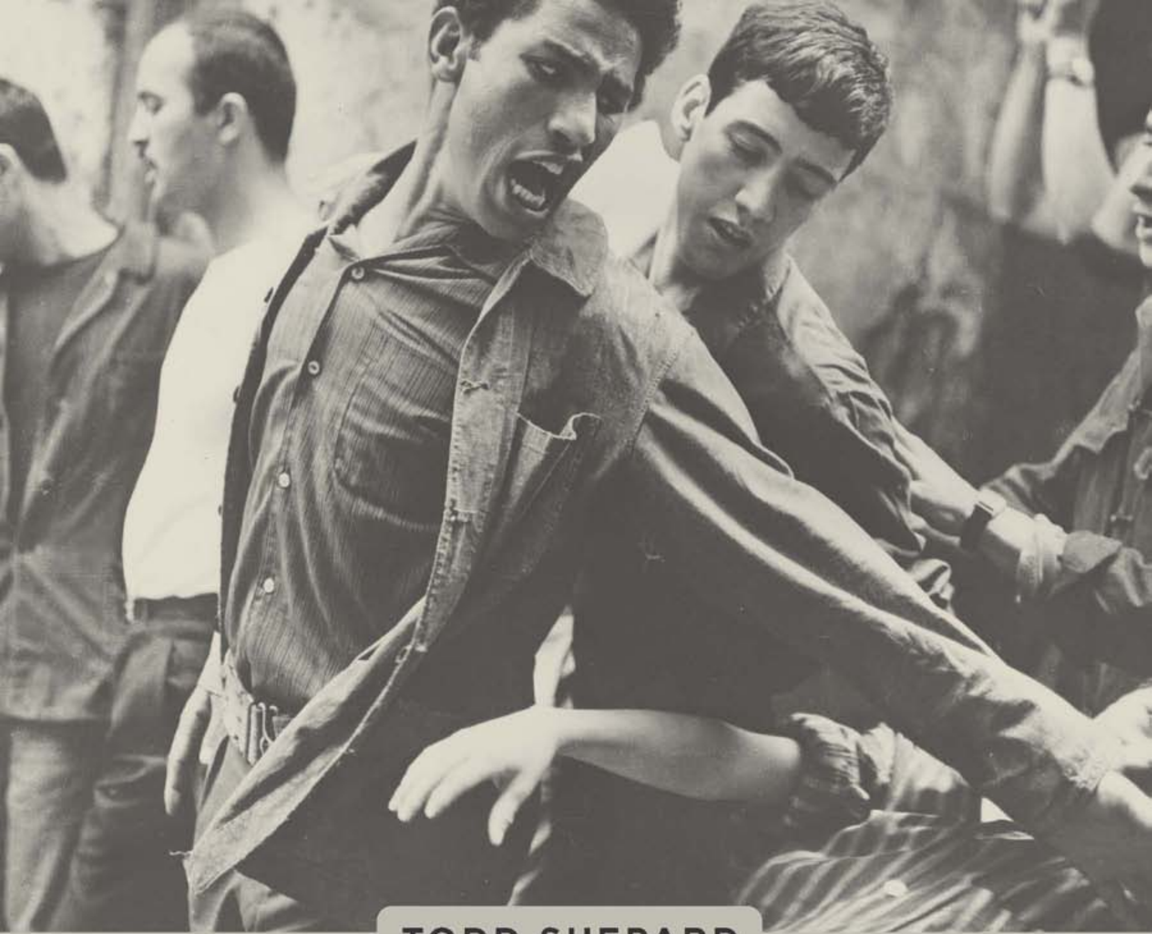

TODD SHEPARD

SEX, FRANCE & ARAB MEN

1962–1979

INTRODUCTION

Sex Talk and the Post-Algerian History of France

> The object of my history is, to some extent, the imperialist colonization inside European space itself. How forms of domination over people or over certain categories of individuals were established and how they made the functioning of Western societies, modern societies, possible.
>
> —Michel Foucault (1978)[1]

Algerian questions—and answers—made the sexual revolution French. This book is a history of how and why, from Algeria's independence from France in 1962 and through the cultural and social upheaval of the 1970s, highly sexualized claims about "Arabs" were omnipresent in important public discussions in France, both those that dealt with sex and those that spoke of Arabs. Two phenomena became enmeshed: the ongoing consequences of the Algerian war (1954–1962) and the so-called sexual revolution—which in roughly those years grabbed public attention and rapidly changed how sex was evoked, lived, and (far more slowly) legislated, even as it also provoked critique, activism, and resistance. To understand each of these things, it is necessary to analyze them together. The fight for sexual liberation is usually explained as a US and European invention. What this juxtaposition of the war's aftermath and "revolution" renders visible is that it also developed out of the worldwide anticolonial movement of the mid-twentieth century.[2]

1. "La scène de la philosophie," in *Dits et écrits*, t. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 571–595; 581; "The Stage of Philosophy, A conversation between Michel Foucault and Moriaki Watanabe," Translated by Rosa Eidelpes and Kevin Kennedy, *New York Magazine of Contemporary Art and Theory* 1: 15 (2014); http://www.ny-magazine.org/PDF/The_Stage_of_Philosophy.html.

2. On the centrality of anticolonialism to the so-called sexual revolution, see Henry Abelove's pioneering text "New York Gay Liberation and The Queer Commuters," in *Deep Gossip*

"An Algerian Harvest": In 1967, this was the title the newspaper *Le cri du monde* (The World's Lament) gave to critic Xavier Grall's assessment of the fall season's new literary novels. Grall expressed the hope that his selection might offer the French public an opportunity to gain some perspective on "the physical and moral drama of the [Algerian] war." There were, he noted, "easily a dozen titles I could cite," but the one he focused on was Pierre Guyotat's just-published *Tombeau pour cinq cent mille soldats* (A tomb for five hundred thousand soldiers). Grall fretted that the book gave too much importance to the war's violence. Yet he embraced what he took to be its greatest insight: "It remains true that the Algerian war had something notably erotic about it." Guyotat—like Grall, a French veteran of the conflict, but one who had been imprisoned for desertion in 1962—had written an enigmatic note to himself in early 1967 to describe the manuscript that became *Tombeau*, which more acutely raises some of the issues at stake in post-1962 France: "decolonization and 'de-eroticization.'"[3]

With this coupling, Guyotat gave voice to the hope that the mid-twentieth-century tide of decolonization had laid low not just European colonialism, but the foundations on which, as subsequent scholars detail, Orientalist erotic fantasies (and nightmares) had long flourished. His controversial 1967 novel, through its excess and experimentations, forces attention to how the mixture of violence and desire exploded during the Algerian war. That admixture aimed to exaggerate and disable, through a process he named "de-eroticization," what had made this recent history so sexual—an ambition it could not possibly achieve. This conflicted past is what Grall's commentary tames into "something notably erotic." Both men's statements are compelling because they give evidence of how quickly familiar sexualized claims about Arabs reemerged in the aftermath

(Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 70–88. This book focuses on an elongated chronology of what French historian Michelle Zancarini-Fournel terms "the '68 years"; see, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, "Conclusion," in *Les années 68: Le temps de la contestation*, ed. Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, Robert Frank, Marie-Françoise Lévy, and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Paris: Complexe, 2000).

3. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the French are by the author. Xavier Grall, "Une moisson algérienne," *Le cri du monde* 13 (December 1967), 52–53; Pierre Guyotat, *Tombeau pour cinq cent mille soldats, sept chants* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967); the citation is from his work notebook, collected in Pierre Guyotat, *Carnets de bord, v. 1 (1962–1969)*, ed. Valérian Lallement (Paris: Lignes & Manifestes, 2005), 200. On Guyotat, see Catherine Brun, *Pierre Guyotat, essai biographique* (Paris: Flammarion, 2015). Grall was the author of an essay on French draftees during the war, *La génération du djebel* (Paris: Du Cerf, 1962), along with many other texts.

of Algeria's independence. Their choice of terms also accurately signals the intensity with which this happened.[4]

The year 1962 was not a definitive break point between before and after. Yet claims and presumptions that the end of French rule in the Maghreb (Morocco and Tunisia had regained their independence six years before Algeria) was exactly such a rupture—as well as the significant developments that supported such arguments—fashioned what came after. This is why the category of "post-decolonization" is useful. Post-decolonization, invocations of sex, and Arabs now primarily described people, relationships, and events located within France even as they always also referenced Algeria. Until the end of the 1970s, another key difference with other variants of so-called sexual Orientalism was that the focus of most assertions was on men rather than women and, in that context, masculinity rather than effeminacy. These discussions churned through a class of evidence that scholars largely ignore, which I refer to as "sex talk": diverse references to sex, sexual morality, deviance, and normalcy in publications, archived documents, and visual sources. Sex talk expanded dramatically in these years, thanks to growing demands for sexual liberation and the transformative power of consumer capitalism.

The post-decolonization grammar of sex talk changed contemporary France. The claims ranged from fascination to reprobation. In a 1962 study, essayist Edouard Roditi asserted that "it is usually agreed in France that Arabs have been gifted with greater manliness than us," which the author linked to their more "primitive" social organization. The tension this quote highlights between "gifted" and "primitive" aptly announces the contradictory ways that assertions about Arab men moved over the following years. What remained constant, however, was an affirmation of stark difference, which opened some possibilities even as it closed more.[5] Many scholars

4. Extensive analyses and descriptions of sexual and gender practices or erotic tastes were one of the forms of "science," of research and truth claims about "the Orient," that, as critic Edward Said first proposed, tell us more about the society that produces them—i.e., "the West"—than about the people they claim to explain. Edward Said, *L'Orientalisme: L'Orient créé par l'Occident* (Orientalism), trans. Catherine Malamoud (Paris: Le Seuil, 1980). Throughout this book, the term "Arab(s)" usually appears unmarked, except when it is placed in parallel with other problematic categories or its use demands particular attention. Still, as the work of Said and others demonstrate, it is always a problematic term; this book details various reasons why it mattered to actors at the time.

5. Edouard Roditi, *De l'homosexualité* (Paris: SEDIMO, 1962), 330–331. Sigmund Freud had written much on the binarism of primitive vs. neurotic; see, e.g., his 1915 "Reflections upon War and Death," in *Character and Culture,* ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 107–133.

have claimed that until the 1990s French public debate avoided grappling with the racism and dehumanizing violence that marked the Algerian war as well as colonial and post-decolonization France. Yet attending to sex talk reveals that many French people could and did debate racism and the suffering that colonialism and decolonization inflicted.[6] It thus maps out important connections between two conversations that have drawn much scholarly attention in recent years, yet which too often ignore each other: histories of empire and histories of sex.

Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, many critics rejected the accusations of sexual perversion leveled at Arab men in France. Maghrebi authors were particularly attentive to this multipronged assault. In *Les ambassadeurs* (The Ambassadors), the Tunisian director Naceur Ktari offered a crude summary of some of the key stereotypes at play. This 1975 feature-length film starkly depicted the difficulties faced by the "immigrant workers" who had become such a visible feature of contemporary France. It was directly inspired by an October 1971 murder in the poor and heavily Maghrebi Goutte d'Or neighborhood in Paris. Djellali Ben Ali, a fifteen-year-old Algerian, died at the hands of Daniel Pigot, the jealous and racist concierge in his building. Pigot was convinced that the boy had slept with his wife. One scene depicts a group of concerned "French" inhabitants who have gathered together thanks to the activism of a far-right (and *vieille* France) hotel owner. Stirred to anger, they list the problems they have with the behavior of their Arab neighbors; all relate to sex:

MAN: They follow our women and are ready to rape them . . .
WOMAN: They are all faggots . . .
MAN: In any case, they'll sleep with anything, even goats . . .
WOMAN: There are several that come on to me . . .

As this book confirms, this almost comical mélange of seemingly contradictory actions and inclinations captures the intensity and depth of ambient prejudices.[7]

Some radical critics, however, drew other lessons from claims about

6. Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991); John Talbott, *The War without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1980). For a challenge to this view, see Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: Une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 20–21. While the French government did not officially accept the designation "Algerian war" until 1999, it appeared regularly in French sex talk throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

7. For reports on similar claims, see, e.g., Katia Kupp, "Le plongeon dans la Goutte-d'Or: 'Les ambassadeurs,'" *Nouvel observateur* 649 (18 April 1977), 78.

supposed differences between Westerners and Arabs. Note, for example, that Roditi's 1962 essay twinned descriptions of Arab and "Muslim" societies as "primitive" with the qualification "less neurotic." Indeed, it paralleled what he characterized as their healthier approach to masculine sexuality with that of ancient Greece. The French-born (Turkish-Jewish) American literary and art critic did so to an end: he meant to critique recent antihomosexual laws in France. Other writers had somewhat different purposes. After May 1968—when protests by leftist students, transformed by a general strike that shut down the country, seemed to open a new era of revolutionary change and brought new issues and arguments into left-wing and wider discussions—celebrations of Arab men as a source of political inspiration increased among many left-wing commentators. Leftists spoke of a liberatory freedom and forms of political action particular to "Arab" or "Maghrebi" actors and militants. France, the West, and those who worked for "revolution," they claimed, could learn from this model. The fact that the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) had led one of the few violent uprisings that forced an unwilling colonial power, France, to hand over sovereignty made Algeria especially important. After 1962, some admirers called Algeria "the Mecca of revolutionaries." In stark contrast to the static hierarchies associated with "Oriental despotism"—a term taken from Hegelian and Marxist analyses and the model that structured sexual Orientalism—French activists across the "'68 years" cherished the "Arab revolution" as an alternate fantasy, one of radical possibilities (figure 1).[8] With the virtual disappearance of such claims by the end of the 1970s, the period this book analyzes came to a close.

The public conversation about sex and Arabs stretched far beyond the far left. The active interest of right-wing voices in these questions indeed reminds us that such recriminations against Arabs did not simply emerge full-born from popular prejudices or historical precedents. Efforts to advance reactionary political claims rehearsed, stoked, and spread decidedly pernicious attacks. In November 1978, after multiple showings on the art-house cinema circuit, Ktari's *Les ambassadeurs* appeared as the centerpiece of one of France's most popular primetime television shows, *Les dossiers de l'écran* (Reports from the big screen). In response, the editor-in-chief

8. On "Mecca," see Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). On the central role of "despotism" in sexual (especially homoerotic) Orientalism, see Joseph A. Boone, *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). The emphasis on political lessons was what differentiated this from other "Islamo-" and "Arabophile" arguments that were typical of all forms of Orientalism (just as philo-Semitism always shadows anti-Semitism).

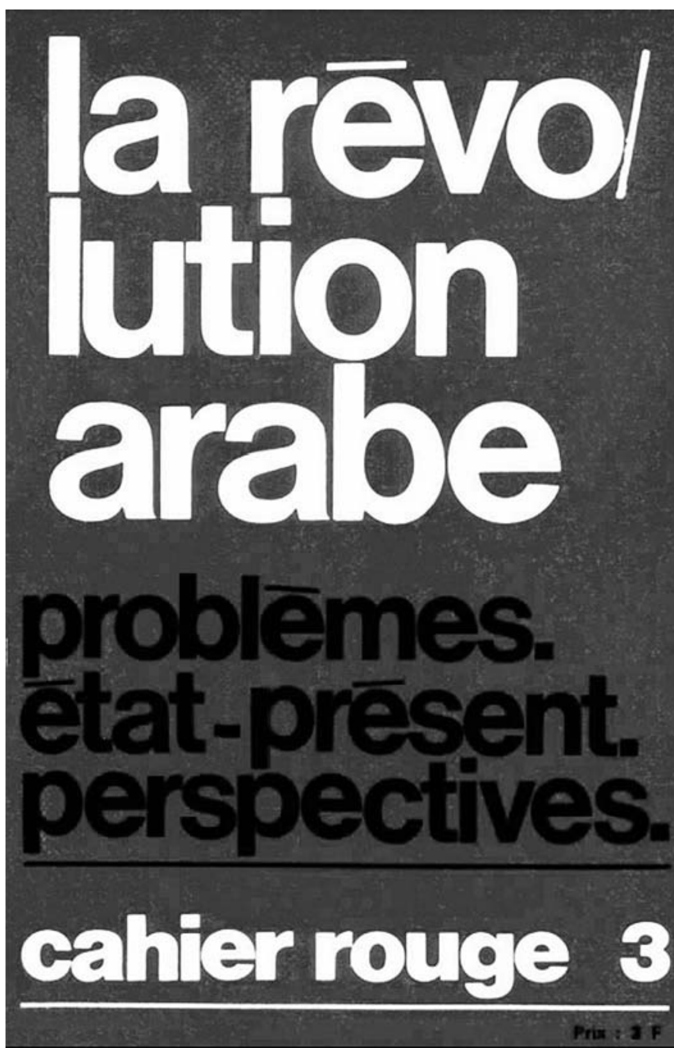

Figure 1. "The Arab Revolution. Problems. The State of Affairs. Perspectives." This 1975 cover image for a special insert in the Trotskyist weekly *Rouge* was one of numerous far-left celebrations of the Arab world as new revolutionary "homeland." See *Le Cahier Rouge New Series* 3. Supplement to *Rouge* 305 (June 1975); permission to reproduce graciously provided by Rouge/RaDAR.

of *Minute*, a far-right weekly, offered an alternate depiction of the "concerned" French men and women whose meeting the Tunisian director had staged.[9] The writer ironically defended "those Frenchmen so profoundly abject that they are incapable of joyously embracing the transformation of their neighborhood into a Casbah." François Brigneau evoked "those heartless Frenchmen so full of themselves that they dislike the stench of Arab cuisine filling their streets, the noise of Arab music, the presence of an overly large Arab minority taking up the seats of the school their children attend." He added one final element to this chain of stereotypes, and it was the most important: the rejection by "those Frenchmen" of what Brigneau termed "the vigor of Arab sexuality."[10] The wry tone presented each element in this list of worries as comprehensible, even self-evident. Most of his concerns focused on the external, on infringements on French sensibilities and senses. Yet this last, right after he summoned the image of "children," located the problem as a difference in kind, a threat inherent to "the Arab man," which menaced intimate boundaries, French families, and the nation.

The supposed sexual threat that "Arabs" posed to "the French" was foundational to post-1962 far right efforts to re-enter mainstream discussions. All the important elements in this fringe of French politics had embraced the defense of French Algeria until the bitter end. To this end, many had supported a terrorist group, the Secret Army Organization (OAS), that from early 1961 used deadly violence in both Algeria and France in an effort to overthrow the government of Charles de Gaulle. Few repudiated such choices, which had deeply discredited the far right. Their attempts to reestablish a foothold in French political institutions would have to wait until after 1979—when the National Front (founded in 1971) began to win some seats—but their efforts to insert an argument about Arab men and sex into public debates had immediate and durable purchase, and laid the groundwork for electoral success.[11] This helps explain why, post-

9. At an earlier point in the film, Ktari shows an immigrant ripping down a poster for *Minute*, which had "Dehors les Algériens [Algerians out]!" in large block letters.

10. François Brigneau, "Haro sur les 'anormaux,'" *Minute* 867 (22–28 November 1978), 8–9. On the central role of "the abject" in mid-twentieth-century far-right activism in France, see Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

11. This success was exactly what the radical-right theorist Alain de Benoist termed "metapolitics," his summons for extremist activists to focus on altering the terms used to describe society rather than waste their time fighting more immediate struggles, which they would lose. He played a key role in the development of such attacks, and was the most influential founder of the Nouvelle Droite. See Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *Visages de la nouvelle droite: Le GRECE et son histoire* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1988).

decolonization, accusations of sexual deviance resonated in virtually all the other social and political registers in which anti-Maghrebi sentiments played out, whether these entailed charges of criminality, high birthrates, parasitism, barbarism, "smells," "noises," or the like.

Was There a "French" Sexual Revolution? Local and Global Histories

Public debates deployed sex and sexuality in ways that offered the French people a chance to assess, evoke, and even to analyze histories and memories of French Algeria, the war, and empire. To map the potent intersections of empire and sex, each chapter of this book explores one key public debate. These focus successively on the far right, gay liberation, debates about prostitution and so-called social Catholics, the "sodomy vogue" of the 1970s, and how the question of rape shaped far left and feminist politics. This history provides a new perspective on the "French" sexual revolution.

Recently, historians have struggled to bring detailed cultural histories into dialogue with wide-lens global histories: this book offers one model. In broad terms, the French sexual revolution and French controversies about sex in the 1960s and 1970s can be fruitfully mapped onto a transnational chronology of crises and evolutions, a global movement that produced clear parallels in other countries (in the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom, for example). Yet, as this book shows, what was particular here—what made these controversies "French" rather than "Western" or "late modern"—were the central roles that invocations of Arab men and Algeria played in them and the ways that such invocations altered the contours and, at key moments, the substance of debates about contemporary sexuality.[12]

What follows does not fully explore the divisions between diverse far-right currents; the focus of primary source research was on the 1960s, when those who in the1970s would become associated with the Nouvelle Droite and/or the Front National, along with "*nationalistes*" (those who embraced the European nation) and "*nationaux*" (those who cared only for the French nation), were all deeply intertwined, notably around "Algeria." For a focus on the conflicts and divergences of the far right, see Jean-Yves Camus and Nicolas Lebourg, *Les Droites extrêmes en Europe* (Paris: Seuil, 2015). On the Front National's first electoral victories, see: Françoise Gaspard, *A Small City in France: A Socialist Mayor Confronts Neo-Fascism*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

12. On the sexual revolution, see esp. Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland: Politics, Culture, and the Sexual Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010). On the need to "regionalize" the

The Erotics of Algerian Difference

What I term "the erotics of Algerian difference" allowed French men and women to grapple with the unstable boundaries of nation and identity in the post-decolonization moment. During the Algerian revolution, anti-colonial activists, most of them Maghrebis, engaged issues of sex and gender that would be at the heart of the sexual revolution. Their arguments against torture or in response to French claims about the "Islamic veil" made clear that sexual norms, too, were colonial in nature, even as the larger struggle they were part of offered analyses and arguments to challenge them. The influence of these arguments on subsequent French discussions makes the post-1962 erotics of Algerian difference somewhat distinct from the longer history of sexual Orientalism, of which it is a part. Sexual liberationists, notably "homosexual revolutionaries" and feminists—such as Catherine Deudon, a photographer and writer, who in 1974 blamed "hetero colonialism" for ongoing lack of attention to lesbian concerns—had proved attentive students; extreme right activists, in turn, were harsh and early critics. The crucial context was immigration, and discussions of the erotic relationship of France and the French to Algerian men shaped claims and framed disagreements between the right and the left. To misuse Freudian terminology, all engaged the unspoken question of whether the libidinal links between Algerian men and the French were to be repressed through demonization, or cathected through emulation or objectification.[13]

Talk of sex and desire helped French observers think through post-1962 relationships, real as well as imagined, between Algeria and France and between Maghrebis and French people. Decolonization, many had presumed, would shrink connections. Somewhat surprisingly however, international links between Algeria and France seemed to grow more important

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history of the sexual revolution, see Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 133; see also the essays in *Sexual Revolutions*, ed. Alain Giami and Gert Hekma (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). For an impressive social history of "love, gender, and sexuality" in post-1945 France that marvelously re-examines the "French" sexual revolution on the ground, see Régis Revenin, *Une histoire de garçons et de filles: Amour, genre et sexualité dans la France d'après-guerre* (Paris: Vendemiaire, 2015), esp. 16–19.

13. On how the Algerian revolution set the stage for the sexual revolution, see Todd Shepard, "'Something Notably Erotic': Politics, 'Arab Men,' and Sexual Revolution in Post-Decolonization France, 1962–1974," *Journal of Modern History* 84 (2012), 80–115; and Todd Shepard and Catherine Brun, "Introduction: Guerre des sexes, politiques du genre," in Brun and Shepard, eds., *Guerre d'Algérie: Le sexe outragé* (Paris: CNRS éd., 2016), 11–26. Catherine Deudon, "Le colonialisme hétéro," *Actuel* 38 (January 1974), 15–16.

rather than less after the war of independence. In 1973 and 1974, the so-called Arab oil embargo sparked much criticism, as (mainly Arab) states in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) sought to persuade other countries to support Arab demands against Israel by leveraging access to oil. The unexpected economic crisis, which began to preoccupy French commentators at just that time, intensified negative reactions. Together, these events seemed to explain the new prominence of anti-immigrant arguments and their anti-Arab valence. Both were visible in a series of government decisions from the 1972 Marcellin-Fontanet circular, which drastically increased legal limits on the rights of immigrant workers, to the July 1974 circular that "suspended" the immigration of all workers and members of their family. In this context, innumerable commentators consistently turned to sex to evoke, assess, or castigate Franco-Arab connections. Of course, there was no obvious relationship between the economics of oil supplies and sex. As this book demonstrates, the economic context nevertheless intensified the circulation of sex talk about Arabs, which was already dense with meaning, and helped certain arguments crystallize.[14]

Most such sex talk concerned Algerian or "Arab" men, in part because the vast majority of the large numbers of Algerians in France were young men.[15] Public debates and, even more clearly, classified government assessments after 1968 make clear what numbers or the usual "universal" categories do not: Most French discussions about "immigrants" or "immigrant workers" in general—categories that, empirically speaking, included women, girls, boys, and men from countries such as Italy, Portugal, and Spain as well as those from the Maghreb and other former colonies—focused on Algerian men. A 1976 study commissioned by the French prime minister's office, titled "The Motivation of French Reactions toward Immi-

14. Yvan Gastaut, "Français et immigrés à l'épreuve de la crise (1973–1995)," *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire* 84 (2004), 107–118; Fausto Giudice, *Arabicides, une chronique française* (Paris: La Découverte, 1992). Michael Seidman describes how demands for sexual liberties emerged among French students in 1962 just as Algerian independence was won, and states that debates about racism and "colonial" immigrants were crucial factors in the shape their protests took; see Michael Seidman, "The Pre–May 1968 Sexual Revolution," *Contemporary French Civilization* 25 (2001): 25–41.

15. In 1962, Algerians constituted 85 percent of France's North African (presumed or "culturally") Muslim population of about 410,000; in 1970 their part had declined to around 75 percent. At that time, the number of "Muslim" noncitizens in the country was over 800,000 and counted approximately 608,000 Algerians (the largest group of immigrants, ahead of the Portuguese) but also 143,000 Moroccans and 89,000 Tunisians. The overwhelming majority were male manual laborers, but the proportion of women and children had actually increased since 1962. See Ethan Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North Africa to France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 217.

grant Workers," reported that the people interviewed all distinguished between "immigrants" and "foreigners." The second term, "which connotes difference, is applied most particularly to Maghrebis, so that people say: 'A Swiss is not foreign; a Spaniard is a bit more when you think about it; an Arab, are you kidding!'"[16] One of the key priorities the research institute proposed to the government was in fact "to transform the immigrant from North Africa into a foreigner like the others."[17] Even within this category, Algerians stood apart. A 1971 police report submitted to the Ministry of the Interior claimed that, "as it concerns Algerians . . . the reports we have are unanimous." Among their French neighbors, "the expressions they adopt range from fear to distrust to diffuse hostility and a priori rejection." A 1973 report to the prefect of the Rhône Département was even starker: "The reactions that are currently out in the open amply demonstrate that the autochtone population is growing ever more reticent in accepting this foreign population, which is to say the North African population, above all the Algerian [population]."[18] Nor do the overwhelming percentages of men among them (although lower than among contemporary South Asian immigrants in Britain, for example) fully explain why the long-standing Orientalist obsession with "Muslim women" was so much less central during the '68 years than was talk of Arab men.

Most important was how successful anticolonial critics had been in positioning the "revolutionary" or heroic Algerian man as the embodiment of (universal and true) manliness, a figure who had confronted the overwhelming force—and the sadistic unmanly tactics, notably torture—of France, and freed his nation and family from colonial oppression. The prestige and aura of this figure, now only a historical memory in France, fashioned political thought in the 1960s and 1970s. On the world stage, the talismanic importance that Gillo Pontecorvo's 1965 film "The Battle of Algiers" (with its insistent depictions of potent semi-nude Algerian male bodies) and the "Algerian" writings of Frantz Fanon achieved in "Third

16. Insitut Pierre Bessi, "Motivation des Français à l'égard des travailleurs immigrés: Test de Moyens d'Actions" (Paris 7 April 1976), 15, in Centre des archives contemporaines des Archives nationales de France, Fontainebleau, France, hereafter CAC: 19960405/11.

17. Insitut Pierre Bessi, "Motivation des Français à l'égard des travailleurs immigrés: Resultat de la recherche d'idées" (Paris 22 March 1976), 22, CAC: 19960405/11.

18. Jacques Pélissier, "Evolution de la population étrangère dans le région Rhône-Alpes" (Villeurbanne, 15 June 1973), 4, in CAC: 19930317/16. On numbers, see Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood*; on the United Kingdom, see Ian R. G. Spencer, *British Immigration Policy since 1939: The Making of Multi-racial Britain* (London, 1997), 19; on shift from invocations of "families" before 1962 to talk of "young men," see Amelia Lyons, *The Civilizing Mission in the Metropole: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State during Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), conclusion.

Worldist" and leftist circles—for example, among the Black Panther Party in the United States—amplified the effects of wartime debates (figures 2 and 3). In addition, whereas the other emblematic figure of Algeria's resistance, the "veiled woman," remained definitively not French (in large part because of its association with Islam), anticolonial and Third Worldist representations of the heroic Algerian man staked their claims on the same ground that French voices considered their own, namely (necessarily masculine) universalism. For some, such as post-'68 leftists, this meant that Arabs could be models and allies. For others, first and foremost far-right

Figure 2. Revolutionary masculinity: "Ali la Pointe" (nom de guerre of FLN fighter Ali Amar [1930–1957]). Police photograph; reproduced by courtesy of *L'Humanité*, Paris. All rights reserved.

Figure 3. Revolutionary masculinity: Brahim Haggiag as Ali la Pointe in *The Battle of Algiers* (1965).

activists, this meant that the need to reject both such claims and an Algerian presence on French territory, alongside or with French people, could appear quite pressing. Both contributed to how immigration, and Arab immigration above all, became an important political topic over the course of the 1960s and 1970s.[19]

By the end of the 1970s, most on the left had become too wary of invoking Arab men as models. Numerous controversies had made leftists too concerned about the many complications such references implied. Subsequent efforts to think about the politics of coalition, intersectionality, or the like ignore these earlier discussions, which invoked similar terms. Yet the far right continued to talk about sex and Arabs to advance their agendas, and proved equally adept when "Islam" and "the Muslim woman" reemerged as crucial references. What disappeared around 1979 was an intense conflict between certain French people about different ways that connections between "Arab men" and "sex" could be understood. On one side were those who argued that, precisely because of their specific history—a history in which French colonialism and anticolonial resistance had played crucial

19. On French republicanism, universalism, and gender, see esp. Joan W. Scott, *"Only Paradoxes to Offer": French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). Judith Surkis incisively analyzes how the "scandalous" trials of Djamila Bouhired and Djamila Boupacha reworked visions of "Algerian femininity." See "Ethics and Violence: Simone de Beauvoir, Djamila Boupacha, and the Algerian War," *French Politics, Culture, & Society* 28 (2010), 38–55.

roles—Arab men offered the solution to a variety of French problems. On the other were those who argued that Arab men were emblematic of all the problems that Arabs continued to wreak on France and the French. The first perspective has faded. The second, much evidence suggests, has become even more influential. But looking back, it is clear that the claim by numerous scholars that the French forgot the Algerian war until the early 1990s is false. What has been forgotten was how much the Algerian revolution shaped France's sexual revolution and, more broadly, its history.[20]

Against (French) Vanilla History

This book relies on sex talk as evidence, and seeks to historicize it with as little voyeurism and as little prudery as possible. It does so to show how much specific histories shaped how sex was lived even as sex, in turn, shaped what it meant to be French, "Arab," or Franco-"Arab" in France. Not just any history, but very difficult, recent, and threatening histories of empire: their striking effects emphasize how necessary it is to analyze both the history of sex and how sex changed history. Multiple chapters of this book explore the damaging efficacy of efforts to assert that links between sexual acts (which included sodomy, rape, and venal sex) and identities (never just sexual or sexed, but also racialized, national, and even class) are natural, essential, and unchanging—without history. Others chart the risky possibilities opened up through attempts to think about the same acts and identities historically and politically, and why and how these efforts faded from view. Some do both.

Both wide-ranging sources and specific methodological choices anchor the multiple challenges this history poses to extant understandings of the sexual revolution and of the 1960s and 1970s more broadly. I focus on debates that had widespread public resonance, and on discussions that have been central to existing scholarship on the sexual revolution. My interpretations attend more to the exemplary—the oft-repeated, the seemingly self-evident—than to the exceptional. Diverse types of sources inspired them. In addition to archived government documents, I explored print media (periodicals, pamphlets, and books) and numerous fictional works. These diverse sources were drawn from numerous archives, from police archives in Paris and Marseille to the French national archives, personal papers, and the archives of leftist, gay rights, and feminist organizations, as well

20. On French discussions of the "Arab boy" in the 1990s, see Nacira Guénif-Souilamas and Éric Macé, *Les féministes et le garçon arabe* (La Tour d'Aigues, France: Éd. de l'Aube, 2004).

as those of authors and publishing houses. Audiovisual sources, both fictional and nonfictional, proved crucial. Alongside Ktari, films such as *The Last Tango in Paris* (1972), *Diabolo menthe* (1977), and *Dupont Lajoie* (1975) receive extended attention. So, too, do the documentaries of Carole Roussopolous and the archived programs of state television. Certain scholarly books produced in France do double service as both guides to analysis and as revelatory primary sources; these include Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978/1980), Alain Corbin's *Filles de noce* (1978), Michel Foucault's *Histoire de la sexualité*, volume 1 (1976), Tahar ben Jelloun's *La plus haute des solitudes* (1975), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipe* (1972), and Edgar Morin's *La Rumeur d'Orléans* (1969).

This history book, it must be emphasized, is also a product of the context in which it was researched and written. To clarify: Ongoing developments in France and the United States have underscored the significance of certain earlier discussions that, although important at the time they first appeared, now seem to have disappeared from popular and scholarly memory. Since 2012 in France, the far-right National Front has repeatedly been described as the most popular political party in the country. Its assertions about the threat that inhabitants with ties across the Mediterranean and to "Islam" pose to France are central to its success. Contemporary claims that misogyny and homophobia uniquely characterize Maghrebis and Islam have taken on particular importance in campaigns by certain intellectuals and politicians to normalize arguments the far right first articulated. It is clear that anxieties about the intersection between sexual difference, sexuality, and Frenchness continue to trouble many French people deeply. Similar concerns are rife in other Western societies (see, e.g., Donald Trump).[21] What follows here, then, is a "history of the present" in the Foucauldian sense. It challenges current histories of what mattered in France between 1962 and 1979 by paying attention to how "categories of contemporary debate that now appear inevitable, natural, or culturally necessary" coalesced short decades ago. The disjunctions with the present are particularly disturbing in part because many of the actors in current French discussions were also involved in this earlier history, either as individuals and or as social groups. This history of the present approach drew me to many sources that other historians have ignored.[22]

21. On the veil, see esp. Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); on the debates provoked by the Marriage for All law, see Camille Robcis, "Catholics, 'the Theory of Gender,' and the Turn to the Human in the French Gay Marriage Debates: A 'New Dreyfus Affair'?" *Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 4 (2015), 892–923.

22. Editors, "Introducing *History of the Present*," *History of the Present* 1, no. 1 (2011), 1–4.

This is clearly the case with one particular focus of research, which might be termed "Maghrebi perspectives." People of Maghrebi descent are key actors now in French developments. They were in the 1960s and 1970s, too, which makes it odd that most history books ignore or ghettoize them—an aspect of what I term "vanilla history." The sources proved rich: they included studies, articles, books, films, and videos created by men and women who identified in various ways as Maghrebi. My work likewise draws on numerous personal advertisements and letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines, whose authors were presumed, perhaps inaccurately, to be "Arabs" or "Berbers" living in France. Throughout the period under examination, growing numbers of Maghrebis (notably from non-elite milieus) published and expressed themselves in writing and film. Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan independence had offered new arguments for why people linked to these countries should be heard (and new educational possibilities that gave many greater access to larger audiences). Another reason for the growing number of such sources was that the years after 1968—as French historians have incisively identified—became the era of the witness.[23]

By the early 1970s, the testimonial was in season. Again and again, in publications ranging from books by respected publishers to gay liberationist journals and porn magazines, from feminist monthlies to mainstream newspaper articles in scholarly as well as leftist publications, Arabs, Algerians, Maghrebis were incited to speak and were offered the opportunity to do so. The need to hear from witnesses rather than merely experts came to seem necessary to many.

Vanilla histories of the West erase the importance of people of color; vanilla histories of sex pretend that its multiple valences and diverse forms are best ignored. This book rejects both choices, even as it shows why they are linked. My study repeatedly demonstrates the striking degree to which the "immigrant" or "Arab" perspectives that made it into print or onto the screen were framed in terms of sex and sexuality. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, to speak as "Arabs" in French, or to be talked about, involved, and seemingly required, entering into a dense thicket of talk about sex and masculinity. Two theorists whose work in those years placed questions of sex, love, and sexuality at the heart of social critique help to make sense of this summons. In 1971 Roland Barthes wrote, "Social censorship is not found where speech is hindered, but where it is enjoined." And power,

23. See, e.g., Annette Wieviorka, *L'ère du témoin* (Paris: Plon, 1998).

as Foucault persuasively demonstrated in *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (1976), now worked primarily through the injunction to speak of certain things, rather than via repression.[24] Repeatedly, Maghrebis who could participate in French discussions had to testify about sexual topics. This can appear self-evident when one reads their published "voices." The archives of French publishing houses, however, flesh out this suspicion. Systematically, referees and editors bolstered their arguments to each other that readers were eager to hear the "voices" of "Arab men" with assertions that those texts these experts recommended for publication were ripe with sex.[25]

That is also why a larger context is needed to analyze French evidence that people from North Africa produced. The literary critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak used the 1973 Foucault-Deleuze conversation cited above to begin her exploration of the question "Can the subaltern speak?" Her answer was no, because the statements of subalterns—those on the margins or seemingly outside of social life—are recorded in the same language that shores up the society that oppresses them; to be legible, its grammar is still at work in even the most unorthodox or marginal utterances. Joan Wallach Scott, similarly, maps out the limits of how too many historians interpret the "experience" of the marginalized.[26] My research on the many "Maghrebi" witnesses who spoke in 1970s France takes up the insights of Spivak and Scott. The evidence nonetheless suggests that the ways in which Maghrebis themselves invoked Arabs and sex do tell us much, and about more than their "identities." So, too, with claims made by women and self-identified homosexuals (many of them feminists, gay liberationists, or sexual revolutionaries). Yet to assess such evidence and arguments requires a bigger canvas. As a number of critics have noted, exoticization and racial fetishism have marked numerous discussions among (French) feminists and male homosexuals. It is also true that attention to "Maghrebi" perspectives can reveal truer stories. To limit oneself to such insights, however, misses

24. Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 130; also *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 126 (translation altered); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. Volume I: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). See also Tiphaine Samoyault, *Roland Barthes* (Paris: Seuil, 2015), 604.

25. See, e.g., Claude Durand, "Paul Flammand" (23 January 1973), in IMEC: Fonds Le Seuil [SEL] 3743.6; Monique Lebas, "Note de Monique Lebas à la comptabilité" (Paris 23 August 1973), 1, in IMEC: HAC 8745 Fonds Hachette Livre: 5GE.

26. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313. Joan Wallach Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991), 773–797.

the bigger story. What this book shows is that, post-decolonization, even people in France who thought of themselves as being free of Maghrebi connections lived and thought with Algerian accents.

The first four chapters of this book focus on minorities (far right activists, gay liberationists, gay French men, Maghrebi authors) in order to sketch out the discursive and political context for how and why the Algerian revolution and its aftermath informed sex talk in France. The first two chapters focus on the far right between 1962 and 1968, a political movement that encouraged efforts to establish clear distinctions between "the French" and "Arabs" in order to separate them. Through sex talk, writers and activists analyzed and bemoaned French defeat at Algerian hands, but also—notably through the idea of Algerian men as sex criminals who menaced post-1962 France—shifted from a defense of "French Algeria" to a fight against an "Algerian France." Chapters 3 and 4 analyze how 1970s gay liberationists and the newly visible gay world inverted these fears as they embraced the post-decolonization presence of Arab men in France. The next five chapters show in concrete detail how the erotics of Algerian difference informed 1970s debates about three issues critical to broad publics and diverse constituencies: prostitution and "white slavery," sodomy, and rape. The conclusion signals how 1979 French debates about the Iranian revolution helped displace these earlier discussions, which opened space for evocations of the "Muslim woman" to return to center stage.

This book shows that the reason why so many people in general spoke about sex and Arab men in the 1960s and 1970s was because of foundational problems in French politics, which Algerian independence crystallized. Although key aspects of what made the period distinct have since disappeared, the claims embedded in these stories still resonate clearly in current debates in France and elsewhere. This history helps explain why.

CONCLUSION

The Erotics of Algerian Difference, 1979/2016

> When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best . . . They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with [sic] us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists.
>
> —Donald J. Trump (2015)[1]

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, French people grappled with what contemporaries named the sexual revolution, which upended potent presumptions about how sex, sexuality, and gender should be organized and lived. In their attempts to make sense of these changes, many activists and commentators consistently invoked Algerian histories and spoke of Arab men, and they did so from widely varied perspectives. The Algerian revolution had forced the image of the heroic Algerian man into French discussions, and post–May '68 interest in the category of the "immigrant worker" and the promise of "the Arab revolution" gave this model new life through the 1970s. Across these years, references to the Algerian revolution had offered tools to French left-wing radicals, approaches and arguments that had already defeated the same powerful, imperialist, and capitalist state and system that they aspired to change. The heroic Algerian man, the newest incarnation of revolutionary resistance, had embodied that post-decolonization vision. By 1979, "Arab" models had lost much of their cachet. Intense debates within the left about how to respond to concerns about male sexual violence against women and girls exemplified and intensified this devel-

1. Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "Donald Trump's false comments connecting Mexican immigrants and crime," *Washington Post*, July 8, 2015.

opment. Algerian lessons now sowed discord, even as they still entranced French right-wing extremists.

Something sputtered to a close in the late 1970s. Yet the coordinates that "the Arab man" had oriented in French understandings since 1962 did not go away. Many French people continued to think with and invoke the erotics of Algerian difference. What disappeared was a deeply historicized and explicitly political version of "Arabophile" Orientalism; the model of the heroic Algerian man was no longer invoked as a source of solutions to problems for the French left, especially for sex radicals and feminists or, indeed, for France. By 1979, more broadly, the particular post-1962 focus on men rather than women and, in that discussion, on masculinity rather than effeminacy had blurred. It did so in conjunction with the reemergence of the place of women and female sexuality as the organizing coordinates around which Western discussions of the so-called Orient turned. The question of Islam, too, emphatically surged back into French debates, which now included references to a threatening "Islamic revolution" far more frequently than they did to any type of inspirational "Arab revolution."

In part because of this dynamic, the post-1962 demonization of Arab men on the far right continued to grow in force, but also in new directions. In the mid-1960s, ultranationalist intellectuals had theorized the utility of "awakening" French people to the threat of "Arab invasion," with a particular focus on the menace of sexual victimization. These same rallying cries did not only prove usable in discussions that centered on women, female sexuality, and Islam; after 1979 they opened up new connections to political movements and intellectuals with roots in the post-1968 new left. By 1989, the first of many public controversies around the so-called Muslim veil would see these rhyzomes germinate; they continue to blossom today.

To clarify some of the connections between then and now, the following pages will first sketch how, in early 1979, French discussions of Iran displaced questions of Arabs onto concerns about Islam. This shift in focus fortuitously opened escape routes out of the conundrums inspired by "the Arab man" that had so troubled leftist debates. Current debates among historians about the late 1970s, European politics, and "history," the next section proposes, need to take this history of 1979 into account. The final pages turn to very recent developments on the French far right, to suggest how attention to 1979 as a tipping point makes visible the ways in which some newly influential ultranationalists—notably the writer Renaud Camus and the politician Marine Le Pen—have successfully synthesized post-1962 and post-1968 concerns.

1979: From the "Arab" to the "Islamic" Revolution

French responses to the victory of the Iranian revolution, and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran that quickly followed it, recircuited sexualized Orientalist themes in France. Shortly after the 11 February 1979 collapse of the regime of Shah Reza Pahlavi, the revolutionary leadership embraced restrictions on women's public liberties as well as the violent repression of homosexuality. This, at least, was how French descriptions at the time interpreted Iranian developments: this interpretation sparked a debate that helped place Islam (and not, in theory, "Arabs") at the center of many French discussions. A 9 March 1979 article in *Libération* informed readers that "fifty thousand Iranian women took to the streets to stop the Revolution from sending them back to the Middle Ages." The protest had taken place on 8 March (International Women's Day) in Teheran, Iran's capital. "The impressive success of their demonstration," *Libération* noted, "came despite attacks from Muslim fanatics, whose slogan captures their philosophy: '[Wear] the veil or [suffer] a beating.'"' The author of the article immediately made clear the extensive implications of what was happening: "This moral order . . . also includes summary executions of deviants, homosexuals among others." These were terms that resonated with lessons that sexual liberationists had celebrated over the course of the 1970s.[2]

In the French press, what was immediately at stake in Iran's takeover by "revolutionary" Islam was liberty of self-expression for women and homosexuals, for the rights and possibilities that, in France, radical feminist and gay rights organizations had forced into public debate since 1968. Most of the key reforms that ultimately would end legal discrimination against homosexuality or women, or even define rape as a crime against the victim (rather than against male honor), had yet to become part of French law. Still, by 1979, the time already had come for French feminists, gay liberationists, and their allies to teach the Iranians rather than to learn from them, or at least to use French lessons to identify which Iranians to support. In mid-March, *Libération* announced a Parisian protest against what was happening in Iran: "The route followed will be symbolic, as it will go from the plaza in front of Notre Dame (departure 6 p.m.) to the [Paris] Mosque." Symbolically, this would allow the demonstrators "to criticize at least two religions, the Catholic version being no more liberatory for

2. M. A. Iran: "Le foulard ou la raclée," *Libération* (9 March 1979), 1. On the following, see esp. Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 106–137.

women than the Muslim."[3] The front page of the first issue of *Le Gai pied*, a new magazine that targeted gay readers, announced that "some 700 women and 300 homosexuals (female and male) . . . protested against the 'new Islamic law' that sends women back to their ancestral oppression and invokes religion to condemn homosexuals." The marchers had embraced a campy rallying cry that joined Arabic and French catchphrases: "Inch'allah [if God wills it], gay gay gay, the homos will be saved." The broader target of monotheistic religions in general motivated the chant "Priests, mullahs [a term for Shi'a Muslim clergy], same struggle [*même combat*]." It was a clear effort to speak across boundaries rather than reinforce them. Despite the work done to focus on religion in general, the larger discussion quickly narrowed in on Islam.[4]

The criticisms of Islam that coalesced in early 1979 immediately resituated certain references to Algeria. Numerous French commentators on Iran noted that the FLN's revolution, too, had been Islamic in inspiration, even if post-1962 observers had largely ignored this aspect (it had been central to French anti-FLN propaganda during the war). Just days after the Shah fled Iran, a feminist journalist turned to recent history to argue that "everywhere that the Koran has triumphed in conjunction with a nationalist revolution (Algeria, Iraq, Libya)," the freedoms Stéphanie Gallicher associated with both modernity and feminist struggles had disappeared, as the new regimes imposed new or stricter limitations on women.[5] Writing two months later, an editorial in a feminist publication regretted that "we rediscover, in an exacerbated fashion here in Iran, the unfortunately classic situation where women, who nourished a revolution with their energies, become its first victims." The article gave one example of this "classic situation": Algeria.[6] "The Arab revolution" had been a source of inspiration for the French far left and feminists in the 1970s, notably via invocations of Algeria. The argument that Arab developments now needed to be reinterpreted as Muslim explained why distance was necessary.

By mid-March, Kate Millett organized an international group of well-known feminists—including a number of French women such as Simone de Beauvoir—for an emergency trip to Iran. Millett, the internationally ac-

3. "Symbole: Ce soir à Paris manifestation de solidarite avec les femmes iraniennes," *Libération* (16 March 1979), 8.

4. "Être homo en Iran, c'est partir les pieds devant," *Le Gai pied* 1 (April 1979), 1.

5. Stéphanie Gallicher, "Le voile retombera-t-il sur les Iraniennes?" *F. Magazine* 13 (February 1979), 48–49.

6. "'Le vêtement de la révolution pour les femmes, c'est le voile': Iran," *Le temps des femmes* 4 (May 1979), 8–10.

claimed American author of *Sexual Politics* (1970), did so in response to an invitation from Iranian women, and against a backdrop of Western concerns.[7] On their return to Paris, the feminist journalist Marie Odile Delacour sharply criticized Millett's analysis of the situation of women in Iran, a critique she grounded in the observation that "this was [Millett's] first stay in an Islamic country. For a Western woman, this encounter with Islam always produces an astonishing shock." In Delacour's reading, Millett's failure to take account of this "shock" explained "an overly 'simplistic' interpretation, overly reductive." She argued that Millett had ignored the radically different situation that Islam created. When a French journalist at the Paris press conference had asked, "What do Iranian women think of Islam?" Millett shot back: "What do you think of Christianity?" Millett's suggestion that the situation women faced in Teheran could be paralleled with what they faced in Paris rang with the slogans of the Notre Dame de Paris to Paris Mosque protests. Delacour found such equivalences wanting; she believed that Islam explained what was going wrong for women in Iran, as it did in other places, too. She singled out Algeria. Delacour argued against relativistic generalities, and for a recognition that certain dangers mattered more. Her analysis recalls Gisèle Halimi's warning, which the lawyer had made in a different context, that "When we accept the whip for women, we accept that the cudgel can be applied to any oppressed peoples." (The left-wing and feminist lawyer was referring to the general phenomenon of fascism, of course, and not Islam.)[8]

This urgent discussion centering on women and Islam overlapped with one about Islam and homosexuality, also tethered to Iranian events. In mid-March, Marc Kravetz, *Libération*'s reporter in Iran, took to the daily's pages to comment on what he termed an "odd demonstration" that, as his newspaper had earlier announced, had taken place on 16 March 1979, "from Notre Dame de Paris to the big Mosque." French demonstrators had proclaimed, Kravetz wrote, "their 'support' for the 'struggle of Iranian women' and protested against the situation the new Iranian regime imposes on women and the 'public executions of homosexuals.'" Kravetz

7. On this trip, see Claudine Mulard, "Téhéran, mars 1979, avec caméra et sans voile," *Les Temps modernes* 5 (2010), 161–177.

8. Marie Odile Delacour, "Kate Millett (se) raconte . . . ," *Libération* (26 March 1979), 16; Halimi, "Extrait de la plaidoirie." Two years later, Delacour would coauthor a book on "the Grenoble Affair," a 1979 trial for pimping (with Germaine Aziz, *Cinq femmes à abattre* [Paris: Stock 2, 1981]). She then coedited the writings of Isabelle Eberhardt, a European female adventurer in late-nineteenth-century Algeria and the Sahara (with her husband, Jean-René Huleu).

chose his scare quotes carefully. In a footnote to the last sentence, he informed readers that "news reports from Iranian sources do not describe the execution of 'homosexuals' per se but of men charged with homosexual pimping and sexual violence."[9] In a letter in response to Kravetz, author "The Token Radical Fairy, Lola Steel" remarked sarcastically, "I took part in the demonstration in support of Iranian women because I had heard about the 'public execution of homosexuals'; but it turns out I had it all wrong because, from what [Kravetz] knows, there have only been executions of men charged with homosexual pimping." Lola's critique of the claims Kravetz made was anchored in identity, a particular knowledge that, she implied, the journalist could not access. "In this case, we're out of luck, we faggots, because Kravetz is going to have a tough time finding an Iranian fairy willing to talk to him." Or perhaps, Lola averred, the journalist was unwilling to do what was necessary to get to the truth—"unless he visits the parks [to cruise for male sexual partners]; but that investigation might be too in-depth for him." It was clear to "we faggots," Lola insisted, that playing with terms missed what was at stake.[10] In late May, *Libération* journalist Annette Lévy-Willard reported that "two people have been condemned to die by the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Teheran. Yet again. And immediately executed, last Sunday. Their crime? Sodomy." In her analysis, "This time, yet again, the pretext was some vague history of the rape of adolescent boys just as with the first condemnation and the first execution. Rape or pedophilia, it's sodomy that is punishable by death in Iran. Or homosexuality." To understand and to resist, Lévy-Willard suggested, it was necessary to speak clearly and truthfully. "Since this revolution began, nine homosexuals have been executed by firing squad. And the threat has become more pressing, since five executions have taken place over the last four days."[11] Kravetz, with his emphasis on how Iranian explanations highlighted rape, pimps, and pederasty, embedded them in multiple late-1970s French discussions. These discussions, as this book has suggested, had fixated on complicated and difficult definitions and raised many questions about claims anchored in identities. In the face of reports from Iran, the intense effort in which so many feminists and "revolutionary homosexuals" had engaged—and still did, in early 1979—to grapple with the

9. Marc Kravetz, "Une mission d'information féministe en Iran aujourd'hui," *Libération* (19 March 1979), 7.

10. La pédale radicale de service, Lola Steel, "En Iran autant qu'ailleurs," *Libération* (28 March 1979), 19.

11. Annette Lévy-Willard, "2 homosexuels fusillés à Teheran," *Libération* (29 May 1979), 7.

complicated intersection of empire, racism, and the struggle for liberation withered. Iran brought clarity. "Occident" or "Orient," freedom or feudalism, which side were you on?

"Death to the Traitor": Foucault, the Islamic Revolution, and the French Left

It was therefore hardly surprising that the French left's early-1979 unease about Iranian developments focused on Michel Foucault. The philosopher was one of the numerous leftist intellectuals who, before the fall of the Shah, had been entranced by what the Iranian revolution seemed to reveal about the world. His take garnered particular attention, as the Italian newspaper *Corriere della sera* sent him to report on events, and what he wrote circulated widely. In the broadest terms, what interested the author of *La volonté de savoir* (*The Will to Know*), as he told two journalists who interviewed him in late 1978, was that the Iranians "have a different regime of truth than ours." This mattered because "ours . . . is quite specific, even though it has become quasi-universal." From this perspective, the political upheaval in Iran revealed a different way to analyze the world—arguments, approaches, forms of action—which might offer even those situated in the so-called West new ways to think. "Regime of truth" was a category Foucault often used to insist on the particularities and the limits—chronological and geographic, but also social—of the ways of determining truth and falsehood that his historical work sought to map.[12] There was, this approach emphasizes, more than one "regime of truth," in the present just as in the past (and as there would be in the future). In this interview, as so often elsewhere, Foucault identified two such regimes, alongside the one he claimed to recognize during his brief 1978 visit to Iran. In the ancient world, he said, "the Greeks had theirs." In the present day, he proposed, "the Arabs of the Maghreb have another one."[13] By early 1979, however, political and philosophical claims linked to such regimes of truth—especially that of "the Arabs of the Maghreb," which had been

12. Ian Almond, *The New Orientalists: Postmodern Representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard* (London: IB Tauris, 2007), 22–41. See also Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, "'When Life Will No Longer Barter Itself:' In Defense of Foucault on the Iranian Revolution," in *A Foucault for the 21st Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium*, ed. Sam Binkley and Jorge Capetillo (New Castle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 270–290.

13. Claire Brière and Pierre Blanchet, "L'esprit d'un monde sans esprit: Entretien avec Michel Foucault," in *Iran: La révolution au nom de Dieu* (Paris: Seuil, 1979), 227–241.

oft invoked in post-1962 left-wing debates—no longer had much place in France.

In August 1979, Foucault explained to a journalist for a Lebanese newspaper that it was important to make comparisons between the "uprisings of homosexuals in the United States" and the "massive uprisings that can happen in a Third World country." Foucault insisted that while such a comparison "can seem ridiculous . . . I would say no, it is not ridiculous." He did so even as France's Iran debate still raged, and arguments that the Islamic revolution was best understood in terms of its rejection of the rights of homosexuals and women had come to dominate discussions on the left. As he stated, one role of the intellectual is "to demonstrate how much the reality we live in, which they tell us is obvious and straightforward, is actually fragile." Others disagreed.[14]

In early April 1979, an article by the philosopher Guy Hocquenghem in the newspaper *Libération* reported that Foucault had been "attacked in his home," a "beating" that Hocquenghem blamed on the context: in the heat of an intense debate "among intellectuals and in the press . . . about Iran," Hocquenghem deduced, "something has gone decidedly wrong." It seems not to be true that Foucault was beaten up in April 1979, at least not in the conditions this article describes. Still, the report of a physical attack on Foucault because of his analyses of the Iranian revolution is a striking metaphor for the end of the history that this book analyzes. Hocquenghem referenced a particularly cutting attack against Foucault and others who had shown sympathy for the Iranian revolution in the left-wing *Le matin de Paris*, which had the outraged title "What Could Philosophers Be Thinking?"[15] Hocquenghem's article in *Libération* grouped the broader attacks on Foucault's writings on Iran under the title "Death to the Traitor." For the radical gay philosopher, what drove the critics was "something that doesn't necessarily have a direct connection to the 'content' of [Foucault's] claims" about Iran, "but which is more in the domain of a generalized—even hysterical—guilt trip, which makes it impossible to exchange information, to discuss." References to history, in Hocquenghem's interpretation of the attacks on Foucault, could no longer be a means to open new possibilities to think. "Any reflection on this subject [the Iranian revolution]," instead, required "immediate judgment on charges of treason and

14. Foucault, "Il ne peut pas y avoir de sociétés sans soulèvements."

15. Claudie and Jacques Broyelle, "A quoi rêvent les philosophes ?" *Le matin* 646 (24 March 1979), 13.

of countertreason before the docket of History."[16] Even if no real blood was shed, this war of words suggests how the quite peripheral involvement of France and some French intellectuals in the Iranian revolution further marginalized efforts to think with the very densely entwined history of Algeria and France.

When the "Muslim Woman" Displaced the "Arab Man"

In broad strokes, we might say that early-1979 French discussions about "Muslim women" and about "sodomy that is punishable by death in Iran . . . or homosexuality," made it easier to let leftist confusion about "the Arab man" fade from view. For example, it became easier to separate discussions of the "uprisings of homosexuals in the United States" from those about the "massive uprisings that can happen in a Third World country," despite the tight links that previous commentators had noted. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, attention to Arab men had constantly summoned French histories, notably those linked to Algeria, as this book has detailed. To speak of Islam, and especially of "Muslim women," offered grounds seemingly clear of inconvenient histories of colonial domination, racist violence, and the suffering of the "immigrant worker" or "the colonized." This was inaccurate, but this is how it seemed. It seemed that way in part because, as far-right reactions to May '68 and leftist responses to feminist antirape activism showed, it remained easy to dismiss the political importance of women's actions and histories—and also in part because it had become less important to take imperialism and anticolonialism seriously.[17]

Between Heroes and Victims: 1979 and the Writing of History

The disappearance of Arab models from French efforts to challenge traditional sexual and gender norms coincided with the late 1970s crisis in Western Third-Worldism.[18] Many historians link the latter to a crisis of rev-

16. Guy Hocquenghem, "Tabassage. Haro sur le traître: Michel Foucault agressé à son domicile," *Libération* (4 April 1979), 8.

17. On the subsequent emergence of the "Islamic veil" in French debates, see Joan W. Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). Jim House identifies a similar shift in French discussions of the massacre of Algerian civilians by the French police in Paris at the end of the Algerian war, an event that took place around 17 October 1961. See Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961. Algerians, State Terror and Memory* (Oxford, UK: Oxford. University Press, 2006), 280–295.

18. In France, the 1983 book *Le Sanglot de l'homme blanc: Tiers-Monde, culpabilité, haine de soi* (*The Tears of the White Man: Compassion as Contempt*) (Paris: Seuil, 1983) came to em-

olutionary politics writ large. Radical Western observers had drawn inspiration from anticolonial militancy and, most particularly, the anticolonial "revolutionary nationalisms" that victorious movements in Algeria, Cuba, and Vietnam had embraced. Yet such utopian projects lost traction on the left, notably in late-1970s France. For French historian Henry Rousso, this helps explain a concurrent shift in why European people looked to the past. "The anti-Nazi or anticolonial struggle foregrounded, in the past, the figure of the hero (and thus of the martyr, the person who dies for a cause and sacrifices for the community)," he argues. How different it is today, in his view, when histories of the recent past "foreground the figure of the victim." Rousso insists that "the change in register is significant," for the shift in focus from hero to victim reveals—very much in the manner of what Hocquenghem saw at play around Iran and Foucault in April 1979—a "move from a political reading of the past to a moral reading." The sexual history of the "disappearance" of the heroic Algerian man adds density and detail to Rousso's argument, as does the new attention that reactions to the Iranian revolution catalyzed about the "Muslim woman" and martyred homosexuals in French and European discussions.[19] In a move parallel to Rousso's, a number of Anglophone historians of France recently have identified 1977 as a turning point when the goal of revolution shifted definitively to a focus on "human rights" or "ethics," which took individual possibilities, rather than any collective aspirations, as the ultimate horizon that should guide political action.[20] Late–Cold War claims about Soviet and Communist "barbarism" and disillusionment with "revolutionary Third Worldism" have focused scholarship on these questions. Yet concerns and responses that emerged in opposition to Iran's triumphant

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blematize the public discrediting of this movement. Its author was Pascal Bruckner, who had first come to public attention with the 1977 essay on the sexual revolution *Le nouveau désordre amoureux,* which he coauthored with Alain Finkielkraut (see chapter 7).

19. Henry Rousso, "Les dilemmes d'une mémoire européenne," *Recherches* (2009), 203–221.

20. See, e.g., Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*; Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals against the Left: The Anti-Totalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York: Berghahn, 2004); Robert Horvath, "'The Solzhenitsyn Effect': East European Dissidents and the Demise of the Revolutionary Privilege," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29 (2007), 879–907, which draws particular attention to intellectuals' responses to Soviet dissident Alexandr Solzhenitsyn's recently translated *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956* (*L'Archipel du Goulag, 1918–1956: Essai d'investigation littéraire*, trans. Geneviève Johannet [Paris: Seuil, 1974]). On the crisis of "Third-Worldism," see esp. Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 2010); also, Eleanor Davey, "French Adventures in Solidarity: Revolutionary Tourists and Radical Humanitarians," *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 21, no. 4 (2014), 577–595.

"Islamic revolution," which engaged debates around questions of sex, gender, and sexuality, also demand attention. These discussions absorbed broad publics as well as intellectuals from all sides. It is also noteworthy that 1979 French criticisms of Islam sparked by developments in Iran have proven more durable than those that other French critics at the time made in response to the Gulag or post-decolonization mass killings in places like Cambodia or Nigeria. This is in part because, in the post–Cold War world, Islam has emerged as the touchstone for multiple explanations of supposed threats to France, the West, and beyond. Orientalist links to aberrant male sexuality, in particular, continue to obsess public discussions. In 2016, two murderous rampages committed in the name of the "Islamic State" (known variously as ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh)—one in June against a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, the other on 14 July (Bastille Day) against a family-friendly celebration in Nice, France—made this brutally clear. The firestorm of public anguish saw both murderers quickly labeled "closeted homosexuals," "bisexuals," and, in the French case, a prostitute for gay men. Communism or, more broadly, nonreligious "utopian politics" now musters less venom, as well as less enthusiasm.

"The Arab Invasion" and the Post-1979 Far Right

Even as new left horizons seemed to fade from the French imagination and quickly lost their Arab colors, visions of dark clouds—more specifically, the threat of darker peoples—assaulting "wholly white" France grew newly important. The post-1962 debate mapped in this book had been structured by two distinct and reductive positions, both of which claimed that meaningful differences between "the French" and "Arabs" could make sense of an ongoing upheaval that sexual questions catalyzed. Proclamations that the Arab man could point the way towards more liberated ways of living sex became difficult to imagine after 1979. This was not the case for warnings that the Arab man incarnated sexual dangers. The second position continued to stir intensely detailed fantasies as well as extreme political projects and acts. In May 2013, to take one over-the-top example, the ultranationalist theorist and writer Dominique Venner committed suicide. As explained in the first chapter of this book, Venner had founded *Europe-action* and had proposed that "masculine humanism" should ground the post-1962 reinvention of ultranationalist politics. On 22 May 2013, *Le Monde* reported that Venner "shot himself in the mouth with an automatic pistol in the middle of the day on Tuesday, just in front of the altar of Notre Dame de Paris Cathedral." In a blog post titled "The Demo of 26 May [2013] and Heidegger,"

published hours before this tragedy, Venner mistakenly predicted that what he ballyhooed as his martyrdom would add new depth to the mass French movement to stop the extension of marriage rights to same-sex couples. (This movement had adopted the name "The Demo for All," a play on "Marriage for All," the title of the law extending marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples). He also hoped that it would convince those engaged in this movement that they must do everything necessary to stop "Afro-Maghrebi immigration." Even beyond the marriage question, Venner's final blog post warned, "The 'Big Replacement' of the population of France and of Europe, which the writer Renaud Camus has alerted us to, is a far more catastrophic danger for our future."[21] Venner had long been panic-stricken by the supposed perils that Arabs posed to the "white race" and, most acutely, how these traps were connected to the social organization of gender and sexuality. His pre-suicide rant echoed fears registered by the far right that had coalesced in the aftermath of Algerian independence. Camus, as discussed in chapter 4, had first gained notoriety as a gay literary sensation with the publication of his novel *Tricks*, which detailed dozens of sexual encounters between the narrator and a variety of other men. Roland Barthes had hailed *Tricks* as revelatory of a new way of living sex, made possible by the sexual revolution. By 2013, some of Camus' more recent writings had inspired far-right and ultranationalist politics in France and elsewhere in Europe. Camus wrote and campaigned in favor of a deeply rooted white French people, their rich culture, and European civilization, and against the forces of cultural relativism and the "colonization" by outsiders that together threatened to pollute these precious heirlooms. Fear of Islam, Muslims, Maghrebis, and Africans, as well as Jews, are central themes in his writings.

By 2013, Renaud Camus embodied a new post-1979 synthesis among French ultranationalists. Venner's blog post can be read as an effort to hand the torch of the "nationalist revolution" to Camus—the theorist of "masculine humanism" passing the flame to the gay male theorist of the "Big Replacement," a flame stoked by the blood Venner spilled at the altar of Notre Dame Cathedral. It is a writerly scenario that echoes the contemporaneous messy takeover by Marine Le Pen of the political party her father created. Aside from Venner, the other emblematic figure of a far-right generation defined by the fight for French Algeria and against "May '68" was the far more widely known Jean-Marie Le Pen. Venner and fellow in-

21. http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/05/22/suicide-de-dominique-venner-un-appel-au-sacrifice-pour-cambadelis_3415157_823448.html, accessed 28 April 2016. See also http://www.dominiquevenner.fr/2013/05/la-manif-du-26-mai-et-heidegger/, accessed 16 September 2014.

tellectuals of the "nationalist revolution" disdained Le Pen, even though their thematic similarities were striking, as has been foregrounded in this book. Both Venner and Jean-Marie Le Pen have now left the center stage of the far-right scene, with as much of a fracas as they could muster, although only Venner did so by choice. The theorist carefully crafted his tragic suicide. The term "politics of spectacle," so associated with French post-'68 politics, accurately describes father Le Pen's clownlike efforts to resist his marginalization and, in 2015, his expulsion from the National Front, the party he founded and led from 1972 until 2011. Yet it was his daughter who used the spectacle to take what her father had built and yet present herself as a new beginning for ultranationalist politics. In this Marine Le Pen—a pro-gay, unmarried, "modern" woman who wrested control of the National Front from her father—and Renaud Camus together symbolize a new far-right generation, the generation of 1979, which relies on "European roots" and a fear of Islam to integrate post-1962 and post-1968 concerns into a new "feminist" and "gay-friendly" synthesis.[22]

A French "National Liberation Front Has Begun Already to Organize the Resistance"

In late January 2016, Renaud Camus spoke at a press conference to publicize a banned Parisian protest. The goal of the protest, which organizers named "Unhinged Cutthroats, Out of Control . . . Drive Islamists from France," was solidarity with Pegida, a group that had formed in Germany in early 2015 to stop the "Islamization" of Europe. Camus sought to comfort those who had not been able to take to the streets. "A National Liberation Front," he reassured anti-Muslim French people, "has begun already to organize the resistance" within France. His reference point was the Algerian FLN, which in November 1954 had embraced armed struggle—and "revolution"—to win Algerian independence. Camus was making the comparison "merely in jest," a journalist from the right-wing *Le Figaro* reassured its readers. No anti-Muslim French organization or project comparable to

22. On Le Pen's use of pro-gay and feminist arguments, see Sylvain Crépon, *Les faux-semblants du Front national: Sociologie d'un parti politique* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2015). On the larger phenomenon of what some scholars term "sexual nationalism," see, for France, Mehammed Amadeus Mack, *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016); and, in theoretical terms, Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*. On "gay-friendliness," see the work of Sylvie Tissot, e.g., "Un quartier gay-friendly? Ethnographie du Marais hétérosexuel," talk presented at the workshop "La sexualité et la Cinquième République / Sex and France since 1958," Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 20 September 2013.

the FLN existed.[23] This Camus episode, however, suggests the durable importance of the history this book has explored.

For many French people from widely diverse horizons, their dense Algerian past remains vivid. In multiple depictions, as in Camus's proclamations, that past is wildly distorted. Those people still assaulted by post-1962 understandings and terms about "Arab men" and sex, can often find it difficult to respond. This can be especially true for those people in France who are now often termed "Muslims" or "of Muslim culture." Part of what makes it difficult for them to respond is that so many earlier analyses of this intersection by commentators of Maghrebi origin, some of which are discussed in this book, gained so little traction. The 1960s and 1970s had offered new possibilities to people with biographical ties to the Maghreb to intervene in French discussions, and some seized these opportunities. They had, this book shows, been enjoined to speak about Arab men and sex. Still, their insistent commentary sometimes unsettled this ambient discourse, and merits critical attention. This missing intellectual patrimony has become even more difficult to access, now that post-1979 arguments about "Islam" and "Muslims" have made examinations of previous French claims about "Arabs" more difficult to parse. This book is an attempt to clarify one crucial aspect of France's Algerian history, to show why it mattered and why it faded from memory, and to do so in ways that speak to current concerns, which echo far beyond France.

A History of the Present / The Artists Already in Movement

This book thus brings historical scholarship to bear on a quite frustrating discussion, but one that has inspired several important recent interventions, notably from artists. From a perspective somewhat outside of France and Algeria, for example, the Austrian director Michael Haneke's French film *Caché* (2005) turns around the reemergence in contemporary France of an episode of anti-Algerian violence during the Algerian war. Through this prism, *Caché* delves into intimacy, childhood fantasy, and nightmares. It details how the mere presence of an Algerian boy/man still has the power to upend French domesticity and to inspire violent rage, as well as other responses that allow the film's characters to avoid grappling with the rich humanity of the Arab, who must die.

The gay French novelist Edouard Louis, to take a second example, relies

23. http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2015/01/21/01016–20150121ARTFIG00263-en-france-si-pegida-fait-rever-certains-il-peine-a-rassembler.php.

on *autofiction* (autobiographical fiction) to delve into similar themes in *Histoire de la violence* (History of Violence, 2016), although he foregrounds questions of sex and homosexuality that Haneke leaves implicit. In his novel, Louis recounts his own rape at the hands of a young man from Algeria whom he met on Christmas Eve at Place de la République (Republic Square). The novelist's effort to take seriously the history and desires of "Réda," the character who rapes "Edouard Louis," resonates with the 1970s histories of Maï and "Brigitte" sketched out in this book. Like those histories, it is a response to the ambient potency of "anti-Arab" stereotypes.

The novel *Meursault, contre-enquête* (*The Meursault Investigation*, 2013), by the Algerian writer Kamel Daoud, offers a final example. In this international best seller, Daoud reimagines Albert Camus's *The Stranger* from the point of view of the brother and family of "the Arab"—his name, we learn, was Moussa Ould el-Assasse—who died on a beach at the hands of the existentialist classic's main character. Daoud revisits, among other topics, a foundational episode in the imaginary "war over masculinity" that had structured so many discussions during the Algerian war and since. His novel returns repeatedly to questions of desire, both sexual and amorous. Its condemnation of murder sidelines divisions between French and Algerian to focus on how this colonial tragedy affects love and human connections and makes it more difficult to get to greater truths. "The crime permanently compromises love and the possibility to love," says Haroun, the narrator, describing the murder he has committed. "Ever since, the body of each woman's body that I have encountered has very quickly lost its sensuality, its capacity to create in me the illusion of wholeness."

Each of these works sparked much critical reaction, which was overwhelmingly laudatory, and each garnered substantial audiences. The last two were best sellers, and their authors the topic of much public discussion and controversy. All three works avoid presenting their protagonists as either heroes or victims. All three also chart connections between past and present. Haneke, Louis, and Daoud each trace durable links between France and Algeria, and do so in ways that speak beyond the borders of both countries. They are part of a vigorous conversation, one from which scholars can learn, and one on which this book—anchored in archives, discourses, and often faceless actors—has drawn in an effort to analyze a foreign past while paying careful attention to how it shapes actual lives.[24]

24. Edouard Louis, *Histoire de la violence* (Paris: Seuil, 2016); Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, contre-enquête* (Arles: Editions Actes Sud, 2014), 101. I am indebted to Saïd Gahia for his work on *Caché*.