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Philip Dine. *Images of the Algerian War: French Fiction and Film, 1954-1992.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. ix + 267 pp. $55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-815875-2.

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It is a pleasure to recommend with the greatest enthusiasm this superb first book by a most talented young colleague, who teaches in the outstanding European Studies Programme at Loughborough University in the British Midlands. The title reflects with absolute accuracy, though not with perfect symmetry, as will be explained below, what the book is about. Professor Dine has for the first time in English–and indeed nothing so focused and systematic has yet been published in French–closely analyzed the extensive French literary and cinematic production dealing with the Algerian War, 1954-1962.

The core of the book is a very sophisticated and historically informed analysis of fiction. Professor Dine, whether he is discussing a brutal and militaristic work such as Jean Larteguy's *Les Centurions*(1960), or a more liberal and accommodating novel like Gilbert Cesbron's *Entre chiens et loups* (1962), is enormously informative, firm in his commitment and conviction, but never strident. It would be difficult to improve upon the formulation, in his introduction, of the vexed question of whether literature and film can have a political influence, in the case in question, whether French writers and filmmakers were able "to exert a direct influence on the process of decolonization" (p. 14).

I would like to highlight four specific aspects of this thoroughly remarkable book. First, Dine's discussion in chapter 5 of novels written after the fact–not *temoignages* published during the war–suggests that many of these are powerful works which deserve to be better known, perhaps in some cases translated into English. Dine mentions that they contain certain parallels to the Vietnam war literature in the United States (p. 128). I think that Tim O'Brien's *Going after Cacciato* offers an eerily powerful reflection of some of the Algerian war novels which Dine discusses. But the lack of realism in these novels–written by conscripts in large measure, not members of elite combat units–is intriguing and disturbing. Many of their protagonists meet violent death, and yet Dine points out that the Algerian war was for most conscripts–about 2.4 million–"singularly lacking in danger" (p.132).

Second, Dine is persuasive in debunking the myth of the *pied-noirs*, the ethnic Europeans residing in pre-independence Algeria, of "their" land, their "abundant literature of nostalgia" (p. 165) and the related "myth of inter-communal harmony," of some kind of common Mediterranean humanity. Dine treats critically, but fairly the general *pied-noir* evasiveness, on such matters as their well-documented allegiance to the Vichy regime and their reluctance to fight for Free France during World War II.

Thirdly, Dine's analysis of sexual relations between colonizer and colonized, as portrayed so extensively in the literature of the Algerian war, is fascinating. This near obsession existed despite, as Dine points out correctly, the almost total "historical absence of such interracial liaisons" (p. 191). Bernard Tricot, President Charles de Gaulle's special advisor on Algerian affairs after 1958 and a French delegate during peace negotiations at Evian in 1962, points out in his recently published *Memoires* (1994) that there were only 382 mixed marriages in Algeria between 1939 and 1953! Incidentally, those who are interested in Franco-Algerian relations, and more generally in Gaullism and politics and society of the early Fifth Republic, will find Tricot's book a marvelous source.

Finally, Dine is the first scholar to look at Algerian war novels *en bloc*. By examining them as a genre, he discovered a large number of cases of veterans' suicide, which is painfully evocative to this American reader. A conservative U. S. government estimate holds that by 1986 there had been 80,000 suicides of Vietnam veterans, more than the 59,000 names on the walls of the war memorial in Washington, D.C.

To conclude, I would like to discuss briefly a regret and a suggestion. First, the regret: this book would have been even more striking if the editors had found it financially possible to include stills from the films which Philip

Dine discusses. A telling example comes from another new book, which can be compared with Dine's in that it touches on some of the same topics, but with a very different approach. The work in question is Kristen Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (1995). In this writer's judgment, Ross's book often simply states the obvious in convoluted post-structuralist language, yet it does contain some brilliant insights and certainly merits an extensive review on H-France, and in traditional published journals. It benefits from a series of high-quality photographic reproductions, among them a beautiful photograph from the film made from Claire Etcherelli's extraordinary 1967 novel, *Elise ou la vraie vie* (*Folio* paperback). Ross's analysis of this relatively unknown masterpiece, probably the greatest single work of fiction dealing with the impact of the Algerian war on France, and on individual French women and men, is thin and insubstantial, whereas Dine's is a *tour de force*.

Turning now to my suggestion. I would urge that part 3, "Filming the War Without a Name, 1954-1992," which comprises only 17 pages of condensed, though highly astute analysis, be expanded by Professor Dine into a second book. Dine's point that French film-makers have not ignored the Algerian war as much as Benjamin Stora, Pascal Ory, and I have indicated in some of our writings, is convincing. Dine notes that as of 1992 fifty feature films had been made in France on the Algerian war, a number that would certainly compare favorably to American productions dealing with undeclared U.S. war in southeast Asia. One should multiply by four to account for the larger U.S. population, and I doubt very much that there have been two hundred feature-length films made in the United States about the Vietnam war. Dine's discussion of Alain Resnais's 1963 film, *Muriel*, the "first work to lift the cinematic taboo on the French military's use of torture in Algeria" (p. 223), is especially brilliant. It shows that Dine is as gifted for film analysis as he is in uncovering the ideological underpinnings and aesthetic strengths and weaknesses of the novels he examines in the first 212 pages of his book. Hence, I hope that in a few years the author will give us a new work, finding ways, whether technically (type of film), thematically, by director, or by date, to organize his material, and bring those fifty films to life for his readers. I would recommend that his publishers grant him leeway to include extensive illustrative materials, and I would suggest that the author add a new a section on films made for television. For example, Benjamin Stora's evocative, often painful, and at the time highly controversial four-hour documentary, *Les Annees algeriennes*, first shown on *Antenne 2* in the fall of 1991, would alone merit a ten- or fifteen-page discussion.

This altogether remarkable book should be of great interest not only to historians of twentieth-century France, to students of literature and experts in the new field of "cultural studies," but also to the large number of American scholars struggling to come to new and more fruitful understandings of the equally long and equally divisive American "war without a name," and the resultant and still unhealed "Vietnam syndrome."

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