand are not punctual, but extend in a before and after of time which only gradually reveal themselves. The moral obscenity that was wreaked on the U.S. has ushered in a new world of maximum damage, a world where fantasy cavorts with the real and death is the message. The obscenity also rang in this message: our vacation from history is over and done with. As the globe is flattened into a single space, it is by the same stroke carved rigorously down the middle. In the conflict between East and West, the *avant la lettre* and the avant-garde, tradition and modernity, Islam, or a version of it, and Capitalism, one transnational movement confronts another. In between times,

we realize how powerful is the appeal to religious orthodoxy; how insecure our sense of the secular; how fragile any ideal of global cultural understanding. As the decade dribbles on with small arms sniping around an elephant-dung Madonna, the artist takes the heat for a long moment of transition and reminds himself or herself of *Fichus*, written by Jacques Derrida, who speaking to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Frankfurt, emphasized the linkage between global capital and local terror, and suggested that the activity of terror is now financed through speculation on the market, and that it is simultaneously capitalist and anticapitalist.

9/11 reminds us more so than it announced in New York or Washington that our responsibility in this regard has never been more remarkable, more acute, more necessary. Never will a new thinking about Europe have been more urgent. 9/11 introduces a deconstructive critique that is sober, alert, vigilant, attentive to everything that, through the best-substantiated strategy, the most justified politicking rhetoric, media powers, spontaneous or organized trends of opinion, welds the political to the metaphysical, to capitalistic speculation, to perversion of religious or nationalistic influence, to sovereignist fantasy. And this, outside and inside Europe. On all sides. These are simple words, but I repeat: on all sides. I have absolute compassion for the victims of September 11, but that does not prevent me from saying that I do not believe in the political innocence of anyone in this crime. And if my compassion for all of the innocent victims is infinite, it is so also in that I do not feel it only for those who lost their lives in America on September 11. Therein lies my interpretation of what should be what was named yesterday, according to the White House slogan, “infinite justice”: to not exonerate oneself from one’s own wrongs and the mistakes of one’s own politics, even when one has just paid the most horrific and disproportionate price for it. (Derrida 2002, 51–52)¹

In another no less impressive essay, an unpublished 1978 lecture, Michel Foucault, in “On Security and Terror,” distinguished power from security, warning that the security state can quickly become a delirious and pathological one.² This is nowhere more evident than in the cavalier way some members of the Bush Administration and the media talk about “unleashing” the FBI and CIA and curtailing liberties and branding people of Muslim origin in the fight against terrorism. Edward Said makes the case with force in the following terms:

Pundits and hosts refer non-stop to “our” war with Islam, and words like “jihad” and “terror” have aggravated the understandable fear and anger that seem widespread all over the country. Two people (one a Sikh) have already been killed by enraged citizens who seem to have been encouraged by remarks like Defense Department official Paul Wolfowitz’s to literally think in terms of “ending countries” and nuking our enemies. Hundreds of

Muslim and Arab shopkeepers, students, *hijab-ed* women and ordinary citizens have had insults hurled at them, while posters and graffiti announcing their imminent death spring up all over the place. (Said 2001, 1)

Needless to add that Lynne Cheney, the Head of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the Reagan Administration, went so far as to co-author and publish a list of 117 people who she thinks are “un-American”: people who have said and/or written things they should not have (Alam 2001, 29-30).

A more compassionate attempt to measure the impact of the disaster can perhaps be found in “Art Ground Zero,” which offers a portrait of the Jamaican-American artist Michael Richards, who died in his studio at the World Trade Center, and *in* whose memory I write today. As for the future, no one has any idea what the promised and threatened “war on terrorism” might look like. But until we know that, we can have no satisfactory picture of the “events” we imagine to have taken place on a single day unless we remind ourselves of the anti-appeaser Churchill, who had 50,000 ordinary citizens of Dresden killed in one night, not “for the hell of it,” but in order to impress the Russians with his bravado and so-called consciousness (Best 2001, 34). Despite this uncertainty, however, it is permitted to feel that the future holds nothing good for either the West or the Rest. For even the more level-headed of us began to realize that our friends in the White House have some embarrassing habits: a penchant for dictatorships in many parts of the world, a fair supply of double standards, a curious mix of ruthless self-interest and missionary rhetoric, and, at home, a bizarre gun cult and relish for the death penalty. If this sounds too extreme then we need only think of a place where cigarettes are perceived as more of a threat to human health than machine guns. Surely we cannot pretend to understand such a “risk society” entirely. It will always be something we both love and hate at the same time.

The consternation, fear and sustained sense of anger and shock that have taken hold of the residents of New York, a gateway to freedom for so many people running away from oppression, itself often, but not always, a function of U.S. overseas intervention, will certainly continue for a long time, as will the genuine sorrow and affliction that so much damage has so cruelly imposed on so many innocent lives. The seeds of oppression are also buried deep in the wholesale massacre of the Left systematically encouraged and directed by the CIA in an even earlier period. Terry Eagleton put it succinctly:

There is no conscious hypocrisy in believing yourself the great bastion of freedom while massacring Cambodians, financing terrorist thugs like the Contras, embargoing Iraqi children to death and being in effect a one-party state, since the belief and the deeds belong to incommensurable realms.

Phrases like “freedom-loving peoples” can’t be invalidated by anything as ingloriously mundane as the facts. (Eagleton 2001, 21)

Add to that the deliberate physical extermination of Iraq, Palestine, Cuba, Korea, Bulgaria. These are crimes as abominable as any contemporary genocide.³ I do not mean to downplay the horrors of September 11, which occurred at a time when the U.S. had emerged as the undisputed heir to the crown of imperial domination, when there is no longer a viable Left to provide a kind of moral allegory, but until more Americans realize that U.S. action as a state does cause offence to many people outside the U.S.—their stance on international Court Justice and the Kyoto Protocol exhibits a spoiled, narcissistic contempt for other peoples (Arab and/or Muslim in the present case, but it could also be Chinese in the near future) and the planet; their public rejection of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention,⁴ the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (they instead brought into operation the American Service Members Protection Act which will permit the authorization of military force to free any American soldier taken into International Criminal Court custody; or, to put it otherwise, they really will “send in the Marines”), and the treaty on Biological Weapons Convention makes them a vast, over-determined symbol of everything the rest of the world hates and fears at the same time; their bombing of Iraq, Lybia, Sudan and Afghanistan has played a clear negative role in sponsoring anti-Americanism, supporting terrorism, and maintaining corrupt, undemocratic societies; their long-standing position on the Arab-Israeli conflict adds up to a near-promise that anything to do with Palestinian resistance to murderous Israeli practices, never more brutal, never more dehumanizing and illegal than today, is snuffed out; their astonishingly obdurate policy on prisoners of war as witness the Guantanamo case of “freedom fighters, Mujahdeen, soldiers, unlawful combatants, detainees, terrorists”⁵—we are all in for a rocky ride.

The only international treaties the U.S. signs and honors are those it can both draft and impose on other countries. The agreement on Intellectual Property Rights is a case in point. “World bullies,” Mary Beard writes, “even if their heart is in the right place, will in the end pay the price” (2001, 20). It is only now that the results of American imperialism are working their way out into actuality, for the resultant absence of any secular alternative, means that popular revolt and resistance in the Third World have nowhere to go but into religious and fanatic forms. As the U.S. war against terrorism spreads, more unrest is almost certain; far from closing things down, U.S. power is likely to stir them up in ways that may not be containable as witness the rejection of offers of a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the war

on terrorism, preferring instead to rely on an extended claim of self-defense. Moreover, the U.S. government has forged new alliances with illiberal regimes in Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt reversing years of effort to promote human rights and freedom of speech (Byer, 2002, 14). In an age of increasing interdependence and co-operation, Bush and his hyena-like advisers (from tight iron pants Rice to cold-blooded Rumsfeld) are deliberately out of step with most of the world.

Seeking to make sense of September 11, Edward Said evoked Joseph Conrad in a penetrating essay touching on the educational overtones of the "horrifying symbolic savagery" of the attack. "With astonishing prescience in 1907," Said explained, "Conrad drew the portrait of the archetypal terrorist, whom he calls laconically the 'professor,' in his novel *The Secret Agent*; this is a man whose sole concern is to perfect a detonator that will work under any circumstances and whose handiwork results in a bomb exploded accidentally by a poor boy sent, unknowingly, to destroy the Greenwich Observatory as a strike against 'pure science.'" The New York and Washington suicide bombers, Said continued, appeared to have been well educated men, rather than stereotypically poor refugees, causing the author to muse on the quality of education that contributed to their deadly mindsets. "Instead of getting a wise leadership that stresses education, mass mobilization, and patient organization in the service of a cause, the poor and the desperate are often conned into the magical thinking and quick bloody solutions that such appalling models provide, wrapped in lying religious claptrap" (2001, 15). Said's point is that Arabs and Muslims might well turn against their rulers were the West (the U.S. in particular) seen as being choked to death by Arab violence and Muslim indifference.

Granted. But Said may be better off reading not *The Secret Agent*, which makes the point in an oblique manner only, but "A Distant Episode" by Paul Bowles, which, seen in the painfully clear light of the past months, strikes one as strangely prescient. Indeed, the nightmarish fantasies of the story now appear, from one's reshaped point of view, like a species of reportage. Anyone who has concerns about the West's relation with the Arab world, or who sensibly worries about a future in which one must attempt to navigate in, and ally oneself with, a culture (or a group of related cultures) one only dimly understands, might do well to reread "A Distant Episode" as a cautionary tale of the horrors that can ensue when a stranger in a foreign land knows too little—and assumes too much as the Bush Administration does today.⁶

The idea that words are supposed to make sense of everything has let us down when we most needed it. This is the gist of so many essays written and interviews given since September 11. "Language has failed us," one of them began. But when did words ever make such extravagant, untenable promis-

es? The answer to the question posed here may be found in *The Triumph of Politics*, which speaks of the mediocrities, charlatans and power-hungry politicians who cluster around Washington. For them, David Stockman perceptively observes, “reality-time” is the 6:30 evening news on television. How do we look and sound? they ask themselves, as if public policy were some sort of show designed to entertain and please the “American people” once a day, five nights a week (1986, 36). On October 7, 2001 reality-time began on each of the three networks with the same indications of an American strike on Afghanistan. In Toronto, I watch Dan Rather on CBS largely as a matter of habit, although the other anchormen seem to produce roughly the same results. Rather opened by announcing that something was happening in Afghanistan; then he passed things over to two correspondents located in Pakistan who, from their hotel window, reported bomb blasts that shook the parched land. Rather came back on to announce a briefing by Ari Fleischer, the White House press spokesman; back to Afghanistan for the continuity of the raid (it was now 6:40 or so), a couple of commercials, and then down to Fleischer in Washington. He read a prepared statement with his customary virtuosity, stumbling over nearly every syllable and yet inflecting his sentences with what in this C-grade Administration passes for righteous seriousness.

Except for a few details, it is difficult to imagine how this well-packaged 30 minutes of national television differs from the way a state broadcasting system, say North Korea’s, would handle an attack on a weak country, ravaged by twenty years of war and/or civil war, somewhere “out there.” One point is that the program was done three times simultaneously instead of once: the unanimity of the networks was perfect. Another is that the show-business co-ordination of getting the raid onto the evening news with appropriate preparation, commentary and summary, keeping it there for 30 minutes including commercials, was an example of how private enterprise and government can work together with remarkable, apparently unrehearsed agility. It was spontaneous, it was high-tech, it was well-synchronized, it was digital, it was, as they say, 100 per cent effective, and for days and weeks afterwards the networks ran advertisements in the papers claiming eminence and victory for their “version” of the same theatrical event. “At 6:31 on October 12, NBC was first,” one ad said.⁷ This is what John Berger has perceptively called the “spectacle of empty clothes and unworn masks.” He continues:

Consider any news reader on any television channel. . . . These speakers are the mechanical epitome of the disembodied. It took the system many years to invent them and to teach them to talk as they do. No bodies and no Necessity—for Necessity is the condition of the existent. It is what makes reality real. And the system’s mythology requires only the not-yet-real, the

virtual, the next purchase. This produces in the spectator not, as claimed, a sense of freedom (the so-called freedom of choice) but a profound isolation.

Until recently, history, all the accounts people gave of their lives, all proverbs, fables, parables, confronted the same thing: the everlasting, fearsome, and occasionally beautiful struggle of living with Necessity, which is the enigma of existence—that which followed from the Creation, and which subsequently has always continued to sharpen the human spirit. Necessity produces both tragedy and comedy. It is what you kiss or bang your head against.

Today, in the system's spectacle, it exists no more. Consequently no experience is communicated. All that is left to share is the spectacle, the game that nobody plays and everybody can watch. As has never happened before, people have to try to place their own existence and their own pains single-handedly in the vast arena of time and the universe. (Berger 2002, 29)

The illusion concerning this order of things (which Post-Modernism has done nothing to correct) is that we are daily bombarded by networks of bodiless and false images about the world we live in. Yet their falseness is not an error but the pursuit of profit; a turnover of unparalleled wealth.

I have never seen anything like it, this display of capsule theatricality, manipulation, violence and unadulterated patriotism, and it still continues. Whole supplements have appeared in each of the major dailies, printing millions of words, all of them repeating more or less the same details, the same jargon about surgical strikes, smoking the “savages” out of their caves, collateral damage, terrorist planning and command centers. Every national and local news-and-discussion show has scheduled literally hundreds of hours of analysis: Mr. President, Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld, General Richard Meyers, various “experts” ranging from Judith Miller to Tom Friedman, who sermonize to Arabs that they have to be more self-critical, missing in anything they say is the slightest tone of *self*-criticism—on terrorism, counter-terrorism, the Middle East, Europe, the universe—have appeared along with a tiny handful of commentators representing the “other side,” interspersed with the same Afghan scenes, the same European bravado led by Tony Blair, Bush's poodle, the same stirring file pictures of American bombers and battleships, the same senators, Pentagon, and State Department spokesmen, the same man-in-the-street interviews extolling “our” side with the same, exactly the same, enthusiasm. We had to do it, ran the standard printable message; or, said *The New York Times*, we were “seeing justice done.” Kicking Ousama Bin Laden's ass, and feeling good about it, was the unspoken message. A.M. Rosenthal even proposed that the cities of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Sudan should be threatened with obliteration.⁸

Riding over the attack on Afghanistan is “terrorism,”⁹ a word which has totally simplified and streamlined official as well as private American attitudes to the world. It is no exaggeration to say that terrorism, more even than Communism and Islamism together, has come to dominate and embody everything “we” do not like, from the poisoning of one Tylenol container to the October 1983 destruction of the Marine barracks in Beirut, to the Sandinistas, the Soviets, Libya, Iran, Syria, the PLO, Noriega, Aïdeed, Milosevic, and of course, Ousama Bin Laden, who stands at the apex of world terrorism. Terrorism overrides history, politics, economics, and above all common sense. It has no immediate graspable definition, it does not admit of negotiation or argument, its moral force cannot really be challenged except by terrorists, it is applicable virtually everywhere and to nearly everything at any time. “Terrorists are those who have no official standing, no gaze, no voice in the established order, those determined by all means possible to usurp power in order to be seen and heard” (Wideman, 2002, 37). Terrorists are, or have become, a Platonic essence: they never change, they have no history, they simply terrorize. When one heard Colin Powell and his President referring to terrorism as the number one scourge of the world (although, September 11 excluded, many more Americans drown in their bathtubs than are killed by terrorism), when one reads polls identifying terrorism as the greatest issue facing America today, when one learned about repeated references to terrorist infrastructures, bases, support, and training centers, and just plain terrorists, and when one was confronted with TV news clips showing how the California-Mexico border, across which Mexicans flee illegally, is likely also to be the place where “Arabs” can infiltrate, we knew we were in the grip of a gigantic propaganda *coup* that had captured the country.¹⁰

There seemed no limit to the mobilization against terrorism past, present, and future. By the end of the week following the attack, a Bill had been introduced in the Senate waiving both the War Powers Act and the Congressional restraints on the official sanctioning of assassination: the President was to be enabled to do anything he pleased.¹¹ Poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease, the likelihood of nuclear war were concerns eliminated by terrorism. “There is also the feeling that all the ‘civilized world’ (a phrase which Western leaders seem able to use without a trace of irony) is paying the price for its glib definitions of ‘terrorism,’” Beard adds,

and its refusal to listen to what the “terrorists” have to say. There are very few people on the planet who devise carnage for the sheer hell of it. They do what they do for a cause; because they are at war. We might not like their cause; but using the word “terrorism” as an alibi for thinking what drives it will get us nowhere in stopping the violence. Similarly, “fanaticism,” a term regularly applied to extraordinary acts of bravery when we abhor their ends

and means. The silliest description of the onslaught on the World Trade Center was the often repeated slogan that it was a “cowardly” attack. (Beard, 2001, 20)

On the scale of evil the September 11 crime is a mere pin prick when set beside the offenses of the U.S. Government, itself responsible for many that are probably worse. Let me make the case, *seriam*.

1. Bangladesh. Often forgotten, but actually marking the inauguration of the puerile term “tilt” to describe an abrupt change of policy or allegiance. In 1971, the U.S. Government, then led by Nixon and Kissinger, overrode all advice in order to support the Pakistani generals in both their civilian massacre policy in East Bengal and their armed attack on India from West Pakistan. In both theaters, this led to a moral and political catastrophe the effects of which are still being felt (Hitchens, 2002).

2. Chile. As Walter Isaacson reminds us in *Kissinger: A Biography*, Kissinger had direct personal knowledge of the CIA’s plan to kidnap and murder General René Schneider, the head of the Chilean Armed Forces and a man who refused to countenance military intervention in politics. In his hatred for the Allende Government, Kissinger even outdid Richard Helms of the CIA, who warned him that a coup in such a stable democracy would be hard to procure. The murder of Schneider nonetheless went ahead, at Kissinger’s urging and with American financing, just between the time of Allende’s election and his confirmation by the Chilean Congress (Hitchens 2001).

3. Cyprus. Another occasion of America’s intimate involvement in the minutiae of conspiracy took place when the U.S. Government approved of the preparations by Greek Cypriot fascists for the murder of President Makarios, and sanctioned the coup which tried to extend the rule of the Athens junta to the island. When despite great waste of human life this coup failed in its objective of forced partition, Kissinger expediently switched sides to support an even bloodier intervention by Turkey (Hitchens, 1984).

4. Kurdistan. Having endorsed the covert policy of supporting a Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq between 1974 and 1975, with “deniable” assistance also provided by Israel and the Shah of Iran, the U.S. Government made it plain that the Kurds were not to be allowed to win, but were to be employed for their nuisance value alone (Hitchens 2001, 34-35).¹²

5. East Timor. The day after Kissinger left Djakarta in 1975, the Armed Forces of Indonesia employed American weapons to invade and subjugate the independent former Portuguese colony of East Timor. Isaacson gives a figure of 100,000 deaths resulting from the occupation, or one-seventh of the population. And it goes on and on and on until one cannot eat enough to vomit enough. There are more broken eggs and omelettes in the years to come. Angola: incite the Zaireans to invade and give a nod to South African

intervention. Portugal: summon Mario Soares and bully him about being “a Kerensky.” The Iran-Iraq war: the policy of the United States should be that “we wish they could both lose”—which meant sending arms and intelligence to both to keep the pot boiling (Hitchens, 1997). Arrogant, indifferent, contemptuous of International Law, dismissive and manipulative of the U.N: this is now the most dangerous power the world has ever known—the authentic “rogue state,” but a “rogue state” of colossal military and economic might. Peopled by “freedom loving people” as if the world were peopled by “freedom-hating people,” America today can accurately be described as a vast gulag—two million prisoners—a remarkable proportion of them black (Pinter, 2002).

Along with the abuse and fear that so many of the earth’s people have endured at the hands of Americans come the smile accompanied by the posture, infinitely more naked and more blatant than it has ever been, and this set of questions: How often are we to be bullied by the U.S. Government, and told that we have to be happy and keep quiet? How can we not despise such a foreign policy and its great enterprises of destabilisation and secret diplomacy as well as the bombing of innocent civilians (estimated number of Afghan civilians killed by U.S. bombing in 2001 alone is 3,950) (*Harper’s Index* 2002, 13) whenever its interests are at risk anywhere on the planet? This is the point to keep one’s eye on; because one must drop everything and think exclusively about U.S. foreign policy and its “loss of innocence.” I have read that the country lost that innocence in the Civil War, in the Spanish-American War, in the First World War, during Prohibition, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at the McCarthy hearings, in Dallas, in Vietnam (of the Vietnamese casualties, one need not speak), over Watergate and Irangate, in the Gulf War. This list is not exhaustive. Innocence, we were recently informed, was lost again at the bombing of Oklahoma City and in Operation Desert Fox. The attacks on the Afghan camps and the Khartoum pharmaceutical factory were certainly Monica-related. Uncle Sam dispatched 79 of the world’s most sophisticated Cruise missiles against a few mud-brick houses and a small factory. Damage was inflicted on innocent civilians, Ousama Bin Laden was turned into a global hero for the like-minded and Clinton won only a 24-hour respite from his bedroom-troubles. Behind the *fin-de-siècle* Post-Modern parable of sex lies a brief account of the Bill/Monica/Ken endgame: the love-sick Mr. President, the star-struck green girl and the corporate Wolf Man—another instance of the “reflexivization” of everyday sexual seduction in today’s “risk society” (Zizek 1999, 3-4).

Needless to add that the heavily mediatized sex show has already been consigned to history’s footnotes, odd refugees from a surreal crisis in a world shaped by the excess of the beginning of the new millennium. That this par-

ticular deluge is all mixed up with adult sexuality, and the repression of it, is quintessentially American as well—it being the nature of Puritanism to produce a world that repudiates sexuality but is also thoroughly sexualized. Innocence for sale! And what of the other innocence? The one involving the victims of slavery and genocide, lynching, murder, high crimes, and misdemeanors at home and abroad, terror of being done in by a rival, or by the simple fear of the contents of the FBI's or the CIA's private dossiers. Tzvetan Todorov sums up the case elegantly:

The very identity of the United States as a nation rests upon these two great crimes (the extermination of the Indians and the enslavement of Blacks) whose after-effects are still felt in American daily life today, in the form of the cult of violence and in the transformation of cities into juxtaposed, hostile ghettos. (Todorov 1997, 7)

Facing the vast wreckage of slavery and genocide, the U.S. has another bill (justice, reparation and fair play) coming due, to the descendants of its slaves as well as to those of its Native Americans, which it is morally obliged to redeem.

It is a tale worth telling. State terrorism itself is of course already a prophetic judgment. The masochism of the press in all the operation(s) has been contemptible, and it forms a sort of repulsive minor theme of many books and essays on the subject.¹³ Very few people have, for example, noted that “terrorism” as a totalizing policy term had been pioneered by the Israelis. By the summer of 1982 Operation Peace for Galilee went forward as an Israeli attack on the “terrorist infrastructure,” a phrase that herded under it a fairly massive war effort whose aim was to settle the political future of the West Bank by wiping out the PLO (Aburish 1999, 34–42). The logic of the war on terrorism is clearly discernible in the Israeli genocidal policy of disfiguration of old Palestine and the way the Western media report from the occupied West Bank: when the Israeli Army, in what Israel itself describes as a “war” operation, deliberately sets about systematically destroying the Palestinian landscape, Palestinian resistance is cited as proof that we are dealing with terrorists. Palestinians are discriminated against in the allocation of water, in the ownership of land and countless other aspects of daily life. More important is the micro-politics of psychological humiliation: Palestinians are treated, essentially, as evil children who have to be brought back to an honest life by a stern “*surveiller et punir*” method. In addition to the cruel and arbitrary treatment they must endure, the Palestinians are also reduced to the status of non-entity, objects of disciplinary measures and/or humanitarian help, but not full citizens.

The paradox is further inscribed into the very notion of a “war on terror”—a strange war in which the Enemy (Palestinian in this case) is criminalized if he or she defends himself or herself and returns fire with fire. Which

brings us back to the “unlawful combatant,” who is neither an enemy soldier nor a common criminal. In this sense, Palestinians in Palestine resemble people referred to in France as “*Les Sans Papiers*,” a kind of *homo sacer*.¹⁴ Palestinians in Palestine, like “*Les Sans Papiers*” in France, the inhabitants of the Favelas in Brazil or the African-American ghettos in the U.S. can be killed with impunity and whose death has, for the same reason, no value whatsoever. (The death of Amadou Diallo, a black immigrant from Guinea who was shot in the Bronx by the quartet of police firing no fewer than 41 shots, is a case in point). What of the *al-Qaï'da* terrorists? They are not enemy soldiers, nor are they simple criminals—the U.S. rejected out of hand any notion that the WTC attacks should be treated as apolitical criminal acts. In short, what is emerging in the guise of the Terrorist on whom war is declared is the unlawful combatant, the political Enemy excluded from the political arena (Agamben 1998; Žizek 2002); or, to put it differently, when the Enemy serves as the “quilting point,” to borrow Lacan’s *point de capiton*, of our ideological space, it is in order to unify the multitude of our actual political opponents.

“Terrorists” are not given prisoner-of-war status; “terrorist” bases are found everywhere in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Libya, and other “Rogue States” like Iran, North Korea, Syria, Cuba; nothing Israel does is questioned, since it is all part of the war against “terrorism.” Slowly the effort to combat terrorism expands: I speak here of a rhetorical expansion, and also of the word’s capitalization. The bland faces of chubby “terrorism experts” mouthing a combination of mumbo-jumbo expertise and banality jabber regularly from the TV screen. Terrorism has become a free-floating idea and is associated, not, for example, with Israel’s policy in South Lebanon, not with the bombing of Lebanon by the USS New Jersey, nor with dropping up to 800 tonnes of DU (Depleted Uranium) in Iraq (Kysia 2001, 1–4),¹⁵ nor with the atrocious record of the Nicaraguan Contras, nor with the South Korean, Philippine, Haitian regimes, nor with the Salvadoran right, nor with Jonas Savimbi, but with official U.S. whose *fons et origo*, it seems, is Ousama Bin Laden (Mangez 2001, 57–59). Moamar Gadaffi, Saddam Hussein, Yassir Arafat have lurked in the background, ready for use in forthcoming eventualities.

Now it is essential to say that from many points of view, including mine, Bin Laden and his peculiar *al-Qaï'da* are basically indefensible. A cold-blooded, immature, often calculating and perplexing man, he has done a great deal of harm in the Arab and/or Muslim world as well as in the rest of the world. The Palestinian people, who were caught on camera dancing in the streets after the news of the attack broke, ironically enough, have little reason to care for Bin Laden, for all his declamations of Palestinian rights. But it is ludicrous to see “Arabs” virtually everywhere where there is trouble in the world, including Costa Rica and Thailand, and nothing short of paranoid to turn

Bin Laden into the embodiment of a national security threat to the U.S. As early as 1991 he was necessary to U.S. policy, which had begun to drift into one irrational posture after another. By 1995 he had become the one constant. Little is known about Bin Laden or about Afghanistan: this is all to the good since the less that is actually known about him, the more can be attributed to him. The press, almost to a man or woman, has accepted the Bush Administration thesis about his involvement in the U.S. Embassies' bombings in Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam.¹⁶ Yet not a shred of real evidence has been presented to the public. Almost every allegation about *al-Qai'da* is presented as irrefutable. Bin Laden is a Muslim, he is erratic, often violent; he is unconventional, he is anti-American and Anti-Semitic. He therefore serves the Israeli-American and anti-Communist and virulently racist cause of representing a test of strength for the "West." War fever has broken out. Phrases like "we should have killed the bastard" or "we're tired of being pushed around" or the admirably terse "nuke 'em" are like a deafening chorus of pleasure all around us.

Western pundits or officials who pontificate about terrorism need to ask themselves how years of colonial exploitation in the Arab world at large produced the oddest, the most severe distortions in the historical consciousness and communal foundations of the peoples and societies left after the European white man's exit. The new order brought to the fore not only young officers like Gadaffi and Saddam Hussein, but new politically opportunistic trans-national companies, eager for undreamt-of profits and expanding markets (Luttwak 2000, 3-6). This is an unwholesome mix, especially as it left unattended-to large, unresolved ideological areas: for the natives an unappealing and frustrated sense of retrospective injustice, for the whites a resentful anger and readily nourished contempt. The periodic revivals of nationalism in the post-colonial Third World have taken both religious and secular forms, but whatever else these revivals afford—and they contain a great deal of undirected nativism and atavistic religious sentiment, as well as daring, often brilliant ideas—they are almost always full of the sense that the European white man and now the American has not sufficiently atoned for his past interventions. Such a sense cares little for the empty shelves, the rusty factories, the barely functioning armed forces. Much more emphasis is placed on the symbolic dimension whereby the Arabs, for example, are now so humiliated as to reproduce their earlier colonial subjugation (Hardwick 1997, 45-49).

Bin Laden's futile stand against the West is nonetheless a reminder to the Arabs of how six capitals—Baghdad, Tunis, Beirut, Tripoli, Khartoum, Ramallah—have been attacked by Israel and the U.S. with scarcely an Arab response, except for the defense of Beirut by Palestinian irregulars. Despite

an immense outlay of money for arms, despite the huge number of shabby deals struck with, but also violated by, the West, despite the abrogation of democracy in the name of national security, the Arab regimes are unable or unwilling to do anything in reply. Everyone seems to be waiting for someone to die, for a new American Administration, for the odd crumb proffered by the West. Victory is rarely more than a UN Resolution. Meanwhile the level of threats and verbal counter-strikes rises and rises and rises. And still Israel sits on the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem; and still Colin Powell and Co. keep blathering on about Arab terrorism; and still the U.S. media have no time for Arabs except as terrorists; and still the Middle East chops itself to death. The gigantism and inflation of the current impasse is not only due to the media's gross distortions. It derives from a sort of ideological surplus, an unhealthy swelling which on the one hand is the effect of history avoided and transgressed and on the other of the failure of rational secular politics. In short, Bush and Bin Laden. The problem with these two is that they were a long time in the making and are hardly prepared to depart very soon. Moreover, there seems to be no mechanism for defusing the renewed buildup of animosity and retaliation, except perhaps a loss of media interest, or the pull of a spectacular disaster elsewhere.

It is hard for anyone who witnessed the events of September 11 to convey without being explicit the yearning for peace in the world, but that is what the writer must do. In the process, one of the incongruities at which one's slow-moving mind balks is the combination of two forms of life that Max Weber thinks are immiscible: the symbolic-religious and the calculating-rational (Mills 1990, 45). "Obviously," Lorraine Daston perceptively adds, "those who carried out the attacks on 11 September practiced both, and simultaneously. It took painstaking planning, meshed co-ordination of people and objects, and a strategic eye for opportunities. This is means-end rationality with a vengeance. It also took a steely commitment to an ideal powerful enough to motivate suicide and mass murder" (2001, 21). Granted. The question, however, remains open: What is it to be done to avoid drug-ging ourselves and subjecting our children's minds to the addictive mix of fantasy and propaganda, the nonstop ads that pass for a culture? Talk of punishing states that "harbor" terrorism is simplistic and misleading. It is more accurate to say that failed states incubate terrorism. Therefore, bullying these states, ignoring the need of weak governments for domestic political support, will be devastatingly counterproductive. That Americans now see their own destiny at risk in such distant goings-on is a direct result of their callous foreign policy, a foreign policy that ought to be reviewed and seriously revised if the U.S. Government is to regain any respect at all in the world.

The world we now live in and act in every day can perhaps be understood, as John Berger proposes in *The Shape of a Pocket*, through the depiction of hell in Hieronymus Bosch's so-called Millennium Triptych in the Prado: "... a strange prophecy of the mental climate imposed on the world at the end of our century by globalization and the new economic order." Like Bosch's hell, our world is one in which "there are no pauses, no paths, no pattern, no past and no future. There is only the clamor of the disparate, fragmentary present." In our world—though maybe not in Bosch's hell—there are "pockets of resistance against the new order." But how? "The act of resistance," Berger goes on to say, "means not only refusing to accept the absurdity of the world-picture offered us, but denouncing it. And when hell is denounced from within, it ceases to be hell" (2001, 89). However, Berger forgets that there could be no pockets of resistance in hell according to Bosch, the forces of satanic power being irresistible. And that in turn casts a certain shadow over the hope that we might have to live together peacefully and construct the

Unbuilt that haunts the space [which] is [made of] the spirit of those fire-fighters and rescue workers who climbed an endless ladder, descending into the circle of death, to do their duty to those who had to escape. In that moment there is a sense of "making progress," step by step, without the transcendent form of progress. And in that action there lies the un-utopian ethic of the Unbuilt. There are no available images of this act of ascent; progress here is a lateral or adjacent move toward the stranger as toward the neighbor. Of such a concern for the foundations of "possible" dwellers and dwellings we can have no visual assurance, only a perspicacity of what remains unbuilt. . . . [W]e have to be interested in constructing a building; at the same time, we have no choice but to place, in full view of our buildings, the vision of the Unbuilt. Perhaps then we will not forget to measure progress as it creeps along the ground even when we find ourselves standing, or so we think, at the top of the tower. (Bhabha 2001, 4)

The lives lost mirror our own fragility and vulnerability, our unpredictable passage through the mysterious flow of time that eternally surrounds us, buoys us, drowns us. Ourselves the glass where we look for the faces of those who have disappeared, those we can no longer touch, where we find them looking back at us, terrified, terrifying.

I

Let me now jump abruptly back to the question of Africa in general and Algeria in particular with which I am much concerned. It is one thing to believe without knowing, quite another to know without believing. Never have world-shattering events been so relentlessly documented, the evidence of testimony converging with the hideous evidence of things, than in the

Africa case. Nearly half a century after the end of colonial rule, the continent that is the birthplace of humanity, home to an eighth of the world's population, and a treasure trove of resources is on the brink of catastrophe. Africa has been in turmoil so long its tragedies have grown commonplace. But this time, the crisis is deeper and its potential consequences wider than ever. Wracked by war and sapped by disease, burdened by a traumatic past and failing to come to grips with the economic and technological revolutions that are reshaping the global community, Africa is slipping out of the control of the leaders who claim to govern it, and beyond the reach of the international institutions and coalitions that seek to rescue it. During recent years it has seemed as if unseen hands are gambling across the board of Africa, with loaded dice marked famine or flood, corruption or coup, and another called cease-fire and peace pact, foreign investment and multi-party elections (Holman and Hawkins 2000, 4).¹⁷

Power changes hands at the ballot box in Senegal, and debt relief comes closer, but torrential rains batter Mozambique and drought jeopardizes the lives of 8 million people in the Horn of Africa. Democracy is flouted in Zimbabwe, Eritrea and Ethiopia go back to an old war, Uganda and Rwanda threaten to start a new one. A UN-monitored settlement collapses in Sierra Leone, and conflict in the Congo sucks in the region; decades-old civil wars continue in Angola and Sudan. So what has changed? The cynic might ask: disease and disaster, flood and famine are the familiar litany of Africa. The answer is that the strains are now intolerable; the continent is unable to cope and the rest of the world cannot avoid being affected, roused if not by compassion then by fear of the consequences. Deepening poverty spreads disease, enhances drug trafficking, destroys the environment and encourages the extremism that can turn to terrorism. "The truth is," UN Secretary General Kofi Annan notes, "Africa is suffering from multiple crises—ecological, economic, social and political. Fresh water, forests and arable lands are under unprecedented stress. Billions of dollars of public funds continue to be stashed away by some African leaders, even while roads are crumbling, health systems have failed, schoolchildren have neither books nor desks nor teachers, and the phones do not work." The background to all this poverty "makes Africans more vulnerable to war and disease. And war and disease constantly thwart Africans' efforts to lift themselves out of poverty" (2000, 34). It is a vicious cycle that Africa and donors have failed to break.

The continent remains heavily dependent on volatile and—in real terms—declining commodities. Savings are low, as are investment rates, privatization has been slow, attempts to industrialize have been a failure, and capital flight has been accompanied by an exodus of skills to Europe and North America. AIDS is also taking a terrible toll. Of the 36 million people

afflicted worldwide, 23 million live in Africa, and the disease will reduce life expectancy by 20 years, cutting a swath through the skilled urban class on which the implementation of reform greatly depends. "The reach and effectiveness of the state have withered away," the World Bank warned in its 1997 World Development Report, "and perforce the state has in effect withdrawn. An institutional vacuum of significant proportions has emerged in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa" (Annan 2000, 34; see *World Development Report 2001*, v-xiii). But what the World Bank and organizations like it fail to notice is that tackling Africa's crisis will require a global initiative. An essential first step is an end to the fiction that recovery is under way, recognizing the mistakes of the donors as well as the failures of the leaders of a fragile continent on the verge of collapse.

There is a growing tendency in Africa for people to believe that most of our ills are imported, that the real sources of our problems come from outside. We blame colonialists, imperialists and neo-colonialists; we blame socialists from Moscow and Peking, and send their representatives packing. We blame the Americans and the CIA. We blame the white settlers and so-called Indian bloodsuckers, and deport them even if they carry citizenship cards. We throw white missionaries out of the continent and demand that the churches must be Africanized. Another, but contradictory phenomenon is the belief that the solutions to our social ills can be imported. Foreign "experts" and peace corps swarm Africa like white ants. Economic "advisors," military "advisors," and security "advisors" surround our leaders. English, French, or American women are invariably the secretaries of all key men in Government. How government hoped to maintain security while on the top hovered these ex-colonial dames and majors has remained a wonder to most people. Every week planes leave Lagos, Nairobi, or Dar-es-Salaam with returning "experts" and foreign ministers to negotiate foreign aid and more "experts," and because we believe in "positive neutrality," we seek aid from both East and West. And while East is still East and West is West, the twain meet in Africa. They rub shoulders in our schools, universities and hospitals.

One hundred years ago, at the Berlin Conference, the colonial powers that ruled Africa met to divvy up their interests into states, lumping various peoples and tribes together in some places, or slicing them apart in others like some demented tailor who paid no attention to the fabric, color, or pattern of the garment he or she was patching together. One of the biggest disappointments of the Organization of African Unity when it came into being more than thirty years ago was that it failed to address this issue. Instead, one of its cardinal principles was non-interference and the sacrosanctity of the boundaries inherited from the colonial situation. That was a foreboding failure of political will. And now we see in Africa what the absence of self-rede-

finition has wrought. If we fail to understand that most of the post-colonial mess stems from the colonial nation-state map imposed from above, there will be little chance to correct the situation over the long term. It does not, however, mean that we should blame it all on the colonial powers even though in the case of Rwanda, for example, the French have their hands drenched in blood.¹⁸ As Wole Soyinka put it: "Africans must accuse Africa's failed leadership for the trail of skeletons along desiccated highways . . . the lassitude and hopelessness of emaciated survivors crowded into refugee camps . . . the mounds of corpses. Africa had been betrayed from within" (1996, 57). Little of this incapacity to catch the tide of development and democracy can be blamed on imperialism. He labeled this new predicament the "brown man's burden." However, the big question for all of us to ask is: Why have we tolerated such an unacceptable state of affairs for so long? We cannot, of course, dismiss the local failure after so many decades of so-called independence have passed since the end of colonial rule. What Chinua Achebe aptly termed the "collusive swindle that was independence" (1964, 45). Unfortunately, African leaders have been concerned with maintaining their power and authority in the artificial ponds created by their colonial masters, so eager to preserve their status as king toads that they have never really addressed the problems facing the people entrapped in those ponds. The end of colonization was not at all the end of the struggle. A dire position not only Africa but also most of the Third World finds itself in.¹⁹

Is it any wonder then that the oppressed masses, despairing of their own secular advancement, are attracted to theocrats or "strong hollow men" as Conrad would have it, appealing to national pride, a sense of identity and resistance to foreign powers and their local lackeys? Edward Said answers a mouthful:

Years of . . . incompetence and corruption at every level bled the life out of our societies, already crippled by an almost total absence of participatory democracy and the hope that goes with it. We must all take the blame for this colossal failure. Blessed with enormous human and natural resources, the third world has declined in production in nearly every sphere: during the last decade the gross national product has shrunk, agricultural output has grown smaller, reserves of money and resources have dwindled, and a whole series of civil wars . . . have sapped much of the vitality of our societies. . . . Our best writers, intellectuals, and artists are either silenced and tamed or imprisoned and in exile. Journalism is at an all-time low. Unpopular opinions are rarely expressed, and in nearly every society the media exist basically to further the regime's own version of reality. (Said 1996, xxvi-ii)

In a world such as the one Said describes the intellectual has been marginalized, silenced, and at times, brutally murdered. The untimely death of Tahar

Djaout in Algeria among several others is a grim reminder of the plight of any Third-World intellectual with moral rigor and literary skill, who ventures to speak out for his or her people who have been dispossessed and subjected to a “slow genocide.” Djaout was killed because he wanted to unveil the truth about what happens when big business and Islamism collaborate with the native bourgeoisie in order to profit from the huge revenues generated by oil. In the eyes of some, he became a nuisance: someone who got in the way of rich men getting richer. So why not kill him? So the *GIA* (*Le Groupe Islamique Armé*) or the *FLN* (*Front de Libération Nationale*)²⁰ (we still do not know who kills whom) shot another writer.²¹

It is not that the violent death of another African writer was anything unusual. The hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa in Nigeria is another cruel reminder of the bloody circumstances that surround those who are bent on speaking out against injustice of any kind.²² There has been civil war in Nigeria, Rwanda, Kenya, and above all in Algeria, and decades of bloodshed in what used to be called Portuguese Africa were just beginning (Peterson, 2001, 247–303). There are already hundreds of thousands of victims; hundreds of intellectuals have fallen in the post-colonial struggle, shot in cold blood or hanged in prison yards. Djaout’s uniqueness was not in his religion or in the mission he chose to follow. It was something more valuable: his secular learning and Berber background. If anyone qualifies as an ancient people in Algeria, it must be the Berbers, who, we ought to remind ourselves, wrecked Byzantine rule in The Maghreb. Justinian the Second’s prefect was defeated by the Berber Garmul. The Berbers fought the Romans, the Arabs, the Turks and finally the French, who took 29 years to subdue the mountains around Tizi Ouzou. In the independence war of 1954–62, the Berber names of Amirouche and Ramdane were synonymous with the National Liberation Army’s “Wilaya 3” resistance to colonial rule.²³ That 62 of them were killed by the Algerian police in just 4 days in May 2001 is a clear sign of their predicament in post-independence Algeria.

II

Whenever one reads or hears the phrase *L’Algérie française*, it hurts. It hurts like an injury that has healed and yet has retained somehow a *trace* of the original pain linked to many different things—memories, values, sentiments. For pain, Wittgenstein tells us, “is characterized by the very definite connections.” The phrase he uses in the German original is in fact more inclusive than mere connections: *Zusammenhänge* (1998, 78). What it connotes is not only a linkage between *le lieu* and (*milieu de mémoire*) but also a sort of aggregation of the joined entity of the past and present to form a loosely gathered context in which there is no escape from colonialism to

post-colonialism. Whatever myths are now spun about post-independence Algeria confronting the bloody reality it finds itself in, Sartre had already set out the principal cause and effect of its underdevelopment by the French *colons*:

In Frenchifying and dividing up the property, the structure of the old tribal society was broken without putting anything in its place. This destruction of the framework was systematically encouraged: first because it suppressed the forces of resistance and replaced collective strength with a handful of individuals; next because it created labor (at least as long as farming was not mechanized). This labor force alone offsets the transport costs, it alone maintains the profit margins of the colonial companies in the face of economies in France where production costs keep going down. Thus colonization has turned the Algerian population into an immense agricultural proletariat. It has been said of the Algerians that they are the same men as in 1830 and work the same land; only instead of owning it, they are the slaves of those who own it. (Sartre 2001, 132)

The context of the pain that disturbs Sartre and us shadows every reference to the colonized *Other*. It is part of a legacy that dates back to the early days of French rule in Algeria and was passed on, through successive generations, eventually to colonials like me whose passage from infancy to youth coincided with the last decade of colonial Algeria. The turmoil of that difficult transition taught my generation to internally contextualize it in history. As we read the past and anticipate the future, we catch history in the process of becoming myth.

The beginnings of the story of *L'Algérie française* lie far back in time, and its reverberations still sound today. From 1830, when it was conquered, until 1962, when *Les Accords d'Evian* made it into an independent state, Algeria was said to be French.²⁴ The echoes of 1962 were plainly audible in December 1991 in the celebratory din following the landslide victory of Islamic militants in Algeria's parliamentary elections (Huband 1999, 65–69). Thirty years earlier, thousands of exultant residents of Algiers draped themselves in the national colors and surged through the capital city's historic Casbah to mark the demise of French colonial rule. Nothing demonstrates this point better than the revolt against a pernicious colonial system that occupied the country, and took the land and exploited the former owners at starvation rates. "Then," Sartre adds, "with mechanization, this cheap labor is still too expensive; you finish up taking from the natives their very right to work. All that is left for the Algerians to do, in their own land, at a time of great prosperity, is to die of starvation (134). The jubilation at overthrowing such a system in 1962 was justified to say the least and everyone sounded the triumphant "Hail Algeria!" coda of the revolution. But even then, in the heady days of secular Arab nationalism, when "Socialism and Progress" were the passwords

of a brash new self-confidence, some revelers could be heard honking and shouting the alternative battle cry, "God is Great!" The task of guiding Algeria into the post-colonial era fell in 1962 to a 43-year-old guerrilla chief named Ahmed Ben Bella, who modeled his leadership style after that of another soldier-statesman of peasant extraction—namely, Gamal Abdel Nasser. Like many of his co-revolutionaries, Ben Bella had risen to prominence through the ranks of the military, at the time the only means of advancement for the sons of peasant families. And like other nationalist military regimes that took power in the Arab world during the 1950s and 1960s, Ben Bella and his cohorts were convinced that non-alignment in foreign policy and state socialism at home were all they needed to steer the country through the difficult days ahead (Sami 1984, 34–56).

Since 1962, because of French investment there, and government loans, as well as the presence on French soil of large numbers of Algerians, France and Algeria have continued to form a strange but inseparable duality. Lionel Jospin, sending his good wishes to Abdelaziz Bouteflika, after his election to the Algerian Presidency on 15 April, 1999, spoke of the intimate knowledge that each country had of the other, and said that relations with Algeria were fundamental for France.²⁵ How crucially the tensions, inequalities and injustices of the metropolitan society exemplified here by Jospin are refracted and elaborated in the imperial culture is described by Edward Said in his influential notion of "overlapping territories, intertwined histories" (1993, 23). For Said, the durability of empire has been sustained on both sides of the cultural dividing line, that of the ruler and that of the distant ruled, and in turn each has promulgated a set of interpretations of their common history with its own perspective, historical sense, emotions and traditions.

What an Algerian intellectual today remembers of his country's colonial past focuses severely on such events as France's military attacks on villages and the torture of prisoners during the war of liberation on the exultation over independence in 1962; for his French counterpart, who may have taken part in Algerian affairs or whose family lived in Algeria, there is chagrin at having "lost" Algeria, a more positive attitude toward the French colonizing mission—with its schools, nicely planned cities, pleasant life—and perhaps even a sense that "troublemakers" and communists disturbed the idyllic relationship between "us" and "them." (Said 1993, 211)

But there is I think, another serious argument to be made here. In the days of empire, France's *mission civilisatrice* purported to "civilize" the *indigènes* (natives) and gradually turn them into *petits français*—junior French who would labor with alacrity to bring in the colonial harvest. The highest ranking juniors were colonial subjects trained to serve two purposes: they cut down on costs by replacing French manpower, and they created the illusion

that colonials were profiting from their subservient status, becoming “civilized,” as it were. Both *petits français* and *évolués* were to serve *La Grandeur de la France*, and one day, or so the ideology posited, in the far, far (and ever receding) future, they would become “civilized” enough to be considered fully French.²⁶

Although the colonial era had come to a close long before the 2000–European Championship, the French found something of the *évolué* culture that is so dear to *La Gloire de la Nation* in the person and performance of the son of a former subordinate. On Wednesday, July 8, 2000, at 11:14 P.M. Paris time, the hopes of the entire country were balanced on the right foot of a shy, Muslim son of Algerian immigrants. He waited for five seemingly endless minutes while his opponents protested (with some valid reason) against the penalty award that would propel France to the final of Euro 2000. Then angular, handsome, balding, the 28 year old man stepped forward and, with a crescent sweep of his right boot, sent the ball cannonading into the top left corner of the Portugal goal.²⁷

Zineddine Zidane’s startling performance in the 1998 World Cup, which France won, and in Euro 2000 has elevated him to the ranks of the greatest French sporting heroes (Kopa, Merex, Killy, Platini). They have also confirmed his status as something far more important than that; something much harder to define. He is a significant political figure in France, even though he has never uttered a political sentence in public and refuses to be deployed for political ends, however benign. To the 4 million French residents of Maghrebian origin—especially for the baggy-jeaned, reverse-baseball-cap-wearing young—Zidane is a proof (maybe the only proof they have ever been offered) that you can be a “Beur” (second generation Franco-Arab) and a success in 21st-century France.²⁸ Such a right, if recognized, cannot be treated as parasitic. It is, if anything, an implicit prior right by which violation of or respect for other rights can be known. This is possibly why of the 577 members of the French national assembly, none is of Maghrebian origin. “Frankly,” Elisabeth Badinter rightly observes: “It is harder to be a North African than to be a woman in France.”²⁹ Beur faces are still rare on French television. To this end, Zidane has had a wide political and social impact; partly because he is an incomparably elegant, inventive and intelligent football player (maybe the best in the world); more importantly because he is of Algerian origin because, in France, the most active racial issue is still fear of the Arab.³⁰

In a survey in March 2000, an extraordinary 63% of French people said that there were too many Arabs in France.³¹ Zidane was born in Marseilles, but his family comes from the Kabyle community in Algeria (which is, technically and ethnically speaking, not Arab). His high-profile presence in the

French national team gave young Beurs a sense of identity for the first time but also—just as importantly—an image of a successful Algerian in mainstream France for the first time in history with the exception perhaps of the famed actress Isabelle Adjani.³² To the great white majority—haunted by racial folk memories from the Algerian war of liberation and by suspicion of young Arab men—Zidane is a relief; a reproach; a counter-argument; a source of joy and pride; in sum, a “*dénégation*” as Freud would have it. His parents, Smail and Malika, emigrated from Algeria in 1953, before the war broke out. Zidane attributes much of his success to his father, to whom he always refers as “*mon papa*” (Lichfield 1998, 34).³³

It is the exceptional quality of Zidane the person that creates his importance as a political symbol, as a poster-child, not just for Dior but also for a successful, multi-racial France. His rare talent might also be read as a proof of continued French racial barriers. “An Arab immigrant’s son,” Kifi Yamgane, President of *La Fondation Républicaine pour l’Intégration*, informs us, “must do very well to be recognized in France.” But the importance of Zidane goes farther afield. He offers young white French people a way to dissolve their prejudices. The views of the bulk of French people were formed many years ago. “Even Zidane’s supernatural ankles will not, however, change them overnight, but he offers young white French children a triumphant and gentle image of Algeria and young Beurs a positive self-image, which is not rooted in drugs, violence or rejection of the red, white and blue” (Maschino 2001, 23). The claim is all the more true insofar as France has yet to come to terms with its history, a history full of shame, a history that dare not speak its name.

Not everyone sees the Zidane phenomenon solely in terms of assimilation, however. A selection of articles published in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* over the last 140 years reveals sentimental and romantic attitudes of the French toward Algeria. The picturesque appearance of Algiers itself; the sense of an ancient Mediterranean civilization; the appeal of the South and of the “*immensité saharienne*”: travelers from Delacroix to André Gide to Jacques Berque long immersed themselves in these exotic pleasures. But they looked, too, for signs of the French past, for the names of streets like *La rue des Pyramides*, or most conclusively, *La rue des Trois Couleurs* in Algiers. And, tucked away in *Le Jardin Marengo*, the small space dedicated to Amélie, Louis-Philippe’s Queen at the time of the conquest.³⁴ Then, clearer evidence of French power, there were soldiers recruited from the local population, wearing their red and white cape. For many years, this colonization was simply taken for granted, even by French intellectuals, until the 1950s, when the whole edifice came tumbling down in a tragic conflict that was both a classic colonial war, with an occupying army fighting against a nation seeking its

independence, and a civil war in which a European population and an assimilated indigenous population were fighting other Algerians.

The war began officially on 1 November 1954 (“*Le Toussaint Rouge*”) and lasted seven and a half years. According to the official figures, 15,583 French, French Muslim, and Foreign Legion soldiers were killed; one estimate puts Algerian losses at around a quarter of a million, but much higher figures have been claimed (Horne 1984, 56). It created violent divisions within metropolitan France, and, as terrorism and demonstrations which got out of hand led to many deaths, a civil war in France itself seemed possible. After 1962, when the war was brought to an end, almost the entire French population of Algeria who, in 1954, had numbered more than one million, left what had been for most of them the country of their birth. As with the defeat of 1940, it has taken a long time for the full history of this war to be written. For more than thirty years after *Les Accords d’Evian*, people said that memories were too selective, the sense of humiliation too persistent and controversy too widespread, for objective research to be undertaken. In the early 1980s, when Benjamin Stora began a doctoral thesis on the life of Haaj Messali, the father of Algerian nationalism, he was the only historian in the University of Nanterre to be working on an Algerian subject. In 1997, the same Stora published a bibliography in which he listed no fewer than 2130 books written about the war in Algeria, and he was able to argue that it was not for any want of information that the subject continued to be avoided by those studying and teaching contemporary history both in France and Algeria.³⁵

Under the French, Algeria was a colony like no other, except perhaps for India under the British. Constitutionally an imperial part of metropolitan France, it was the greatest rhetorical example of the French imperial doctrine of assimilation. Despite defeat in three major wars, France never abandoned the territory. Algeria was the keystone of *L’Union Française*, as it became known in 1946. For France to have one day to abdicate its imperial role there seemed to many a prospect worse than the defeats of 1870–71 and June 1940. For unlike France’s other colonies, Algeria was incorporated into France legally and constitutionally by the Second Republic (1848–1851). It was identical (at least in theory) to *Calvados*, *Tarn-et-Garonne*, or *Bouches-du-Rhone*. Henceforth all that distinguished Algeria, now *fille de France*, from the so-called *Hexagone* (the roughly six-sided mass of European France) was precisely a hollow space, a blank page, the enormous vacancy of the sea separating it from *Maman-Fouance: outre-mer, outre-mère*.³⁶ Algeria would continue to be perceived, spoken about and acted upon, both locally and in Paris, because it became involved in a subordinate filial relationship with *La Métropole* under which the old androgynous *mère-patrie*, or what Jacques Derrida has percep-

tively called the “Capital-City-Mother-Fatherland,” clearly lived on in the unconscious of “French” and “Algerians” alike (1996, 73).

Decolonization, the handing-over of power in Africa which began in the 1950s and reached its peak in the 1960s, required a sort of complicity. The African leaders used big words when talking about independence, but it was understood that behind the rhetoric an intimate relationship with the old colonial power would continue as “business as usual,” which required much forgiving and forgetting on the African side. The Algeria handover in 1962 was quite different. The white settler population was considerably larger than in other European colonies divided along ethnic lines (colonies, that is, where the indigenous population had not simply been exterminated). The Algerian war for independence therefore was effectively a civil war, a secessionist conflict which undermined the self-professed ideals of Republican France. It is the political investment represented by this close union which explains the violence of the final break. But only in part. For the violence rose also from the effort of willing a nation into existence. No more than in other territories where the sovereignty of colonial power came to be disputed could there be a nation. “Algeria”—as much as “India”—had to be created, and the central agent in this task was the *FLN*. The *FLN* moudjahidine had not only to erode the authority of the French police and military; equally, they had to impose their own authority over diverse ethnic communities: Berbers, Mzabis, Harkis, Jews. And they did so principally by terror. As Michael Kettle amply demonstrates in *De Gaulle and Algeria 1940-1960*, for every European murdered by the *FLN*, they killed eight of their own people (1976, 34). Decolonization never took the form of simple opposition between oppressor and oppressed. Frantz Fanon was wrong.

What was the war—or, as it was known to some, revolution—about? In the broadest terms, it was a three cornered struggle: between the colonial French state; the *pieds-noirs* settler population in arms with disaffected French military officers and the native Arab, Berber and Jewish communities. Members of the three groups were mustered (often through sadistic terror) into support for the *FLN*’s idea of the Algerian nation, or into mercenary armies, the doomed Harkis.³⁷ Presiding over the *mêlée* was *Le Général* himself, a “prince of ambiguity” whose intentions on Algerian matters were inscrutable. Typically, when he arrived in Algiers in June 1958 to pronounce the most famously sibylline words of his reign—“*Je vous ai compris*”—he was euphorically received by the French army, the *pieds-noirs* and the natives alike. To those who tried to read his mind, he stood variously for integration and French Algeria, for a looser form of association, or for self-determination. De Gaulle would decisively lose the initiative to the *FLN*: the cost of re-asserting control

over his own putsch-prone colonels in the chaotic menace of “*la semaine des barricades*” in January 1960, proved almost fatal (Morin 1999, 34–35).

When on 18 November 1960, two weeks after a televised speech in which de Gaulle had spoken of a future Algeria that would no longer be governed by France as “*une Algérie algérienne*,” This “*auto-détermination*,” as he called it, could be carried out either with or against France. Of the leaders of the resistance movement—who had been based outside Algeria for six years and were likely to remain there for many more—he declared: “They say they are the government of the Algerian Republic that will come into existence one day but has never existed yet” (Morin 1999, 67). The speech greatly upset many people in *Le Général’s* entourage, the last words about the “Algerian Republic” especially. The Prime Minister, Michel Debré, told Jean Morin that when he had read the text of the speech before it was recorded, the phrase about the “Algerian Republic” had not been there. Debré protested and *Le Général* apologized, saying that he had been carried away, that the words had come out in spite of himself. Morin believed that de Gaulle had been deceived into making his famous “*je vous ai compris*” speech in Algiers in June 1958 by the sight of Europeans and Muslims cheering together. He had not realized that the Muslims had been forcibly brought there. In a conversation with Morin in February 1959, de Gaulle claimed that his “*Vive l’Algérie française!*” outburst during the same visit was a deliberate concession to the Europeans in Oran—he would not have used the same phrase in Constantine (111). Morin is perhaps being cynical here. After all, the Algerian peasantry had been very severely treated by the Army and saw perhaps in de Gaulle a glimmer of hope. There may well have been genuine applause and, in de Gaulle’s response, a spontaneous “*Vive l’Algérie française!*”

What Morin did not, however, know was that de Gaulle had in mind direct negotiations with the *FLN*—which had established itself in September 1958 as *Le Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne*, based in Geneva. The initiative for direct negotiations had come from the *FLN*, via a Swiss diplomat, after de Gaulle’s “*auto-détermination*” speech. The negotiations began at Lucerne in February 1961. De Gaulle told Pompidou that his mission was simply to collect information. He maintained that France was not frightened of Algeria’s becoming independent, since in his view independence was meaningless. The President of Congo Brazzaville, Flubert Youlou, was “independent,” but it was de Gaulle, who provided his income (Wauthier 2001, 67). If Algeria did not want to be associated with the French, then France would respond by concentrating its forces in Algiers, Oran, Mers-el-Kebir and other “*points sensibles*,” a convention would have to be signed setting out contractual guarantees for the European population.

On all these matters de Gaulle gave way. He specifically instructed his negotiators not to delay by insisting that all these details be resolved to their satisfaction. During the negotiations that took place in February 1962, the French, who had originally wanted to keep their base at Mers-el-Kebir for 99 years, accepted 15 years (in the event they evacuated it on 1 February 1968). It is true that two days after *Les Accords d'Evian* had been signed special provisions were made for the future of the many Muslim soldiers who had been recruited by the French. It was also agreed that there would be no reprisals against any individual or group that had been serving France. But within days of the Agreement, the nationalist forces led by Houari Boumediane were organizing attacks on the Harkis, who had been disarmed by the French military authorities. The French Army could not, officially, protect them, and estimates of the number of Harkis killed vary from 25,000 to at least 100,000 (Morin 1999, 102). De Gaulle insisted that, after independence, France would not be responsible for maintaining order in Algeria. With regard to the Harkis he made it clear that he did not think of them as French, and he explained that they could not be "repatriated" since they were not returning to the land of their fathers. He explained his attitude about France being no longer involved in Algeria in the following terms: "*Napoléon disait qu'en amour, la seule victoire, c'est la fuite. En matière de décolonisation aussi, la seule victoire, c'est de s'en aller*" (144). And so, when in 1962 Algeria gained independence, the Algerians were left to work out their own ruin, and *Les Légionnaires* moved out singing Edith Piaf's "*Je ne regrette rien de rien*" (Videliér 1992, 75).

The liquidation made the European settlers from one day to the next into panic-stricken and penniless refugees—vicarious sacrifices to decades of mismanagement by their own leaders, of clashing ambitions on the part of Paris politicians and of the grandiosity of de Gaullian *Weltpolitik*. Above all, the exodus was of great detriment to the Algerian people, who were cruelly abandoned to the mercies of the *FLN*, who engaged from the beginning of the rebellion in 1954, in the fraternal violence its leaders have learnt to practice against one another—an experience which has served them well as rulers of the country. The rebels had formed in exile a *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne*. This body, headed by Youssef Benkhedda, took over from the French in Algiers in 1962. Its tenure was very short indeed. Ahmed Ben Bella, one of the so-called *chefs historiques* of the revolution, who had been in a French prison between 1956 and 1962, saw no reason why he should defer to Benkhedda. He conspired with Mohammed Brahim Boukharrouba, known as Colonel Houari Boumediane (or Rouge), chief of staff of the *Armée de Libération Nationale*. Stationed in Morocco and Tunisia, it had taken hardly any part in the struggle against the French. Boumediane,

who had been dismissed from his post by the *Gouvernement Provisoire* in June 1962, marched with his troops on Algiers the following August, swept away Benkhedda and his government and imposed Ben Bella in his place. Boumediane himself became Minister of Defense and Deputy Prime Minister. In 1965, he toppled Ben Bella and reigned in his place until his own death in 1978. Ben Bella never stood a chance. It was not just that the present situation metaphorically tied his hands before his Algerian enemies and rivals did it literally, or that his entourage did not consider that its task extended to looking after the personal safety of the man who had fought for independence and was imprisoned by the French for that very reason. He was helpless against the sheer power and numbers of those who were determined to destroy him. In the mean time, Boumediane kept Ben Bella imprisoned and in solitary confinement in a flat on the top floor of an apartment building (Ben Bella 2001, 18).

Boumediane, like Patrice Lumumba in Congo, had a clear vision of what was then beginning to be called “neo-colonialism.” He saw that the way to guarantee independent politics was not to airbrush out the past, but exactly the opposite: to build the awareness of the Algerian people around the memory of their appalling suffering and humiliation at the hands of the French during the previous 133 years of domination. During his reign, Algeria itself was deprived of communication with the outside world, and subjected to drastic experiments. Agriculture, industry and commerce were nationalized and administered—if this is the right word—by a centralized bureaucracy beyond any control by its hapless subjects. During this period, many of the original *FLN* leaders were imprisoned, silenced, driven into exile or murdered. Colonel Boumediane was succeeded by Colonel Chadli Benjedid. He was the choice of the Army, which imposed him as sole candidate for the presidency, and as head of the *FLN*, the only legal political party. He was to Boumediane what Brezhnev was to Stalin. Socialist Algeria stagnated for 10 years under his rule. Living conditions inexorably worsened while blatant corruption, indulgently described by Boumediane as the *nomenklatura*’s honey, continued to enrich the pillars, and the camp-followers, of the regime. Ferhat Ben Abbas was one of the earliest native Algerian political leaders. He persuaded himself to cast his lot with the *FLN* in 1955, only to be rudely pushed aside after 1962. The title of a book which he published in 1984, *L’Indépendance confisquée*, concisely sums up the travail of Algeria from 1962 onwards.

To achieve independence or to confiscate it once achieved, does not mean that those who occupy the seats of power can govern honestly or efficiently. The rulers of “decolonized” Africa, and especially those of Algeria, are a standing demonstration of this truth (see *Le non-alignement-ouvrage collectif*

1985, 23-87). The governors of Algeria after 1962 came out of the revolutionary, conspiratorial, and violent tradition of Messali Hâj's *Parti du Peuple Algérien* and of its *organisation secrète*. From it emerged, among others, Ben Bella, the first President, and Mohammed Boudiaf, whom Ben Bella condemned to death in 1964. Boudiaf, who had lived in exile since then, and whom the Army brought back in January 1992, to sit in the place of Benjedid, was brutally murdered by the State (Huband 1999, 77).

Unlike most of the new African states, however, Algeria enjoyed a very large income from oil, following the nationalization of the French oil companies in 1971, and above all the OPEC coup of 1973. These enormous resources seem to have been largely wasted. The state controlled 40 per cent of the best agricultural land, but agriculture was mismanaged to the extent that a massive increase in food imports became necessary. Drugged by OPEC money, the government embarked on grandiose, centrally managed industrialization projects conceived within the framework of the "irreversible socialist option" proclaimed soon after independence by the *FLN*. The consequence was, in spite (or rather, because) of the income from oil, a spiral of international debt, inflation and the utter inability of the centralized command economy to find employment for the inexorably increasing numbers of its dependents. It is as though the standing exhortation to their fellow-citizens of the anti-Guizots who run Algeria is *Appauvrissez-vous*. This fall from grace, as reflected in the everyday life of all Algerians, has come with great suddenness. In the years following 1962 no one had a clear idea of the real conditions in Algeria. Only one book gave an inkling of what went on in the People's Democratic Republic under "Rouge." This was *The Private Life of Islam*, by an English medical intern, Ian Young, which was about the neglect and victimization of women patients in the gynecological ward of a country hospital, where medical posts were part of the spoils that fell to *FLN* apparatchiks and camp-followers (1978). The explanation of this failure to report what was going on lies in the restrictions imposed by a repressive and secretive regime.

A moment of truth for the regime came with the riots of October 1988. That they should have happened at all shows the great discontent which unemployment and impoverishment had elicited in an autocratically governed population, generally acquiescent to its lot. These riots clearly shook the regime and frightened its leaders. They promised reforms, an end to the political monopoly of the *FLN*, and elections. In the circumstances, these promises were a mistake, since they could be taken to show that loss of nerve is particularly dangerous for autocratic and despotic governments. This, at any rate, seems to have been the judgment of those who removed Benjedid.

Following the exodus of the Europeans and the Jews in 1962, Algeria became totally Muslim. Its Islamic loyalties became more self-conscious under Boumediane, who wanted to *arabize* Algeria, by promoting Arabic as a teaching medium in schools and in the newly established universities. This necessarily increased contact with the Arab East and with so-called fundamentalist movements such as the *Muslim Brethren*, active both in Egypt and Syria.³⁸ When Benjedid allowed some freedom of the press and party activity after the riots, an Islamic political idiom was ready on hand by which to attack the regime and the misgovernment it promoted, in a manner which spoke to the hearts and minds of the masses. The *FIS* was formed in September 1989. In June 1990, it greatly increased its status and influence by winning many seats in municipal and regional elections. Elections were promised again for June 1991, but then postponed to the following December. When the first ballot in December showed that the *Front* was heading for a decisive majority in the National Assembly (Vidal 2000, 56). The Army intervened, Benjedid was deposed, the second ballot, scheduled for mid-January, canceled, and the *Front* proscribed. The leaders of the *FIS*, as well as a large number of its adherents, were detained without trial, and twelve members appeared before a military court, were found guilty of the murder of three soldiers and sentenced to death.

Though the *Front* was formally established only in 1989, the Islamic current had become evident almost a decade before, and from its beginnings, as chronicled by M. Al-Ahnaf, B. Botiveau and F. Fregosi in their valuable compilation, *L'Algérie par ses Islamistes*, there was evident the same element of conspiratorial violence which is now apparent, and which has also characterized the *FLN* and the *Organisation secrète*. In 1981, Mustafa Bouyali, a former guerilla, established the *Mouvement Islamique Algérien Armé*, consisting of 16 cells. In 1983, he was caught in an ambush and killed. His organization was dismantled. Bouyali has become for the Islamists the symbol of struggle against the impious Algerian state. A few years earlier, in 1976, a preacher, Mahfoudh Nahnah, expressed his opposition to Boumediane's regime by blowing up an electricity pylon, for which he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was freed after Boumediane's death, and is said to have helped—in return?—to dismantle Bouyali's apparatus.

The two leading figures of the *FIS* were Abassi Madani, a professor of education born in 1931, and Ali Belhaj, born in 1956, a preacher and a teacher of Arabic. Both were active in the Islamic movement, and both were condemned to house arrest, or to prison and exile, during the 1980s.³⁹ Their writings and declarations, included in *L'Algérie par ses Islamistes*, give an idea of the movement's intellectual baggage and of its aims. Belhaj denounces liberty as merely a Masonic slogan spread by the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in

order to corrupt the Islamic world. What he fails to note is that the *Protocols* were devised by the Czarist regime for purely anti-Semitic slander. The Czarists knew about the power of representations; so did Hitler when he adopted the pamphlet for his own purposes; and so do today's Zionist propagandists, who use the very same slander to distract their morally bankrupt intellectuals with the image of the dishonest, bloodthirsty, lazy and vindictive Palestinian and/or Arab. Another kind of representation is examined in Said's *Orientalism*, which single-handedly set in motion the contemporary left's obsession with media-unmasking. Said vividly demonstrated how Western scholars had exoticized and deformed the image of the Arabs, portraying them as sexy, mysterious, and unfathomable. Yet if representations dehumanize and obscure, they possess degrees of virulence; or, to put it differently, to give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, is an immoral formula implying that state and religion can be separated, which means that man can control his own fate independently of the Creator. Believers are enjoined to command the good and prohibit the evil for Belhaj, this divine injunction is unknown to the Zionists, who are a "cursed community," working to promote democracy and thus to weaken Islam. Two Jews, Haim Nahol (Haim Nahum, Chief Rabbi of Istanbul under the Young Turks) and Lord Cardon (Curzon), had thus demanded the abolition of the Caliphate and the establishment of a secular state in Turkey. The Jewish newspaper, the *Economist*, has followed in their footsteps by advising President Sadat to shut down all the mosques of Egypt if he wants his pro-American and pro-Israeli policy to succeed. As for the *Front*, what it aspires to, Belhaj declares, is to re-establish the Caliphate over the whole Muslim world. Against Jews, Masons and the impious Algerian state which is steeped in violence and torture, Belhaj professes to fight for the sake of Allah and Islam. For him, Islam is the religion at the same time of tolerance and of force, of the word and the whip, to be used on the proud and the wilful. Islam, in short, is a religion which allies the conquering sword to the righteous Book.⁴⁰

In February 1989, President Benjedid was pleased to grant a constitution establishing democracy in Algeria. On the first anniversary of the new era, the Algerian army newspaper declared that the mission of the Army was to support democracy and prevent dictatorship. A few months later, Madani warned this army of democracy that if it were to come out of its barracks, "we, men and women, will, by the grace of God, come out, and we shall be an Islamic army fighting in the cause of the Prophet of God" (Quoted in Gacemi and Pasquier 2000, 23). In this war, the Army of democracy has won the first round. It is, however, safe to say that today, 12 years after Madani made his pronouncement, Algeria offers a new replay of old predicaments: national neglect, distrust between the populace and their governors,

Islamism, violence and counter-violence, the tyranny of the upper class, civil war. The 2001 Berber revolt that was quelled with 62 deaths in four days is a clear reminder of the injustice inflicted on Algeria's ancient people.

The Berbers, with their own distinctive culture and language (*Tamazight*) hoped their participation in the war against France would give them recognition; but President Ben Bella destroyed their aspirations in 1962 when he declared: "We are all Arabs." In May, 2001 the Berbers recalled the "Berber Spring" of 1980 when the government refused to permit the writer Mouloud Mammeri to give a lecture on 16th-century Berber poetry; the thousands of arrests that followed this uprising are insignificant compared with the deaths in the same month. Whole areas of the Kabyle capital of Tizi Ouzou were taken over by demonstrators while police stations in outlying towns were assaulted by hundreds of youths. The provincial *gendarmerie*, having run out of tear-gas grenades, began shooting down the protesters with live rounds. Algeria's "Islamist" war with its own toll of perhaps 150,000 lives has frightened the French so much that only a massacre of Sabra and Chatila proportions will not provoke even a squeak from the Quai d'Orsay. With its own massive Algerian population, France does not want another immigration of refugees from The Maghreb. It is better to let the Algerian Government handle the problem. But is it capable? After all, many still claim that the murder of the famous Berber singer Lounes Matoub, shot dead by Algeria's familiar "unknown" gunmen in 1988, was the work of the government. The country's "commissions" of inquiry whether investigating the most grotesque massacres or the murder of a former president traditionally fail to unmask anyone; which is why so many Algerians suspect that the government and its all powerful army have a hand in the violence that has torn Algeria apart.⁴¹

Village life in Algeria has become extremely cruel and while it is true that a lot of government-sponsored development work has been wasted, and ham-fisted in its execution, it has nevertheless brought some benefits in the shape of health care, education, and a minimum wage. But what remains is appalling poverty, tribal diversity and obvious shortcomings. The post-colonial elite on the other hand display characteristics common to their counterparts in many former French colonies: they are insular and insulated, incestuous, smug, and contemptuous of the masses. They protect and nurture their own interests, and profess egalitarianism while practicing their own pernicious system. It is obvious that their overreliance on Western ideas and prescriptions has eroded the Algerian ethos and nearly ruined the country. They have yet to recover from their colonial hangover and develop the education, attitude, and institutions that may persuade the ruled to think of themselves as partners rather than as a *tiers-état*. Democracy and the nation-state concept

have failed because the people the poor have elected have ruled—not represented—them. If all Algeria's woes were just a particularly bad hangover from French Algeria, there might well be room for optimism. Algeria is not only a land governed by a handful of men trained to ape the ways of the European white men who once ruled them. It is also a land under the influence of Eastern fundamentalism (*albeit* from the rest of the Muslim world). One therefore must look at Algeria from the point of view of those most affected, the riot victims, the women, the children, and the underprivileged.

Massacres have been taking place for years. In early 1993 there was a rash of incidents in which gunmen entered the homes of civil servants—police-men in particular—and killed everyone in sight. Later that year Tahar Djaout, at thirty-nine, one of Algeria's most promising young writers, and Mahfoud Boucebi, a leading psychiatrist, were assassinated within a few days of each other. Journalists became favorite targets—both senior figures in the Algerian press, like Said Mekbel, a well-respected and widely read columnist for *Le Matin*, and beginners, like Khadija Dahmani, on the staff of *a-Shurük*, a popular Arab-language weekly until its demise in 1998, which was by no means hostile to religion. To date some sixty-nine journalists and a number of other media workers have been assassinated, and although no violence against the profession has been reported since 1999, many writers and intellectuals are still living in hiding, changing their residences frequently. But the spectacular murders of individuals who could easily be identified by profession did not overshadow the fact that vehicles were being stopped on highways and their occupants gunned down, schools were being burned and schoolteachers murdered in front of their students—sometimes along with them. By the time the massacres in villages captured the world's attention, in the summer of 1997, reliable estimates placed the number of people killed in Algeria since 1992 at 60,000 to 150,000 (www.ina.fr/Dossiers/Algerie/). This total, of course, includes thousands of terrorists and, according to groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, a number of people suspected of being terrorists.

The terrorism of armed fundamentalist groups began after the army canceled the parliamentary elections scheduled for January of 1992, in which the *FIS* was about to best both the ruling and by then corrupt *FLN* and the secular opposition, collectively known as democrats. The implication is that a secularist military blocked the legitimate accession to power of a religiously inspired party democratically favored by the majority of voters. This position was implied in the initial coolness of the U.S. State Department toward the regime that emerged from the aborted elections of 1992 and in the repeated offers by the French to facilitate some kind of national conference at which the parties to the conflict could discuss their differences. The most

controversial—and to many Algerians, libelous—critique of the regime's legitimacy came with unsubstantiated suggestions, half spoken in European media and political circles, that the government was behind the village massacres. This went well beyond the accusations made in Algeria that the security agencies, and the army in particular, failed to provide villagers with adequate protection (Girardon 1990, 10–13).

Two other famous national electoral events that left an imprint on Algerian politics were also punctuated by violence. In November of 1995 a retired general, Liamine Zeroual, ran for President and won, with 61% of the vote, against an Islamic candidate, Mahfoud Nahnah, and the democrats' Said Saadi. And in June of 1997 a newly formed governing party, *L'Union Démocratique Nationale*, which supported the President and a program of gradual institutional and economic reform, won a plurality in the long-delayed legislative elections and formed a coalition government with the *FLN* and Nahnah's party.

The most likely explanation of what happened in Algeria in the 1990s did not seem to interest anyone. The emirs and their drugged acolytes—drunk with evil brews of false religion and politics, and with every stimulant available, as autopsies have repeatedly shown—had lost their bid to overthrow the Algerian state and were determined to bring down as many people with them as they could. Many of the commanders of the *FIS* were apparently persuaded by the security forces, along with the official government policy of forgiveness for surrender, to lay down their arms in October, 1997. However, the *GIA*, which had broken off with the *FIS* in 1994 was bent on either victory or death. In the summer of 1997, the *GIA* focused on the region where it was strongest, the Valley of the Mitidja, just south of Algiers. As army sweeps in the valley began to pay off, security specialists surmise, the *GIA* sent its death commandos into the region where they were not expected. Its purpose was revenge: the villagers, who might at one time have shown insurrectionary bands some support, if only out of fear, were now recalcitrant. Moreover, since the summer's surrenders any village from which the *FIS* had recruited young men was now marked in the minds of the *GIA* as a nest of traitors deserving no mercy (Pautard 1992, 11–14).

Until 1988, for example, *Al-Musâhid*, which was long Algeria's only major newspaper, was a government mouthpiece (its editor-in-chief was murdered in 1995). The trade-union federation, the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens*, was run by operatives of the ruling party, the *FLN*, and served, in the Soviet style, to ensure the workers' acceptance of economic and social policies, rather than to champion their interests. In the late 1980s, however, Algeria developed an independent press, and trade unions unaffiliated with the regime often led strikes against government policies. A

reformer in the teachers' union, Abdelhak Benhamouda, seized control of the *Union Général* in 1986, and later renewed historical ties with the U.S. AFL-CIO. Political parties were created, along with other institutions that a free society takes for granted—women's-rights groups, for instance. The nationalized economy was being transformed to make room for a private sector. At the same time, Algerian society was under attack by a militant political movement flying the banner of Islam. From 1992 to 1995 especially, it seemed that the attack might succeed. Algeria was assumed in many circles to be the “next Iran” (Girardon 1990, 10–13). In France politicians on the right warned that a takeover of Algeria by the *FIS* would have deleterious consequences not only for French-Algerian relations but also for the human rights of ordinary Algerians. But politicians on the Left, including the former Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, and the humanitarian activist Bernard Kushner condemned the interruption of the electoral process in 1992 (Pautard 1992, 13). Many in France hoped for a more nuanced approach to even the most radical Islamists, arguing for their inclusion in the political process.

Even as Western observers grew used to the idea that the “natural identity” of the Algerians would eventually sweep away a tottering regime that lacked popular support, Algerians were showing that, on the contrary, they would support a monster state that stood for their national independence. Voting repeatedly under the threat of death was an expression of this support, as was the daily decision of parents to keep their children in schools under threat from throat-slashing killers. Said Saadi, who got fewer of his compatriots' votes than he had hoped, voiced a word that took on the sound of a popular refrain: “resistance.” “Terrorism has not been defeated but terror has been” (Quoted in Bouamama 2000, 19).⁴² In the Arab world, characterized by authoritarian regimes and tempted—supposedly—by fanatical and reactionary religious ideologies, this was a big story, with implications for the ability of Islamic cultures to accept modernity.

The terror did not begin with the army coup in January of 1992. Ideologically driven parliamentary cells of Islamists had begun testing their new skills early in the 1980s. Perhaps more significant than their attacks on border posts and police stations was their growing boldness in terrorizing ordinary people. It was by no means unheard of for them both to organize private charities for the needy and to beat people up for lax mosque attendance or, in the case of girls and young women, for dressing immodestly. When, following widespread anti-government riots in 1988, President Chadli Benjedid legalized political parties, the *FIS* emerged as a federation of the hundreds of networks, including paramilitary cells, that had constituted themselves in the 1980s. In the 1990 elections the *FIS* won more than half the seats in municipal councils across the country, with more than 54

percent of the popular vote, and the party was able to deepen and broaden what its constituent factions had been doing for years. In the more ideologically fanatical town councils highly controversial social policies were passed: girls could no longer play sports (Algeria had previously done a great deal to promote the education, athletic as well as academic, of girls); wedding parties could no longer have musicians, particularly singers of the popular Algerian blues known as *Rai*; the intensifying paramilitary training of young men would now be paid for with municipal funds. Distributors of TV antennas, which allowed viewers to follow “immoral” programs and movies from France and elsewhere, were told to find other merchandise to sell or risk the consequences. The same for wine merchants.

The demagogue young leader of the *FIS*, Ali Belhaj, whose sermons at his mosque in Bab el-Oued were widely disseminated, was open about his party's program. Algeria would be a Muslim state, with no room for anyone who did not accept that fact. The only purpose of women would be to produce more Muslims (this in a country where nearly half the university graduates are women), and there would be no use for the non-Arabic languages—French and *Tamazight*—that are spoken by Algerians. Belhaj and his minions were waging a full-scale cultural war. The *FIS* called on its militants to launch an insurrectionary strike in the spring of 1991, to force President Benjedid to resign and call early national elections, which Belhaj was confident of winning. The union leaders associated with Benhamouda, the teachers' union reform, had just wrested control of the *Union Générale* from the *FIS*, which had been running the federation Soviet-style—that is, as an appendage of the ruling party—since the mid-1960s. They were social democrats, and they viewed their adversaries as fascists. They did not care how popular Belhaj was. “Hitler was popular too,” one of them said. At any rate, the union responded in kind to the *FIS*'s mobilizations, and for several months in early 1991 it appeared that the country was headed for civil war. However, it is probably true that Benhamouda and his comrades would have taken up arms against an Islamist takeover. In 1997, Benhamouda, his bodyguard and a parking-lot attendant were killed in front of the *Union Générale* headquarters in Algiers.⁴³

The upshot is that the army personnel and the government officials who have dealt with the crisis since 1992 have yet to find a solution. In the meantime, Algerian society has been under assault for nearly 15 years by a totalitarian movement and/or regime. The Algerian people have suffered enormously. In the years to come, it may be that those who have most to fear from the current situation are the generals in the present-day Algerian Army, men who draw whatever legitimacy they have from the memory of the armed struggle against the French—the former Algerian Defense Minister Khaled

Nezzar had to be hastily flown out of Paris in April 2001 after two enterprising French lawyers attempted to have him arrested and detained under the terms of the UN Convention against Torture. The lawyers were acting on behalf of three Algerian expatriates, one of whom had already died in France as a result of his injuries.⁴⁴

Many Algerians have been enraged to hear a spokesman close to the Algerian Government describe the current debate over the atrocities of the Algerian War in France as an “affair for the French.” It is easy to see why powerful men in Algiers feel that too much discussion of French crimes might elicit some uncomfortable comparisons. In February, a book was published in Paris by a man who had been a junior officer in a parachute regiment. *La Sale guerre* describes torture, summary executions and all the horrors of living in an “interrogation center” where soldiers drank themselves unconscious in order to avoid hearing the screams coming from the cellar below. The author of the book, Habib Souaida,⁴⁵ was an officer in the Algerian Army in the 1990s. The book also describes how tribalism has replaced the old concept of nation-state imposed from above and how the death threats against intellectuals who speak against corruption, injustice, poverty, are renewed every day. Unlike those who decide to stay and identify as well as assimilate to a large extent with the powers that be, Souaida stands for a cause and matters involving integrity, conviction, justice, truth; principles that do not occur in a vacuum, a laboratory or a library. For the intellectual who believes in justice, this simply means, in essence, that there is today the risk of the rope, the sword or the bullet. Only when we understand that, will we be able to provide the right alternative. The virulently anti-Islamist Habib Tengour sums up the case with force:

“All those who fall” today in Algeria—much against their will, for many of them—in a way bear witness to this circumstantial link to the group of origin.

And yet I wonder about my dead friends:

—Wasn’t Tahar Djaout assassinated because his anti-fundamentalist journalistic writings disturbed the ruling elite and the Islamacists?

—Wasn’t Youcef Sebti assassinated because of his “consciousness raising”

activity among the students of the El Harrach National Institute of Agronomy?

—Wasn’t Abdelkader Alloula assassinated because he was a communist?

—Wasn’t Bakhti Benouada assassinated because he worked at being a link between “arabophone” and “francophone” intellectuals and artists?

All, despite the differences of their aesthetic projects, were partisans of a resolutely anti-Islamic “social contract” and had made their stance public. It was their “political” struggle for a modern society many are trying to eradicate that made them targets. (Tengour 1999, 261–62)

III

My aim in this introduction has been to present the reader with a representative view of the Algerian plight, now that there is so much talk of Algeria and the Algerian civil war. In formulating this position, I have relied mainly on what I think can justly be called the *Algerian experience*, which to all intents and purposes became a self-conscious experience when the first wave of French colonialists reached the shores of Algeria in the early 1830s. Thereafter, Algerian history took a course peculiar to it, and quite different from Arab history.⁴⁶ There are, of course, many connections between what Algerians did to rid themselves of domination and what other oppressed people have done in the past century; but the defining characteristic of Algerian history before and after 1962, the year of independence—its traumatic national encounter with Islamism—is unique in the region. This uniqueness has both guided my aim and my performance—however flawed. By some standards Algerians are perhaps an unexceptional people; their national history testifies to a failing contest with a basically French and ambitious ideology (as well as practice); they have been unable to interest the West very much in the justice of their cause. Nevertheless, many scholars, teachers, journalists, intellectuals and writers have begun, I think, to construct a political identity and will of their own; they have developed a remarkable resilience and fashioned an even more remarkable national resurgence; they have gained the support of all the peoples of the Third World; above all, despite the fact that Algerians are fragmented and geographically dispersed in a country five times the size of France, and they have been united as a people largely because the story of Algeria’s domination (which they have articulated out of their own experience of dispossession and exclusionary oppression) has a coherence to which they have all responded with positive enthusiasm. It is to the full spectrum of Algeria’s post-independence failure and its subsequent return to the lived details of that failure that this issue addresses itself.

Thus one thing about Islamism is the imbalance in its perception. Because the reality is so chilling, to cite figures and offer explanations is not enough. In the West, the ways in which the whole matter is stripped of all its resonances and its often morally confusing detail, and compressed simply and comfortably, inevitably under the rubric of “Islamist terror,” are questionable to say the least. Yet as someone who has been touched by the issue in all sorts of ways, I must also say that I have been petrified at the sporadic killings, the

suicidal missions, the assassinations, the bombing of schools and hotels; horrified both at the terror visited upon its victims, and by revulsion at the fact that Algerian men were driven to do such things. Since I do not write as a detached observer, rather than trying to deal frontally with the terror itself, I have attempted to convey some sense of the larger Algerian *story* from which all these things originate. And if in the end the story does not—as it cannot—mitigate the tragedies of waste and unhappiness, it does at least present what has been missing, the reality of a collective national trauma with implications for every Algerian *inside* and *outside* Algeria.

As the contributors shrewdly demonstrate, whereas France and its history have been celebrated without interruption, the actuality of Algerians, with lives being led, small histories endured, aspirations felt, has only recently been conceded an existence. Yet all of a sudden, the Algerian predicament now seeks an answer: world opinion has demanded that this hitherto slighted crux of the Algeria impasse be given its due. But, alas, the possibility of an adequate debate, much less a genuine solution, is slim. The terms of such a debate are impoverished, for (as I said above) Algerians have been known only as terrorists. A sizeable corps of Algeria “experts” has tended to monopolize discussion, principally by using social science jargon and ideological clichés masked as knowledge. Most of all, I think, there is the entrenched cultural attitude toward Algerians deriving from age-old Western prejudices about Islam, the Arabs and the Orient. This attitude, largely shaped by the French in the case of Algeria, and from which in its turn they drew for their representation of the Algerians, dehumanized them, reduced them to the barely tolerated status of a nuisance.

However, the purpose of labeling the Algerian as inferior is not explained by a rebuttal of its alleged political role. Edward Said views the entire discipline of Orientalism as embodying the assumption that it is the study of a world that has ceased to evolve. By implication, such a world could be made at least to appear ripe for colonization:

Of itself, in itself, as a set of beliefs, as a method of analysis, Orientalism cannot develop. Indeed, it is the doctrinal antithesis of development. Its central argument is the myth of the arrested development of the Semites. From this matrix other myths pour forth, each of them showing the Semite to be the opposite of the Westerner and irredeemably the victim of his own weaknesses. By a concatenation of events and circumstances the Semitic myth bifurcated in the Zionist movement; one Semite went the way of Orientalism, the other, the Arab, was forced to go the way of the Oriental. . . . Each time tent and tribe are solicited, the myth is being employed; each time the concept of the Arab national character is evoked, the myth is being employed. The hold these instruments have on the mind is increased by the institutions built around them. For every Orientalist, quite literally, there is

a support system of staggering power, considering the ephemerality of the myths that Orientalism propagates. The system now culminates in the very institutions of the state. To write about the Arab Oriental world, therefore, is to write with the authority of a nation, and not with the affirmation of a strident ideology but with the unquestioning certainty of absolute truth backed with absolute force. (Said 1991, 307)

The prejudice—racial, religious, linguistic, and cultural—that Said sees at the heart of Western views of Islam evolved, over the course of several radical turning points, as the relationship between Europe and the Orient shifted. As a result, the myth has been sustained. Historical circumstances have assured that.

Fred Halliday provides sufficient evidence, citing examples for the post-colonial era that reveal the extent to which this prejudice has festered and found its voice in the nationalist wars that have characterized the conflicts of the post-Cold War era (1996, 179). Further, this prejudice—myth or not—is renewable, depending on circumstances, having a common thread. Said explains:

One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of the "mysterious Orient." This is nowhere more true than in the ways by which the Near East is grasped. Three things have contributed to making even the simplest perceptions of the Arabs and Islam into a highly politicized, almost raucous matter: one, the history of popular anti-Arab and Anti-Islamic prejudice in the West, which is immediately reflected in the history of Orientalism; two, the struggle between the Arabs and Israeli Zionism, and its effects upon American Jews as well as upon both the liberal culture and the population at large; three, the almost total absence of any cultural position making it possible to identify with or dispassionately discuss the Arabs or Islam. (Halliday 1996, 26)

Beyond the academic study of Islam or the Arabs, part of Algeria's misfortune, as Said sees it, is to be the object of worn stereotypes. The French promulgated a whole series of them during the 135 years they occupied Algeria. Alexis de Tocqueville witnessed the appalling brutality of the French conquest of Algeria, yet he swallowed his humanitarian principles because he believed that Algeria was vital to French interests. Nevertheless he predicted that a dual society would end badly. This is exactly what happened. The convenient idea of a country inhabited by "barbarians," who would hardly notice if their land was taken from them and improvements made upon it, was succeeded by Napoleon III's romantic notion of an "Arab Empire" that would

become the ally of his own. The Third Republic introduced the ethnographic racism of late-nineteenth-century science to justify mass settlements (only about a third of the European settlers in the early years of the century were French). The French policy of assimilation—for the tiny minority that was capable of evolving from Islamic-Arab darkness toward the light of French civilization and citizenship—was a way to rationalize disenfranchising the other nine tenths of the population, which numbered almost 10 million at the apogee of French Algeria. There were only a few thousand “*évolués*” in the early 1950s, when the war of independence broke out. At this point the French Fourth Republic discovered that the Algerians were really communists—or, alternatively, “*boucs*,” equivalent to “niggers” (Le Cour 2001, 24).

Racist stereotypes in France closely resembled those in the U.S. And just as in the U.S., racism ultimately gave way to a kind of guilt-ridden inability to criticize their attitude toward the *Other*. For forty years scarcely a voice in France so much as suggested that whatever the merits of the post-independence Algerian leadership’s forced march into economic development, it was coming at the expense of liberal political development. When the trouble began in the 1990s, of course, the French were nearly unanimous in asking what can one expect from a gangster regime and a backward people? The socialist and revolutionary rhetoric of the post-independence years sometimes gave the misleading impression that Algeria was, broadly speaking, a secular society. But Algerian nationalists had always associated the idea of their country’s Islamic identity with the independence struggle. Islam had in fact provided the bedrock of the revolution. The original Algerian freedom fighter, Emir Abd al-Qadir, who fought intermittently for nearly two decades in the nineteenth century, was a recognized religious authority in the Muslim world.⁴⁷ And the movement led by another religious authority, Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis, sustained the sense of national identity on the basis of Islam and Arabic language and literature in the first half of the twentieth century—when the French colonial authorities were most intent on denying that Algeria was any different in its relation to Paris from Aude or Gascogne.

The militant rhetoric of French republicanism masked the fact that most Algerians were affected by it only to the extent that it pauperized them economically and marginalized them politically. But ultimately the proclaimed intention of the Islamic radicals to model their new Algeria on Iran gave the impression that Algeria had remained—despite colonialism and revolution and socialist experiments—a deeply traditional and religious country. This is why it was fashionable, at the height of the FIS’s campaign of terror, in 1993–96, to say that 135 years of French colonialism had failed to dent the “Algerian personality,” as had two decades of Algerian socialism, and that the extremists were merely reasserting Algeria’s long-repressed political-cultural

identity. This was another misreading, for it is perhaps in its relation to Islam that Algerian society reveals its modernity most deeply. The political culture of rural villages; the benign attitude of the Ottomans, who were chiefly interested in the coastal towns, and the attitude of the French administration, which viewed Islam as an effective excuse not to make citizens of the conquered population, contributed in different ways to making religion a force for cultural identity without its becoming the dominant political organizing principle (Hourani 1983).

This issue tries to put the Algerian matter before the Western reader, not as something watertight and finished, but as something to be thought through, tried out, engaged with—in short, as a subject to be dealt with culturally. For too long Algerians have been outside history, and certainly outside discussion; in its own modest way this issue attempts to make the predicament of Algeria a subject for discussion and cultural understanding. The reader will quickly discover, I hope, that what is proposed here is not an “expert” view nor, for that matter, personal testimony. Rather, it is a series of experienced realities, grounded in a sense of urgency and human rights as well as in the contradictions of social and political experience, couched as much as possible in the language of everyday reality.

The present issue also maintains that most of our social and/or political ills in Africa are indigenous, that the primary sources of our problems nearly fifty years after independence are native, rooted in the political, social, economic setup; that the most effective solutions cannot be imported: they must be the result of deliberate reorganization of the resources available for tackling specific issues. Does independence mean the replacement of foreign rule by native dictatorship? What does equality mean in a newly independent African state like Algeria? How hollow are the men who rule us? Algeria serves as the case study for the contributors, who certainly do not intend their views as a polemic against what has rightly been called the ideological bent of social science work that pretends to scientific objectivity. Instead, the essays gathered here try to describe Algeria and its awakening slumber, without at the same time neglecting the setting of their life on the land, in the region, in world politics. But throughout their experience is woven the strands of Islamism. This is no theoretical issue, nor a matter of name-calling. To most Algerians, Islamism has meant ruthless violence. What they need to inform the world about therefore is how it means certain concrete things to some, things of which they collectively bear the living traces.

A number of basic premises inform the argument the contributors develop. One is the continuing existence of an Algerian people. Another is that an understanding of their experience is necessary to an understanding of the impasse between the West and the Arab world. Still another is that

France, as well as its supporters, has tried to efface the Algerian in word and action. Until today, it is a striking fact that in France merely to mention the Algerians or Algeria is to name the unnameable, so powerfully does their existence serve to accuse France of what it has done to them. Ultimately I suppose that I am asking the question, "What is Algeria?" Given the realities of the Algerian experience, the contributors find ways of telling us about the determining Algerian aspiration—namely, a longing for peace at home and in the street. It is hoped that their counter-archival essays encounter debate and a much-hoped-for engagement with the "other side." Such an endeavor symbolizes, I believe, a heroic ideal that is rationally willing to venture beyond what Freud aptly called the upper floors of the house of human existence and to unsettle and rediscover what lies hidden or forgotten beneath them.

Such essays must not be easy to write. For they derive from study of and reflection on the meaning of modern Algerian history. Many of them, however, arise from an active participation in the often discouraging quest for the Algerian predicament. They are all conscious of trying to present more than a summary of recent history, or a prediction of tomorrow's developments. My hope is that the contributors have made clear the Algerian interpretation of colonial and/or post-colonial experience, and have shown the relevance of both to the contemporary cultural scene.

To explain one's sense of oneself as an Algerian in this way is to feel embattled. To the West, to be an Algerian is in political terms to be an outlaw of sorts, or at any rate very much a "terrorist." That at bottom is the stereotype, which "connotes rigidity," Bhabha declares, "and unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and demonic repetition" (1983, 18). This is to say that at the heart of the stereotype, a discursive strategy designed to locate or "fix" a colonial *Other* in a position of inferiority to the Westerner, the potentiality of a disruptive threat must be admitted. For example, if a stereotype declares the Algerian to be rapacious and/terrorist, then even as it marks him or her as inferior to the self-controlled white, it announces his or her power to violate, and thus requires the imposition of restraint if such power is to be curtailed: so stereotyping cannot rest; it is always impelled to *further* action and misrepresentation. For those who bear the mien of the *Other*, *freedom* is paradoxical, and choice is the contingency of claiming one's subaltern presence as it is projected in and through the power of another's possession. To choose to *be* or *belong* in this peculiar sense, with its double consciousness and split identification, is also to commit oneself or one's community to an agonistic existence.⁴⁸ Henry Louis Gates makes the point perceptively:

Each, in his own way, rages against the dread requirement to represent; against the demands of "authenticity." People who have been vested with

meaning [define themselves] by struggling against other meanings, other allegories. . . . Somehow the choice is always between alternate inauthenticities, competing impostures. Another approach toward the question: How does it feel to be a paradox? (Gates 1997, 34)

Notes

¹ See Derrida (2002); Bhabha (2002, 6-7).

² For more on the topic of what "bio-pouvoir" means, see Foucault, (1989, 42-49; 2002); Agamben, (1997, 112-35).

³ Think of Rwanda, Bosnia, Iraq, Sudan and the case will be clear enough.

⁴ In relation to this treaty, the U.S. made it clear that it would agree to the banning of biological weapons as long as there was no inspection of any biological weapons factory on American soil.

⁵ For more on the subject of the prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, see McGuire (2002, 1-5).

⁶ For more on the subject, see Bowles (2002b, 312-42; 2002a, 34-56).

⁷ See Cockburn and St. Clair (2001, 12-13); Hitchens (2001, 1-5).

⁸ A perspicacious view of this matter is to be found in Edward Said (2001a, 1-4; 2001b, 15).

⁹ A brilliant perspective is given by Wideman (2002, 33-39).

¹⁰ Said has written extensively on terrorism. For more on the subject, see (1981, 1994).

¹¹ The government demanded and got the powers to wire-tap telephones, to arrest and detain Middle Eastern people on suspicion of terrorism, and generally to include a state of alarm, suspicion and mobilization that could amount to paranoia resembling McCarthyism. Depending on how one reads it, the American habit of flying the flag everywhere can seem patriotic, of course, but patriotism can also lead to intolerance, hate crimes and all sorts of unpleasant collective passion. Some of these points are examined by Tariq Ali, Said, Hitchens, and Cockburn in (*Counterpunch* 2001); Davis (2001, 1013).

¹² I am indebted to Christopher Hitchens for the formulation of some of the ideas I develop here. For more on the subject, see (2001b, 19-127; 2000, 85-103).

¹³ A litany of books on the subject of terrorism: Miller, Engelberg, and Broad (2001); Reichman with Tanne (2002).

¹⁴ I am truly indebted to Žižek for the formulation of some of the ideas I develop here (2002: 3-5); also Agamben (1998, 23-71).

¹⁵ See Kysia (2001, 1-4). Kysia explains how the sanctions against Iraq have spared Saddam Hussein and condemned hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis to death, disease, and malnutrition.

¹⁶ There is a precedent to this wholesale accusation: we still recall the Reagan Administration thesis about Gadaffi's involvement in the Berlin disco bombing, which was never proved.

¹⁷ Holman and Hawkins (2000, 4). I am indebted to Holman and Hawkins for the formulation of some the points I develop in this section.

¹⁸ An insightful view of the role the French have played in the genocide in Rwanda is to be found in Waller (1993); Malvern (1996, 11-15); Peterson (2001, 245-303), and in particular Prunier (1995).

¹⁹ See Davidson (1993, chap. 4 in particular; 1995).

²⁰ For more details on the topic, see Stora and Quandt (2001, 195-231); Malley (1996, 204-51).

²¹ For more on the subject, see Marrouchi (2000, 5-25).

²² The murder of Ken Sara Wiwa was carried out in spite of appeals from some of the world's most influential organizations and people: Mandela, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the European Parliament of Writers and Pen.

²³ For more on the subject of Berber resistance to foreign incursions, see Shatzmiller (2001, 41-69) and Brett, Fentress, and Shipton (1997, 34-76).

²⁴ Naylor (2000, 11-72); Ageron and Brett (1991, 112-45); Caviglioli (2000, 48-50); Lindqvist (1998).

²⁵ Pasquier et Baki (1999, 24-31); Pasquier and Gacemi (2000: 42-47); Kaplan (1998, 17-28); Gacemi et Pasquier (2000, 52-57); Basbous (2000, 45-72 in particular).

²⁶ Lorcin (1999, 35-90). Lorcin's study demonstrates how the image of the subordinate—namely, the Arab (bad) as opposed to the Berber (good) were used to negate the underlying beliefs and values of the dominated society and to impose French cultural, social and political values. See also Daubert (2001, 25-29) and Etamad (2001, 32-39).

²⁷ Dubois (2000: 42-43) and Camps (1995, chap 3).

²⁸ Labrunie (2001a, 21; 2001b, 20); Tayler (2000, 58-66); Cojean (2001, 34).

²⁹ For more on the subject of women and people of Maghrebian origin living in France, see Kramer (2000, 112-23).

³⁰ Savarèse (2000, chap. 2 and 3 in particular) and Blanchard et Bancel (1998, 59-82).

³¹ Videlier (2001, 10-13); Conklin (1997); Blanchard et Bancel (1997).

³² Collot (1987, 43-111) and Lefeuvre (1997).

³³ I am grateful to Lichfield for formulating some of the arguments I make in this section.

³⁴ Causse and de Cessole (1999) and Jauffret (1998).

³⁵ Stora (1991, 34-56 in particular) and Droz et Lever (2002).

³⁶ I borrow the formula "Vuve la Fouance" from Chamoiseau (1997, 197).

³⁷ On the subject of the Harkis, see Wauthier (2001, 67-68).

³⁸ The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by the Egyptian Hassan al-Banna and remains the single most influential Islamist organization. Its broad following, political importance especially in the Middle East, and intellectual force have cemented the brotherhood's primacy among Islamist organizations despite attempts, particularly by Arab governments, to destroy it. For more on the subject, see Huband (1999, chap. 4 in particular).

³⁹ Willis (1996, 45-72 in particular) and Verges (1997, 29-68).

⁴⁰ Quoted in Basbous (2000, 56). See also Mimouni (1992, 62; 2000) and Gacemi et Pasquier (2000, 53–70).

⁴¹ For more on the plight of the Berbers, see Fisk (2001, 1–4).

⁴² For more details on the subject see Bouamama (2000, 23–45).

⁴³ Baya et Sylvaine, (56) and Beaugé (2002, 2).

⁴⁴ Pasquier (2000, 58); Tuquoi (2002, 2).

⁴⁵ Souaidia lives in exile in France. He is the author of *La Sale guerre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001).

⁴⁶ Stora (2001, 34–58); Laroui (1977, 24–56); Djait (1985, 13–32); Ali (2002: 1–13).

⁴⁷ Between 1832 and 1871, a number of religious leaders emerged to head armed opposition against the French colonial power that had established its rule in Algeria in 1830. Most prominent among these leaders was the Sufi Emir Abd al-Qadir, who was the elected leader of Algeria's western tribes. Between 1832 and 1847 he prevented French rule from taking root in the western areas of Oran, organizing a state based on Islamic principles and stressing the religious nature of his struggle against the non-Muslim French. His revolt collapsed in 1847 but was followed by others, all of them motivated by religion. Only in 1871 was France able to impose its rule throughout the territory. For more on the subject, see Hourani (1983, 23–45).

⁴⁸ There is a very fine account of the ideas I develop here in Bhabha (1983, 18–36); *Artforum* (1993, 167; 1997, 11–12). I owe it to Bhabha for shaping my argument in this section.

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