Pragmatic utopia and Romantic science: Colonial identities and Saint-Simonian influences in the writings of Thomas Ismaïl Urbain (1812-1884) and Henri Duveyrier (1840-1892)

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Pragmatic utopia and Romantic science: Colonial identities and Saint-Simonian influences in the writings of Thomas Ismaïl Urbain (1812-1884) and Henri Duveyrier (1840-1892)

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School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
Discipline of French

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that I have not received a degree based on its contents from NUI, Galway, or any other university.

____________________
Sheila Walsh
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and were kind enough to make reading suggestions and to listen to my thoughts on various figures during academic conferences and research trips to Paris.
Introduction

[L’identité est d’abord un être-dans-le-monde, ainsi que disent les philosophes, un risque avant tout, qu’il faut courir, et qu’elle fournit ainsi au rapport avec l’autre et avec ce monde, en même temps qu’elle résulte de ce rapport. Une telle ambivalence nourrit à la fois la liberté d’entreprendre et, plus avant, l’audace de changer.]

This study stems from the intersection of a number of interests, but, as the above quotation from Patrick Chamoiseau and Édouard Glissant indicates, chief among such interests was a desire to explore some of the paradoxical and conflicting elements which give rise to concepts of identity, in this case French colonial identity, together with the attendant risks and benefits of an individual’s negotiation of destabilising forces and their frequently ambivalent impact upon the relationship to others which ultimately gives meaning to any personal concept of identity. It is also rooted in the desire to explore a region, namely the Southern Mediterranean, a period, the nineteenth century, and the cultural engagements of figures who represented France there either as travellers, explorers or colonial officials, as contained in the writings which recount their experiences of, and opinions regarding, the region, and more specifically the role which France played, or should have played, there as an aspiring colonial power in the burgeoning era of European imperialism.

For many years, much scholarly attention has been devoted to the accounts of famous French literary figures who travelled in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Chateaubriand, Nerval, Flaubert, Gautier, Gide and many more, and to questions of identity therein. For those who could afford it, the voyage en Orient became almost a rite of passage, similar to the established tradition of the Grand Tour of Europe undertaken by young aristocrats over preceding generations. The travel accounts which resulted repeatedly drew forth the drama of the author’s own identity, as he or she confronted the alterity of new landscapes, alien social customs, religious practices and especially as a result of encounters with foreign peoples. Egypt, the Holy Land and the site of the ancient city of Carthage in Tunisia were privileged sites of pilgrimage for many European

travellers throughout the nineteenth century. Although the travel accounts which evoke these and other locations produced by renowned French literary figures make for stimulating reading and have given rise to innumerable insightful analyses, the present thesis opts instead to attend to the writings of two figures who made part of the Southern Mediterranean, namely Egypt and Algeria, the focus not merely of a temporary evasion from l’Hexagone, but rather the object of their life’s work and the principal subject of much of their respective œuvres, thus exposing themselves to a more prolonged and intense encounter with the risks, challenges and potential advantages of existence as an être-dans-le-monde, as described in the opening quotation from Chamoiseau and Glissant. The selected subjects, Thomas Ismaïl Urbain (1812-1884) and Henri Duveyrier (1840-1892), are relatively marginal figures in mainstream colonial historiography and are not recognised within the literary canon of French travel writing, therefore preliminary biographical summaries of both figures are useful.

Frequently introduced in historical texts as un mulâtre de Guyane, Thomas Urbain was born in Cayenne, French Guiana, the illegitimate son of a French businessman, Urbain Brue, and a Guianese woman of mixed-race slave origin. He was educated in Marseilles, but was not recognised by his father. In 1832, Urbain responded to a call for members by Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin (1796-1864), the leader of the Saint-Simonian social utopian movement, in an article published in the Saint-Simonian newspaper Le Globe. He travelled to Paris where he became a member, and thereafter the movement prompted his first trip to North Africa – namely Egypt – from 1833 to 1836. During this trip Urbain converted to Islam and took the name Ismaïl. Following his return to France, in 1837 Urbain received a commission to work as an interpreter with the French army in Algeria, and from then until his death in Algiers in 1884 he divided his life between Algeria and France working as an interpreter, a colonial administrator, a prolific journalist, a pamphlet writer and a political advisor on Algerian policy to Emperor Napoleon III. He retained a life-long affiliation with the Saint-Simonian movement, and its early mystical doctrine influenced much of his thought and subsequent writings.

Henri Duveyrier was born in Paris, the eldest child of Charles Duveyrier, a playwright, journalist and prominent Saint-Simonian, and an English mother who died when Duveyrier was attending boarding school abroad in his early teens. Thus for both Urbain and for Duveyrier, their fathers furnished the only source of their
metropolitain French heritage and especially during early adulthood, the notion of father-figures was an important issue for both men. Duveyrier was raised in an environment influenced by senior members of the Saint-Simonian movement. Saint-Simonian patrons and Duveyrier’s father Charles promoted a career in international commerce and advertising, but Duveyrier rejected this career path and elected to work as a professional explorer. He made his name as an explorer of the Sahara and an expert on Tuareg nomadic tribes. Duveyrier was also a prominent and longstanding member of La Société de Géographie de Paris, the world’s oldest Geographical Society founded in 1821.² He was a regular contributor to the Society’s Bulletin and participated in various delegations and government commissions on geography and French overseas activities from the 1860s to the 1880s. Historical and other reference texts regularly refer to Duveyrier as a Saint-Simonian-affiliated explorer, but as this study will demonstrate, Duveyrier did not ascribe to this attributed status, although it does convey the considerable influence upon his thought of Saint-Simonian concepts such as reverence for a perceived benevolent science and a progressive Western civilisation.

At the outset of this research project, among the numerous French figures who worked in, and wrote about, their experiences of North Africa during the nineteenth century, a cohort which included Saint-Simonians, individuals who were affiliated with the movement and a number of figures associated with Saharan exploration, became a focus of interest. Such figures evidently included Urbain and Duveyrier, as well as Prosper Enfantin, Ferdinand de Lesseps, Théophile Gautier, the little known Suzanne Voilquin, Dr August Warnier, Oscar Mac Carthy, Adrien Berbrugger, Félicien David, Émile Barrault, Louis Jourdan, Charles de Foucauld, Gerhard Rohlfs (a Prussian explorer, but a veteran of the French Foreign Legion), Ernest Carette, Henri Fournel and many others. The presence of many of these figures in North Africa coincided with developments which included the Saint-Simonian expedition to Egypt and the Levant from 1833 to 1836 – ostensibly to seek out a female messiah or Mère Suprême to lead the movement alongside Enfantin, but members also endeavoured to oversee the construction of a dam on the Nile and various other large-scale technical projects. Several of the figures alluded to above were variously involved in the planning, construction and journalistic coverage of

² <http://www.socgeo.org/> first consulted 03 July 2013.
the opening of the Suez Canal, which eventually took place in 1869. From the late 1830s, when Saint-Simonianism had waned as an influential movement in France, many of these individuals became involved in the colonisation and economic exploitation of Algeria. A number of them participated in the *Commission scientifique* of 1839 to 1841 which sought to replicate the achievements of the famous Napoleonic expedition to Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, while others took up positions in the army, investigated potential mineral wealth, established model farms, and, under the Second Empire, acquired concessions for mining and the establishment of railway companies, among a variety of industrial and capitalist ventures.

Within this diverse cohort, Urbain and Duveyrier proved particularly interesting figures. An increasing familiarity with their writings and with the existing scholarship on their lives and works led to the observation of considerable repetition in references to them in the various historical texts, journal articles and biographies which addressed their lives and writings. Additionally, a dearth of thematic textual analyses of their stylistically and thematically diverse writings in favour of what are admittedly very engaging biographical trajectories emerged as a dominant feature of much existing scholarship on Urbain and Duveyrier. Biographical interest in these somewhat obscure figures has been relatively prominent, particularly in recent decades, for example the first biography of Urbain by Michel Levallois was published in 2001 and a second volume concentrating on the post-1870 period of his life is forthcoming. In 2007, Dominique Casajus published a biography of Duveyrier which follows various others extending back to René Pottier’s text of 1938. As areas of significant interest which have not been explored in detail by existing studies, concepts of personal identity and the challenges of relating to the colonial other in Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings constitute the focus of this thesis. Furthermore, despite a number of connections and interesting potential for points of comparison and contrast between Urbain and Duveyrier, particularly with respect to their attitudes toward colonisation and franco-indigène relations, there have been no attempts to date to conduct a sustained examination of these figures in tandem.

In fact, with the exception of biographical interest, Urbain and Duveyrier have remained largely forgotten figures for many years. However, a gradual rise in scholarly interest, particularly in relation to Urbain’s writing, has occurred from the mid-twentieth century to the present day, but this has frequently been within the
restricted scope of historical studies of colonial North Africa, and of the Saint-
Simonian movement, a perspective which we will seek to expand by focusing
explicitly on Urbain, rather than referring to him as a secondary figure of colonial
historiography. This status as a background figure is understandable, not least
because it was actively encouraged by Urbain himself. In addition to publications
which allude to Urbain as a marginal or background figure, in 1993 a collection of
his poetry and travel journals from his time in Egypt and the Levant in the mid-
1830s was published by Harmattan with a preface by Philippe Régnier under the title
Ismaïl Urbain : Voyage d’Orient suivi de poèmes de Ménémontant et d’Égypte, and
in 2005 two autobiographical texts, originally composed by Urbain in 1871 and 1883
were compiled by Anne Levallois and published by Maisonneuve et Larose as Les
Écrits autobiographiques d’Ismaïl Urbain (1812-1884). Urbain has also been the
subject of journal articles such as Jérôme Debrune’s analysis of his conversion of
1835 in Cahiers Africains, ‘La part de l’Autre dans la quête de soi : A propos de la
conversion à l’islam de Thomas Ismayl Urbain’ (2002), and chapters or substantial
sub-sections in larger thematic texts such as Les Saint-Simoniens en Algérie (1941)
by Marcel Émerit and « L’Algérie Algérienne » : du royaume arabe de Napoléon III
à de Gaulle (1980) by Charles-Robert Ageron, which examines Urbain’s role as one
of the key instigators of Emperor Napoleon III’s adoption of the series of reformist
policies for the rule of Algeria known collectively as la politique du royaume arabe.
As a whole, Ageron’s text charts the presence of a strain within French political
thought which is seen to link the Algerian policies promoted by Urbain and the
Emperor to those advocated by later figures such as Jules Ferry and Charles de
Dominique Chagnollaud and Jean Lacouture similarly devotes a chapter to Urbain,
in the context of voices of dissent within the French Empire. The collection
L’Orientlisme des Saint-Simoniens (2006), edited by Sarga Moussa and Michel
Levallois, also affords considerable attention to Urbain and a number of the essays it
contains focus explicitly on him. Collectively, such texts have contributed to an
increased recognition of Urbain as a figure of historical interest over the late

3 ‘le bruit avait couru bien souvent que j’allais être nommé conseiller d’État. Je ne reçus aucune
ouverture à cet égard et je m’abstins de toute démarche ou sollicitation. On connaît les raisons qui
me portaient à éviter les positions en évidence.’ Urbain, Ismaïl ‘Notes autobiographiques’, 1871 in
Levallois, Anne, ed., Les Écrits autobiographiques d’Ismaïl Urbain (Paris: Maisonouve & Larose,
2005), p. 82.
Introduction

twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a tendency which the present study seeks to develop and to interrogate from the perspectives of identity and approaches to colonial relations.

Although many analyses of Urbain’s writing have been conducted within the context of colonial policy in Algeria – specifically, the aforementioned politique du royaume arabe, which is frequently viewed as an attempt to introduce a form of rule based on the association of French and indigène cultures and interests – few if any analyses have attempted to integrate Urbain’s diverse body of writing, which spans his lengthy involvement with North Africa, including a crucial formative period spent in Egypt in the mid-1830s, in addition to the many decades he spent living and working throughout colonial Algeria. This thesis aims to address this omission by drawing attention to, and utilising as primary sources, texts which are representative of the variety of genres in which Urbain wrote. These include the following: his poetry and travel journals of the 1830s; his writings as an Algerian correspondent for French newspapers; his extended articles for French periodicals of the 1840s and 1850s; his best-known texts, namely the polemical pamphlets of 1861 and 1862, L’Algérie pour les Algériens and L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants; and his retrospective autobiographical texts of 1871 and 1883, Notes autobiographiques and Notice chronologique. These primary texts were accessed from a variety of sources including pdf versions of the original printed editions of Urbain’s pamphlets which are available through the Gallica digital repository of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) and recent re-editions such as the 2000 edition of L’Algérie pour les Algériens with a preface by Michel Levallois. Other texts were consulted as published editions and re-editions, in their original form and as microfilm reproductions in the archives of the BNF’s Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal. Newspaper articles were sourced from a combination of online pdf formats available on the Gallica website and through consultation of archive editions held at the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal. These primary texts are supplemented by references to materials sourced from a combination of archives and printed texts, such as Urbain’s personal correspondence with Prosper Enfantin, other Saint-Simonians, Duveyrier, and also his daughter Béïa. This broad chronological span, the reference to varied genres and the mobilisation of a combination of published and archival sources are together intended to demonstrate the evolution of Urbain’s thought and his sense of his identity across his adult life, as well as his versatility as a writer and his tendency
to cultivate certain genres to address particular types of issue relating to his public or private life, and in some cases both. As its title suggests, this study seeks to focus on the tensions between Urbain’s optimistic philosophy, based on certain key traits and concepts derived from Saint-Simonian Orientalism, and his pragmatism in attempting to translate this optimistic philosophy into workable formulas for creating a hybrid franco-indigène society in colonial Algeria that would be both equitable and prosperous.

Although Duveyrier was a well-known public figure during his lifetime, becoming at 21 one of the youngest recipients of the Légion d’honneur, posthumous scholarly attention to his writing has been limited. By far his best-known text remains Les Touareg du Nord (1864), a vast compendium including zoology, botany, geology, meteorology and ethnography relating to the Algerian and Tunisian Sahara. As a reference text and thus as a source of knowledge on the Aijer Tuareg tribes, Les Touareg du Nord was enormously – and enduringly – influential, but the profile of its author and the numerous other texts which he produced and published during his lifetime have been subject to neglect. This neglect can be gauged from the lack of reprints or new editions of his published works, many of which were sourced from nineteenth-century editions accessible online in pdf format through the Gallica digital repository of the BNF. In an exception to this trend, Dominique Casajus’ recent biography Henri Duveyrier : Un Saint-Simonien au désert (2007), provides detailed textual analysis of both Les Touareg du Nord and Duveyrier’s last major publication, La Confrérie musulmane de Sidi Mohammed ben’ali es-Senoûsî et son domaine géographique en l’année 1300 de l’hégire = 1883 de notre ère (1884). Additionally, Michael Heffernan has published insightful texts which address the theories of Saint-Simon, the movement to which they gave rise and the nineteenth-century French geographical tradition more generally. He focuses specifically on

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5 Duveyrier was made a Chevalier of the Légion d’honneur on 22nd January 1862 and promoted to the rank of Officier on 1st June 1884. AN LH 886 / 31, Archives Nationales, Paris.


As with Urbain’s writing, we will seek to expand upon and move beyond the most frequent type of references to Duveyrier’s best-known text, Les Touareg du Nord, which typically occur in historical overviews of exploration. The consequent aim is to chart Duveyrier’s personal and intellectual development – from a youth who was subject to sometimes overbearing Saint-Simonian influences, to an accomplished, celebrated explorer and geographical scholar of note, and finally to a disillusioned, disappointed and marginal figure – by analysing a range of texts, in various genres, which he produced, some for publication, others not, over his lifetime. These primary texts include the following: travel journals; biographical works on other explorers, namely the Scot David Livingstone and the Frenchman Norbert Dournaux-Dupéré; his most famous work Les Touareg du Nord; his writings on the Sanusiyya Islamic brotherhood; and excerpts from his personal correspondence with Enfantin, Charles de Foucauld, Charles Maunoir, Gerhard Rohlfs and Urbain. These documents were sourced from scholarly texts and archives, including Duveyrier’s personal documents held in the Fonds Duveyrier of the Archives Nationales in Paris. As indicated above, few of Duveyrier’s works remain in print and for this reason the resources of the François Mitterrand site of the BNF and its Gallica digital repository were invaluable sources of original editions of Duveyrier’s work, and indeed of Saint-Simonian texts and other contemporary publications.

The reference to Romantic science in the title refers primarily to Duveyrier. As a successful and ambitious explorer, practitioner of field science and geographer, Duveyrier’s affiliations to science, and more precisely to the nineteenth-century secular cult of science are impossible to ignore. However, as Heffernan and other scholars who have examined Duveyrier’s writing in detail have observed, he was also deeply affected by Romanticism, and was particularly susceptible to the projection of a romanticised image onto nomadic tribes, such as the Tuareg, which he encountered in the Sahara through his work as an explorer. This thesis examines

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the interaction of these Romantic and scientific leanings, which are shown to both reinforce one another and significantly to problematise Duveyrier’s self-conscious identification as a man of science.

Within the broader analysis of Urbain as predominantly a pragmatic utopian thinker and of Duveyrier as a Romantic scientist, both of which constitute complex and apparently paradoxical personas, the following axes of inquiry are employed to shed light upon their *œuvres*: the respective influence of the Saint-Simonian social utopian movement and of Romantic thought and particularly Orientalism upon the development of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s identities. Also examined is how their perceptions of the colonial other influenced the approaches they advocated to the complex issues of colonial relations raised by the French presence in North Africa. These perspectives have proved to be particularly rich, because they allow for an original type of analysis, which for the first time takes into account the collective body of writing produced by these fascinating individuals over their prolonged engagements with North Africa – in particular with colonial Algeria – as well as exploring the ways in which these engagements developed, not only challenging but also prompting considerable internal conflict for both Urbain and Duveyrier. This methodology has been selected in preference to the analysis of a specific aspect of Urbain’s or Duveyrier’s writing in a particular text, viewed in isolation and as part of a larger scholarly project, for the purposes of which they are taken to illustrate one particular trend or tendency, as has been the case in the majority of scholarly references to both figures to date.

The analysis of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings from the perspective of colonial identity/identities facilitates the examination of their status as representatives of the colonising power in Algeria and of their attitudes toward native inhabitants as colonial subjects (colonised identities), which hitherto have not been conducted in detail in relation to either figure. Familiarity with these figures and with the forces which moulded their choices in terms of the colonial identities which they adopted and which they advocated, for those colonisers and colonised implicated by *la question indigène* – the term used to describe debates in France and among colonisers and colonial administrators regarding what policies should be adopted toward the subjects of the French conquest in Algeria – has informed the understanding formulated in this study. This argues for a view of Urbain and Duveyrier as distinctive individuals subject to influences which were grounded in
their era and in the milieux to which they were exposed – such as the Saint-Simonian movement – and additionally as important representative figures whose experiences illuminate the forces and strategies which not only were at work in colonial relations in their own time, but which continue to have an enormous impact upon our understanding of the postcolonial world and thus of global relations in the present day.

The plural term colonial identities highlights the manner whereby Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s identities mirror and oppose one another in much the same way that the narratives of their biographies simultaneously have much in common and appear in striking contrast. Moreover, it is particularly apt for Urbain’s position as an individual who hailed from French Guiana, a colonial outpost that was the legacy of an earlier period of overseas expansion under the Ancien Régime, moulded by the slave-trade, and as such was largely ignored or looked-down upon by metropolitan society. This inferior status, in tandem with Urbain’s mixed-race and slave ancestry, marked his identity as not straightforwardly that of a French citizen, but rather as a marginalised hybrid product of the union of French colonisers and the descendants of African slaves who were transported to work on sugar plantations. Thus, while Henri Duveyrier was a Parisian-born cosmopolitan of English and French parentage, who received his education in a variety of European countries, his was a colonising identity, whereas Urbain represented both a colonising identity – he travelled to Algeria as a representative of France – and, by virtue of his origins, simultaneously a colonised identity.

A key feature of the present thesis is the analysis of the extent to which both Urbain and Duveyrier were exposed to the teachings of the Saint-Simonian social utopian movement as adolescents and young adults, and the assessment of the manner whereby aspects of these teachings exerted a lasting influence on the thought, writings, actions and identities of both men. Saint-Simonianism was one of several post-revolutionary movements which developed in France mainly in response to social division and the increasing secularisation of French society and sought to counteract their divisive effects by reconciling science and religious mysticism in a harmonious industrial society. It is named for its founder Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825). Along with Fourierism, which is similarly named after its founder Charles Fourier (1772-1837), Saint-
Simonianism is recognised as a utopian movement and a forerunner of socialism. As a young man, Auguste Comte (1798-1857) worked as a secretary to Saint-Simon before going on to found the influential nineteenth-century doctrine of Positivism which is seen as a further offshoot of post-revolutionary utopian thought, and an important source for the later discipline of sociology. Saint-Simonian philosophy sought to harness the progressive power of science and industry to improve the lives of all humanity, and additionally to achieve a reconciliation of these modern forces with spirituality and religious faith. It was deeply eclectic, seeking to engage with an enormous variety of topics, which prominently included issues of relations between the West and the “Orient,” which constitute the principal concern for this study with respect to the movement as a whole. The following quotation is taken from Système de la Méditerranée by Michel Chevalier, which was first published as a series of articles in the Saint-Simonian newspaper Le Globe in 1832. Its use here is intended to provide a brief introduction to key concepts and defining features of Saint-Simonian Orientalism:

> La Méditerranée va devenir le lit nuptial de l'Orient et de l'Occident.
> Ce n’est pas en vain que les poètes de l’Europe rêvent l’Orient [...] Ce n’est pas en vain qu’ils vont [...] y chercher la trace des gloires passées et le germe des gloires à venir. [...] Leur élan dans les régions orientales atteste qu’en effet une association est proche entre l’Orient et l’Occident. [...] [..]
> [...] La politique pacifique de l’avenir aura pour objet [...] de constituer à l’état d’association, autour de la Méditerranée, les deux massifs de peuples qui depuis trois mille ans s’entrechoquent comme représentants de l’Orient et de l’Occident : c’est là le premier pas à faire vers l’ASSOCIATION UNIVERSELLE. [...] Considérons ce système méditerranéen sous le rapport industriel ; car la politique est spécialement le règlement des intérêts des peuples et des individus sous ce rapport.

Among other concepts, Chevalier elaborates those of universal association and the union of Orient and Occident which were promoted by the Saint-Simonian movement under its most influential leader (known as le Père Suprême), Prosper

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10 ‘The key to [Saint-Simon’s] thinking was a quasi-religious positivist faith in science and technology as engines for beneficial progress; as the spiritual life force of a new utopian age of “industrialism.”’ Heffernan, Michael, ‘Historical Geographies of the Future: Three Perspectives from France, (1750-1825)’, pp. 125-64, in Livingstone, Withers, 1999, p. 147.
Enfantin. The passage illustrates the unusual blend of nostalgia, mystical symbolism, optimism, and veneration of the regenerative potential of industry that characterises much Saint-Simonian rhetoric. It illustrates the importance of the Orient, particularly those regions bordering the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean which were cultivated in the Saint-Simonian imagination. As Philippe Régnier notes, a focus on the union, or rapprochement, of Orient and Occident was not among the concerns expressed by the movement’s founder Saint-Simon: ‘Mais alors que Saint-Simon […] ne dévie guère de la culture nationale, […] ses discîles enfantiniens intègrent à leur réflexion des apports étrangers et visent, au-delà même de l’Europe, à surmonter la scission de l’Orient et de l’Occident’.

This focus on the union of Orient and Occident developed in the wake of Saint-Simon’s death at least partially in response to intensifying hostility toward the movement during the early 1830s in France: ‘Puisque l’Occident rejette le saint-simonisme comme dogme nouveau, la seule issue est d’aller quérir une légitimité en Orient, berceau des grandes religions du Livre, pour en éblouir la sceptique Europe.’

As well as a practical move in response to the controversy the movement generated in France, Saint-Simonian interest in the Orient tapped into a rich vein of popular imagination associated with literary Romantics: ‘le principal tropisme des saint-simoniens, en 1832, n’est déjà plus le Nord. A la suite de Chateaubriand, […] à l’imitation de Victor Hugo […] et comme Lamartine, […] ils regardent vers le Levant.’ This popular interest is also emblematic of that which Edward Said in Orientalism (1978) identifies as an Orientalist world view through which the West sought to intellectually appropriate and aestheticise the Orient as an object of fascination. By helping to initiate Urbain and Duveyrier into contact with a new North African environment as late-adolescents and young adults, and by acting to mediate that contact, the Saint-Simonian movement played a key role in the formation of their adult identities. Their initiatory experiences of North Africa, and the travel journals – and poetry in the case of Urbain – which they inspired, set the tone for life-defining engagements with North Africa and with the French colonial project for both figures. More specifically, in relation to the present work, examining

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13 Ibid., p. 51.
14 Ibid.
these initiatory experiences helps to frame the interrogation of the attitudes adopted by Urbain and Duveyrier to North Africans and the ways in which these attitudes were moulded by the conceptions that they developed of their own identities and those of the colonial other.

By electing to focus on Urbain and Duveyrier, this study offers an opportunity to analyse, in Urbain, a figure who maintained an intimate affiliation with the movement and its teachings, initially in Paris and later in Egypt and Algeria. Furthermore, Urbain sustained close relationships with many of the most influential figures within the Saint-Simonian movement throughout his time in all three of these locations, even following occasionally prolonged debates and disagreements. These circumstances draw attention to Urbain as an unusually committed and sustained disciple of the movement, and its brand of mystical, eclectic Orientalism, throughout his adult life. In contrast, Duveyrier’s relationship to Saint-Simonianism allows a privileged opportunity for the examination of a rare individual who was born into a Saint-Simonian-dominated environment and was thus subject to the influence of its philosophy from childhood, throughout a cosmopolitan education and later as he attempted to forge a career as an explorer of the Sahara. This distinguishes him from many, if not all, of the fellow explorers, geographers and natural scientists who constituted his professional contemporaries.16

We may thus note, on the one hand, Urbain’s double status as an agent of the colonising power in Algeria and a would-be passeur and spokesperson for the rights of the Indigènes, and, on the other hand, Duveyrier’s fascination with nomadic tribes such as the Tuareg, combined with his unbending fidelity to Enlightenment-inspired concepts of science and rational thought. While very different, these outlooks similarly generated considerable problems of instability and uncertainty in the two men’s respective writings. These tendencies and the tensions and ambiguities to which they give rise represent key concerns for this thesis, and are explored in detail in Chapter 4. The term Indigènes employed above was used by the French and by European settlers to refer to the native inhabitants of colonial Algeria, while the term Algériens was appropriated by the settler community. To avoid any potential confusion, this study also employs the term Indigènes to refer to the native

16 Although many of Duveyrier’s explorer contemporaries were also exposed to Saint-Simonian thought, this typically occurred considerably later in life, and without the same overt attempts at indoctrination to which Duveyrier was subject.
inhabitants of colonial Algeria. Additionally, Urbain and Duveyrier frequently refer to Arabic terms and place-names in their writings by means of transliterations into French. Although their transliterations frequently deviate from those subsequently standardised, it is rarely to an extent which hinders their comprehensibility. For this reason, quotations from texts by Urbain, Duveyrier and their contemporaries appear unmodified, in their original orthography. However, a brief glossary of selected terms of North African origin, which may not be familiar to all readers, is provided following the main body of the text, and the terms which are glossed are indicated by an asterisk.

Among the existing analyses of Urbain’s writing which have helped to frame the research questions of this thesis, the afterword by Anne Levallois to the 2005 edition of Urbain’s retrospective autobiographical writings proved particularly fruitful in terms of establishing the parameters of this inquiry into issues of colonial identity. Levallois traces the posterity of Urbain’s thought and locates it, following consideration of various potential matches, not in the early twentieth-century Négritude movement, which sought to rehabilitate black identity among colonised Caribbean and African subjects, but in the postcolonial theories of Créolisation and the Tout-Monde, as articulated by one of their principal proponents, the Martinican writer and literary theorist Édouard Glissant. The following extended quotation from Levallois makes a series of observations and claims which this thesis seeks to elucidate in relation to Urbain’s perception of colonial identity and the response to la question indigène promoted in his writing:

Alice Cherki insiste à plusieurs reprises sur le refus de Fanon de penser l’identité en termes statiques et sur le danger de repli qu’il voyait dans le concept de négritude « renvoyant à une origine “une et insécable”, à l’abri du temps et de l’histoire ». On retrouve cette contestation de l’idéalisation de l’origine chez les écrivains antillais contemporains qui […] affirment l’existence d’une identité créole, ouverte, sans limites. Ils se disent héritiers d’une autre histoire, faite du métissage des peuples et des cultures produit par l’esclavage colonial et ne recherchent plus leur origine dans une terre mythique – l’Afrique, l’Europe ou tout autre lieu – mais dans le Tout-Monde, pour reprendre l’expression d’Édouard Glissant […].

Si Urbain a été un précurseur, c’est bien de ce Tout-Monde, de cette créolisation faite de la diversité qu’il annonçait, il y a plus d’un siècle, la doctrine saint-simonienne rêvant de renverser l’ordre monolithique patriarcal et d’associer les peuples et les races pour constituer une famille humaine riche de ses différences. […]

Loïn de l’idéologie de la Négritude, Urbain a été, comme Enfantin le lui avait enseigné, « l’apôtre de la foi universelle » et pas seulement celui « de la religion des noirs ». Sa capacité à mettre en jeu son identité de sang-mêlé – « ni blanc, ni noir » – dans un réseau complexe d’appartenances a certes été pour lui une source de déchirements entre des univers incompatibles. Mais elle fut aussi, avant l’heure, une véritable pratique de la « créolisation » au sens où l’entend Édouard Glissant : « Ce qui nous porte n’est pas la seule définition de
Similarly to the opening quotation from Chamoiseau and Glissant, Levallois’ comments highlight the necessity of conceiving of identity in dynamic rather than static terms. Drawing on these comments by Levallois and on the work of postcolonial theorists such as Glissant, this thesis examines whether Urbain can be considered, as contended above, a forerunner of Glissant’s *Créolisation* and *Tout-Monde*, and whether or not he can be seen to constitute a relational type of identity which allows for itself and the identities of others to be formulated in fluid and plural terms to accommodate diversity and cultural exchange. Furthermore, the conjunction of Saint-Simonian Orientalist teachings and a colonised *créole* identity in Urbain’s writing is alluded to in brief by Levallois above. This study seeks to explore this conjunction in greater detail, with a view to an assessment of the potential for considering Urbain as an example of what Judith Butler terms a performative identity.

The principal *point de départ* for the analysis of Duveyrier’s writing stems from two varieties of observation made by commentators, from Duveyrier’s own era, from the early-twentieth century and from recent scholarship. In the last category, the following extended quotation is taken from the conclusion to Michael Heffernan’s previously quoted article on Duveyrier, which foregrounds traits that also emerge as some of the most interesting qualities of his writing. These include particularly the blending of an almost paradigmatic adherence to the norms of exploration and science in the era of colonisation with contradictory and atypical traits which, more often than not, appear to stem from a sensibility heavily influenced by Saint-Simonian thought and by certain preoccupations linked to a Romantic outlook:

Like many intellectuals of his generation, Henri Duveyrier combined numerous roles. He was a fearless explorer, an excellent natural scientist, an erudite anthropologist and a brilliant geographer. He was also a committed proponent of French colonial expansion and his knowledge and expertise were used explicitly for colonialist objectives. [...] Yet [...] Duveyrier’s brand of colonialism was radically different from many of his contemporaries. His inspiration came from a utopian political philosophy which was a product of early nineteenth-century French romantic thought. By the end of the nineteenth century, in a political climate of military imperialism, Duveyrier’s colonial ideals, built on the notion of mutual spiritual and commercial exchange between Europe and Africa, seemed hopelessly

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impractical and naive. His life and tragic death provide, therefore, a poignant illustration of the complex and shifting nature of European colonial attitudes in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{18}

The present thesis will analyse the presence of these variously rationalist, Romantic and utopian traits, the tensions which they create, and the responses to the intellectual challenges to which they gave rise, across a selected body of Duveyrier’s writings sourced from throughout his lengthy career as an adventurer, a professional explorer and a scientific scholar. Another perspective which is crucial to this study was raised following Duveyrier’s suicide in 1892 – for example by Duveyrier’s contemporary the geographer and anarchist Elisée Reclus,\textsuperscript{19} and by René Pottier in his biography of Duveyrier. This perspective is grounded in observations that Duveyrier was a pure soul who approached Saharan exploration with a probity and an earnestness that were incompatible with the material realities of the times in which he lived. This uncompromising nature was also seen to have led to Duveyrier’s eventual self-destruction, or as melodramatically depicted by Pottier, his martyrdom to science and exploration while being harried and scapegoated by those who harboured more petty and worldly agendas than the virtuous object of their attacks:

ces mêmes Pouvoirs publics, dont l’aide lui était indispensable avaient commis de graves erreurs ! Il fallait un bouc émissaire. Dans le troupeau humain, ils choisirent la victime la plus pure, la plus douce, la plus innocente. Duveyrier n’était pas un explorateur de salon, celui qui fait frissonner de jolies femmes au récit d’aventures imaginaires, il n’avait pas voulu que devant des gloires d’un jour, il n’avait plus de soutien ni politique, ni mondain, ni financier, donc haro sur Duveyrier !

[…]

On dira qu’il s’est suicidé dans un mouvement de folie, dans un accès de fièvre chaude, que lui importe ? Il le souhaita même. Ainsi les méchancetés cesseront, il se sera offert en holocauste pour faire taire ses détracteurs.\textsuperscript{20}

Heffernan quotes from a speech made by Elisée Reclus shortly after Duveyrier’s suicide, which in a similar vein describes Duveyrier as ‘cet homme si pur, si généreux, ce géographe si consciencieux et si droit’.\textsuperscript{21} This sense of Duveyrier as a pure individual, an untainted innocent with a quasi-religious devotion to an equally pure and disinterested science points to an early recognition that his was a fragile identity, too uncompromising in its convictions to cope with the real world. This thesis explores and develops this image of Duveyrier to demonstrate that he

\textsuperscript{18} Heffernan, 1989, p. 349.


\textsuperscript{21} Heffernan, 1989, p. 348.
Introduction

represented both what would later be identified by postcolonial theorists as an *identité racine unique* or arborescent identity, and the demonstration of certain highly aspirational and self-contradictory aspects of Saint-Simonian utopian thought taken to their extreme conclusion.

As regards the second figure scrutinised here, this thesis also concurrently examines Urbain’s fidelity to the mystical doctrine of early Saint-Simonianism, and his closely associated commitment to the Christian values of his heritage in addition to the Islam of his conversion of 1835, to assess how these measures helped to sustain his self-conceived status as a *passeur* between the cultural traditions of the Orient and the Occident during his career in Algeria. In these ways, and in sympathy with Levallois’ claims, Urbain’s approach is broadly shown to share more common ground with certain postcolonial theorists than with many of his nineteenth-century contemporaries. In contrast, Duveyrier’s approach is examined as a manifestation of the difficulties bred by the schematic Western modes of thought which defined the era in which he lived and specifically his vision of his identity as a representative of a superior Western civilisation. These tensions are recognised, albeit unknowingly, by Pottier and some of Duveyrier’s own contemporaries, such as Reclus, and are observed in the comments by Heffernan above. The application of postcolonial analytical tools to Duveyrier’s attitudes to North Africans reveals them to be grounded in a Eurocentric perspective, arising from Enlightenment rationalism and nascent concepts of the nation-state. Theorists such as Said, in *Orientalism* and various other texts, and Michel Foucault, in works such as *L’Archéologie du savoir* (1969), have shown these paradigms to be crucial influences on the development of disciplines like geography, anthropology and various natural sciences, and indeed on concepts of knowledge in general. Duveyrier forged his career and his reputation in such disciplines. In *Orientalism*, Said foregrounds the role of geography in the construction of systems of knowledge which had as their goal the intellectual appropriation of, and the assertion of the West’s power over, the oriental other:

Geography was essentially the material underpinning for knowledge about the Orient. All the latent and unchanging characteristics of the Orient stood upon, were rooted in, its geography. Thus on the one hand the geographical Orient nourished its inhabitants, guaranteed their characteristics, and defined their specificity; on the other hand, the geographical Orient solicited the West’s attention, even as – by one of those paradoxes revealed so frequently by organized knowledge – East was East and West was West. The cosmopolitanism of geography was, in Curzon’s mind, its universal importance to the whole of the West, whose relationship to the rest of the world was one of frank covetousness.22

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Similarly, in a discussion of the origins of anthropology and ethnography in his essay ‘Orientalism Reconsidered’ (2000), Said asserts that:

The origins of European anthropology and ethnography were constituted out of this radical difference [to the Orient as the age-old antetype of Europe], and, to my knowledge, as a discipline, anthropology has not yet dealt with this inherent political limitation upon its supposedly disinterested universality.  

For its part, Foucault’s writing draws particular attention to the constructed nature of Western concepts of knowledge (savoir) and of scientific disciplines as epistemologies which emerge from a nexus of discursive processes, observing that these processes were particularly prominent from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment and into the nineteenth century, thus eventually coinciding with the lives of Urbain and Duveyrier and their professional activities in North Africa:

Duveyrier’s quasi-religious commitment to a scientifically and specifically a geographic and ethnographic epistemological project for the intellectual appropriation of North Africa provides an excellent opportunity to trace the results of the epistemologising tendencies highlighted by Foucault, particularly in the first two sections of the present study. Furthermore, the fields of rationalist science on the one hand, and nationalism on the other, which together gave rise to and stimulated the production of distinctively Western epistemologies, also strongly promoted national and individual identities based on mythic concepts of purity through continuity and of civilisation as the preserve of the West inherited directly from antique civilisations.

The notion of a pure identity is, of course, illusory, given that all races, nationalities and individuals are the product of the interaction of complex and conflicting forces. As Amin Maalouf states: ‘En tout homme se rencontrent des

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appartenances multiples qui s’opposent parfois entre elles et le contraignent à des choix déchirants. Pour certains, la chose est évidente au premier coup d’œil ; pour d’autres, il faut faire l’effort d’y regarder de plus près.25 Yet, as Chamoiseau and Glissant have noted, this reality did little to impede Western society from constructing originary myths: ‘Toutes les cultures ont eu leur projection magico-mythique liée à une démarche rationnelle et technique’.26 Such mythic conceptions were frequently invoked to galvanise developing nation-states and to justify colonial expansionism over the mid- to late nineteenth century. The fields of myth-making and nationalism – which has itself been shown to be a largely mythic construct by scholars such as Benedict Anderson in his Imagined Communities (1983) – constitute key themes within the present study. Edward Said, in his seminal text Orientalism, comments upon Orientalist scholars’ attempts to generate a totalising vision of the Orient which is doomed to failure because it systematically attempts to establish a fixed and transparent image:

Against this static system of “synchronic essentialism” I have called vision because it presumes that the whole Orient can be seen, is panoptical, there is a constant pressure. The source of this pressure is narrative, in that if any Oriental detail can be shown to move, or to develop, diachrony is introduced into the system. What seemed stable – and the Orient is synonymous with stability and unchanging eternality – now appears unstable. [...] History and the narrative by which history is represented argue that vision is insufficient, that “the Orient” as an unconditional ontological category does an injustice to the potential of reality for change.27

The concept of vision is a prominent one in colonial and postcolonial texts alike, and in the twenty-first century certain theorists have identified phenomena which they describe in terms of rhetorical blindness, or aberrations of vision which are typically deemed to result from the determination to make foreign cultures and mentalities transparent and knowable, i.e. to establish perfect clarity of vision. Alongside other related concepts, those of vision, transparency and intellectual fragility which are raised in the above quotation from Said are taken into account in the present analysis, particularly in relation to Duveyrier’s later writing, and are linked to the image of Duveyrier as a figure who is emblematic of the impact on both identity and intellectual outlook of colonial mentalities and the dominant discourses which define them.

In terms of chronology, the primary period of interest for the thesis extends from 1830 to the mid-1880s. It thus spans the most prominent period of activity for the Saint-Simonian movement in France, which variously coincided with the early decades of the French presence in Algeria, beginning with the blockade and invasion of Algiers in 1830 under the restoration monarchy of Charles X, the reign of the July Monarchy from 1830 to 1848, and of the modernising ruler Mhémét-Ali in Egypt. In a fashion similar to many studies which consider nineteenth-century France and colonisation, in the present work a backdrop of revolution and successive metropolitan regime changes must be taken into account. Urbain successfully weathered the regime changes from monarchy to republic and from republic to empire from 1848 to 1851, retaining his position as a colonial administrator in Algeria. This was not a negligible achievement given that Urbain had cultivated a close relationship with the Duke of Aumale under the July Monarchy, a distinction which could easily have consigned him to obscurity, or even removed him from his post under the republican and imperial regimes which followed, thus pointing to Urbain as an individual with a significant capacity for pragmatism. In fact, Urbain was made a Chevalier of the Légion d’honneur under the July Monarchy in 1844 and was subsequently elevated to the grade of Officier in 1865, under Emperor Napoleon III, clearly demonstrating that his services were not merely tolerated, but valued, under disparate French regimes. As an explorer and field scientist, Duveyrier did not begin his career until 1857 and he was not involved in the political milieu to an extent comparable to Urbain. Consequently, Duveyrier, unlike Urbain, was not directly compelled to reconcile himself to the practical realities required to ensure survival as a colonial official and a political adviser on Algerian policy. However a further regime change, and the events surrounding it, proved to be a crucial influence upon the lives, careers and writings of both Urbain and Duveyrier and is thus a major concern for this work. The change in question was the collapse in 1870 of the Second Empire followed by the birth of France’s longest post-revolutionary regime, the Third Republic. This rupture occurred within the context of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to 1871, a conflict which constituted a landmark event in the history of France and Western Europe. In terms of the repercussions of regime change and a wounded sense of French national pride, the conflict also marked a defining period.

in the history of colonial Algeria and in the lives and writings of Urbain and Duveyrier. Chapters 5 and 6 address this period and its associated consequences in detail.

The turning-point of 1870 is intrinsically linked to an important theme which is also particularly relevant to the concluding section (Chapters 5 and 6) of this study and which has been alluded to briefly above: the rise of nationalism and competition for overseas expansion among rival European nation-states over the final decades of the nineteenth century. This development marked a sea-change for societies such as France and the way in which its relations with its European neighbours and its overseas territories were developed and maintained. The rise of nationalism accelerated already fomenting changes in the roles of geographical exploration and the acquisition of scientific knowledge and expertise across the Western world. These developments, in turn, fundamentally altered and even undermined the profession and the epistemological outlook adopted and advocated by Duveyrier.

The work of Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Raoul Girardet, Anne McClintock and Patrick Chamoiseau and Édouard Glissant inform the analysis of the rise of nationalism and competition for the acquisition of overseas territories among rival European powers from 1870 onwards, in relation to both Urbain and Duveyrier and up to and including the present era.

Structurally, this study is divided into three main sections. The opening section, comprising Chapters 1 and 2, examines Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s early writings, produced during formative phases in their respective lives when the influence of the Saint-Simonian movement upon them was at its peak. Chapter 1 examines relevant aspects of the Saint-Simonian movement, particularly Saint-Simonian Orientalism in Egypt and in Algeria. It also addresses the theme of surrogate families and more specifically the influences of fathers and surrogate father-figures upon Urbain and Duveyrier. Thus, by extension, it also investigates their susceptibility to traditional values, including patriarchy, and to monolithic versus more fluid constructions of identity. Chapter 2 addresses manifestations of Romantic sensibilities in the early writings of Urbain and Duveyrier, including travel as Orientalism, formative adventure, evasion and exoticism. It also examines Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s first impressions of the Orient and their early depictions of North Africans, and highlights their first experiences of the region as a coming-of-age for both figures.
The opening and subsequent sections consider Urbain and Duveyrier in terms of points of convergence, such as their formative exposure to Saint-Simonian social utopian doctrine, and also in terms of divergences, oppositions and in particular, areas of ambiguity. This approach aims to highlight the degree to which their respective writings were exceptional and challenged the pervasive conventions of nineteenth-century French writing on North Africa, and/or were conservative and conformed with dominant trends in the writings of the majority of their contemporaries. In addition to investigating Saint-Simonian and Romantic influences, the opening section provides an analysis of the formation of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s respectively colonial-hybrid and colonial identities. The resulting insights into the germination of a sense of vocation – as an explorer and man of science in the case of Duveyrier, and as a cultural, racial and religious intermediary in the case of Urbain – establishes the pertinence of the selected primary texts, which include Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s travel journals of the 1830s and 1850s respectively, as well as Urbain’s poetry – as tools of inquiry into the formation of each figure’s sense of identity. It also paves the way for the section which follows.

The analysis of colonial and colonial-hybrid identity in this opening section is informed by selected post-colonial theoretical writings, in particular works by Edward Said on exile and errance and by Daniel Sibony on the concept of l’entre-deux, and by recourse to the scholarly theorisation of nineteenth-century French travel writing, particularly the analysis of David Scott in *Semiologies of Travel: from Gautier to Baudrillard* (2004) and works on Romantic Orientalism by Patrice Bret and colonial rhetoric by David Spurr. Thus, the selected primary texts are employed to demonstrate the formative influence of literary Romanticism and Romantic concepts of travel upon the early writing of Urbain and Duveyrier, and furthermore the potent results of the intersection of travel and coming-of-age experiences in the formation of their adult identities.

Chapters 3 and 4 form the second main section. Chapter 3 addresses the concepts of vocation and the civilising mission, specifically within the context of the French colonisation of Algeria, in writings from the early and middle period of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s œuvres. It also builds on the analyses of the preceding section, for example by pursuing the earlier exploration of Urbain’s ambitions to translate his hybrid colonial identity and his conversion to Islam into the culturally intermediary role of passeur, observing how he attempted to adapt this perceived
role to his work as a representative of French conquest in Algeria during the so-called pacification of the 1830s and 1840s. The primary texts include selected journal entries and poems composed by Urbain in the 1830s and his extended articles ‘Du gouvernement des tribus de l’Algérie’ (1847), ‘Chrétiens et Musulmans, Français et Algériens’ (1847) and De la tolérance dans l’Islamisme (1856). The selected primary texts from Duveyrier’s œuvre are Les Touareg du Nord (1864) and David Livingstone (1874), a biography of the famous Scottish explorer which provides an insight into Duveyrier’s concept of the role of the explorer as a humanist vocation. David Spurr’s analysis of colonial representational tropes in The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration (1993), Edmund Burke III’s analysis of French approaches to writing on Islam in ‘The sociology of Islam: the French tradition’ in the edited collection Genealogies of Orientalism: History, Theory, Politics (2008), Denise Brahimi’s reflections on Urbain’s utopian outlook in the article ‘L’Algérie coloniale, histoire d’une impossible fusion’ in the edited collection L’Orientalisme des Saint-Simoniens (2006), the historical analyses of Charles-Robert Ageron, Marcel Émerit and Annie Rey-Goldzeiguer and the works of postcolonial theorists such as Édouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau and Amin Maalouf inform and steer the observations and help to structure the arguments of this chapter.

Chapter 4 addresses the question of relating to the colonial other in Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings on colonial Algeria, focusing in particular on ambiguities, myths and utopias. Key issues which are addressed include the following: depictions of religion, specifically Islam; paternalism and/or empathy for the colonial other; attitudes toward North Africans as guides and sources of scientific information; early ethnography and the influence of race theory, including Racial Darwinism. The primary texts are the three extended articles by Urbain named above, the pamphlet L’Algérie pour les Algériens (1861) and Duveyrier’s most celebrated work Les Touareg du Nord (1864). In addition to the theorists referred to in relation to Chapter 3, Chapter 4 also invokes the work of Judith Butler, particularly her Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative (1997) and Giving an Account of Oneself (2005) to provide insight into the motivations, challenges and viability of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s approaches to relating to the colonial other in Algeria. The writing of theorists such as Said – applied to Orientalist representations of the desert and the colonial other in Les Touareg du Nord – Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on binary
and rhizomic thought and Homi Bhabha on colonisation and counter-hegemonic currents within the modern era also inform this chapter.

The third and concluding section comprises Chapters 5 and 6. This section can be broadly subsumed under the theme of crisis. It deals with Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s works of the 1860s and 1880s. Chapter 5 is structured around the periods preceding and following the turning-point of 1870 to 1871, which included the Franco-Prussian War, the fall of the Second Empire and the beginning of the Third Republic. 1871 also saw a violently suppressed insurrection in Algeria. The rise of nationalism and the European nation-state has particular relevance for this section, given the enormous implications of such developments for Western and colonising identities and for geographical exploration in the later nineteenth century, all of which deeply affected Duveyrier’s writing over the 1870s and 1880s. The clash of the so-called *arabophile* and *arabophobe* lobbies for power over colonial society in Algeria had a significant effect on Urbain’s writing, as well as his personal and professional life over the 1860s and 1870s, raising his profile in colonial society and fashioning him into a hate-figure for many settlers, as well as making him an adversary of certain senior colonial officials. These included Marshall Mac Mahon, of whom Urbain remarks in an autobiographical text of 1871: ‘Lorsque le maréchal [Mac Mahon] avait été nommé Gouverneur général de l’Algérie en 1864, le Général Bertin de Vaux m’avait écrit qu’il me surprendrait par son inaptitude et son intelligence. Il n’avait que trop raison.’

The mythic fallacies of French-administered Algeria, such as the exaggeration of European achievements in agriculture, modernisation and the introduction of technology and industry, supposedly for the common benefit of settlers and the *Indigènes*, and claims regarding the possibility of peaceful co-existence between these groupings within a colonial society where the interests of settlers relentlessly predominated, also came to the fore over this period in Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writing, although with differing tone and emphasis.

The primary texts addessed in Chapter 5 are Urbain’s pamphlets *L’Algérie pour les Algériens* (1861) and *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants* (1862)

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29 These terms refer to those French representatives in Algeria who favoured offering improved rights to the *Indigènes* (*arabophiles*) and those, mainly settlers, who supported the maintainence of the colonial *status quo* which privileged the rights of settlers, French and European alike over those of the *Indigènes* (*arabophobes*).

and the autobiographical texts *Notes autobiographiques* (1871) and *Notice chronologique* (1883). Other primary texts include the following: Duveyrier’s biography of Livingstone and his account of the final days of the doomed explorer Norbert Dournoux-Dupéré, both of which were published in 1874; letters sent by Duveyrier to Urbain from 1869 to the early 1870s which addressed issues of Islamic tribal hierarchies and religious brotherhoods; and Duveyrier’s project to write a proto-ethnographic/sociological work on these topics. Scholarship on nationalism informs this chapter, while works by Butler and Chamoiseau and Glissant on identity and identity relations continue to underpin the analysis of Urbain and Duveyrier as exemplars of relational and arborescent identities respectively. Works by Said, including *Orientalism* (1978), *Humanisme et Démocratie* (2005) and the essays ‘Orientalism Reconsidered’ (2000) and ‘Freud and the non-European’ (2003) also provide crucial theoretical reference points relating to concepts such as paradox, marginal and fractured identities, and the possibility of constructive reformulations of humanism. The analysis of historians of colonial Algeria such as Ageron, Émerit and Rey-Goldzeiguer provides reference material – in this chapter and throughout the thesis as a whole – regarding the intensifying and increasingly bitter struggle which unfolded, particularly over the 1860s and early 1870s, between settler interests and those such as Urbain who were sympathetic to the *Indigènes* and promoted the extension of humanist and Revolutionary values – liberty, equality and fraternity – to colonial subjects without calling for the suppression of their native customs, culture, religion and language, as advocated by policies of colonial assimilation.\(^{31}\)

Chapter 6 examines Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings in the period following Urbain’s enforced retirement as a colonial official in 1870 and the collapse of Duveyrier’s career as an explorer. These developments occurred against the backdrop of increasing French overseas expansion, and particularly killings of European travellers in the Sahara which culminated in the massacre of the Flatters expedition in 1881 by the Hoggar Tuareg. With the beginning of the Third Republic, and the ensuing triumph of conservative European settler interests at the expense of

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\(^{31}\) Assimilation became the official policy for integration in Algeria under the Third Republic. It involved promoting the primacy of French law, language, customs and values over any others and thus made demands of those *Indigènes* seeking to accede to the rights associated with French citizenship which were virtually impossible to reconcile with their native culture, traditions and religious beliefs.
indigène rights and access to the advantages of French citizenship in the 1870s and 1880s, Urbain took on a new polemical role as a voice of opposition and a prophetic figure, accurately predicting a disastrous future of hatred and bloodshed for colonial Algeria under the Third Republic’s official policy of assimilation.

Duveyrier’s late writing develops as a reflection of his desperation to exonerate the Tuareg, but more specifically his wish to defend the Aijer Tuareg led by Ikenoukhen from accusations of hostility to French and European representatives in the Sahara, thus preserving the scholarly credentials of his most celebrated work, *Les Touareg du Nord*. Duveyrier’s depiction of the Tuareg was subject to increasing criticism given the rise in violent deaths among Europeans in the Sahara. His response to these developments was a concerted attempt to vilify the Sanusiyya Sufi brotherhood as a source of anti-French hostility, Islamic fanaticism and insurrection in his final major work, *La Confrérie musulmane de Sidi Mohammed ben’ali es-Senoûsî et son domaine géographique en l’année 1300 de l’hégire = 1883 de notre ère* (1884).

The primary texts for this concluding chapter are Urbain’s autobiographical writings of 1871 and 1883, the final articles which he wrote for the French daily newspaper *Le Journal des débats* in 1881 and 1882, excerpts from letters by Urbain and Duveyrier to friends and relatives, and Duveyrier’s final published text of 1884, mentioned above, which focused on the Sanusiyya brotherhood. Chapter 6 continues to draw on the work of Butler, Said, Burke, Spurr and Heffernan and on Chamoiseau’s and Glissant’s analysis of colonial, postcolonial and national identities, particularly as presented in the text *Quand les murs tombent : L’identité nationale hors la loi ?* (2007). It also draws upon the work of Derek Gregory and on the analyses of Albert Memmi’s celebrated anti-colonial text *Portrait du Colonisé* (1957), comparing Memmi’s own experience of intermediary colonial identity with

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32 There was a gradual articulation of the idea of a path by which the true believer could draw nearer to God; those [Muslims] who accepted this idea and tried to put it into practice came to be known generally as Sufis.’; ‘Older [Sufi orders] like the Shadhiliyya and Qadiriyya continued to give rise to sub-orders; those like the Naqshbandiyya and Tijaniyya [...] some new ones appeared [...] like the Sanusiyya, established in Cyrenaica in the 1840s by an Algerian who had studied in Fez and Mecca.’ Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), p. 152, p. 312.
33 Urbain began writing for *Les débats* in 1837 and was a regular correspondant on Algerian affairs for many years. He resumed his role as a contributing journalist following his retirement as a colonial official in 1870. No comprehensive study of Urbain’s prolific journalistic output as an Algerian correspondent, which spans more than three different French political regimes, has been undertaken to date and it is an area which merits further scholarly attention.
that of Urbain. Chapter 6 concludes by examining the final years of both Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s lives as periods of disenchantment and by assessing the outcomes of this *remise en question* for their respective identities. Additionally it offers an assessment of the continued relevance in the postcolonial era of the issues of colonial relations, civilisationalist discourses and imbalances of power which their writings not only addressed, but also manifested both explicitly and implicitly, establishing a *bilan* of sorts for the traditions which they exemplified and for their posterity in the current era.

Overall, this thesis seeks to engage with contemporary dialogues on colonisation and on the role and importance of North Africa, for nineteenth-century France and for subsequent French and North African societies. Furthermore, it seeks to take into account the extent to which such dialogues offer a continuation of or break with the era which gave rise to the mass colonisations of Africa and Asia by European powers in the nineteenth century. It also seeks to build upon the analyses of recent decades which have generated a greater attentiveness to the complexity of the manifestations of the myriad social and political forces which acted upon agents of or figures linked to French colonisation, such as the much vaunted concept of *la mission civilisatrice*, in terms of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s individual identities and their approaches to the encounter with the colonial other. Although scholars in the field of subaltern studies have sought to give voice to those individuals who have been and continue to be disenfranchised and subjugated by Western hegemonic discourse, this should not be at the cost of applying the same homogenising value judgements – whose application to the subaltern they rightfully condemn – to all individuals who came into contact with a nineteenth-century colonising power such as France: i.e. committed the original sin of colonial association and thus enabled its transmission over the centuries that followed.

Consequently, the present work also addresses issues of relevance to the world as a whole and therefore aims to contribute to the elaboration of the complexity of the socio-cultural pressures and opportunities linked to nineteenth-century travel to North Africa, and thus the French colonial project, by examining them as they were encountered and negotiated in the writings of Urbain and Duveyrier, whose specificities and qualities as figures who represented broad trends and cultural movements competed and intersected. Indeed, their writings, respective life-work and formative *milieux* also intersect literally, in terms of common
Introduction

acquaintances, shared Saint-Simonian influences and shared professional interests in colonial Algeria.

There has been an understandable reticence to engage in the sustained analysis of the complexities of the views expressed by figures involved in colonial conquest and administration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, this type of analysis is imperative if we are to develop a more effective understanding of the origins and nature of the mechanisms which drive today’s world and to counteract those which continue to threaten human dignity and the right of all peoples to fair and humane treatment. In this sense, the internal debates within French colonisation and geographical exploration in the nineteenth century are particularly informative and display considerable variation. Moreover, these traditions provided much of the stimulus for the writings of Urbain and Duveyrier, which are particularly rich and worthy of scholarly attention as indeed are the créole, Saint-Simonian and scientific milieux from which they emerged as writers and which, within the scope permitted by the current analysis, this thesis seeks to explore.
Chapter 1: Surrogate families and father-figures: *le fils mal aimé* and the reluctant disciple

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine issues associated with surrogate families and father-figures in the early writings of Urbain and Duveyrier, and it will focus primarily on the texts *Voyage d’Orient suivi de poèmes de Ménilmontant et d’Egypte* (1993) by Urbain and *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger : février, mars, avril 1857* (1900) by Duveyrier. However, a preliminary discussion of certain relevant aspects of the Saint-Simonian movement is useful in establishing the context of these early texts and thus an understanding of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s early relationships to the movement and in particular to the father-figures with whom it brought them into contact.

1.2 Some relevant aspects of the Saint-Simonian movement

As we noted in the introduction Saint-Simonianism developed in response to the divisions which plagued post-revolutionary French society and it is habitually referred to by scholars as an example of a nineteenth century utopian movement.¹ Saint-Simonians aspired to a harmonious and progressive alliance of human spiritual

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¹ ‘The Utopian calling, ... seems to have some kinship with that of the inventor in modern times, and to bring some necessary combination of the identification of a problem to be solved and the inventive ingenuity with which a series of solutions are proposed and tested [...]. But such a creation must be motivated: it must respond to specific dilemmas and offer to solve fundamental social problems to which the Utopian believes himself to hold the key. [...] For the Utopian remedy must at first be a fundamentally negative one, and stand as a clarion call to remove and to extirpate this specific root of all evil from which all the others spring. This is why it is a mistake to approach Utopias with positive expectations, as though they offered visions of happy worlds, spaces of fulfilment and cooperation, representations which correspond generically to the idyll or the pastoral rather than the utopia.’ Jameson, Frederic, *Archaeologies of the Future: The desire called Utopia and other fictions* (London: Verso, [2005] 2007), pp. 11-12. ‘[T]he first stirrings [of the socialist imagination] went back to the Restoration and the influential writings of Saint-Simon (Le Système industriel, 1820-22), and when Fourier appealed to the king, the tsar and the Rothschilds to support his model socialist community. For this was peaceful, philosophical socialism, convinced that if it could only set up a working model of Utopia, based on science, sociology and religion, then princes, paupers and merchant bankers would flock to join. Charles Fourier (d. 1837), the most extravagant visionary of all, planned his social phalansteries around the satisfaction of pleasure, which would be ensured by a minute scientific planning of the community so as to provide a mix of 810 human types, ages and tastes. [...] Etienne Cabet (in Le Voyage en Icarie, 1840) portrayed a more regimented society: uniform clothing and uniform opinions, people’s courts, vast factories, identical housing blocks, and, instead of gastronomy, rations delivered from central kitchens – as history has shown, a more plausible utopia.’ Tombs, Robert, *France 1814-1914* (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 76-77.
and material existence. The movement’s founder Saint-Simon saw the revolution of 1789 as incomplete, and believed that it merely constituted the first, albeit radical step in a larger, prolonged process which would bring about a more just and prosperous society led by a class of *industriels*. Following Saint-Simon’s death in 1825 his followers Bazard and Enfantin emerged as the leading figures within the developing movement. In 1832, Enfantin led male members to establish a retreat at Ménilmontant in Paris and sought to elaborate and synthesise Saint-Simonian doctrine into *Le Livre Nouveau des Saint-Simoniens*: ‘Le livre, que je vous appelle à préparer avec moi dans nos entretiens de la nuit doit être à la fois l’inspirateur de la science nouvelle, de l’art nouveau, de la langue nouvelle.’

A young man born in Cayenne, Thomas Urbain was among those who joined the retreat. He is listed alongside the most prominent names associated with literary and journalistic elements of the movement – including Henri Duveyrier’s father Charles – in the subtitle *Le Livre Nouveau : Manuscrits d’Émile Barrault, Michel Chevalier, Charles Duveyrier, Prosper Enfantin, Charles Lambert, Léon Simon et Thomas-Ismaïl Urbain* (1832-1833).

Important themes explored in *Le Livre Nouveau* included revolutionising and reconciling the spheres of art and industry, mysticism and materialism:

> Tous les projets de grands travaux d’utilité publique que nous avons exposés dans *Le Globe*, n’étaient que des avertissements [sic] donnés par nous au monde afin de préparer l’ère pacifique que nous avons mission d’installer parmi les hommes : mais ces projets ne renfermaient pas en eux-mêmes la condition indispensable de leur réalisation, car ils n’ouvriraient pas une série régulière de travaux conçus sous une inspiration vraiment universelle. Ils n’étaient point la REPRÉSENTATION de la sublime PAROLE que Saint-Simon, notre maître, fait adresser au chef de la chrétienté par la bouche de Luther : « maintenant que la dimension de notre planète est connue, faites faire par les SAVANS [sic] les ARTISTES et les INDUSTRIELS, un plan général de TRAVAUX À EXÉCUTER...”


pour rendre la possession TERRITORIALE de l’espèce humaine la plus productive possible, et la plus AGREABLE à habiter sous tous les rapports. La masse des travaux que vous déterminerez sur le champ, contribuera plus efficacement à l’amélioration du sort de la classe pauvre […] et par ce moyen, LES RICHES, LOIN DE S’APPUYER PAR DES SACRIFICES PÉCUNIAIRES, S’ENRICHIRONT EN MÊME TEMPS QUE LES PAUVRES.

Pour que ces PROJETS de TRAVAUX fussent susceptibles de réalisation, il faudrait en effet que la CONCEPTION fût de nature à se TRADUIRE en un MODÈLE CAPITAL, servant d’exemple et fournissant une INSPIRATION continuelle par le CULTE dont il serait environné pour tous les TRAVAUX dont ce modèle serait le SYMBOLE.

Or la CAPITALE du MONDE nouveau, du royaume humanitaire, la MÉTROPOLE de la FOI UNIVERSELLE, est ce modèle, car c’est le point d’où part toute DIRECTION de grands TRAVAUX sur le GLOBE entier.

Voici la CITÉ de DIEU, la JÉRUSALEM nouvelle.° (original emphasis)

The tone of the passage suggests that Saint-Simonian doctrine, like many post-revolutionary movements was considerably influenced by French universalism and the concomitant view of France as an example of humanist values for other nations and peoples to follow, spreading le génie français across the globe.° The unorthodox typography is characteristic of Saint-Simonian writings and will be discussed in relation to Urbain’s poetry in Chapter 2. At this point, we may usefully note the numerous references to ‘projets de travaux,’ ‘utilité,’ ‘amélioration,’ ‘inspiration’ and other similar terms emphasising large-scale industrialisation as a progressive force with the potential to improve the lives of all social classes and to be applied on a global scale. This vocabulary of technological progress is related via quasi-religious rhetoric, which is further reinforced by the juxtaposition and direct linkage of religious and modern terms such as ‘la MÉTROPOLE de la FOI UNIVERSELLE.’ Religious imagery also abounds, for example: ‘la JÉRUSALEM


° The philosophes of the eighteenth century, among them Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, perceived themselves as the harbingers of a new world in which arbitrariness, injustice and the irrational, all associated with the Ancien Régime, would be vanquished by the forces of reason and progress. This would be true not only of France, but also of the rest of the world, for these notions of reason and progress were perceived as being universal. The French Republic that was born of the Revolution of 1789 perceived itself as the enactment of these universal principles […]. The republic created by the French Revolution was perceived as the particular embodiment of the Enlightenment’s abstract universalism, a “universalist republic.” The sovereignty and specificity of a particular nation were thus inextricably linked with principles that were considered universal. This meeting of the universal and the particular, of the universal in the particular, is at the heart of what has been referred to as French exceptionalism. […] Beyond its borders, the republic had a mission to advance the cause of universal reason and progress by spreading them throughout the world. This is the aspect of French universalism that laid the basis for France’s massive colonial project, referred to as its mission civilisatrice (civilizing mission). Culture, and more specifically, a certain idea of cultural greatness, also lies at the core of the republic’s mission both inside and outside its frontiers.’ (original emphasis) Celestin, Roger, Dal Molin, Elaine, France from 1851 to the Present: Universalism in Crisis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 3-4.
The overall effect is that the promotion of global industrialisation through large-scale projects is presented as an undertaking which will be of material and moral benefit to humanity by increasing productivity and fostering solidarity without compromising the spiritual dimension of human existence. This characteristic duality of nostalgic, eclectic and optimistic spirituality allied to the promotion of rational science, technical and commercial innovation and industrialisation on a global scale will be relevant to our analysis of the reception of Saint-Simonian teachings by Urbain and Duveyrier.

In a divided post-revolutionary France, Saint-Simonianism – which was also known as le Nouveau Christianisme – aimed to unite science and religion as compatible tools for the improvement of society. Following Saint-Simon’s death in 1825, Enfantin became the most important leader of the Saint-Simonian movement, elaborating its doctrine and attempting to spread its influence beyond France, to Egypt, and later to Algeria. Many bright and idealistic individuals were drawn to Saint-Simonianism’s blend of science, technological progress and religious mysticism. Among them were Duveyrier’s father, Charles and Urbain. Saint-Simonianism is noted for the capacity it had to attract members from the alumni of Paris’ école polytechnique, a prestigious military-administered institution founded in the wake of the French Revolution in 1794. Chevalier and Enfantin were among those members who were alumni. Bankers and industrialists such as the Péreires, the Talabots and Gustave d’Eichthal were also prominent Saint-Simonians. One of the most famous engineers and industrialists of the nineteenth century, Ferdinand de Lesseps, also maintained close links to Saint-Simonianism for many years.

Links to engineers, venture capitalists and the army are well known, but Saint-Simonianism is less remembered today for the wide sweep of social and cultural activities that it sought to encompass and the consequent diversity of the professional and personal backgrounds of its members. For example, Charles Duveyrier, a key member of Enfantin’s inner circle and Henri Duveyrier’s father, was a man of the arts and a prominent figure in the fields of poetry, literature and theatre in Paris from the 1830s. Charles Duveyrier was also a mentor to the young Urbain in his aspirations as a writer, poet and journalist. From an altogether more

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humble background, Suzanne Voilquin was a Parisian textile worker who joined the movement with her architect husband in the 1830s. Voilquin became co-editor of *La Tribune des Femmes*, a newspaper established and run by Saint-Simonian women. Voilquin also travelled to Egypt in 1834, trained as a midwife and took an interest in Saint-Simonian projects for the establishment of Western-style schools for Egyptian girls. Another remarkable figure, Félicien David, was a young composer, who, like Urbain, travelled to Egypt and the Levant as part of a group led by Émile Barrault in 1833. David composed music for the Saint-Simonians and his best known work, *Le Désert*, is based on his experiences of North Africa.

### 1.2.1 Algeria via Egypt

In the early 1830s, as hostility grew toward Saint-Simonianism in France, particularly in relation to the morality it espoused,\(^9\) Enfantin and Barrault prophesied that they would discover a female messiah or *Mère Suprême* in the Orient, possibly in Constantinople. This *Mère* would complement the masculine leadership of Enfantin, promote a renaissance of the spirit of antique civilisation and help to satisfy the spiritual needs of members. It was with the mystical aim of discovering the *Mère Suprême* that a group of male members – including Urbain – set off from Marseilles in 1833 (which Enfantin dubbed *L’Année de la Femme*) under the leadership of Émile Barrault. In keeping with much colonial rhetoric, and nineteenth-century thought more generally, Saint-Simonian doctrine did not conceive of the Orient and the Occident, or men and women, in terms of outright equality, but as having certain innate yet differing qualities with the potential to complement and mutually enhance one another. This binary outlook attributing opposing feminine and masculine traits to the Orient and the Occident respectively is characteristic of the mechanisms of Western Orientalism in general, as depicted by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) and other texts.

The group spent the majority of their time in Egypt, a location which Said’s *Orientalism* identifies as the setting of the first systematic exercise in the intellectual appropriation and attempted domination of the Orient by the Occident: the

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\(^9\) The concept of “freedom of association” between men and women proved to be a particularly controversial teaching for the movement under Enfantin. Alongside Charles Duveyrier and Michel Chevalier, he was serving a prison sentence for contravention of public morals, when the group under Barrault’s leadership departed from Marseilles in 1833. Enfantin joined them in Egypt a few months later when he was given early release from Sainte-Pélagie prison.
Napoleonic expedition of 1798 to 1801, giving rise to the twenty-three volume *Description de l’Égypte* (1809-1829). In his essay ‘Les contingences orientalistes de l’expédition de Bonaparte’, Patrice Bret credits the expedition with broadening the scope of French interest in the Orient, thus paving the way for the Saint-Simonians, among others:

l’expédition d’Égypte, au carrefour de l’orientalisme intellectuel et de contingences politico-militaires, a ainsi produit des orientalistes en grande partie par hasard et a commencé à diversifier la nature de l’orientalisme. […]

Cet aspect contingent des orientalismes de l’expédition – qui a largement contribué à la diversification des attitudes européennes envers l’Orient – est la différence fondamentale avec les choix orientalistes, individuels ou collectifs, des décennies suivantes, ceux de Byron ou Delacroix, de Lane ou Renan, celui des saint-simoniens, enfin, dont l’utopie pourrait bien être, globalement, le juste équilibre entre les trois pôles de l’orientalisme [science – imaginaire – action].

The challenges of balancing what Bret identifies as ‘les trois pôles de l’orientalisme’ will prove to be crucial to Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s engagements with North Africa. The spheres of *science* and *imaginaire* will provide the focal points of a struggle for supremacy in Duveyrier’s *œuvre* as he attempted to reconcile scientific ambitions with his Romantic fascination with the Tuareg, while in Urbain’s work *imaginaire* and *action* will emerge as the predominant competing forces in his attempts to reconcile the conflicting demands of his syncretic conception of Saint-Simonian doctrine with those of the French colonial project in Algeria.

In his essay ‘The sociology of Islam: The French tradition’, in the collection *Genealogies of Orientalism* (2008), Edmund Burke III addresses the tradition of the essay’s title, identifying periods and locations when this kind of Orientalist activity was at its peak. The first concerns Egypt and stems from the Napoleonic expedition. The second, and in Burke’s estimation ‘by far the most important was the Algerian period’, beginning in 1830 and ending around 1870. Although the formal movement waned from the mid-1830s, Saint-Simonian members’ interests in North Africa mirrored the pattern adopted by the state, focusing first on Egypt and later on Algeria, the site of France’s most significant colonial undertaking of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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In 1833, Egypt appeared to offer an ideal locus for Saint-Simonians to launch a regeneration of the Orient, as Michel Levallois and Sarga Moussa observe in the introduction to *L’Orientalisme des Saint-Simoniens*: ‘les saint-simoniens conçoivent leur présence sur le sol égyptien comme l’apport d’un souvenir occidental destiné à un Orient « attardé », ou en tout cas moins avancé technologiquement et industriellement.’\(^{13}\) With its rich history, Egypt was also an ideal base for the utopian mysticism of Saint-Simonianism. By 1836, the Saint-Simonians had lost the favour of the Egyptian ruler Mhémét-Ali, a project to build a dam on the Nile had been suspended, and their campaign for the construction of a canal to link the Mediterranean and the Red Sea was ignored. In addition to this, many members succumbed to an epidemic of bubonic plague. The movement in Egypt was spent and most members returned to France, although many later made their way to Algeria.\(^{14}\)

By the time of Duveyrier’s arrival in Algiers in February 1857, many Saint-Simonians and figures who were sympathetic to the movement were spending considerable periods of time living and working in France’s newest colony, among them Urbain. From 1839 to 1841, a government-sponsored *Commission scientifique* conducted a study of Algeria,\(^{15}\) and numerous Saint-Simonians including Enfantin and Dr Auguste Warnier were appointed to it. Inspired by the *Description de l’Égypte*, the commission attempted to synthesise a range of scientific disciplines with the effective aim of intellectually appropriating Algeria. Following his work on the commission, Enfantin published *La Colonisation de l’Algérie* (1843). Beyond the scope of the commission, from the late 1830s, numerous Saint-Simonians such as Urbain worked as civilian officials in the French military administration, or directly for the army, while others took on land-holdings as colonisers, or went on to fill a wide variety of positions,\(^{16}\) establishing a dispersed, but more influential, presence than the cluster of members who had sought to establish the movement in Egypt during the 1830s.

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\(^{15}\) Ibid

\(^{16}\) 'De très nombreux saint-simoniens s’établissent à demeurer en Algérie et spécialisent leurs activités, Fournel dans les recherches minières, Carette et Berbrugger dans le domaine historique et épigraphique, le docteur Vital dans le domaine médical, le docteur Warnier en journalisme colonial, l. Urbain en politique indigène.' Ibid.
1.3 Exploration and the construction of identity

Members of the movement, including its leader Enfantin, sought to indoctrinate Urbain and later Duveyrier into its practices and beliefs as young men. A number of Saint-Simonians adopted a surrogate father posture toward these promising individuals, who came from markedly different backgrounds. In this section we will trace these processes and gauge the early responses of Urbain and Duveyrier to their Saint-Simonian father-figures, and the extent to which they assimilated or rejected Saint-Simonian thought and teachings. Both Urbain, in 1832, and Duveyrier, in 1857, departed France and travelled to North Africa seeing in travel a means of escape from family expectations. Urbain welcomed the embrace of Saint-Simonian surrogate father-figures in France and in Egypt, whereas Duveyrier’s project of travel was in part an effort to escape the metropolitan – and specifically Saint-Simonian – surrogate family in order to assert his independence. Notwithstanding, this study will demonstrate that *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* illustrates that, rather than allowing for an escape, that Duveyrier’s 1857 trip fed a specific Saint-Simonian influence into the type of explorer he became, particularly through the influence of the surrogate father-figures Auguste Warnier and Oscar Mac Carthy.

1.3.1 Urbain’s Saint-Simonian surrogate family

Urbain’s mixed-race, illegitimate origins and colonial upbringing primed him for a conflicted sense of identity, and an outsider status on the periphery of mainstream French society: ‘Urbain […] eut à porter la « double tache », de sa naissance illégitime car il ne fut pas reconnu par son père, et de sa « couleur »’.¹⁷ His early childhood was spent in Cayenne followed by an education in Marseilles. However, he failed to fulfill his father’s ambition that he follow a career as a medical doctor or start his own business. The opening chapter of Michel Levallois’ biography, *Ismayl Urbain (1812-1884) : Une autre conquête de l’Algérie* (2001), outlines the circumstances of Urbain’s adherence to the Saint-Simonian movement. Levallois notes that Urbain’s father was anxious that he return to Cayenne following his

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education; however, Urbain only spent a few months in the colony before returning to Marseilles in July 1831.

He first learned of the Saint-Simonian movement in 1832: ‘la lecture des ouvrages S’[sic] Simoniens m’avait entièrement séduit’.\(^{18}\) In June of that year, he travelled to Paris in response to a call for members issued by Enfantin in *Le Globe*.\(^{19}\) Although scarcely more than a teenager when he joined, Urbain was a devoted disciple,\(^{20}\) and he remained faithful throughout his life to many of Saint-Simonianism’s mystical teachings, particularly those of universal association and the union of Orient and Occident. Urbain established and maintained close friendships with fellow members such as Gustave d’Eichthal, Charles Duveyrier and Louis Jourdan. But in addition to providing Urbain with intellectual stimulation, the Saint-Simonian community crucially provided a nurturing family environment: ‘Avec quel plaisir je revis Massol, Rogé, nouvellement arrivés de France, David, le Père Lambert et le PÈRE, puis Gondret […]. J’étais comme au milieu de ma famille.’\(^{21}\) Enfantin is repeatedly evoked and referred to as a father-figure in Urbain’s poems and journals: ‘Ou bien c’est que le PÈRE entouré de ses apôtres, en présence du peuple, m’a donné son signe d’honneur, sa marque distinctive en disant : celui-ci, je le reconnais pour mon fils’ (‘A mon écharpe jaune’).\(^{22}\) The use of the verb *reconnaître* highlights how Urbain found that which his biological family had failed to provide among Saint-Simoniens, and particularly in his father-son relationship with Enfantin, namely love and public recognition. Urbain’s journals of 1833 to 1836 record sentiments of tranquil contentment when he was in the company of fellow Saint-Simoniens, under the benevolent gaze of Enfantin:

Le PÈRE me dit de faire faire connaissance à ces dames avec ma fille de Damahnour. Je lus *La fille de Damahnour*. Je lus aussi *La prière à la Lune* et, l’attendrissement m’ayant gagné, j’eus le bonheur d’être pressé dans les bras du PÈRE et dans ceux d’Ollivier, Holstein, Duguet. Avec ce soir, à Ménilmontant, où le PÈRE pleurait à mon appel pour la race noire, ce jour est le plus beau de ma vie. Je ne me suis jamais senti vivre plus fièrement, plus saintement qu’après ces baisers du PÈRE dont mon front fut bêni. […] J’étais abîmé dans la joie du présent comme si c’était l’avenir, qui émousse toute convulsion, toute secousse, et

\(^{19}\) Levallois, 2001, p. 19.
\(^{22}\) *Ibid*, p. 269.
This supportive environment emboldened Urbain, encouraged his literary aspirations and provided him with a long-sought sense of stability and reassurance. The final lines above have a strongly affective quality; Urbain’s surrogate family is evoked as gently cradling or rocking his psyche, a gesture primarily associated with maternal love for an infant child. Urbain’s worries and fears for the future are thus forgotten within the womb-like, nurturing atmosphere of his surrogate family. Striking physical images of rocking and cradling are important tropes in Urbain’s early writing and suggest his fixation with maternal love, or the lack thereof in his upbringing.

1.3.2 Biological versus surrogate fathers

Urbain’s poem ‘Au Miroir du Père’, dated January 1834, forms part of an extended vein of introspective interrogation of identity in the poetry he composed from 1833 to 1836. In this and other similar poems, he seeks to supplant the identity that he inherited from his biological family with a more positive self-image, founded on Saint-Simonian mystical principles. ‘Au Miroir du Père’ is a lyric poem, divided into distinct stanzas. Although it adheres to conventional poetic form, it plays extensively with subjectivity and objectivity, conflating the ‘je’, ‘tu’ and ‘il’ personas to explore issues of identity and self-estrangement. Through the poetic device of the young poet reluctantly confronting his reflection in a mirror, the opening stanzas reveal the powerful sense of self-loathing, timidity and inferiority experienced by Urbain:

Je ne recherche pas ainsi les miroirs
Pour y contempler mon visage.
[...]
Mes yeux regardent toujours la terre ;
[...]
Je suis craintif
Et ne regarde jamais
Les personnes auxquelles je réponds.
[...]
Je suis religieux,
Mais je ne sais à quoi, ni pour qui.
[...]
Je suis laid, je suis villain,
Je le sais. Mille me l’ont dit.24

23 Ibid., pp. 60-61.
24 Ibid., pp. 245-46.
Chapter 1: Surrogate families and father-figures: le fils mal aimé and the reluctant disciple

The trope of estrangement from one’s mirrored reflection has been investigated by psychoanalysts and postcolonial literary theorists in the twentieth century, notably Jacques Lacan and Frantz Fanon. This trope has become emblematic of the struggle to come to terms with a conflicted or fractured sense of identity and the associated difficulties of dealing with colonial identity as reflected by the metropolitan gaze. For Urbain, both of the father-figures – his biological father Urbain Brue and Enfantin, in whom he sees his image reflected in ‘Au Miroir du Père’ – are representative of metropolitan France. Analysing Glissant’s writing in *Sounding in French Caribbean writing since 1950: The Shock of Space and Time* (2002), Mary Gallagher observes the communication of sentiments of estrangement and ambivalence which are also relevant to Urbain’s writing in ‘Au Miroir du Père’:

France, and Paris in particular, doubly helps Glissant to deepen his consciousness of his own doubleness. On the one hand, it reflects him because it is similar; on the other hand, it shows him what he is not because it is radically different. [...] Glissant thus acknowledges himself both as son and as foreigner in relation to France. Hence the French connection is seen to be partly generative. It has in some sense produced Glissant and is thus familiar and even familial; yet he also feels his displacement or strangeness relative to this dominant, Oedipal ‘other’. Glissant’s use of the imagery of mirroring is thus much more positive and constructive than Fanon’s recourse to it in *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Fanon’s approach is more Lacanian in that the mirroring that he associates with ego-formation (or identity formation) is undercut by the self-destructive alienation associated by Lacan with narcissism.

Gallagher’s reference to mirroring in Fanon’s writing as symptomatic of alienation in the process of identity-formation is particularly relevant to the opening sections of ‘Au Miroir du Père’, which address the poet’s relationship with his biological father in a distinctly negative tone, while the more productive outcome of similar processes in Glissant’s writing speaks to the second half of Urbain’s poem, which has a positive tone that reflects the poet’s affirmative experience of his identity as mirrored by the encouraging metropolitan father-figure, Enfantin. What Gallagher describes above as Glissant’s recognition of his status ‘both as son and as foreigner in relation to France’ is both literally and figuratively true of Urbain’s relationship to the métropole, and to his associated father-figures, something which he seeks to explore and comprehend in ‘Au Miroir du Père’.

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In the early stanzas, the poet claims that the image he sees cannot be his own, that it is too assertive, too vivacious and attractive to be that of a métis from Cayenne, an identity which is thus implicitly loaded with negative connotations and notions of inferiority:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Jamais mes yeux n’ont eu cet éclat,} \\
\text{Mais je vous dis que ce n’est pas moi !}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Je suis Thomas Urbain,} \\
\text{Aussi Gabriel de Cayenne,} \\
\text{Je ne porte pas ainsi la tête ;} \\
\text{Je ne recherche pas ainsi les miroirs} \\
\text{Pour y contempler mon visage.} \\
\text{Non, ce n’est pas moi !}^{28}
\end{align*}
\]

The particular concept of self-estrangement in this passage, signified by the refusal of recognition ‘Mais je vous dis que ce n’est pas moi!’, is similar to the phenomenon of doubling in Romantic and early modernist poetry, particularly works with a gothic aesthetic such as the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe. In the article ‘Divided selves, ironic counterparts: Inter-textual doubling in Baudelaire’s “L’Héautontimorouménos” and Poe’s “The Haunted Palace”’, Deborah Harter makes a series of observations which can also be seen as relevant to the anxieties and disharmony conveyed in Urbain’s poem. For example, she notes the manner in which Poe’s poem acts as the stage for ‘a single traumatic moment of psychic division’ and how for Baudelaire ‘a single narrator becomes a divided self, lucidly narrating the effects of its own disunity.’^{29}

In ‘Au Miroir du Père’ there is a turning-point, or point of rupture, roughly one third through the poem. It is marked by an italicised interjection ‘– Lui ! –’ separating two stanzas. After this interjection the poem addresses the persona of Thomas Urbain in the second and third rather than the first person: ‘C’est toi! C’est bien toi!’, ‘Saît-il comment il verra le soleil.’^{30} The poet’s identity is thus grammatically split into its constituent and contrasting parts – those associated with his family and upbringing, and those associated with his new existence as a poet under the patronage of his surrogate father, ‘le PÈRE’ (Enfantin) in Egypt. The second section provides a detailed description of Enfantin’s noble qualities, which appeal to the young fils d’esclave. Thus, the point of rupture in Urbain’s poem

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28 Urbain, 1993, p. 245.
instigates a positive transformation as the fruit of what is initially evoked as an unsettling self-estrangement. If we return to Harter’s analysis, she observes that the poems by Poe and Baudelaire centre upon transformations initiated by moments of rupture. This is also true of ‘Au Miroir du Père’. In Poe’s ‘The Haunted Palace’ Harter identifies a ‘movement towards disunity and a loss of control’ which follows from an opening depiction of idyllic unity. 31 Her account of Baudelaire’s ‘L’Héautontimorouménos’ provides an even closer parallel with Urbain’s text in terms of achieving a greater sense of resolution and community:

From a narrative “je” dominating the first six stanzas, lost in the agony of its own duplicity, comes [...] a proclamation of community, a clear statement of brotherhood among those (or at least between those two) who find themselves “out of tune” with the divine symphony [...]. The narrative “je” seems to lift its eyes for a moment from the mirror-reflection (and the unending splitting) of itself, to speak directly back to the earlier poem, to double its duplicity as it were, and in doing so to re-grasp some unity. 32

The closing lines refer to an inter-textual dialogue between the poems by Poe and his literary admirer Baudelaire. Urbain’s journals from his time in Egypt make specific references to distributing his poems to Enfantin, Charles Duveyrier and other Saint-Simonians thus stimulating the dissemination and discussion of his compositions within the movement and helping Urbain to establish an intellectual dialogue with fellow members. 33 Additionally, there was a precedent within Saint-Simonianism for poems similar to ‘Au Miroir du Père’ which were dedicated to a God-like or messianic Enfantin, including ‘Au Père’ by Charles Duveyrier. 34 Although the form, style and imagery of Urbain’s poem differs considerably from that of his mentor Charles Duveyrier, reverence for Enfantin and the inspirational power of his paternal patronage are themes common to their respective compositions, thus like Baudelaire’s poem, ‘Au Miroir du Père’ has intertextual qualities:

Comme toi je l’ai vu,
[...]
Celui qui porte la face d’un empereur,
Avec la douce beauté d’un Messie :
Celui dont les yeux brillent de tant de bonté,
[...]
Et fait taire toute douleur !
[...]

31 Harter, 1989, p. 32.
32 Ibid., p. 37.
Chapter 1: Surrogate families and father-figures: le fils mal aimé and the reluctant disciple

As alluded to previously, Urbain’s self-image metamorphoses when he finds a surrogate father-figure – Enfantin – to replace his biological father, hence the title ‘Au Miroir du Père’. It is the poet’s image as he envisions it projected through the eyes of his competing father-figures that in turn determines his propensity to denigrate or value his hybrid identity. When his only point of reference is his biological father, he sees himself as little more than a banal failed professional, but under Enfantin’s patronage, he is an apostle-poet, a new man from and for a new world:

Que me parle-t-on de poésie.
De plaisir, de chant ?
La négresse !
La fille de Damahnour !
Tout cela est beau,
Bouillant, ardent,
Je le sais.
Mais ce n’est pas moi qui l’ai fait.
Je n’ai jamais écrit que des lettres de bonne année
A mon très cher papa.
Je suis le fils naturel
De Monsieur Urbain Brue ;
Je dois être médecin
Ou négociant.
Que me parle-t-on d’apostolat nouveau ?

The concept of ‘l’homme nouveau’ which is evoked in ‘Au Miroir du Père’ is important in Urbain’s poetry of the 1830s. We will return to this in Chapter 2, but for present purposes the passage can be seen to convey the dichotomy of Urbain’s identity as constructed through the limiting, even undermining, perspective of his relationship with his biological father versus the unlimited potential of the vocation of quasi-religious poet which he assumes under Enfantin’s influence. Religious imagery predominates throughout, conveying the importance of this vocation and also of father-son relationships as mystical alliances invested with great significance for Urbain.

Just as ties to his biological family inhibit and deflate the poet in ‘Au Miroir du Père’, his new mystical vocation and the nurturing support of his surrogate father Enfantin empower him to surpass what he previously perceived as the limitations of his mixed-race identity:

36 Ibid., p. 246.

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Chapter 1: Surrogate families and father-figures: le fils mal aimé and the reluctant disciple

C’est lui qui te donne chaque jour
La nourriture du lendemain.
C’est lui qu’à tout instant du jour
Tu nommes ton PÈRE,
Le PÈRE !
Ah ! Thomas Urbain!
Passez votre chemin
Il n’est pas ici. Cherchez ailleurs.37

‘Au Miroir du Père’ and several other poems which Urbain composed during his time in Egypt identify the period he spent there as a crucial turning-point which enabled him to work through his insecurities and to re-evaluate his hybrid identity in a more positive light. Another important development of Urbain’s time in Egypt was his conversion to Islam. In 1835, Thomas Urbain of Cayenne and France reinvented himself as Ismaÿl Urbain, a mediator between Christianity and Islam, Orient and Occident.38 Urbain’s conversion was orthodox, in that he began to learn Arabic, took religious instruction from an imam, underwent circumcision and chose a new name. The name he chose, Ismaÿl, was loaded with significance, as he points out in his journals:

J’avais pris le nom d’Ysmayl, nom de prophète, nom symbolique pour moi, dans lequel se réunissent presque tous les caractères de mon apostolat : Ysmayl, fils d’une esclave, un bâtard, abandonné de son père. Qui sait si Dieu ne me réserve pas de découvrir la source nouvelle où toutes les populations musulmanes iront se désalterer.39

While ‘Au Miroir du Père’ explored the intimate dimensions of Urbain’s hybrid colonial identity, the above passage from his journals relates his change of name as a symbolic act which situated him as a representative figure within the broader context of a syncretic vocation. This supplements the circumstantial symmetry of his choice of the name borne by Abraham’s illegitimate son conceived with the slave Agar.

Even though Saint-Simonians referred to the movement as Le Nouveau Christianisme, Enfantin was receptive to Urbain’s conversion: ‘Je n’ai jamais douté un seul instant que le Père n’en fût satisfait.’40 Neither Urbain nor Enfantin considered his conversion in terms of a rejection of Christianity or Western values, but rather as their enrichment through contact with Islam and Oriental society. He began to see himself as a passeur between faiths and cultures, and that this role was a strength born of his hybrid identity and thus fittingly complemented by his

37 Ibid., p. 248.
40 Ibid., p. 96.
adoption of Islam. Urbain’s development of a hybrid self-image as a cultural, racial and religious intermediary was compatible with the Saint-Simonian principle of universal association: ‘Voilà que mon apostolat s’agrandit et s’affermit, je me rattache à tous les peuples, à chacun je donne de ma vie pour les associer en moi comme symbole de l’association universelle’.\(^\text{41}\) It was also compatible with the principle of the union of Orient and Occident: ‘La communion de l’Orient et de l’Occident, la communion du musulman et du chrétien, voilà ce que je réalise en moi.’\(^\text{42}\)

Urbain sought to cultivate an improved understanding of Islam among Westerners and he promoted it as a sister religion to the other monotheistic faiths of Christianity and Judaism which share its veneration of certain holy figures. Urbain believed that this would lead to increased respect for Islam and its adherents:

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Ce serait une chose belle et glorieuse […] de dévoiler passionnément aux occidentaux tout ce qu’a de grand, de poétique, de divin, la mission de Mohammed ; de faire hautement justice de tous les petits ridicules dont on entoure l’islamisme et d’introniser par son talent d’apôtre et d’artiste Mohammed sur la même ligne que Moïse et Jésus.\(^\text{43}\)
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Throughout his later career as an interpreter, government official, journalist and pamphlet-writer, Urbain would retain his faith in the compatibility of Europeans and North Africans, Christians and Muslims. This imaginative syncretic vocation was very different from the purpose and outcome of Henri Duveyrier’s first encounter with North Africa in 1857, which explicitly focused on the scientific pole of Bret’s Orientalist schema, while unconsciously but no less importantly drawing upon a Eurocentric rather than a syncretic imaginaire – another of the poles evoked by Bret. It is on that contrasting application of Saint-Simonian principles that we will now focus our attention.

### 1.3.3 A reluctant Saint-Simonian disciple

In a passage from *Histoire de l’Algérie contemporaine* (1969), Charles-André Julien comments on the role of Saint-Simonians during the early years of French colonisation in Algeria and alludes to Duveyrier as a Saint-Simonian Saharan explorer.\(^\text{44}\) Similarly, the recent biography by Dominique Casajus (2007) is titled

\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 96.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 91.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 96.
Henri Duveyrier: un Saint-Simonien au désert. Hence there is a clear precedent for identifying Duveyrier as a Saint-Simonian. However, during his lifetime, Duveyrier did not see himself as a Saint-Simonian, and may not have been comfortable with the incorporation of his legacy into the movement’s activities in North Africa.

Among the movement’s apostles in the early 1830s, which included the young Urbain, Charles Duveyrier – Henri Duveyrier’s father – was known as Charles Poète de Dieu. Charles Duveyrier was tried and convicted alongside Enfantin and Michel Chevalier in Paris, in 1833, for his role in promoting Saint-Simonian teachings on the “free association” of men and women under the socially conservative regime of the July Monarchy. He was also among the members who participated in the retreat of 1832 to 1833 at Ménilmontant, and he regularly corresponded with Urbain during his time in Egypt and later, when Urbain divided his time between Algeria and France. ‘Au propre fils du Poète de Dieu fut dévolu l’honneur de commencer les exploits de la seconde génération saint-simonienne.’

As this statement by Marcel Émerit suggests, Duveyrier was born into the very heart of Saint-Simonian influence, and grew up immersed in the movement and the powerful personalities who devised and disseminated its doctrine. Like Urbain, Duveyrier encountered Saint-Simonian surrogate father-figures, but his receptiveness toward them was more mitigated. As a would-be progressive movement, favouring industrial development and technological advances, members naturally looked to the younger generation to act as the standard-bearers for their vision of a new future for France, Europe and the world. A letter addressed to Enfantin by Arlès-Dufour, a prominent Saint-Simonian and a banker who funded Duveyrier’s education in Switzerland and Germany during the 1850s, illustrates the extent to which he felt entitled to assume the status of a father in Duveyrier’s life, and the weight of expectation attached to this assumption: ‘Moi, j’ai adopté Henri Duveyrier qui, j’en suis sûr, ne sera pas celui de mes enfants qui me donnera le moins de satisfaction.’

Arlès-Dufour’s moral and material investment in Duveyrier was matched by the latter’s biological father Charles’ capacity ‘de déployer les richesses d’une

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47 ARS Ms 7686, Letter from Arlès-Dufour to Enfantin, extract, in Émerit, [1941] 1949, p. 222.
imagination puissante’, in order to encourage his son to participate in a movement which was central to his own existence and to enter the career in commerce and advertising which had been earmarked for him.

In a similar fashion to the relationship between Urbain and his father, Charles Duveyrier had plans for his eldest son’s career which did not coincide with the younger Duveyrier’s aspirations. Although Charles Duveyrier and numerous would-be father-figures, such as Arlès-Dufour, Enfantin, Dr Auguste Warnier and Oscar Mac Carthy (the two latter figures will be discussed later), actively promoted or were heavily influenced by Saint-Simonianism, Duveyrier remained a reluctant disciple, as the following extract from his correspondence with Enfantin demonstrates:

« J’ai beaucoup de raisons pour ne pas vouloir être Saint-Simonien, […] je préfère que vous me croyez un enfant capricieux… » […] Le Père [Enfantin] lui répond […] Henri, son petit-fils chéri, peut-il avoir une autre croyance que Charles, son père, par le sang, que Prosper Enfantin, son père spirituel, qu’Arlès-Dufour, son bienfaiteur ?

Duveyrier’s resistance, particularly to the metaphysical emphasis of Saint-Simonian doctrine, further distinguishes him from his father, who was among its most influential architects. As Philippe Régnier comments, for committed Saint-Simonians like Charles Duveyrier, all acts were invested with religious significance: ‘les saint-simoniens ne réduisent pas une culture à ses expressions artistiques ou intellectuelles. Du mode d’alimentation au type de conjugalité en passant par l’hygiène, tout, à leurs yeux, est « religieux ».’ As previously observed, although Saint-Simon had promoted the concept of le Nouveau Christianisme, Enfantin and the aforementioned Charles Duveyrier responded in positive terms to Urbain’s conversion to Islam in 1835. Although steeped in mysticism, the Saint-Simonian

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48 Ibid., p. 219.
49 Dans la grande Famille saint-simonienne, […] Charles Duveyrier s’était réservé le rayon de la publicité. L’idée le hantait d’une application du saint-simonisme au commerce. Comme il se faisait vieux, il destinait son fils Henri à cette noble occupation. […] Mais bientôt [Henri] fait à son père une pénible confidence : C’est l’Afrique seule qui l’attire. […] Puisque la Famille [saint-simonienne] s’est donné la tâche d’élargir le champ d’activité de l’espèce humaine, de favoriser la circulation des richesses, de créer des voies de communication entre les continents, pourquoi Henri ne deviendrait-il pas explorateur ?’ Ibid., p. 220.
50 Ibid., p. 224, including a citation of ARS Ms 7669, Letter from Duveyrier to Enfantin, 9 November 1859.
movement adopted an eclectic approach to religion which was in harmony with the syncretism implied by the concept of a *rapprochement* of Orient and Occident.

In spite of these differences, particularly in relation to religious mysticism, at a practical level *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* reveals a high level of Saint-Simonian involvement in, and even orchestration of, Duveyrier’s first experiences of North Africa in 1857. This belies the spirit of rebelliousness which might initially appear to characterise Duveyrier’s pursuit of a career as an explorer over the one in advertising favoured by his father and patron. Indeed, Saint-Simonian influence pervaded almost every aspect of the 1857 trip – much as it had Urbain’s first experiences of North Africa in 1833 – moulding Duveyrier’s fledgling career as an explorer in an unorthodox fashion distinct from the experiences of his predecessors and contemporaries. Many explorers, for example, came from backgrounds in the army, as such a pedigree initiated contact with foreign regions, honed practical skills and stimulated the interest of many men in careers as professional explorers; Rohlfs, a former member of the French Foreign Legion and de Foucauld who was educated at the Saint-Cyr military academy and served with the French army in Algeria during the suppression of the Bou Amama uprising of 1881, are just two examples of this pattern among explorers of the Maghreb.

Nearly all of the contacts who received Duveyrier and assisted or accompanied him during his trip of 1857 were members of, or sympathetic to, Saint-Simonianism: ‘Pour s’initier au monde berbère, [Henri] débarque, en 1857, en Algérie, où Mac Carthy, le Docteur Warnier, Berbrugger et M. Clerc, neveu du Docteur Perron, le reçoivent à bras ouverts.’

As an adolescent Duveyrier entered a world mainly populated by hardened colonial pioneers such as Auguste Warnier and veteran scholars like Oscar Mac Carthy and Adrien Berbrugger. Duveyrier’s close friend Charles Maunoir, in his preface to *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger*, acknowledges the formative influence exerted by Warnier and Mac Carthy on the young Duveyrier:

> Henri Duveyrier pouvait, d’ailleurs, compter sur les conseils de deux hommes qui dirigèrent ses premiers pas dans la carrière de l’exploration.  
> L’un d’eux, un ami de Charles Duveyrier, était le docteur Warnier, homme de grand savoir et de grand sens, établi en Algérie depuis plusieurs années.

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MacCarthy schooled Duveyrier in the practical competences required for travel and scientific fieldwork in the desert, such as instructing him on the clothing and equipment he would require for their trip to Laghouat:

J’ai déposé dans la soirée, chez M. MacCarthy, ce que je désirais emporter dans mon voyage […]. J’ai fait faire une boîte de fer-blanc pour herboriser, et j’ai fait prendre chez le tailleur un pantalon sac commandé sur les indications de M. Mac-Carthy, car il n’y a pas de pantalon ordinaire qui puisse résister pendant une course dans le S’ah’ra.55

Warnier received Duveyrier at his estate in the Mitidja before his departure for Laghouat with MacCarthy. Duveyrier’s first description of Warnier shows him to be a charismatic figure keen to impress his young charge with the promise of adventure:

A peine étais-je assis que M. Warnier arriva, et après m’avoir souhaité la bienvenue, sans me laisser le temps de me reposer, il m’entraîna dehors en me disant : “Venez, Henri, je vais vous montrer la nature sauvage, les horreurs de la forêt vierge, vous n’avez encore rien vu de pareil.”56

Both men were associated with Saint-Simonianism, and although they lived and worked in Algeria, they remained representative of a Saint-Simonian intellectual milieu. A figure of considerable renown as a desert explorer and an expert on North Africa, Oscar Mac Carthy probably exerted the most significant influence over Duveyrier’s 1857 trip and subsequent work ethos as an explorer:

MacCarthy was known as the ‘Grey Eminence of the Sahara,’ so deep was his knowledge of the language, the terrain and the culture of the many different peoples making up this new colony. In 1860, he was appointed Director of the Library and of the Museum of Fine Arts of Algiers and, later again, he was one of the advisers of Charles [de] Foucauld.57

As the quotation from Barbara Wright suggests, the later French explorer Charles de Foucauld completed a similar apprenticeship under Mac Carthy. Duveyrier and de Foucauld both seem to have modeled their rigorous work ethic and obsessive commitment to scientific fieldwork – evoked in the following quotation – on Mac Carthy:

En passant de Chlef, [Mac-Carthy] laissa tomber son képi dans le fleuve, puis quand il fut lui-même au milieu de l’eau, la corde de ceux qui tiraient se rompit et ce fut toute une histoire pour le faire arriver à l’autre bord. Enfin, pour comble de malheur, son baromètre se cassa, et ce dernier échec lui causa un si grand désappointement qu’il fut un moment sur le point de retourner à Alger.58

56 Ibid., p. 6.
58 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 39.
However, Duveyrier’s account of his time under Mac Carty’s tutelage also demonstrates that even as a seventeen-year-old engaging in his first encounter with Africa, he both assimilated and questioned the information presented by his mentor. Hence despite his young age, Duveyrier possessed a level of confidence in his own convictions and was willing to express them assertively:

En effet, la plupart de ces tombeaux sont abattus [...]. M. Mac-Carty, après les avoir inspectés, déclara que c’étaient des tombeaux romains ; seulement, qu’ils étaient faits sans soin. Je prendrai la liberté de ne pas suivre son opinion, et, selon moi, ces monuments seraient d’origine autochtone.59

This assertiveness with regard to the validity of his opinions is an early indication of Duveyrier’s rigidity as a scholar. He was to remain reluctant to back down from his initial conclusions, or to nuance his opinions, throughout his career.

1.3.4 Scientific innovation and technology

*Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* demonstrates how Duveyrier’s introduction to North Africa was overseen by Saint-Simonian surrogate father-figures. Furthermore, it also suggests that his indoctrination into Saint-Simonian theories on progress and the modernisation of the Orient through European conquest and colonisation had proceeded with greater success than his indoctrination into the movement’s mystical beliefs. Duveyrier’s text comments favourably upon French efforts to establish modern infrastructure and to modify land use, through the construction of dams, the draining of swamp lands – such as the Mitidja, which became an emblematic region for Algerian colonisation and for popular French perceptions of colonists as hardy and industrious individuals – and the irrigation of arid regions. Duveyrier expresses his admiration for preliminary efforts to apply scientific methods to plant cultivation, in order to assess the merits of native plant and animal species for economic exploitation, and to work toward the introduction of non-indigenous species to Algeria. Such measures also concurred with Saint-Simonian doctrine regarding the reinvigoration of the Orient by the Occident via the transmission of technological and scientific expertise:

On travaille sans cesse à améliorer le système des eaux dans l’ouest de la Mitidja, à la régularisation du cours de l’Ouedjér, au dessèchement du lac H’alloula, etc. Dans les derniers jours de mon séjour à K’andouri, le génie avait travaillé à un barrage, pour faciliter les travaux […].

[...]

Dans l’après-midi, j’ai été au jardin d’essai avec M. Warnier. Ce jardin offre une magnifique collection de plantes indigènes et exotiques, dont on fait des élèves pour propager ensuite les espèces utiles et en faciliter l’acclimatation. […] Nous vîmes aussi dans le jardin des mérinos, des cultures de cochenille, une gazelle et deux autruches récemment amenés du S’ah’ra. 60

Central to the Saint-Simonian movement was the development and application of modern scientific methods and projets de grands travaux, undertaken in the public interest, as suggested in the quotation from Chevalier’s Système de la Méditerrannée in the introduction. These interests preceded members’ involvement in the promotion, financing and execution of infrastructural projects such as the construction of railways and bridges, involvement in the banking sector and in capital investment projects under the Second Empire both in France and in Algeria. Such activities were considerably less focused on the greater good of humanity than on financial gain. Duveyrier appears to sympathise with the earlier approach rather than the capitalist ventures favoured by those among his Saint-Simonian contemporaries who invested in Algeria. This, therefore, marks Duveyrier’s interests as anachronistic and harking back to the early days of the movement during the 1830s, preceding his birth. A naïve or anachronistic outlook will characterise the intellectual positions assumed by Duveyrier on a number of issues in his later writing.

1.3.5 Strained filial loyalties

While Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger generally assumes a positive and enthusiastic tone, this is occasionally nuanced by some tensions between Duveyrier’s filial obedience to the wishes of his father Charles, and his evident desire to devote his life to exploration. The closing lines of Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger refer warmly to Duveyrier’s father, siblings and friends in France, and express his impatience to be reunited with them. However, earlier in the text Duveyrier related an incident in which his loyalty to his father’s wishes was tested, namely his encounter with a Targui (Tuareg tribesman) in Laghouat. Duveyrier suggests that they struck up a friendship and that the Targui consequently invited him to visit his homeland. To remain faithful to the schedule of his planned visit, as he had promised his father, Duveyrier could not accept: ‘J’ai été voir le Targui […] Il me demanda si je voulais l’accompagner dans son pays ; je n’aurais

60 Ibid., p. 23.
rien désiré tant que de le faire, mais, comme cela aurait été désobéir à mon père, je fus obligé de refuser.’ Duveyrier’s resolve was further tested when the Targui renewed his offer, guaranteeing his safety. With palpable regret Duveyrier declined: ‘Nous nous dîmes adieu, et j’espère qu’un jour les circonstances permettront que j’accomplisse ma promesse d’aller le voir dans son pays « in ch’Allah ! »’. Duveyrier thus honoured his promise to his father, but even as he made his refusal he expressed his hope that he would return to visit the Targui in his homeland, ruled by the tribal chief Ikhenoukhen, under whose authority he had been sent to Laghouat to negotiate trade routes with the French.

Duveyrier’s dedication to *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* marks a concerted effort to highlight the achievements of the trip and to forward a case for a further full-scale expedition:

> J’y ai beaucoup appris, tant en ce qui regarde l’étude de la nature, la géographie, l’histoire, la langue arabe, qu’en ce qui concerne la connaissance des hommes en général. S’il m’est donné de faire un autre voyage..., je ne serai plus tout à fait novice.

Toward the end of the dedication, Duveyrier suggests that further trips would enable him to perfect his understanding of the region: ‘J’ai perdu les préjugés qui courent en Europe sur le climat, la nature et les habitants de ces contrées, et je crois m’être formé, à cet égard, une opinion qui n’est pas éloignée de la vérité.’ A desire to establish irrefutable truths and comprehensive scientific knowledge was to become one of the characteristic tropes of Duveyrier’s writing.

The tensions in the adolescent Duveyrier’s relationship with his fathers, both biological and surrogate, might appear to be a separate issue from the motives behind his wanderlust. However, in *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (1995), John M. MacKenzie highlights work by Dennis Porter on male travellers in a context which is pertinent to the circumstances of Duveyrier’s project of travel and authorship:

> [Porter] discovers a certain continuity in travel writing in which travel is stimulated by the desire to ‘fantasise the satisfaction of drives denied at home’, [...] and also by the conflict between guilt and duty, often expressed through the father-son relationship. To extend Porter’s idea further, travel can thus represent at one and the same time alienation from ‘patria’ and Utopia-seeking abroad together with filial duty and a concomitant denigration of

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64 *Ibid.*
the ‘Other’. [...] he sees one function of travel writing as representing ‘a form of experimentation at and beyond established limits’. 65

This passage echoes the motivations of numerous other travellers and travel-writers, including André Gide, Eugène Fromentin, and also Urbain in his trip of 1833 to 1836 to Egypt and the Levant. It provides a means of linking Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s early projects of travel in terms of reactions against the established limits and expectations associated with their lives in Western society and additionally, in the case of Urbain, as a reaction against his inferior status as a colonial subject. The concept of a drive to push beyond established social and personal limits will take on considerable importance in relation to Duveyrier’s subsequent professional activities, and particularly his relations with North Africans. MacKenzie also observes an increasing critical attentiveness over the last two decades to the ‘vulnerability of the dominant in a Romantic search for the extended and fuller self.’ 66 This vulnerability of the dominant will become particularly apparent in the case of Duveyrier, while resilience will emerge as characteristic of Urbain whose hybrid identity was rooted in a position of marginalisation rather than the dominant (and vulnerable) perspective of cultural hegemony.

1.4 Conclusion

This opening chapter has demonstrated the extent to which male members of the Saint-Simonian movement such as Duveyrier’s father Charles Duveyrier, Enfantin and others attempted to influence the direction of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s careers, to mould their beliefs and their first experiences of North Africa. Although Duveyrier was receptive to Saint-Simonian thought regarding the progressive potential of science and technology, and while he admired projects of intellectual appropriation undertaken by Saint-Simonians such as Oscar Mac Carthy and other representatives of France in Algeria, in contrast to Urbain, Duveyrier’s first experiences of Africa did not cultivate a commitment to Saint-Simonian mysticism.

While Urbain did not obtain the sense of belonging which he sought from his membership of the Saint-Simonian movement, which he pursued through his participation in their project of travel to Egypt and the Levant, he was successful in

66 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
achieving a more satisfying vision of his hybrid identity. This was aided by Enfantin’s role as a surrogate father, by conversion to Islam and by his associated adoption of the vocation of passeur to act as an intermediary between the Orient and the Occident and to enact Saint-Simonian mystical beliefs. Chapter 2 will expand upon some of the key questions raised thus far, with a particular emphasis on Romantic tendencies in the early writings of Urbain and Duveyrier, many of which are linked to or amplified by their exposure to Saint-Simonian thought.
Chapter 2: Romantic tendencies, evasion and exile: apprentissage and l’homme nouveau

2.1 Introduction

The following passage from David Scott’s *Semiologies of Travel: From Gautier to Baudrillard* (2004) addresses key concepts which will be of relevance to this chapter’s analysis of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s early writings and initial experiences of North Africa:

The link between this epistemological project and travel to unexplored countries, real or imagined, is symptomatic of a deeper impulse in the early modern European sensibility – that of a desire to relate the new – whether scientific or utopian – to the past – whether historical or mythological. In this way, the quest for the new and different is paradoxically accompanied by a nostalgia for an integrated semiotic system. [...] This nostalgia becomes, after the nineteenth century, an integral part of this appeal of the exotic, part of whose underlying project, as Chris Bongie suggests, is ‘to recover the possibility of this total “experience”’.¹

Scott draws attention to concepts which can be seen to constitute key motivations for Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s projects of travel – a thirst for novelty accompanied by nostalgia for a combined historical and mythic past, which foster the quest for a form of total experience considered unobtainable in the West. In this chapter, common tropes and some of the underlying goals of Romantic literary Orientalism will be identified as crucial components of both men’s early writings and as formative influences on their identity and the development of their relationship with North Africa. We will begin with their accounts of their expectations and first impressions as travellers to the Orient.

2.2 Expectations and early encounters

2.2.1 Urbain’s first encounters with the Orient

Urbain’s journals open with an account of the days preceding his departure from Marseilles. He reveals that: ‘Le Père Barrault nous lisait tous les jours un chapitre du Koran ou de l’histoire des musulmans pour nous initier aux mœurs de l’Orient.’²

Urbain’s expectations were also shaped by his personal readings. Excerpts from Victor Hugo are used as epigraphs to several of Urbain’s poems, for example ‘Sur le

Nil’, ‘Mon Dromadaire’ and ‘A mon écharpe jaune,’ thus demonstrating that he admired Hugo’s work. Like many prominent writers of the early nineteenth century, Hugo never visited the Orient, but through his writing he drew attention to it as an exotic, mystical location. Urbain’s education in Marseilles would have schooled him in the tradition of reverence for Hellenic and other antique Mediterranean civilisations, and also in Judeo-Christian religious beliefs for which the Orient was a location of great symbolic significance, with Egypt providing the setting for biblical episodes, such as the Exodus of the Israelites.

Hence Urbain’s expectations were moulded by biblical readings, Eurocentric historical texts, and depictions of a Romantic imagined Orient. It was not unusual for a European traveller’s first impression of the Orient to be disappointment, owing to the décalage between expectations and material realities. Well-known travel narratives such as Gérard de Nerval’s *Le Voyage en Orient* (1851) and Gustave Flaubert’s *Voyage en Orient 1849-51* (1867) convey their authors’ first impressions of disenchantment with an Orient which was at odds with their romanticised expectations, while Urbain’s fellow Saint-Simonian Suzanne Voilquin expresses a combination of disappointment and disgust upon her arrival in Alexandria in 1834. Urbain also experienced initial disappointment which is conveyed in his journals:

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nous mouillâmes dans une baie, sur la côte de l’Asie mineure [...]. Les maisons étaient basses, mal bâties. Les campagnes étaient cultivées par des Grecs très misérables. En somme, ce pays ne réveilla pas du tout en moi les sensations que je croyais devoir éprouver à la vue de la terre d’Orient.
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The religious eclecticism – leaning heavily on Judeo-Christian mysticism and symbolism, but allied to a modernising sensibility – and the associated accommodation of paradox which characterised Saint-Simonian teachings must have proved useful to Urbain in overcoming this initial sense of disappointment. Furthermore, he had already experienced two distinct cultures and geographical regions (Europe and the Caribbean), and as such was better equipped to adapt to a new environment than most travellers.

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Chapter 2: Romantic tendencies, evasion and exile: apprentissage and l’homme nouveau

Urbain’s journals recount how he enjoyed the cultural familiarity of visiting locations such as the site of the ancient city of Troy: ‘Nous ne tardâmes pas, favorisés par le vent, à découvrir l’ancienne Troade, les tombeaux d’Achille et de Patrocle, celui d’Ajax.’ This passage, peppered with allusions to the Greek epics, is juxtaposed in Urbain’s journal with an exotic description of Constantinople. Urbain also incorporates references to Christianity into his description, emphasising Constantinople as a site where the Christian and Muslim faiths already engage in processes of fusion which could be enhanced by Saint-Simonian mysticism:

Here, as elsewhere, Urbain’s language is suffused with a religious rhetoric characteristic of Saint-Simonian writings of the period, for example his reference to ‘une sublime communion de bonheur’. The reference to ‘la MÈRE’ marks an explicit allusion to the mystical mission to discover an oriental female spiritual leader to complement Enfantin’s masculine leadership of the Saint-Simonian movement.

2.2.2 Duveyrier’s first impressions of Algiers

Constantinople was the first “Eastern” city experienced and described by Urbain. The equivalent for Duveyrier was the colonial city of Algiers, which presented a different variety of exotic spectacle, based less on fusion than on cultural juxtaposition and colonial penetration. According to Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger, the moment Duveyrier glimpsed Algiers from the steamer, almost everything he witnessed surpassed his expectations:

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J’arrivai à Alger avec bien du contentement. Du bateau qui venait d’entrer dans la rade, je promenais mes regards avides sur cette ville dont j’avais tant entendu parler, et vers laquelle depuis quelques temps mes plus chers désirs s’étaient dirigés. Cette terre d’Afrique, que je voyais alors pour la première fois, avait pour moi quantité d’attrait ; j’allais y voir des Arabes, et être en contact avec ce peuple que j’affectionnais déjà sans le connaître ; j’allais voir une nature nouvelle et fouler ce continent mystérieux et si peu connu […]. J’employai les quelques instants qu’il fallut attendre à bord le permis de débarquement, à contempler attentivement le spectacle de la ville, des jardins et des campagnes qui l’entourent, et enfin vers la gauche l’aspect imposant des hautes montagnes de la Cabylie indépendante, dont les cimes neigeuses s’élevaient à l’horizon. – Alger, bâti en amphithéâtre sur une colline, a la

7 Ibid., pp. 14-15.
8 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
The opening lines depict Duveyrier as an exceedingly expectant traveller. He conveys a desire to consume the scene he observes: ‘je promenais mes regards avides.’ His gaze is also heavily predetermined: ‘dont j’avais tant entendu parler’. This first sighting marks a point of culmination before Duveyrier has set foot in Algeria: ‘depuis quelques temps mes plus chers désirs s’étaient dirigés [vers Alger].’ Duveyrier also pre-empts his future experiences by affirming that he will establish an affectionate rapport with the “Arab” people, ‘ce peuple que j’affectionnais déjà sans le connaître’. Duveyrier approached this first encounter with North Africa with significant Orientalist preconceptions. For example, the sentence ‘j’allais voir une nature nouvelle et fouler ce continent mystérieux et si peu connu’, which positions Africa as a new land or tabula rasa, i.e. since it has not yet been explored and “understood” by Westerners it is somehow unformed and empty, an absence waiting to be animated by the powerful Western imagination. The agenda Duveyrier outlines is voyeuristic and blends scientific curiosity with a fascination for the exotic unknown, an agenda which Annie Rey-Goldzeiguer identifies with literary Romanticism: ‘Les romanciers friands d’exotisme depuis le XVIIIe siècle, […] découvrent un cadre nouveau […]. Des paysages vierges, des populations inconnues, des mœurs déconcertantes, voilà ce qu’apporte à l’imagination littéraire l’Algérie, clé du désert et de l’Afrique.’

The second half of the passage provides a practised, aestheticised description of Algiers. It pans in, describing the rugged, snowy mountaintops of Kabylia giving way to more domesticated scenes of gardens on the city outskirts – although it is, in fact, unlikely that it would have been possible to view these features from the approach to the Bay of Algiers. The city itself both mirrors and reverses this framing structure, with the European city surrounding, but dominated by, ‘courronnée par’, the Kasbah. Duveyrier comments that his fellow travellers were struck by the spectacle of the white cone-shaped city and concludes by alluding to an Arabic term

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for Algiers, which suggests a linguistic interest in keeping with the systematic Orientalist intellectual appropriation of the other. This reading is supported by the fact that Duveyrier took lessons in Arabic from the linguist Dr Fleischer in Leipzig prior to this trip alongside instruction in geology, zoology and various natural sciences. Thus, for the young Duveyrier, language and linguistics were disciplines to be scientifically studied and incorporated into the Western canon of knowledge about the Orient. Accordingly, language acquisition was included in a list of pedagogical areas in which Duveyrier estimated that his trip had improved his aptitudes in the dedication to *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* (quoted in Chapter 1).

Conversely, Urbain did not receive formal instruction in Arabic prior to his first encounter with the Orient and acquired his competence *in situ* in Egypt. Upon his arrival in Algiers in 1837, to take up a position as an interpreter, Urbain’s future livelihood rested upon his proficiency, or more accurately his ability to acquire sufficient proficiency by working to extend his existing knowledge of Arabic. In an article he wrote for the newspaper *Le Temps*, Urbain describes a frustrating first attempt at communication with locals in Arabic which he reluctantly abandoned to address a Frenchman in his native tongue instead:

> J’aborde le premier habitant du pays que je trouve sur mon chemin, et lui dressant un salut amical, je lui dis en bon arabe du Caire ; « Honnête Musulman, pourrais-tu me conduire au bazar ? » Le passant s’arrête me regarde de haut en bas et secoue la tête. Je supposai qu’il ne m’avait pas compris, et je repris : « Indique-moi le foundouc où logeai en les étrangers » Il ne me répondit pas autrement que la première fois. « Au moins, lui dis-je ; avez-vous un khan ou descendent les voyageurs ? » Il paraît que mes questions l’importunaient, et il partit sans rien dire. […] Force me fut, malgré toute ma répugnance, de prendre des informations auprès d’un Français et en français.

The problem appears to have been based on Urbain’s incorrect assumption that Algiers would have a bazaar and traditional accommodation for travellers rather than a specific linguistic failure, but the incident points up Urbain’s *apprentissage* of language as a practical rather than an academic exercise, i.e. that he did not seek to employ *joli dictons* like Duveyrier, but to use language to solicit information and to establish a dialogue with the *Indigènes*. Urbain also refers to the ‘bon arabe du Caire’, highlighting that he did not envision one definitive version of Arabic, but a series of vernaculars, which one could acquire – as he had – through direct experience of the regions where it was used in daily life. There is potential for

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11 Duveyrier, 1900, *dédicace*.
developing a detailed analysis of linguistics in the colonial setting and how approaches to language, language acquisition and communication with the Indigènes in Arabic and Berber featured in the works of both Urbain and Duveyrier. In fact, Duveyrier expresses a keen interest in the subject and in his most celebrated text, Les Touareg du Nord, alludes to his efforts to acquire knowledge of the Tuareg Tamasheq language (a member of the Berber linguistic family), from two young tribeswomen whom he encountered. However, an extensive analysis of these linguistic issues is beyond the scope of the present study.

The first impressions of Algiers which are conveyed in Urbain’s article for Le Temps are strikingly at odds with those expressed by Duveyrier. Urbain describes the city as disappointingly Europeanised and nothing like “authentic” oriental cities such as Constantinople, Cairo and Alexandria:

« Où sont : me disais-je, les caïques élancés et si coquets de Constantinople, que de beaux rameurs […] font voler légèrement sur les eaux limpides du Bosphore ! Où sont les minarets et les dômes qui se dressent de toutes parts sur la ville du Caire ! Où sont les palmiers et la colonne d’Alexandrie ! Est-ce bien une ville orientale que je vois devant moi ! » J’étais déjà indisposé contre Alger avant d’avoir touché la terre. Mais combien fut plus grand mon désappointement lorsque je débarquai !

« Maudit repaire de pirates et de corsaires, m’écriai-je, tu ne fus jamais digne d’être une ville orientale. » […] je me fis conduire à l’hôtel du Nord, où je pris une chambre sur la terrasse afin d’échapper le plus qu’il me serait possible au spectacle de l’europanisme.13

Following his effusive opening description, Duveyrier’s account does proceed to manifest some of the disappointments and unsatisfied expectations associated with many other travel narratives, and with Urbain’s article for Le Temps, such as a somewhat deflating encounter with Europeans upon disembarking the steamer, and a scarcity of Indigènes: ‘A peine fûmes-nous à terre, que je fus un instant choqué par l’aspect passablement ignoble d’une nuée de Maltais qui se disputent mes paquets.’14

The reference to Maltais conveys the prominent presence of Europeans of Mediterranean origin which was developing as a key feature of Algerian colonial society. However, more in keeping with Romantic Western images of the Orient is Duveyrier’s first contact with a non-European, a Mauresque (Moorish woman) on his journey inland from Algiers. The Mauresque consents to an examination of her cloak, thus permitting Duveyrier to literally and metaphorically peer beneath the veil:

13 Ibid.
14 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 2.
Quand nous fûmes sortis de la ville, elle ôta son voile, arrangea ses cheveux, quitta ses souliers et s’accroupit sur la banquette absolument comme si elle eût été dans sa chambre. C’était une bonne occasion de connaître l’habillement des Mauresques, et j’en profitai. […] Je lui demandai de voir son h’aïk.¹⁵

Duveyrier had never seen a Mauresque before and knew nothing of how she would behave in her bedroom, his comments thus draw upon an imagined Orient – the imaginaire of Bret’s poles of Saint-Simonian Orientalism. Despite this privileged meeting, it is not until several days after his arrival that Duveyrier describes his first encounter with a significant number of Indigènes in a non-European setting:

Il y avait marché à K’ole’aa, et on voyait une grande quantité d’Arabes Souah’elïa (Habitants du Sah’el) rassemblés pour leurs affaires. C’était la première fois que je voyais un aussi grand nombre d’indigènes réunis, et je leur trouvai une fort mauvaise mine.¹⁶

Clearly, this experience falls well short of ‘ce peuple que j’affectionnais déjà sans le connaître’. The tone is close to that of a subjective ethnographer and conveys a distinct lack of any exuberant affection. Duveyrier will not overcome his disappointment with Arabs in Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger, and this episode marks the beginning of a general antipathy toward Arabs in his work which will be offset by a more positive response to nomadic and Saharan peoples, in particular the Aijer faction of the Tuareg.¹⁷

¹⁷ ‘Some past observers have argued that the Arabs were nomads who lived on the plains [of Algeria] in tents, whereas the Berbers [which include the Tuareg tribes of the Sahara] were sedentary people who lived in the mountains in *gourbis* made of wood and thatch: that the Arabs spoke Arabic and practiced Islam, whereas the Berbers spoke Berber and were more resistant to Islamic culture. By and large, these global generalizations are not accepted by scholars today. The primary distinction between Arab and Berber boils down to a linguistic one. Arabic and Berber belong to different language families […]. The point here is that Arab-Berber differences revolve ultimately around the question of the degree of acculturation which has occurred over the last thousand years. For the Berbers of today are descended from the original inhabitants of North Africa, and the Arabs migrated west from Egypt and Asia Minor a millennium ago. The first Arabs were nomadic, and the Berbers retreated from them in large numbers to the less accessible mountain areas. Hence the stereotypes.’ Prochaska, David, *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1990] 2002), p. 41. See also Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner books, 1991), p. 104, p. 434.
2.3 Significant influences on early style

2.3.1 Egypt: land of opportunity

Historical and cultural curiosity, which typically fuelled the travels of Westerners to the Orient, was intensified for Urbain, since Egypt specifically offered escape from the binary oppositions (Caribbean/Europe, black/white, slave/master) which had defined his identity thus far. Furthermore, in Egypt Urbain achieved a sense of symbolic homecoming by experiencing the continent of his slave ancestors. Jérôme Debrune highlights the unprecedented sense of belonging, which is almost a sense of return expressed by Urbain upon his arrival in Egypt: ‘Alors qu’il se sent une exception en France […], il avoue éprouver une complicité entre lui et les Arabes. L’Égypte devient, pour ainsi dire, une Guyane où il aurait sa place.’ 18 This phenomenon recalls Aimé Césaire’s famous poem ‘Cahier d’un retour au pays natal’ (1939), 19 a central text of the Négritude movement, which sought to rehabilitate black colonial identity. Despite this, Urbain’s poems and journals, such as the following excerpt from ‘La fille de Damnahour’ (1833), suggest that like many nineteenth-century travellers, he was also attracted by Western images of the Orient as a locus for the fulfilment of sensual pleasure:

Moi, je suis né comme elle,
Sous un soleil brûlant;
[…]
A moi, la danseuse,
La fille d’Egypte.
Je l’aime,
Je la veux. 20

Sexual union with dark Egyptian beauties is a prominent theme of the poetry composed by Urbain from 1833 to 1836 and also of nineteenth-century Orientalist Romanticism. In Urbain’s case there was an additional dynamic, as such unions offered both an encounter with the mysterious other and the opportunity to achieve union with his dark-skinned sisters, thus enacting a form of return to his ancestral origins and doubly invoking the imaginaire pole of Bret’s Orientalist triad. The role

of women in Urbain’s writings from his time in Egypt can be illuminated to some extent by means of reference to his journal entries and poems.

2.3.2 A mother’s love: the Dussap family

While in Egypt, Urbain established an intimate acquaintance with the Franco-Egyptian Dussap family, which mirrored his biological family, consisting as it did of a white French expatriate father, a dark-skinned woman of slave origin, Halimah, and mixed-race children; a daughter, Hanem and son, Arif. Whereas Urbain saw his biological mother as unaffectionate, his journals describe how Halimah Dussap lavished him with much craved affection:

Cependant j’allais tous les jours chez M. Dussap […]. C’est dans ce temps que je commençai à goûter les douceurs de la famille dans cette maison. Dieu seul sait comment je fus amené à aimer Mme Dussap et à me faire aimer d’elle. […] On voulut tout de suite m’habiller à la nizam. Elle appelle son tailleur, lui donna de l’argent et le 8 mai, je me trouvai tout équipé des pieds à la tête. […] combien mon amour grandit pour cette femme afin de lui payer en amour sa tant noble et délicate générosité. […] Dieu l’a mise sur ma route afin de me récompenser, je n’en doute pas, de mes travaux apostoliques. Merci et gloire à Dieu, car je n’ai pas compté avec le bonheur dans les jours de son amour !

As the passage suggests, their relationship became an affair, thus lending it a quasi-incestuous dimension. Denise Brahimi highlights Urbain’s numerous affairs with North African, mixed-race or black women as a re-staging of his conception: ‘la liaison amoureuse avec des femmes indigènes, ce dont Ismaïl Urbain est à la fois le représentant et le practicien (par sa naissance et par son mariage)’. In Brahimi’s reading, affairs with women who mirrored Urbain’s mother’s slave and/or African origins constitute an attempt to compensate for the shortcomings of their mother-son relationship. However, as is frequently the case for Urbain, an explanation suggesting a direct cause and effect is not wholly satisfactory and his motivations are more ambivalent than initial appearances, or any single line of inquiry, may suggest.

Urbain’s journals reveal that shortly after he began his association with the Dussap family, he learned of the death of his father in France. Given the economic and social difficulties facing him in France as the unrecognised son of a man who had died leaving him no inheritance, nor any connections to assist him in establishing a career, this development generated a sense of crisis for Urbain, which

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21 Ibid., 68.
23 Urbain, 1993, pp. 69-70.
deepened when an epidemic of bubonic plague swept Egypt – Halimah Dussap became an early victim, thus making her a figure synonymous with loss as well as sensual love in his writing. Following Halimah’s death, Urbain further compounded the quasi-incestuous dynamics of their relationship by transferring his affections to her adolescent daughter, Hanem. Although Urbain’s affections may or may not have been reciprocated, he conveys the intensity of his emotional investment by describing his sorrow in departing from Hanem and the Dussap household. The description also provides a general insight into Urbain’s desperate desire for affection and a sense of belonging, which was probably heightened by the news of his father’s death, thus further distancing him from any sense of the potential for gaining acceptance in France:

Il fallut donc encore une fois m’élCroigner de cette maison qui m’était devenue si chère. Hanem me donna un mouchoir brodé et un dika* qu’elle mit dans mon sac sans me rien dire. […] Je lui serrai longtemps la main et je la quittai sans savoir si son cœur partageait mon amour. J’embrassai Arif et je donnai la main à tous les domestiques. Au moins, en partant, j’étais accompagné de leurs bons souhaits. Combien de fois ne suis-je pas parti d’un lieu regretté de personne, sans bénéédiction pour mon voyage ?²⁴

The epidemic also later claimed Hanem’s life. Urbain’s journals and poems refer to Hanem as his fiancée, and she comes to incarnate both an idealised figure and the embodiment of many of Urbain’s personal disappointments in the writings he produced during and after the epidemic: ‘Dieu a pris pitié de ma jeunesse isolée et de mon amour. Voici la fiancée que mon Cœur désirait si chaudement […]. Dieu me l’envoye pour éclairer ma nuit et ma solitude.’²⁵

Urbain’s journals and poems from this period are dominated by melancholy and fatalism as his Romantic ambitions and the Saint-Simonian mission simultaneously unravelled in the indiscriminate carnage and anarchy of bubonic plague:

A trois heures ½, encore des lettres avec cette puante odeur de ghilleh,* odeur de mort, messagère de larmes et de tristesse. Encore une fois, il faut tremper sa plume de cette encre noyée de larmes ; encore une fois il faut inscrire sur ce livre de mort des noms effacés, des espérances brisées. C’est Lamy, Lamy qui n’est plus parmi nous, qui m’écrit. […] O triste lettre d’un mort pour un mort ! […] Puis c’est Touroundk, l’Abyssinienne d’Hanem […] que j’aimais comme deux sœurs […]. Toutes les femmes que j’ai aimées s’écroulent, mon amour reste debout comme une colonne désolée d’un temple ruiné !²⁶

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²⁴ Ibid., p. 79.
²⁵ Ibid., p. 82.
²⁶ Ibid., p. 107.
The extract communicates Urbain’s desolation in the face of so many untimely deaths, such as that of fellow Saint-Simonian Lamy,\(^{27}\) who we are told eerily died before Urbain received his letter. We witness the recurring fear of isolation, and he employs repetition and images of death and destruction, to convey an impression of relentless suffering: ‘cette encre noyée’, ‘des noms effacés, des espérances brisés’, ‘les femmes […] s’écroulent, mon amour reste debout comme une colonne désolée d’un temple ruiné’. Urbain thus depicts himself as a tortured soul caught in a maelstrom of suffering and death.

### 2.3.3 The fils mal-aimé: a Romantic exile

In the era of literary Romanticism, classical poetry gave way to forms which placed greater emphasis on the ‘je’ figure of the poet, thus facilitating the exploration of intimate topics.\(^{28}\) In keeping with this evolution, Urbain’s most intimate preoccupations are dealt with in his poetry, while his journals address issues of more contemporary social relevance. The poems ‘Au Miroir du Père’ and ‘Mystère’ both date from the first months of 1834. This was a period of intense introspection and identity crisis for Urbain. Poetry was evidently a cathartic outlet and a means of confronting some of the most painful and complex issues underlying his relationship with his biological family and its implications for his sense of identity. The poem ‘Mystère’, dated 1\(^{st}\) February 1834 and ascribed to the location ‘Désert. Ras el Ouadyh’ is unconventional in both form and content.

It comprises three main sections, with a long central prose section enclosed by passages in a more conventional verse form. The Saint-Simonian text *Le Livre Nouveau* advocated literary experimentation, particularly the use of prose in poetic composition: ‘Le verbe d’action, de mouvement, d’entraînement, tiendra plus de la prose.’\(^{29}\) Greg Kerr notes that:

> [The Saint-Simonians] envisaged a reconfiguration of poetic structure from the side of prose. […] contributors [to the *Livre Nouveau*] theorized that verbal dynamism could be discovered within linguistic structures themselves rather than being imposed from without by the mechanism of versification. Thus less regular rhythmical patterns than those created by rhyme and conventional metric forms would give rise to the new configurations of sensation.

\(^{27}\) Although Lamy is depicted as a member of the Saint-Simonian community in Egypt in both Urbain’s journals and Suzanne Voilquin’s travel account, neither provide his first name, although Voilquin’s account does specify that he was employed as an architect. Voilquin, 1866, p. 266.


to which the Saint-Simonian poet aspired. […] For Barrault, a major strategy for the renewal of prosody is an increased use of accent […]. He thus proposed a relation of greater complementarity between the rhythmical variations of the text and its stylistic form.\textsuperscript{30}

The concept of accent calls for particular terms or concepts to be cast into relief. This is usually achieved through combinations of typographic variation. Some forms of accent became conventionalised, such as references to Enfantin as ‘le PÈRE’, using bold, capitalised letters and references to God as ‘DIEU’:

[peculiar typographic] presentation places language in relief; it presents an order of mounting abstraction that is in proportion to the increasing materiality of the printed word, thus suggesting to the reader the sensual immanence of the projected idiom. […] meanwhile the abstract notion of ‘accent’ is inscribed typographically throughout the Livre nouveau by recourse to varying sizes of font.\textsuperscript{31}

Urbain experimented with prose form and with typographical variation in many of his writings from 1833 to 1836. Nonetheless, the opening of ‘Mystère’ employs a relatively conventional verse form. It sets the scene for the act of composition. The lines are short and utilise a conventional poetic vocabulary to evoke the desert by night as a mystical setting for reflection. In this sense it is typical of a Romantic elegy. Literary critics, including David Scott, have observed the unusual productivity of the negative space of the desert for introspective writing:

The fascination of the desert for travellers in the western tradition is […] both hermeneutic and semiological. On the hermeneutic level the desert at first seems to offer unpromising materials: appearing a virtually blank sheet, an empty landscape, it offers little purchase to interpretation. However, its vacant contours are soon imagined to be pregnant with hidden significance. […] It is the site of recollection of or communication with otherwise unheard or forgotten voices, inner or supernatural. It gives access to the deeper self or to the divinity.\textsuperscript{32}

Urbain experiences the desert as precisely this type of space which stimulates introspective thought. The poem opens with an account of the vast emptiness of a nocturnal desert scene which is translated into intimate reflection:

\begin{quote}
Une heure après minuit!
Nous sommes au désert.
Silence dans le ciel ;
Silence sur la terre ;
Partout !

[…]
Cette heure est une heure solennelle,
Une heure du cœur.
On aime le passé :

[…]
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{30} Kerr, Greg, The Poetics of Prose: Urban Utopia and prose by poets in Nineteenth-Century France. (Doctoral thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2009), pp. 46-48. Barrault is a reference to Émile Barrault, a senior Saint-Simonian and one of the movement’s major literary figures. He led the group, including Urbain, which departed from Marseilles in 1833 for Egypt and the Levant.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 48.

\textsuperscript{32} Scott, 2004, p. 137.
These incantatory opening lines emphasise the expansive starry sky (symbolic of eternity) and a symbiotic relationship between the suspended time and space of the desert and the poet’s introspective mood. In these respects it is similar to the climactic scene of Albert Camus’ short story ‘La Femme adulte’, in which a female settler experiences a mystical, sexual union with the nocturnal desert landscape. This comparison will also be relevant to subsequent analysis of Duveyrier’s writing later in this chapter. The aesthetic vision of the opening passage of ‘Mystère’ is broadly representative of the tropes of Romantic Orientalist aesthetics which depict the desert as an empty, primitive space outside time and civilisation, thus providing a counterpoint to modern Western existence.

The dense central prose section initiates a shift in focus from the symbolic, eternal setting of the lyric poet’s solitary contemplation to one which is more temporally and thematically specific, dealing with his birthplace, Cayenne, and his family. It also demonstrates the combined influence of Saint-Simonian literary theory regarding the revitalisation of language through prose and the subsequent stylistic innovations of some Romantic and early modernist poets with respect to the poème en prose, most famously in Charles Baudelaire’s Le Spleen de Paris (Petits poèmes en prose) (1866). The poet introduces the Christian names of his siblings and provides concrete details such as their profession, marital status and defining character traits. Urbain thus seeks to avail of both the allusive language of poetic verse and of prose’s capacity to communicate detailed information. This heterogeneous and disruptive style instigated by shifts in expression, format and subject-matter, is an apt means of conveying the ambivalence Urbain felt towards the

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33 Urbain, 1993, p. 250.
family for which he expresses great love, ‘Je vous aime, ô mes frères’, but simultaneously deep estrangement, ‘Et vous, mes jeunes frères, mes jeunes sœurs, dont je connais à peine la vie’, and draws attention to the fact that he found such issues emotionally charged and deeply confusing. ‘Mystère’ thus constitutes a material reflection of the poet’s conflicted mental state and adheres to the Saint-Simonian literary aspiration of seeking to achieve increased emphasis on the materiality of the written word, as identified in the quotation from Kerr. It also prefigures aspects of Amin Maalouf’s account of the migrant’s fraught relationship with his or her origins in *Les Identités meurtrières* (1998):

Avant de devenir un immigré, on est un émigré ; avant d’arriver dans un pays, on a dû en quitter un autre, et les sentiments d’une personne envers la terre qu’elle a quittée ne sont jamais simples. Si l’on est parti, c’est qu’il y a des choses que l’on a rejettées – la répression, l’insécurité, la pauvreté, l’absence d’horizon. Mais il est fréquent que ce rejet s’accompagne d’un sentiment de culpabilité. Il y a des proches que l’on s’en veut d’avoir abandonnés, une maison où l’on a grandi, tant et tant de souvenirs agréables.

In this passage Maalouf evokes many of the core issues at stake in ‘Mystère’, such as criticism and rejection of the place of origin, feelings of guilt in having abandoned loved ones, and happy memories of home.

The detailed account in ‘Mystère’ of the poet’s siblings – living, dead and still-born – exposes an uneasy relationship with a disjointed family, which occupies a no-man’s land of social and class relations. The closing stanzas elaborate how the poet’s family are ambiguously poised on the border between black and white racial communities in Cayenne, economically privileged as plantation-owners, but also eternally stigmatised as the illegitimate, second family of a European businessman. Urbain thus conveys his sense of his in-between condition, which deprives him of any feeling of belonging, felt most acutely in relation to his birthplace:

Nous avons dans nos maisons,
Sur nos plantations,
Des esclaves noirs,
[…]
Vous savez tous ce que c’est !
Toute notre famille est sang-mêlé ;
Notre aïeule était noire.
Les hommes de couleur ne sont pas *Blancs*.
Ils ne sont pas noirs,
Ils ne sont pas esclaves,
Ils ne sont pas maîtres,
Ils sont hommes de couleur.

37 *Ibid*.
39 Urbain, 1993, pp. 252-53.
In *Entre-deux : L’origine en partage* (1991), Daniel Sibony links the theoretical concept of *l’entre-deux* with the subject’s exploration of the difficulties and complexities of their origins and the associated potential for the development of a composite form of identity:

> Pour passer l’entre-deux, et recoller quelques morceaux, il faut pouvoir faire le voyage de l’origine [...] dans ces quêtes confuses, on trouve parfois juste ce qu’il faut pour se libérer de l’origine, pour prendre son départ et n’avoir plus à revenir compulsivement. [...] La traversée de l’entre-deux est alors celle de l’origine. [...] ces épreuves sont de celles qui rendent possible *l’origine multiple*, l’identité morcelée mais consistante, avec des trous et des reprises, des tours et des retours.  

Elsewhere, Sibony remarks that the act of writing, as for Urbain in Egypt, often amounts to a rite of passage into alterity: ‘Curieux que la question de l’écriture soit aussi celle de l’identité; que faut-il honorer dans une langue pour qu’elle vous laisse passer ailleurs, ou accepter l’ailleurs ?’

It is unsurprising that Urbain found Egypt, where numerous races and cultures intermingled, a liberating alternative to Cayenne’s rigidly stratified colonial society, as described in ‘Mystère’, where the racial composition of family lineages was minutely observed and power lay in the hands of the all-powerful *Blancs*, while solidarity between people of colour such as his mixed-race family and black slaves remained non-existent. In this way Urbain’s writing also echoes the motivations behind the programme for the rehabilitation of black identity promoted by the twentieth century *Négritude* movement, which sought to overcome superimposed Western, “white” values that taught Caribbean peoples of slave or colonised origins to consider themselves in exclusively negative terms. For example, the writing of Guianese poet and political activist Léon Gontran-Damas, which refers to a sense of violated justice and continued exploitation as central to the Guianese consciousness, thus recalling Urbain’s analysis of Guianese identity and his use of religious imagery in ‘Mystère’:

> Il serait d’une odieuse injustice d’examiner le Guyanais au point de vue psychologique, sans tenir compte de ce fait essentiel qu’une grande partie de sa mentalité actuelle ne lui est pas foncièrement propre, mais lui a été, au contraire, imposée par une longue série de malheurs, d’inquiets et d’injures. [...] 

> Puis le Guyanais se sépare de ses congénères par le caractère tenace et insoluble de sa rancune : le souvenir d’un tort, d’un affront reçu ne s’efface jamais de son esprit.

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41 Ibid., p. 58.  
In the central prose section of ‘Mystère’, Urbain emphasises how he refused to comply with his parents’ expectations and asserted his independence:

Or écoutez : moi, votre frère, je suis un homme nouveau, depuis deux ans le monde m’appelle fou ; j’ai échappé aux projets que mon père avait formés sur moi ; je vis indépendant de nos parens [sic], d’une vie qui n’a pas d’exemple parmi vous. 44

He then expresses disappointment and a sense of loss that this assertion of independence deprived him of a more intimate acquaintance with his siblings: ‘Dieu me mettra auprès de vous pour que nous parlions ensemble de cette fraternité si tôt brisée !’ 45 However, despite these regrets, the affirmation ‘je suis un homme nouveau’ is crucially important and foreshadows a plea to his siblings to assert their own independence, even if it necessitates distancing themselves from him, as he distanced himself from their parents to embark upon his reinvention. Paradoxically l’homme nouveau is also a prominent trope of colonial representation and thus hints at the subliminal influence of colonisation on Urbain’s psychological formation in addition to influences which he acknowledges in explicit terms.

The poet continues by advocating his family’s dissolution and conveys the extent of his bitterness toward a mother whom he sees as having denied him the love she affords his siblings:

notre mère vous aime et ne m’aime pas. C’est donc avec toute loyauté de cœur, en conservant votre indépendance que vous devez écouter ce que je vais dire, afin que je ne vous impose plus mon patronage. Prenez chacun votre nom et fondez seul votre famille si vous ne voulez pas de celle dont je suis la souche et le père 146

References to dead or still-born siblings equal or exceed those to the living, pointedly associating this family more with death than life. The central prose and the final verse sections mark an attempt to revive the memory of the poet’s deceased siblings, belatedly bringing them to life:

Vous êtes six, les enfants [sic] morts-nés, je suis celui qui doit vous engendrer à la vie. Lorsque votre père, votre mère, vos parens [sic], vous oublient, c’est moi qui vous recueille dans mon amour. Vous êtes mes aînés et je vous sens vivre en moi, j’ai hâte de vous donner la vie. Je sens votre impatience, ô mes frères, mes enfants [sic] ! 47

This eerie imagery is again reminiscent of the gothic and supernatural aesthetics favoured by poets such as Poe, which frequently take death or a return from the grave as central themes. The work of Kerr on depictions of urban space in the poetry

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46 Ibid., p. 252.
47 Ibid.
of Charles Duveyrier and Michel Chevalier\textsuperscript{48} is among a small number of recent thematic analyses of Saint-Simonian poetry, but the exploration of Romantic aesthetics in Urbain’s poetry is an additional area which merits further scholarly attention. The concept of reseventing one’s dead or still-born siblings in oneself is probably derived in Urbain’s case from Saint-Simonian teachings which suggested that human souls had permeable boundaries and both pre-existed birth and endured following death. This was termed \textit{la vie une et multiple} and was outlined by Enfantin in a number of works, such as an extended letter to Charles Duveyrier.\textsuperscript{49} In ‘Mystère’ the poet adopts a form of auto-exile, asserting his determination to found an alternative lineage – a project which he later puts into practice in Algeria – the “what might have been” of his biological family. Urbain’s doomed affair with Halimah Dussap and pursuit of her daughter Hanem could be interpreted as an effort to found such an alternative lineage in the more cosmopolitan space of Egypt as a desirable counterpoint to Cayennne’s restrictive society.

\section*{2.4 Nostalgia and the condition of exile}

Themes of death and grief pervade Urbain’s later poems and journal entries in Egypt: ‘Et alors je sortirai de ce cercle de contagion et de mort qui environne l’Égypte et semble devoir en dévorer tous les habitants [sic]’.\textsuperscript{50} Despite this, Urbain retained some of the optimism of earlier poems such as ‘Au Miroir du Père’ and ‘Mystère’ which aspired to the positive figure of \textit{l’homme nouveau}. The following excerpt from Urbain’s journals, in the aftermath of the epidemic, predicts the resurgence of a new Egyptian people, made stronger by suffering: ‘S’il est vrai que la mort ne soit qu’un enfantement, que le sépulcre ne soit qu’un berceau, voici que nous allons voir surgir un peuple nouveau, fort, puissant, aimant et qui travaillera avec ardeur à se guérir de tout ce qu’il a souffert’.\textsuperscript{51} This passage can be read as a metaphor for Urbain’s personal journey of identity in Egypt understood as a cathartic coming of age experience which precipitated his rebirth as a more resilient figure. The image of the cradle or \textit{berceau} is once again prominent. Here it is associated with rebirth as well as childhood and nurturing love.

\textsuperscript{48} Kerr, 2009.
\textsuperscript{49} Enfantin, Barthélemy Prosper, \textit{Lettre à Charles Duveyrier sur la vie éternelle} : [juin 1830] (Paris: Alexandre Johanneau, 1834).
\textsuperscript{50} Urbain, 1993, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 156.
In later poems from his time in Egypt, such as ‘Vingt-trois ans !’, Urbain becomes increasingly open to the prospect of a nomadic existence as his divinely ordained duty, and accepts that achieving a definitive sense of belonging is not necessarily his destiny:

Amis, nous sommes dans la vie comme des oiseaux passagers, nous bâtissons à la hâte sur chacune de ces années un nid tout couvert de duvet où nous abritons nos espérances. Hélas ! Bien souvent le temps nous chasse sans pitié, avant que nous ayons vu pousser ces plumes désirées qui porteront notre couvée à travers l’immense mer. Il faut partir, il faut chercher d’autres climats, toujours, sans cesse, jusqu’à ce que la fatigue nous prenne dans ce long pèlerinage et nous confie aux soins muets de la mort, pour nous porter à Dieu.\textsuperscript{52}

The metaphor of the migrant bird to evoke the solitary artist was immortalised in Charles Baudelaire’s poem ‘L’Albatros’, which featured in the 1857 collection Les Fleurs du mal. However, in his earlier poem Urbain relates the image of the migratory bird to a class of exiled, wandering colonised peoples, for whom he, the poet, acts as a representative figure, as distinct from Baudelaire’s comparison of the albatross to the artist as a unique and misunderstood individual, who stands apart from any social grouping or affiliations. In ‘Vingt-trois ans !’ Urbain and his kind are compelled to journey across oceans connecting their present and past by a complex triangulation of Africa, Europe and the colonial Caribbean, but even these exertions do not lead to resolution, but rather to lifelong pilgrimage through errance. Composed in Cairo shortly before Urbain’s departure from Egypt, the poem also conveys the powerful extent of his developing nostalgia:

En vain, j’ai retardé mon départ comme si j’eusse craint qu’en me séparant de l’Egypte, elle allait, jalouse m’arracher plus vite d’entre les bras de cette année expirante ! En vain, je me suis hâté de courir à toutes les sources d’amour que je connaissais pour y puiser un divin breuvage qui pût retenir au milieu de mes jeunes années le vieux temps enchanté ! Hélas ! ni mes chants d’amour, ni mes prières, ni mes pleurs, n’ont pu obtenir un seul répit ; il a traversé avec indifférence toutes ces fraîches richesses que j’étalais sous ses yeux : il n’a fait que sourire en écoutant mon âme si candide !... Il est passé ?\textsuperscript{53}

Urbain’s evocations of his psychological unease as he faced an uncertain future, newly armed with a more positive self-image derived from his membership of the Saint-Simonian movement and various formative experiences, correspond quite closely to the complex condition of the exile theorised by Edward Said:

For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension […]. There is also a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 325.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 324.
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This remains risky, however: the habit of dissimulation is both weary and nerve-wracking. Exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure. [...] a life of exile moves according to a different calendar, and is less seasonal and settled than life at home. Exile is life led outside habitual order. It is nomadic, decentered, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew.54

The extended metaphor of the migrant bird which must rebuild its life at regular intervals and travel great distances without hope of reaching a permanent destination in the first of the two quotations from ‘Vingt-trois ans!’ mirrors Said’s description of the condition of the exile as insecurity and constant adaptation to change. Thus, like many Western travellers who preceded him, Urbain found a sense of spiritual communion and homecoming in the Orient, but unlike most others, he had no prior feelings of authentic attachment to another location. The Orient’s symbolic fecundity constituted a spiritual home and encouraged ambitions he could not have conceived in the countries to which he bore an affiliation by birth. Poétique de la Relation (1990), by Martinican theorist Édouard Glissant, highlights a vision of errance which speaks to Urbain’s re-evaluation of his hybridity and his rootlessness as a rhizomic capacity to relate to many different peoples, rather than the limiting inability to obtain an “authentic” sense of belonging:

L’errance ne procède pas d’un renoncement, ni d’une frustration par rapport à une situation d’origine [...] ce n’est pas un acte déterminé de refus, ni une pulsion incontrôlée d’abandon. On se retrouve parfois, abordant aux problèmes de l’Autre ; les histoires contemporaines en fournissent quelques exemples éclatants : ainsi du trajet de Frantz Fanon, de Martinique en Algérie. C’est bien là l’image du rhizome, qui porte à savoir que l’identité n’est plus toute dans la racine, mais aussi dans la Relation.55

Urbain’s conversion to Islam and the affection he expresses for the people of Egypt suggest that he was capable of relating to others on their terms, a capacity which is evoked by Glissant as characteristic of errance.

Like Glissant and Said, Homi Bhabha also links hybridity and marginality to productivity. In The Location of Culture (1994), Bhabha outlines the creation of a form of identitary interspace which, like Glissant’s vision of errance, resonates with the appreciation of hybrid identity arrived at by Urbain during his time in Egypt. Similar to Said’s conception of exile, this interspace is understood by Bhabha as a condition of permanent contingency which, although unsettling, is pregnant with productive potential:

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Freud’s concept of the ‘narcissism of minor differences’ – reinterpreted for our purposes – provides a way of understanding how easily the boundary that secures the cohesive limits of the Western nation may imperceptibly turn into a contentious internal liminality providing a place from which to speak both of, and as, the minority, the exilic, the marginal and the emergent.56

While expressing uncertainty regarding his future, the concluding passages of Urbain’s journals also reveal a newfound confidence in his ability to adapt to whatever conditions he may face and to proceed constructively, thanks to rather than in spite of his marginal position. This recalls Sibony’s account of travel and l’entre-deux: ‘Il ne s’agit pas d’aller vers l’origine mais de voyager avec l’idée de l’origine, de faire voyager l’origine.’57 As we have observed, Urbain’s outlook at the end of his time in Egypt also resonates with broadly positive postcolonial analyses of errance and the condition of exile:

Je n’ose pas encore envisager bien sérieusement la position que je puis avoir en France; et ce n’est que l’irrésolution connue de mon caractère qui m’inspire quelque confiance, car je m’imagine encore, pour me consoler, que si je ne crois pas à toutes les espérances que j’ai fait naître, c’est un effet de mon naturel. Que ferais-je? Sera-ce dans la littérature que je prendrai mon rang? Dans le théâtre? ou bien dans la politique? Je ne sais, je doute. Il faut que je me représente sans cesse devant les yeux le PÈRE m’encourageant, ayant foi dans mon talent, pour ne pas désespérer de mon avenir. Cependant, il y a quelque chose d’instinctif chez moi qui me dit que lorsque je serai une fois lancé dans ma voie, j’irai hardiment. Nous verrons. En tout cas, les bénédictions du Père et de tous mes frères m’accompagnent.58

The emotional resilience that Urbain acquired from introspective reflection, exposure to formative experiences and the support of his Saint-Simonian surrogate family in Egypt considerably bolstered his capacity to cope with an uncertain future and to embrace the condition of exile, rather than succumbing to the sense of inferiority and contamination which commonly defined colonial self-images in his era. This helped him to cultivate a positive vision of the in-between identity which he ultimately chose to embrace, and which Sibony evokes affirmatively in the following terms:

Pouvoir quitter l’origine, autrement qu’en lui cherchant un simple double ou un reflet, rester ouvert à ses irrruptions récurrentes, est un défi qui n’est pas simple à relever. Il y faut une force d’amour qui tienne autant de la passion que de l’exil ou du détachement passionné et serein. […]

[…] l’origine apparaît comme à la fois ce qui nous porte et qui en même temps est perdu, ou « partagé », morcelé, ne s’appartenant pas, ne nous appartenant pas mais prenant part au processus où l’on advient, et où s’égrainent successivement nos clichés d’origine. Ces clichés, nous les « prenons » pour prendre part à l’origine comme pour la remettre à distance – pour éviter de la rejeter ou d’être captif de ce rejet. Mais c’est au passage de l’entre-deux que l’origine se fait parlante ; dans le partage de l’origine que l’entre-deux instaure.59

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58 Urbain, 1993, pp. 199-201.
2.5 Apprentissage and Boy’s Own adventure

Duveyrier’s *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* frequently takes the form of a linear narrative punctuated by a series of excursions, many of which were devised by Warnier or Mac Carthy specifically for his amusement:

> M. Warnier avait organisé une excursion pour explorer un des bras de l’Oued Ouedjer. Le caporal commandant des condamnés militaires arriva dans la matinée, et nous partîmes tous les trois pour faire une reconnaissance des lieux, du côté où nous traverserions le fleuve. […] Enfin nous revînmes à K’andourî pour déjeuner […]

This itinerary of amusing excursions, supports Casajus’ stance that the trip was arranged by Charles Duveyrier as a controlled expiation of his son’s adolescent whim, rather than as a precursor to a career as an explorer. There is an air of school boy fantasy about many episodes, as though Duveyrier sought out adventure and learning through play in an enactment of a Boy’s Own adventure. Additionally, he was following in the footsteps of mentors and predecessors such as Oscar Mac Carthy and Eugène Fromentin, who had hunted together at the lake mentioned in the following passage:61

> Je passai la matinée à courir, le fusil sur l’épaule, de l’autre côté de l’Oued Kherchî, à travers des broussailles et des ravinis, où je m’attendais à tout moment à être en présence d’une panthère, car de temps en temps une odeur fétide de bête féroce indiquait que quelqu’une de ces bêtes à belles robes avait passé par là peu auparavant. Cette attente me plaisait ; j’aurais désiré voir une panthère […]. Malheureusement je n’eus pas ce bonheur. Après le dîner, un Arabe nommé Abd-el-Kader, chasseur de profession, vint me chercher pour aller chasser avec lui sur le lac H’alloula. […] En rechargeant mon fusil je manquai faire chavirer la barque, et quand nous arrivâmes à terre, nous avions de l’eau presqu’au ras du bordage. Comme j’étais trempé, je jugeai à propos de revenir le plus vite possible à K’andourî.

Rather than expiating his youthful enthusiasm for adventure, the trip galvanised Duveyrier’s determination to pursue a career as an explorer and during these excursions he sought to acquire skills which would serve him in such a future career in addition to satisfying his boyish appetite for adventure and fulfilling many of his romanticised prejudices regarding North Africa. Thus, *Journal d’un voyage*...

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60 Duveyrier, 1900, pp. 7-8.
61 ‘[Fromentin] made a three-day expedition, between 22 and 25 October 1847, to Lake Haloula and Timpaza, which was to prove memorable, in both his life and his work. […] In the context of the expedition to Lake Haloula and Tipaza, Vandell [frequently a pseudonym for Mac Carthy in Fromentin’s writing] expressed the military point of view, from which Fromentin, in his turn, sought to distance himself. They prepared for a hunt, one of Fromentin’s favourite activities […]’ Wright, Barbara, *Eugène Fromentin: A Life in Art and Letters* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 190.
62 Duveyrier, 1900, pp. 19-20.
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dans la province d’Alger is punctuated by references to Duveyrier’s progress in mastering pursuits such as hunting: ‘Je n’avais tué qu’un loriot d’Afrique.’, ‘Je remarquai que j’avais fait des progrès dans le tir ; il m’arriva même de tuer cinq oiseaux isolés, coup sur coup’. The following extract suggests that romanticised images of game-hunting had made a considerable impression on Duveyrier:

j’ajustai, elles s’envolèrent, le coup partit et l’un de ces oiseaux retomba dans l’eau. […] Tout en marchant, Abd-el-Kader me donna une idée des habitudes du gibier du pays. […] Je demandai à Abd-el-Kader s’il n’y avait pas moyen de faire une chasse à l’affût à la panthère ou au moins à la hyène et au chacal, car j’aurais bien voulu tuer quelques-uns de ces animaux pour en avoir la peau.63

Trophy-oriented game-hunting, similar to that referred to by Duveyrier, particularly lion-hunting was celebrated in the writings of army officiers who served in Algeria, such as Le Tueur de lions (1855), by Jules Gérard. Lion-hunting in Algeria was famously parodied in Alphonse Daudet’s comic novel Tartarin de Tarascon (1872) as a deluded exercise in self-agrandisement and colonial domination. In fact Duveyrier is listed among the explorers whose accounts Daudet’s hero Tartarin has read, rendering his depiction of colonial Algeria an implicit target of Daudet’s satire. Duveyrier’s Journal also relates his first experiences of the harsh conditions of desert travel:

Il faisait très chaud, l’air était lourd, et quoique nous ne fussions qu’au mois de mars, le soleil était déjà très ardent […]. Depuis notre départ […] je n’avais rien bu, car j’avais dédaigné l’eau du Bir-el-H’amra, l’ayant trouvé trop bourbeuse ; je fus bien puni de ma délicatesse et depuis ce temps, je ne trouvai plus d’eau que je dédaignasse, quelque aspect qu’elle eût.66

His persona is thus primarily that of an earnest pupil keen to absorb scientific information, to acquire the survival skills necessary for desert travel and to master the manly pursuits favoured by colonial pioneers, such as hunting and horsemanship.67 These formative episodes, combined with the journal form of the text, lend it a roman d’apprentissage quality.

63 Ibid., p. 9, p. 58.
64 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
65 Tartarin’s reading on African exploration also includes the works of such celebrated figures as the Scottish explorers Mungo Park and David Livingstone, and their French counterparts, including the Saharan travellers, René Caillé and Henri Duveyrier.’ Dine, Philip, ‘Big-Game hunting in Algeria from Jules Gérard to Tartarin de Tarascon’, pp. 47-58, in Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings (Vol. 12. 1, 2012), p. 54.
66 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 50.
67 Ibid., p. 45.
2.5.1 Maintaining European conventions

In addition to Duveyrier’s lust for adventure, and although the apprentice explorer revelled in excursions and minor adventures, as the quotes above have already demonstrated, he was cautious not to abandon European cultural norms, including the familiarity of daily routines such as mealtimes. In this sense, Duveyrier’s trip, with its predetermined itinerary, could be regarded as a nineteenth-century equivalent of the modern-day adventure holiday, which marries alterity with many of the norms of home. Duveyrier’s experience is similar in many respects to that of the modern tourist, whose relationship to the destination environment is often ambiguous, and frequently poses a threat to the very cultural difference that motivates the initial desire to travel: ‘Like all foreign influences, tourism ultimately destroys the object – the exotic, the Other – that it seeks to possess.’68 The concept of participating in the destruction of an object by seeking to gain access to it will become increasingly pertinent to Duveyrier as a writer and an explorer, and also to the European intellectual appropriation of foreign territories in general over the nineteenth century. In *Le Temps* Urbain expressed his distaste for the attempted Europeanisation of Algeria’s built environment, expressing his lack of interest in Europeanised towns. This tendency is echoed in Duveyrier’s writing: ‘Je ne dirai rien sur l’état actuel de Medïa ; pour moi, les villes où le cachet européen domine n’ont que peu d’intérêt.’69 This was despite France’s explicit goal of Europeanising Algeria, the reality that allowed colonial agents such as Warnier to make Duveyrier’s trip possible, while in the case of Urbain the colonial project was his professional *raison d’être*. Like many tourists Duveyrier harbours the fantasy of discovering an unspoilt or virgin terrain which Sibony evokes in the following terms:

> arriver le premier au Nouveau Monde, [...] but du voyage, pour constater que c’était vierge. Virginité donc, arriver juste à temps pour l’imminence d’une trace première. Fantasme d’arriver, et que l’arrivée soit elle-même la nouveauté qu’elle promet ; arriver au lieu unique.70

69 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 28.
2.5.2 Depictions of the Indigènes

Duveyrier describes how his trip, like those of other tourists, allocated time for the observation of local culture and daily life. For example, Warnier escorted him to observe village life in two rural settlements on his estate in the Mitidja. In the process, Warnier, who was to become a key figure in the lives and careers of Duveyrier and Urbain comes across as the quintessential colonist with an overwhelming sense of entitlement to the lands he has appropriated:

[Warnier] résolut d’aller faire une visite aux villages dans la matinée, pour me montrer un peu les gourbis, et pour voir lui-même les villages qu’il n’avait pas encore visités. […] […] on apporta du lait, car, comme tout le monde sait, l’hospitalité arabe veut que l’hôte ne s’en aille pas sans avoir « rassasié son ventre » […] Je bus donc à la manière arabe […] Le vase fut ensuite présenté à M. Warnier qui fumait un cigare ; il refusa, disant ; « Non, je n’en veux point. » […] Le Berbère dans la hutte duquel nous étions nous dit que, lors de l’arrivée des Français, il possédait une maison dans la montagne, mais qu’elle fut brûlée pendant la guerre. M. Warnier lui répondit que si, au lieu de tirer sur les Français, il leur avait apporté du miel et de la farine, ses biens auraient été épargnés. Cette réponse satisfit complètement notre hôte, qui dit alors d’un air convaincu et en branlant la tête « bes’sah’ » (c’est vrai !). 71

The concluding passage suggests that Warnier regarded as trivial the violence perpetrated against the Indigènes during the French military conquest. Yet it was the continued threat and practice of violence which ultimately preserved his settler lifestyle in Algeria. The spectre of violence forms an undercurrent in Duveyrier’s account, for example his observation of the mauvaise mine of the first group of Indigènes he encountered is explained by the more experienced Mac Carthy in terms of a fear of violence: ‘M. Mac-Carthy, il me répondit : « Ne craignez rien, s’il y a quelques-uns qui vous regardent de côté, c’est qu’ils redoutent que vous ne leur fassiez administrer des coups de bâton »’. 72 Later in the text Duveyrier notes that: ‘Le Targui avait laissé son sabre à Ouargla, […] car les habitants de cette ville lui avaient assuré que c’était une mesure indispensable pour ne pas être tué par les Français.’ 73 Both of these references suggest that the Indigènes Duveyrier encountered were noticeably fearful of the continued threat of French violence.

Duveyrier’s portrayal of the passive Berber’s jovial acceptance of Warnier’s propositions obviously sits very uneasily with any modern reader, but it is also a useful illustration of his susceptibility as an author to the norms of colonial rhetoric which sought to justify the imposition of European authority over non-Europeans.

71 Duveyrier, 1900, pp. 12-15.
72 Ibid., p. 5.
73 Ibid., p. 53.
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and served to underpin the rationale of la mission civilisatrice.\textsuperscript{74} In fact, Duveyrier’s Journal frequently describes the Indigènes as won over by the virtue of Frenchmen. This is only occasionally belied by references, such as those above, to fearful Indigènes. Duveyrier’s account of a judicial hearing presided over by the Bureau arabe official M. Pharaon is exemplary of the category of supposedly grateful Indigènes:

Un Arabe avait donné sa fille à un mari qui la maltraitait. Le père eut une dispute avec son gendre, qui lui donna un coup de bâton sur la tête. Le patient était venu demander justice. […] Le procès ne fut pas long : le mari fut condamné à 50 francs de dommages et intérêts en faveur du père et de plus à une amende de 50 francs au profit de l’État. L’Arabe, ému jusqu’au fond du cœur d’avoir ainsi gagné 50 francs, et qui aurait sans doute voulu avoir reçu bon nombre d’autres coups à ce prix-là, vint baiser respectueusement le genou de M. Pharaon. Ainsi se termina en quelques instants cette affaire.\textsuperscript{75}

This account, based on brief observation of a French-dominated setting, asserts that the reparations imposed by Pharaon neatly resolved the affair – no allusion is made to the subsequent fate of the plaintiff’s daughter, her welfare does not appear to concern the court, or anyone else. The grateful plaintiff kissing Pharaon’s knee is echoed in a later account of a guide – referred to as an ethnic type: le nègre rather than by name, much like le Berbère who spoke to Warnier – who kisses Duveyrier’s and Mac Carthy’s hands following their intervention to spare him punishment by another indigène guide, Couider:

Couider avait menacé le nègre qui nous avait guidés dans le marais de lui faire donner la bastonnade pour s’être si mal acquitté de ses fonctions, mais je jugeai à propos de lui faire grâce, c’est pourquoi il vint me remercier et me baiser la main ainsi qu’à M. Mac-Carthy.\textsuperscript{76}

These accounts of grateful Indigènes also share a slightly mocking tone trivialising them as quaint figures of fun for the European observer. Duveyrier’s supposition that the Indigènes’ pervading feelings toward the French had, by 1857, – less than ten years after the surrender of Abd-el-Kader which marked the official end of the French campaign of military conquest\textsuperscript{77} – become those of gratitude and deference,

\textsuperscript{74} ‘the idea that they were there in order to carry out a civilising mission was strong among Europeans who ruled or conducted their business in Arab countries, whether it expressed itself as the idea of a superior civilisation bringing a lower or a moribund one to its own level, or the creation of justice, order and prosperity, or the communication of a language and the culture expressed in it. Such ideas, of which the logical conclusion was the ultimate absorption of Arabs on a level of equality into a new, unified world, were crossed by others: a sense of an unbridgeable difference, of an innate superiority which conferred the right to rule,’ Hourani, 1991, p. 324.

\textsuperscript{75} Duveyrier, 1900, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., pp. 76-77.

\textsuperscript{77} ‘En décembre 1847, Abd el-Kader, symbole de la résistance algérienne, se rend. […] La conquête totale est presque achevée en 1847. Il ne reste que quelques pôles de résistance dans les massifs kabyles et dans le Sahara et le Sud algérien.’ Rey-Goldezieguer, in Meyer et al., 1991, pp. 358-59.
betrays a self-deceiving Eurocentric outlook which had important consequences for Duveyrier’s later writing. It is strikingly at odds with an episode related by an army lieutenant to his contemporary Eugène Fromentin during his travels in the Sahara in the summer of 1853 and published in *Un été dans le Sahara* (1887). The account in Fromentin’s work foregrounds an *indigène* desire for violent retribution which will not be forsaken:

« Eh bien, en conscience, ces gens-là ne sont pas méchants », disait le lieutenant en me montrant quelques groupes d’individus qui se levait sur notre passage, et nous disaient presque affectueusement bonjour. « On les a mis dans l’impossibilité de bouger, mais non de nuire. Avez-vous vu les rues hier soir ? En France on les appellerait des coupe-gorge. Après cela, chez nous on se venge tout de suite, ou à m’écrocher, vivant, pour faire un tambour avec ma peau. En attendant Dieu l’avait écrit ; Si-el-Hadj-Aïca l’avait annoncé. »

We could thus hypothesise that father-figures such as Warnier distracted Duveyrier from *indigène* hostility, or that Duveyrier naively overestimated the native population’s level of respect for French authority and thus its willingness to forgo vengeance for the prolonged violent conquest. However, regardless of the underlying cause or causes, Duveyrier manifests a propensity to classify the *Indigènes* with whom he interacts as good and bad servants, and the French, by implication, as their masters:

Nous n’avons jamais eu qu’à nous louer de la conduite excellente et du bon caractère de Moh’ammed, notre chamelier, tandis que Couider, au contraire, nous a causé bien des désagréments par son humeur contrariante et le manque d’énergie de son caractère.

By the same token, Duveyrier’s allusions to the *Indigènes* who mimic French manners and dress convey considerable disdain. For example, he describes a former spahi – a class of soldier in the *corps indigène* of the French army: ‘Rien n’est plus risible que de le voir les poings sur les hanches, faisant l’apologie des Français au détriment de toute la race bédouine.’ Ridicule of native people who mimic European manners is a common colonial trope noted by David Spurr:

If the act of going native represents one threat to this exclusionary principle, what happens when the natives, from their side, take on the manners and values of the European coloniser? In another paradox of colonial discourse, the natives are reviled for their non-Western otherness, yet ridiculed for their attempts to imitate the forms of the West.

79 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 68.
81 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 73.
Spurr links mockery to a fear of going native. This linkage resonates with Duveyrier’s attentiveness to the observance of European social norms, as in the following episode when an excursion is suspended to respect the convention of dinner-time:

> Je remarquai que j’avais fait des progrès dans le tir ; il m’arriva même de tuer cinq oiseaux isolés, coup sur coup, ce que je n’aurais jamais été en état de faire lors de mon excursion à K’andourî. Enfin l’heure du dîner étant arrivée, nous revînmes aux chevaux et nous remîmes en selle.\(^83\)

This and similar episodes underline the perceived primacy of European culture in Duveyrier’s account. His mockery, particularly of the former spahi may also be accounted for through Bhabha’s concept of mimicry as a source of discomfort for the coloniser, i.e. that Duveyrier is unsettled by the encounter at a subconscious level. As Bhabha puts it: ‘The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to menace – a difference that is almost total but not quite.’\(^84\) Such a reading is also supported by Duveyrier’s reference to the mauvaise mine of the first group of Indigènes he encountered with Mac Carthy.\(^85\) The related concept of menace, alluded to by Bhabha will prove to be particularly significant in Duveyrier’s later writing and will be discussed in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

Duveyrier’s derisive attitude toward those Indigènes whom he depicts as adopting a superficial mimicry of European manners can be contrasted with his description of how he was impressed by the the traditional Tuareg dress and weaponry of the Targui he met in Laghouat:

> Ce fut avec un bien grand plaisir que j’appris qu’il y avait à Lar’ouat un Targui, qui venait d’arriver de R’at’ par Ouargla. […] Il portait un turban blanc élevé et sa figure était voilée par un « lethâm* » blanc. […] Il portait à son bras droit un anneau de pierre noire. Sa voix était douce comme celle d’une femme, ce qui faisait un singulier contraste avec les timbres grossiers des Arabes. […] Il avait amené son « meh’ari » ou chameau de course. C’était un animal très haut sur jambes et infiniment plus grand, plus fort et mieux fait que les autres chameaux. […] Au côté était attaché le fourreau du fameux sabre dont les Touâreg se servent avec une habileté consommée pour couper les jarrets de leurs ennemis.\(^86\)

Although the Targui rides a camel not a horse, the description recalls that of a knight on horseback. It praises the animal and its imposing shape, height and implicit speed and alludes to the Targui’s sheath for a famed weapon. He displays affluence in the

\(^{83}\) Duveyrier, 1900, p. 58.


\(^{85}\) Duveyrier, 1900, p. 5.

\(^{86}\) Ibid., pp. 52-53.
form of a jewelled ring which is suggestive of elevated social status, noble birth, or possibly femininity. The comparison of his voice to those of Arabs suggests refinement and an effeminate quality. In addition to this, the veiled Targui is evoked as a figure of mystery somewhat like an errant knight, or given the references to his voice and jewelled ring, a noble damsel and thus a passive, feminised colonial other who can be admired without posing an overt threat to masculine French colonisers.

Although Duveyrier foregrounds observation of fact in his epistemological project, his writing displays a preference for many of the preoccupations of Romantic Orientalism, including a fascination with an imagined and isolated Orient populated by nomads who recall a long disappeared, or mythic European past. Duveyrier’s attitudes toward the various Indigènes he encounters imply that the potential for drawing comparisons with the romance and legend of medieval Europe fuels his admiration for the Tuareg, whereas indigène attempts to adopt contemporary French customs and manners subconsciously unnerve him.

2.5.3 Romantic aesthetics and colonialist representation

Anne Mc Clintock has observed how the colonial journey is frequently construed as a journey back in time: ‘True to the trope of anachronistic space, the journey into the interior is, like almost all colonial journeys, figured as a journey forward in space but backward in time.’ Several episodes in Duveyrier’s Journal evoke his experiences in these terms. On some occasions the journey leads him to a primeval space:

La rivière coulait à quelques pas de nous dans le milieu d’un ravin qu’elle avait creusé et dont elle sape encore continuellement les bords, ce qui occasionne de fréquents éboulements. […] Ce ravin de l’Ouedjër est frayé au travers d’une forêt primitive, de sorte qu’il n’y a aucune séparation entre le ravin et les arbres de la forêt.

Elsewhere, it is a journey to an era which can be linked to a distant cultural past. This latter tendency is exemplified in his account of Laghouat, the destination of Duveyrier’s trip with Mac Carthy which is the setting for the climatic Romantic moment of the Journal’s narrative.

The specific moment in question, involves Duveyrier’s description of the night-time scene surveyed from his bedroom window in the oasis town of Laghouat.

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88 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 8.
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This descriptive passage reveals that Duveyrier was heavily influenced by imagery of a sensuous and mysterious Orient associated with *The Arabian Nights*, and in a more contemporary context, with the productions of French and other European literary Romantics:


Le ciel était pur et couvert d’étoiles qui semblaient ressortir sur le velours du firmament. Des parfums délicieux émanant des jardins parvenaient jusqu’à moi, et je ne savais si je devais en croire mes sens tant j’étais transporté par la beauté du spectacle. Je ne me reconnaissais plus, moi qui, jusque-là, avais été presque insensible aux beautés de la nature ; je n’avais jamais éprouvé ce sentiment d’extase.

Quintessential tropes of Romantic Orientalism foregrounded include the reference to a story from the *Arabian Nights*, which moulded perceptions of the Orient among European readers from the eighteenth century on: ‘The oriental tale and the influence of the translations of the *Arabian Nights* may be regarded as factors that paved the way to romanticism.’ Similarly, Urbain uses an excerpt from this famous text – known as *Les Mille et une nuits* in French, first translated from the Arabic by Antoine Galland and published in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries – as an epigraph to his prose poem ‘Exaltation’, demonstrating that he was also an admirer. Here, the atemporal scene is rich in images of abundant exotic fruits and heady perfumes. Duveyrier’s mingling of an atemporal setting with references to texts of ancient, mythic or folkloric origin

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90 Duveyrier, 1900, pp. 51-52.


92 ‘Galland [c.1646-1715], who was the first European translator of *The Thousand and One Nights* and an Arabist of note’, Said, [1978] 2003, p. 64.


94 Urbain, 1993, pp. 283-90.
parallels Bret’s observations regarding nineteenth-century French travel writing in the edited collection _L’Orientalisme des Saint-Simoniens_ (2006):

D’abord un miroir à l’usage des grands débats internes de la France des Lumières sur la société, le pouvoir monarchique et la religion, l’Orient devient « un lieu qui est en « retard », un passé dans le présent ». […]

Venu volontairement au-devant d’un choc culturel que ceux-ci ont vécu par contingence et parfois par contrainte, l’artiste voyageur est comme eux en quête d’une Antiquité disparue, qu’il réinvente au miroir d’une altérité contemporaine. 95

Bret also suggests that this Romantic interest in the Orient as a living past constitutes a cultural nostalgia which the Western observer seeks to satisfy through contact with ‘une altérité contemporaine’. Bret’s analysis can account for Duveyrier’s appetite for a radical alterity which is paradoxically evocative of cultural nostalgia, thus making the figure of the Targui so appealing, while the former spahi is degraded and ridiculous in Duveyrier’s depiction. Duveyrier’s choice of words, ‘Je ne me reconnaissais plus, moi qui, jusque-là, avais été presque insensible aux beautés de la nature’, evokes a sense of self-estrangement which has the effect of an epiphany, or a radical semiosis similar to that outlined in Scott’s analysis of exoticism in Segalen’s travel writing:

[T]he aim of the traveller as _exote_ is to rediscover, if only momentarily, a certain plenitude of existence in which the other, in _exceeding_ its containment within known signs, becomes a dynamic object sufficiently challenging and unexpected to activate the dynamic interpretant and, in the process, to mobilise the full inner resources of the observing subject. It is in such moments of radical semiosis, that is, of intense feeling and heightened intelligence, that the subject experiences a sense of the authentic integrality of self in the world. 96

As the only human presence in this climactic scene, Duveyrier’s account of Laghouat by night also mirrors certain aspects of Albert Camus’ twentieth-century short story ‘La Femme adulte’,97 which was alluded to in the earlier discussion of Urbain’s poem ‘Mystère’, pointing to a common ground between Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s experiences of the desert as an important space of self-exploration. If Laghouat, as representative of the Orient, is characterised by Duveyrier as a place of escape and opportunity for accessing one’s inner self, and with it a sense of one’s place in the world, then implicitly the Occident constitutes the seat of history, a dynamic space marked by the passage of time, but also one of confusion or clouded individual identities. Duveyrier’s description constitutes a moment of perfection, frozen outside time, evocative of an Edenic purity and plenitude. It concludes with a

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statement of satisfaction in having attained the goal of his trip, literally in terms of its geographical destination, and imaginatively in terms of its associated exoticism and alterity. Duveyrier’s transcendent experience recalls the quotation from Bret, and also echoes Scott’s analysis of the project of nineteenth-century travel as a Romantic one which emphasises the imaginative agency of the Western traveller, keen to achieve simultaneous experience of the culturally familiar and the radically different, the contemporary world and the distant past:

Travel writing is a paradox in that it is a rite of passage both to the real – that is, to an epistemic system different from that of the writer […] – and to the ideal – that is, to a world of renewed and heightened meaning. […] travel writing’s search for the exotic shares another paradox with the Romantic project, being built in part upon the nostalgia that came with the discovery of the historical dimension to all experience (and thus the desire to rehabilitate the previously known) and in part an anticipation of the new and strange (the desire to discover the differently known).98 (original emphasis)

It is also interesting to juxtapose Duveyrier’s 1857 description of Laghouat with Orientalist painter and writer Eugène Fromentin’s 1853 account. Fromentin and Duveyrier agree on points such as the vivid starry sky and the species of fruit trees in the oasis at Laghouat, but little else. Although Maunoir’s preface notes that Laghouat had only been conquered by French forces five years before his trip,99 Duveyrier’s actual account makes no reference to this recent violence. Conversely, Fromentin’s depiction of the town is dominated by omnipresent reminders of the conflict, such as the gruesome sightings of corpses framing his arrival and departure:

C’était trois cadavres de femmes que les chiens avaient arrachés de leurs fosses. […] Une main se détachait de l’un des cadavres […]. Je la pris et l’accrochai à l’arçon de ma selle ; c’était une relique funèbre à rapporter du triste ossuaire d’El-Aghouat. Je me rappellai le corps du zouave découvert du côté de l’est, le jour de mon entrée, et je trouvai la symétrie de ces rencontres assez fatale.100

Duveyrier’s first allusion to Laghouat is as ‘cette charmante apparition’,101 which is followed by the equally positive ‘nous aperçûmes tout à coup Lar’ouât […] je ne pus m’empêcher de consacrer quelques instants à admirer le coup d’œil magique qu’offrait cette belle verdure des palmiers, tranchant vivement sur la surface jaunâtre et aride du désert.’102 Fromentin’s account conveys a very different impression, that of the lingering spectre of death and violence, and implicitly the threat of its

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99 Maunoir, Charles, pp. v-vii, in Duveyrier, 1900, p. vi.
100 Fromentin, 1984, p. 181.
101 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 48.
102 Ibid., p. 50.
spontaneous re-emergence as a defining trait of the French colonial system in Algeria:

\[ J e \ ne \ sais \ quoi \ de \ menaçant \ dans \ le \ silence \ et \ dans \ l’air \ de \ cette \ ville \ noire \ et \ muette \ sous \ le \ soleil, \ quelque \ chose \ enfin \ que \ je \ devinais \ dès \ l’abord, \ m’avertissait \ que \ j’entrais \ dans \ une \ ville \ à \ moitié \ morte \ et \ de \ mort \ violente. \]

Like Duveyrier, Fromentin describes an evening spent in solitary contemplation of his surroundings. However, Fromentin expresses a pervading sense of melancholy. He describes an army signal for curfew as both plaintive and reminiscent of France:

\begin{quote}
Vers 10 heures, un clairon de cavalerie vint sous mes fenêtres sonner le couvre-feu. C’est un aire lent et doux, finissant par une note aiguë […] « Allons, me dis-je, je ne suis pas tout à fait hors de France ! 
\end{quote}

Clearly this marks a distinct contrast with Duveyrier’s account of exotic reveries, rich perfumes and imagery from the Arabian Nights. Much as Daudet does for his readership in Tartarin de Tarascon, Fromentin’s account systematically domesticates and demystifies Laghouat, as for example in his description of the flora of the oasis which was to inspire such climactic sentiments in Duveyrier:

\begin{quote}
Malheureusement, l’oasis ressemble à la ville; elle est resserrée, compacte, sans clairières, et subdivisée à l’infini. […] On n’y voit ni oliviers, ni cyprès, ni citronniers, ni orangers ; mais on est surpris d’y trouver beaucoup des essences d’Europe, pêchers, poiriers, pommiers, abricotiers, figuiers, grenadiers, puis des vignes, et dans de petits carrés cultivés la plus grande partie des légumes de France, surtout des oignons.
\end{quote}

Fromentin concludes by reinforcing his anti-exotic portrait of the oasis, which counterintuitively constitutes a more authentic representation of colonial Algeria: ‘pour enfermer cette Normandie saharienne, le désert se montrant entre les dattiers ; peut-être trouveras-tu, comme moi, qu’il manque quelque chose à ce pays pour résumer toutes les poésies de l’Orient.’ Hence Fromentin denies Laghouat the function it so prominently fulfils for Duveyrier, as the incarnation of a poetic, mythic and sensuous Orient.

A further episode in the Journal again situates Duveyrier in solitary contemplation, but in a more reflective and elegiac mood. On this occasion, he pauses Rousseau-like at a vantage-point on the slope of a hill near the ruins of an ancient tomb – visiting ruins was a favourite activity of the typical Romantic-era tourist and a fascination with ruins constitutes a recurring trope of Romantic

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103 Fromentin, 1984, p. 78.
104 Ibid., p. 85.
105 Ibid., pp. 138-39.
106 Ibid., p. 139.
literature. On this occasion, Duveyrier’s thoughts turn to his father and younger siblings in France:

Je restai environ une demi-heure dans la même position, plongé dans d’agréables rêveries, me plaisant dans l’idée de mon isolement au milieu d’un peuple barbare. Je me demandais ce que faisaient mon père, mon frère et ma sœur, tandis que moi, venu en pèlerinage au pied du tombeau des anciens rois du pays, je reportais avec bonheur mes pensées vers le foyer paternel.107

The reference to an invisible ‘peuple barbare’ somewhere below evokes the concept of the commanding view elaborated by Spurr:

[T]he commanding view is an originating gesture of colonisation itself, making possible the exploration and mapping of territory which serves as the preliminary to a colonial order. [...] The writer is placed either above or at the center of things, yet apart from them, so that the organization and classification of things takes place according to the writer’s own system of value. Interpretation of the scene reflects the circumspective force of the gaze, while suppressing the answering gaze of the other.108

The inhabitants are implicitly Duveyrier’s subordinates, much like the villagers living on Warnier’s estate. The trope of the commanding view also occurs in Duveyrier’s description of the situation of Warnier’s house: ‘Voici une petite esquisse de la topographie des environs de K’andourî, en prenant pour centre la maison de M. Warnier, qui, située sur une colline, possède une vue magnifique.’109

Other passages of the Journal draw upon further colonial tropes, for example Warnier depicted as a regal figure ruling over his private domain, from a château which is a composite of Eastern and Western styles:

Avant de nous endormir, disons quelques mots sur la maison de M. Warnier. De cet établissement, qui doit comprendre une ferme complète, il n’y a encore de terminé que la maison qui, étant un composé du style mauresque et du style français, se trouve parfaitement accommodée au climat du pays et aux besoins de ses habitants. [...] Tel est ce petit château qui passe pour une merveille aux yeux des Arabes.110

Commandant Margueritte, the commanding officer in Laghouat at the time of Duveyrier’s visit, is evoked in similar regal terms, ‘M. Margueritte est le plus habile tireur de Lar’ouât et il possède aussi les meilleures armes ; il a tué plusieurs lions et plusieurs panthères dont les peaux sont dans le salon de son petit palais.’111

These depictions reinforce the common colonialist representations of the French as les maîtres de l’Algérie, as Philip Dine states in relation to hunting:

A regularly depicted diversion of military men in early colonial Algeria, hunting was informed by a proto-Darwinian view of the natural world and the political order. Indeed,
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hunting narratives would provide a sporting template for the subsequent construction of the subaltern status of colonized populations. [...]

French hunters [...] looked to Algeria as a natural playground, in which locally based officers and metropolitan visitors could enjoy the opportunities for sport provided by the abundant wildlife [...].

However, Dine also notes Commandant Margueritte’s condemnation of the erosion of local nomadic customs through contact with Europeans, which resulted, at least in part, from his own involvement in efforts to encourage European tourists to visit the region. This mixture of fascination with the unfamiliar, while knowingly contributing to phenomena which threaten its very existence, was evoked earlier and links Duveyrier to Margueritte in terms of a shared colonial mindset characterised by contradiction.

Both of the reflective passages from Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger examined in this section register symbolic significance. They demonstrate Duveyrier’s nostalgic fascination with a mythic past, exemplified in literature by the Arabian Nights, and more concrete reminders in the form of ruins and ancient monuments, both of which fascinated literary Romantics. Scott observes that: ‘The complex form Romantic cultural nostalgia takes may in part be a function of the fact that Europeans were never really able to sustain for long an originating myth of their own.’

Duveyrier’s later writings will attest to the inherent difficulty of sustaining Western originating myths, particularly in relation to the non-Western other. Thus the personal insights of Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger serve to highlight that, alongside an appetite for scientific inquiry – Bret’s science pole of Saint-Simonian Orientalism – Duveyrier’s desire to travel was additionally motivated by a strong sense of imaginaire, that is to say, by impulses commonly associated with nineteenth-century travel writing and by many of the dominant tropes of the French colonial project in Algeria.

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113 Ibid., p. 52.
2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored two contrasting experiences of the travel writer’s “apprenticeship” as regards the Orient. On the one hand, Urbain’s poetry and journals reveal the painful transformative process of his time in Egypt, which taught him to value the potential of his hybrid identity, in large part through his exposure to Saint-Simonian mysticism. This promoted a positive attitude toward diversity and religious syncretism – as indicated by the reference below to ‘la vie où Dieu a écrit son nom de tant de manières diverses’ which is probably an allusion to the 99 names for Allah (God) which are enumerated in the Koran – and thus his suitability to act as a cultural intermediary between Orient and Occident:

Ainsi je vais rêvant, feuilletant avec soin ce grand livre de la vie où Dieu a écrit son nom de tant de manières diverses qui semblent contradictoires et qui cependant s’harmonisent divinement aux yeux de celui qui sait y lire, comme les notes diverses de la musique qui toutes prennent leurs places dans la mélodie d’un immense concert. (27 juillet 1835)\(^\text{115}\)

This coming-of-age experience and exploration of identity was a feature which Urbain’s early writing shared with many of his literary contemporaries. Indeed, such experiences continued to motivate many European writers to travel to the Orient well into the twentieth century, for example André Gide. In this sense, Urbain’s experience of Egypt and the Levant was as much a journey of imagination and identity as it was an experience of the encounter with a real geographical region, making it typical of Romantic exoticism. Urbain’s early writings also reveal how he learned to distance himself from the frequently destructive self-images imposed upon him, in particular by conservative members of French and Guianese societies, and to regard his colonial hybrid identity in a more positive light through exposure to racial diversity and cosmopolitanism in Egypt, and also through the support of his Saint-Simonian surrogate family, particularly his surrogate father Enfantin. The disappointments of his time in Egypt could not overshadow the affection Urbain had developed for its landscape, people and culture. Furthermore, the reference below to ‘le tableau pittoresque de ces Arabes’ recalls the scenes which visual artists such as his contemporary Fromentin were similarly captivated by and sought to convey in their œuvres:

Nous couchâmes encore à la belle étoile devant un bon feu. […] Je regrettais vivement de ne pas savoir peindre le tableau pittoresque de ces Arabes qui se chauffaient autour du feu en écoutant les récits d’un vieux conteur.

\(^{115}\) Urbain, 1993, p. 143.
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[...] Le rivage était garni de barques à une distance d’une demi-lieue. A droite s’élevaient les sommets rougeâtres du Mokattam au pied duquel étaient groupés comme des bouquets de minarets ; à gauche s’étendait la fertile île de Boulak. J’étais ébloui de tout ce que je voyais.116

On the other hand, Duveyrier’s Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger demonstrates that his desire for travel was considerably influenced by impulses associated with romanticism and tourism, some of which he shared with the young Urbain. These served to reinforce, but were later to render problematic, Duveyrier’s vocation as an explorer and proto-ethnographer. The Journal reveals the voyeuristic nature of Duveyrier’s first encounter with North Africa comprising the pursuit of exoticism and cultural nostalgia. He was a privileged observer of scenes of village life, exotic landscapes and sites such as Laghouat. Although Duveyrier’s trip was an important apprentissage for his future career, in terms of prompting him to question the Eurocentric idées reçues of his cultural heritage, its productivity was limited. Sibony evokes similar failures in his analysis of travel and l’entre-deux:

Si l’origine ne s’ouvre pas, il y a un repli narcissique. [...] Dans le cas du voyage, ce même repli se signifie dans le fantasme du Paradis [...] qui se révèle être le reflet d’une mise au monde originelle : les ébouis du « voyage » [...] vous parlent de ciel, de lumière, d’eau, de couleur, bref des tout premiers éléments qu’ils ont perçus en débarquant sur notre planète. Ils nomment l’adhésion compulsive à leur lieu d’origine [...].117

The Journal’s concluding passage has a marked sense of closure, rather than the ouverture à l’origine advocated by Sibony. This confirms the absence of a transformative element in Duveyrier’s experiences. A Saharan suntan marks the young explorer as only externally altered upon his return to France:

Le lendemain de notre arrivée à Alger, nous prîmes un bain maure qui nous rendit notre aspect habituel, sauf un peu de hâle que le soleil du S’ah’ara avait laissé sur nos figures.

Après avoir passé quelques jours à Paris où je me retrouvais bientôt au milieu de mes parents et de mes amis, complètement satisfait du petit voyage que je venais de faire.118

Duveyrier’s apprentissage was thus a success in terms of moulding him into a pioneering Frenchman assured of his intellectual superiority over the non-European other in a world increasingly dominated by Europe. The reference to a petit voyage affirms the trip’s apprenticeship status as a preliminary to what Duveyrier foresees as a more serious endeavour of exploration proper in his future. The following sections will draw upon the foregoing discussion to examine Duveyrier’s feats as a Saharan

116 Ibid., p. 58, p. 52.
118 Duveyrier, 1900, p. 78.
explorer and the development of his life-defining relationship with and depiction of the Tuareg. They will also explore Urbain’s continued commitment to many of the ideas that were first cultivated in his writings in Egypt and the Levant, and conversely, how in colonial Algeria he also began to question some of the exoticising tendencies and the Romantic illusions fostered by these formative experiences.
Chapter 3 The passeur and the explorer: Vocation and la mission civilisatrice

3.1 Introduction

The previous section dealt with the processes of formulating an identity respectively undertaken by Urbain and Duveyrier in conjunction with their first encounters with the Orient. The present section will deal with how they subsequently developed their colonially-influenced identities, and related them to the colonial other in Algeria.

Edmund Burke III’s essay ‘The sociology of Islam: the French tradition’ asserts that the tradition of the title was heavily influenced by its origins in the Description de l’Égypte – produced by the academics of the Napoleonic expedition of 1798 to 1801 – and also by the first generation of Frenchmen who worked in Algeria.1 Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s epistemological projects in Algeria are included in Burke’s analysis. This chapter will examine a selection of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings on the colonial project and how they suggest relations between the Indigènes and the French, particularly representatives of French authority in Algeria, should be developed via their respective conceptions of two key areas of interest for this study: vocation, and the associated notion of the civilising mission.

Despite shared Saint-Simonian influences, the writings of Urbain and Duveyrier evolved to demonstrate differing approaches to North Africans and the crucial question indigène. This section will argue that these differences owed much to Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s concepts of personal and collective identity, which are respectively characteristic of relational and arborescent identities. Urbain’s writing, based on his experiences in Algeria from 1837, charts his development from a hybrid figure to a spokesperson for indigène rights, espousing views that, to a certain extent, foreshadowed some of the developments of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in imperialism and postcolonial thought. However, the approach to la question indigène in Duveyrier’s writing combines scientific observation with the racial essentialism commonly associated with colonial rhetoric and romanticised depictions of nomadic tribes, particularly the Tuareg, who are viewed with a mythologising cultural nostalgia.

This chapter will begin the exploration of these and other issues as they are addressed principally in Duveyrier’s most celebrated publication, *Les Touareg du Nord* (1864), based on his exploration of the Algerian and Tunisian Sahara from 1859 to 1861. This work forged his reputation as an explorer and an expert on the Tuareg. Duveyrier’s biography of the Scottish explorer Dr David Livingstone (1874) will inform the analysis of Duveyrier’s conception of the profession of explorer as a vocation. Among Urbain’s writings we will examine a number of polemical articles published by major French periodicals in the 1840s and 1850s, specifically ‘Du gouvernement des tribus de l’Algérie’ and ‘Chrétiens et Musulmans, Français et Algériens’, both of which were first published in 1847, and *De la tolérance dans l’Islamisme* (1856).

### 3.2 Vocation and personal identity

Owing to the fact that both Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s engagements in North Africa can be considered in terms of the fulfilment of personal vocations, those of racial and cultural intermediary and Romantic, humanist explorer respectively, vocation constitutes a major point for the analyses of the present chapter. The concept of *la mission civilisatrice* which was employed to justify colonial expansion is closely linked to the concept of vocation both for Urbain and for Duveyrier. Therefore the examination of their respective visions of what this mission could and should involve is a natural partner to the analysis of vocation as a key point of interest for this phase of our study.

#### 3.2.1 From apostle to pragmatist: Urbain and the vocation of cultural intermediary in colonial Algeria

The previous chapter alluded to Urbain as an admirer of Victor Hugo. Gretchen Schultz offers a useful summary of Hugo’s influential conception of the poet as a spiritual and moral guide to the public:

> Hugo’s poets are at once “philosophes,” “sages,” “lutteurs,” “hommes de persévérance,” and “chercheurs.” Set apart from the corrupt masses, they are men of vision and of hope: “l’homme des utopies.” […] Like the priest who mediates between God and humanity, the Poet was seen as an intercessor whose poetry translated the world and the experiences of common people in nobler terms. […] Bénichou uses the word *mission* to describe the Romantics’ poetic quest: […] Implicit in this notion is a double position for the Poet, who
was seen as both a practicing artist (one who writes poems) and a visionary (one who speaks truths).  

As Schultz notes, the concepts of vocation and mission were central to Hugo’s vision of the Romantic poet. During his time in Egypt in the 1830s, Urbain embraced Hugo’s conception of the poet as a visionary and priestly figure, an exceptional individual who embraces a mission to act as spiritual guide for the population at large. However the young Urbain’s drive to incarnate this type of prophetic figure was invested with the more specific aim of representing the black race and the disenfranchised and marginalised of mainstream French society, such as colonial subjects, both male and female:

Et cependant je suis apôtre! apôtre des noirs, des noires, des esclaves et des bâtards. Je suis apôtre et je vous jure que Dieu a mis dans mon sang ce qui fait accomplir les grandes choses. ('Prière', Paris November 1832)  

Comprennez donc que je suis l’apôtre de la chair noire; Dieu l’a écrit sur tous les jours de ma vie. Il m’a donné les noirs [...]. J’ai leur signe depuis l’heure de ma naissance. Voilà mes titres à l’apostolat des nations. ('Exaltation’, April 1834)  

The complexity and paradox of the Romantic poet/prophet figure work well with Urbain’s self-conceived role as a hybrid passeur mediating between civilisations, religions and races: ‘je me rattache à tous les peuples, à chacun je donne de ma vie pour les associer en moi comme symbole de l’association universelle.’ As Urbain was aware, his eclectic background and affinity with the Orient equipped him better than most to fulfil the demanding vocation of prophet-poet working toward the Saint-Simonian goals of universal association and fostering the spiritual and material union of East and West. Already the product of numerous opposing traditions and social forces, as a poet, Urbain willingly adopted the dual roles of solitary lyric poet – ‘Mon souvenir va toujours plus sombre […] comme la pensée de ce poëte qui se promène, par un vent froid d’automne, dans l’allée jonchée de feuilles sèches…’ (‘Pensée’) – and divinely chosen spokesperson and racial mediator:

Thomas Urbain, votre frère,  

[...] 


4 Ibid., p. 287.  

5 Ibid., p. 96.  

6 Ibid., p. 306.
Les passages de “Mystère” utilisent largement l’argumentation réligieuse de Saint-Simonian et maintiennent les conventions typographiques des œuvres littéraires de Saint-Simonian qui ont été discutées dans le chapitre 2. Importamment, il permet de comprendre l’étendue des ambitions d’Urbain à agir comme une médiation unifiant et élevant des peuples disparates, la majorité d’entre eux étant des esclaves, des Bâtards, des sang-mêlés qui constituent une minorité et une minorisation de son identité. La mise en évidence de ces groupes défavorisés est un dispositif qui est également employé dans des sections du Cahier d’un retour au pays natal de Césaire.8 En effet, l’œuvre de Urbain accentue le concept que plutôt que d’aspirer à l’appel prophétique du guide du public comme chez Hugo – le modèle du poète romantique – il a choisi de faire de lui un porte-parole, afin de promouvoir la solidarité et une image positive de soi parmi les stigmatisés et les défavorisés de la société coloniale, c’est-à-dire de contrecarrer l’ego-centrisme et l’auto-haine qui affecte de nombreux sujets colonisés : ‘Soyons encore de la même famille ; Aimons-nous.’

Il est prodigieux de penser que la conversion d’Urbain se fit pendant son séjour à Damiette, en 1835, car cette grossière résolution [... de me faire instruire dans la religion musulmane. [...] J’ai obéi aussi à une impulsion provenant de mon origine qui me rattachait à la race noire. [...] Je me sentais appelé à faire des efforts pour

7 Ibid., pp. 253-54.
8 “Partir./ Comme il y a des hommes-hyènes et des hommes-panthères, je serais un homme-juif/ un homme-cafre/ un homme-hindou-de Calcutta/ un homme-de-Harlem-qui-ne-vote-pas [...]. What follows the infinitive “Partir” [...] is the wish for identification with and connection to all oppressed people, the rediscovery of “le secret des grandes communications” and a primal union with nature. This rediscovery is the poetic project at hand: to the poetic word is attributed the power to achieve this union [...]. Only in declaring a leave-taking is the possibility for identification and connection produced.’ Suk, Jeannie, Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [2001] 2003), p. 42.
le grand rapprochement de l’Orient et de l’Occident, des musulmans et des chrétiens. [...] Une occasion se présenta pour m’ouvrir une carrière. [...] je fus nommé au mois de février 1837 interprète militaire de 3e classe [...].

Pour moi c’était la continuation de ma mission en Orient. [...] j’allais travailler sous une forme pratique et directe à l’union de l’Orient et de l’Occident, des musulmans et des chrétiens, de la société musulmane du Nord de l’Afrique avec la civilisation française.  

It is noteworthy that the loaded term mission favoured by Romantics such as Hugo reappears here. Urbain felt that a position working with the forces of colonial conquest could be exploited to further his aspirations as a racial and cultural intermediary. Urbain positioned himself as an advocate of the Indigènes while working as an agent of la mission civilisatrice, thus pursuing a modified version of his previously proclaimed intermediary vocation: ‘L’État n’a pas deux buts en Algérie : l’un européen ou chrétien, l’autre indigène ; il n’a qu’un but : la prospérité du pays par la civilisation des indigènes.’  

In his work from 1837 onwards, Urbain travelled extensively in Algeria. Although his admiration for North African culture grew, he did not reject his heritage, continuing to envision himself as an intermediary figure working to reconcile the French and the Indigènes rather than to promote the primacy of one culture over the other. Consequently, although Urbain cultivated close relationships with nationalist figures such as the Emir Abd-el Kader,  

he continued to pursue the goal of fostering collaboration between Algeria and France to exemplify the Saint-Simonian principle of association universelle.

However, it must be remembered that Urbain pursued these goals during an era when the options available to him were severely limited and the topics that he addressed marked him out as a singular figure, as Casajus notes:

Des intellectuels algériens parlent aujourd’hui d’Ismayl Urbain avec estime et affection, songeant à ce qui aurait pu être et n’a pas été. [...] C’est ainsi que, même avec ses illusions, la bienveillance d’Urbain en fait un homme rare en son siècle.

The image of Urbain as a rare individual in his era is also employed by historian Charles-Robert Ageron. As a counterbalance to allusions to Urbain as a figure

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10 Ibid., p. 10.
11 ‘En 1851, j’accompagnai le Général Daumas, [...] pour visiter l’Émir Abd el Kader [sic] interné dans le château de cette ville [...]. J’ai entretenu depuis des relations très cordiales avec el hadj Abd el Kader [sic]’ Urbain, 1871, in Levallois, 2005, p. 47.
12 Casajus, 2007, p. 60.
steeped in illusions, with an ambitious but naïvely utopian outlook, it is worth considering the following excerpt from a letter addressed by Urbain to Enfantin:

Il y avait deux manières d’interpréter ma présence en Afrique. Je pouvais, ou m’attacher exclusivement aux Arabes et espérer d’exercer un jour sur eux une grande autorité comme musulman et comme avocat de la civilisation auprès d’eux, ou bien de me poser comme représentant des Arabes auprès des Français en espérant arriver un jour à être secrétaire du Gouvernement et exercer ainsi une influence sur l’Autorité française. Je me suis senti plus fort pour cette dernière mission que mon éducation et mes goûts me conseillent.14

The extract reveals Urbain’s awareness of the apparent incompatibility of his professional activities with his vocation as a racial and cultural intermediary, as well as his pragmatic approach to finding a practical means of resolving this evident contradiction. Urbain’s vision of the constructive potential of his preferred intermediary role concurs with much more recent formulations by postcolonial theorists of the potential of marginal figures to bridge racial, cultural and social divides and to generate solidarity between disparate groups. For example, Bhabha observes: ‘it is by living on the borderline of history and language, on the limits of race and gender that we are in a position to translate the differences between them into a kind of solidarity.’15 Furthermore, Glissant has referred to the widespread propensity among twentieth-century Caribbean-born intellectuals to work on behalf of exploited ethnic groups in distant regions. In Introduction à une poétique du divers (1996), Glissant evokes a vocational impulse which is similar to that declared by Urbain – although in Urbain’s case the impulse comes from the ambiguous position of an agent of a conquering Western power – as a productive outcome of the negative experiences of créolisation:

Nous avons vécu la créolisation sous deux aspects : l’aspect négatif de l’esclavage et de l’asservissement et aujourd’hui un autre aspect négatif qui est l’assimilation à la culture française. […] Mais ce que je dois dire c’est que la créolisation, quand elle se pratique de manière négative, continue d’avancer quand même. Et « à l’intérieur » de la créolisation il s’est présenté bien des moyens d’échapper à la négativité. C’est pour cela que […] les Antillais qui vivent la créolisation sont toujours portés vers l’aillleurs […]. Comme si, ne pouvant peut-être pas résoudre les problèmes chez eux, les gens de la Caraïbe étaient portés à aider les autres, dans un aillleurs qui serait toujours l’ici. C’est le positif […] qui préfigure les solidarités futures.16

Understanding Urbain’s manifestation of certain traits which theorists such as Glissant associate with phenomena of créolisation in contemporary contexts,

although possibly anachronistic, may offer a very fruitful avenue for the analysis of Urbain as an aspiring passeur and a representative of indigène interests. It also supports the reading of Urbain as a precocious example of what Glissant, Deleuze, Guattari and other postcolonial theorists term a relational or rhizomic identity. Glissant’s criticism of the assimilation of colonial subjects to French culture, which he lists above as one of the powerful negative effects of créolisation, provides another means of linking his thought to that of Urbain, who, as we will observe, made opposition to assimilation one of the cornerstones of his polemical writings.

For Urbain, the strategy of working for change from within the French administration in Algeria was a compromise, and a means of employing his aptitudes as a writer and diplomat to further his passeur vocation. In a practical enactment of the fusion for which he argued, in 1840 Urbain married a Muslim from Constantine. His autobiographical writings affirm that this union was intended as a pragmatic testament to the fusion of the Orient and Occident, of black, white and North African races, of cultures and religions, colonisers and colonised: ‘je me résolus à me marier à une femme musulmane qui aurait aidé mon action sur ses coreligionnaires [...]. Il en serait résulté un avantage considérable pour la fusion des races, la conciliation des intérêts et l’apaisement des haines.’ Urbain’s positive vision of fusion resonates with Chamoiseau’s and Glissant’s postcolonial reformulations of national identities and once again points to Urbain as a precocious thinker and a self-conscious example of a relational identity:

Ce n’est pas parce que l’échanger mène souvent au changer que tous et chacun iraient se diluer dans un trou-brouillon où s’égareraient et s’étofferaient les identités, où s’effacerait les différences. Changer en échangeant revient à s’enrichir au haut sens du terme et non à se perdre.

However, Denise Brahimi alludes to Urbain’s marriage and to the above statement regarding ‘l’apaisement des haines’ in the essay ‘L’Algérie coloniale, histoire d’une impossible fusion’, referenced in Chapter 2. Brahimi’s essay contends that

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17 ‘L’arbre est filiation, mais le rhizome est alliance, uniquement alliance. L’arbre impose le verbe « être », mais le rhizome a pour tissu de conjonction « et, et... et... et... ». ’ Deleuze, Gilles, Guattari, Félix, Mille plateaux : Capitalisme et schizophrénie (Paris: Minuit, 1980), p. 36.
Urbain’s stated goal of appeasement of hatred was an impossible aspiration for any relationship founded on colonial conquest and domination and thus amounted to a utopian delusion. It is true that Urbain’s plan to develop a fusion-based hybrid Algerian society was a failure and that colonial Algeria took a decidedly dystopian turn, but we will return to these important issues, and the attitudes adopted by Urbain toward them, in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

3.2.2 The Romantic explorer’s mission: Duveyrier and vocation

In contrast to Urbain’s optimistic embrace of the possibility of fusion with the people and culture of Algeria, Duveyrier sought to act primarily as an observer keen to document the natural history and human inhabitants of the Sahara for a European audience and to advance European-led scientific disciplines. He did so without attempting fusion with North African culture or people, and thus ultimately failed to reconcile his reverence for nomadic culture with the threat posed to it by European incursion. Duveyrier’s refusal of disguise when he embarked on his exploration of the Algerian and Tunisian Sahara from 1859 to 1861 is an emblematic rejection of fusion. He explained his refusal in terms of avoiding an unnecessarily risky dissimulation; indeed, two later French explorers who travelled in disguise under false identities, Charles de Foucauld and Camille Douls, were respectively kidnapped and killed in the course of their work. However, on another level, this decision marked Duveyrier’s refusal to compromise his status as a European. The imperative of retaining a stable and singular identity is outlined as a trait of the identité racine unique by Glissant and Chamoiseau:

allant à la rencontre d’autres identités, on a l’impression d’une menace de dilution […] je me dis que si je vais à la rencontre de l’autre alors je ne suis plus moi-même alors je suis perdu ! […] comment être soi sans se fermer à l’autre, et comment s’ouvrir à l’autre sans se perdre soi-même ?

Duveyrier appears to have been anxious to inoculate himself against identitary ambiguity and potential dissolution of his Western identity by “going native”, via the disguises and role-play experimented with by many of his contemporaries including Burton, Rohlf, de Foucauld and Douls, of whom Spurr observes:

In 1888 […] a Frenchman named Camille Douls wrote an extraordinary account of his travels in the Western Sahara. Fluent in Arabic and disguised as a Moslem, he is captured by warlike nomads and eventually becomes “a brother of the tribe,” joining in their raids on caravans. Though ostensibly undertaken for purposes of geographical exploration, Douls’s

21 Chamoiseau, Glissant, 2007, p. 23.
journey has the quality of a calculated flirtation with the possibilities of enslavement, madness, and self-annihilation [...] these acts of concealment and disguise are part of a symbolic transformation of personal identity which the writer chooses to undergo in pursuit of an ephemeral goal.  

In *Les Identités meurtrières* (1998), Amin Maalouf remarks a fear of the type of dissolution of identity risked by Douls as underlying impulses to assert a singular identity: ‘celui qui aligne [...] ses multiples appartences, est immédiatement accusé de vouloir « dissoudre » son identité dans une soupe informe où toutes les couleurs s’effacerait.’ This type of defensive impulse can account for Duveyrier’s objection to travelling in disguise, but one might additionally wonder what initially propelled Duveyrier to embark upon a career as a Saharan explorer given the risk of identitary dissolution, or going native, which was potentially at stake when engaging in contract with the non-Western other.

In his introduction to *Les Touareg du Nord*, Duveyrier alludes to the challenges associated with Saharan exploration and the approaches which he adopted to overcoming them. He also elaborates the aims underpinning his epistemological project as an explorer:

Les difficultés qui se sont présentées à moi sont de deux ordres : les unes tiennent à la nature des lieux parcourus ; les autres au caractère particulier des hommes avec lesquels je me suis trouvé en contact. […]

[…] on a à lutter contre des intérêts mal compris, placés entre les mains de gens méfiants et égoïstes, qui trouvent un point d’appui dans l’intolérance religieuse. Tous ces obstacles, il faut l’espérer, disparaîtront graduellement avec l’élément indispensable du temps et la puissance de la vérité. Dans cette dernière voie, je crois avoir avancé l’état des choses, […] en étudiant la nature des lieux, le caractère des hommes ; en affermissant des relations déjà préparées ou en en créant de nouvelles.

Concepts such as the ordering or categorising of tasks, working to dispel misconceptions, to increase the precision of analyses and to expand knowledge dominate the passage. The reference to religious intolerance is worth noting and will be relevant to the discussion of attitudes to religion in subsequent chapters. Also present is the assertive, virtuous role envisioned for explorers as pursuers of an all-powerful truth. Duveyrier’s writing thus suggests that he was strongly influenced by the so-called cult of science, the tendency to elevate empirical science to a quasi-religious status, which is exemplified in the thought of figures such as Duveyrier’s

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friend and mentor, the influential Orientalist, linguist and nationalist Ernest Renan, of whom Tzvetan Todorov remarks:

Renan […] devient le grand prêtre du culte de la science […]. La science est le trait le plus élevé de l’humanité, son plus grand titre de gloire. […] La science […] seule nous conduit vers la solution des énigmes de l’humanité […] c’est la science, et la science seule, qui peut nous révéler la vérité.\textsuperscript{25}

In Les Touareg du Nord, Duveyrier suggests that even a small number of rigorously dedicated, well-prepared Europeans – appropriately trained army physicians\textsuperscript{26} in the following quotation – could dispel the mysteries of the enigmatic Sahara, thus suggesting that the establishment of truth and the resolution of mystery go hand in hand:

Quand la France aura un agent consulaire à Ghadâmès ou à Rhât, on pourra utilement confier cette glorieuse mission à l’un de ces nombreux officiers de santé de l’armée pour lesquels l’occasion de rendre des services est toujours une bonne fortune. Si ce médecin parlait l’arabe et avait le goût des voyages, le Sahara n’aurait bientôt plus de secrets pour nous.\textsuperscript{27}

The concept of mission, in this specific case a glorious mission, links Duveyrier’s conception of the role of Europeans in the Sahara to Urbain’s vision of the role of cultural intermediary, which, although contrasting, was evoked in similar terms in the latter’s writing. The shared references to service and utility also gesture to the role of Europeans in the region as the fulfilment of a vocation which serves a practical purpose.

The foregoing quotation underlines Duveyrier’s commitment to nineteenth-century conceptions of scientific scholarship, which rendered paradox anathema to his world-view and conditioned him to seek out fixed truths in order to explain the world in what were, with the benefit of hindsight, reductive terms. Chamoiséau and Glissant allude to this brand of nineteenth-century scientific thought, again emphasising the perceived capacity for truth to explain the world in its entirety:

La science occidentale à son moment triomphant, c’est-à-dire quand elle ne doutait pas ni de son devenir, ni de ses méthodes avait la prétention d’aller en profondeur […] vers une vérité qui serait la vérité de la matière et qui donnerait un jour ou l’autre l’explication de l’univers, du monde. C’était ça la prétention de la science occidentale.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Duveyrier’s comments are indicative of the contemporary status of medicine as a model science, hence the success of texts such as Claude Bernard’s Introduction à l’étude de la médecine expérimentale (1865).
\textsuperscript{27} Duveyrier, 1864, p. 438.
\textsuperscript{28} Chamoiséau, Glissant, 2007, pp. 74-75.
The concepts of unravelling secrets and rendering the Sahara transparent to Europeans which are also alluded to by Duveyrier are characteristic of the concept of the cult of science, and effectively constitute the reverse of the intellectual mechanisms of opacity as formulated by Glissant:

La pensée de l’opacité me distrait des vérités absolues, […] en me faisant sensible aux limites de toute méthode. S’agit-il de déployer l’arc des idées générales ? S’agit-il de s’en tenir tenacement au concret, à la loi du fait, à la précision du détail ? … La pensée de l’opacité me garde des voies univoques et des choix irréversibles.

[…] Les comportements humains sont de nature fractale ; en prendre conscience, renoncer à les ramener à l’évidence d’une transparence, c’est contribuer peut-être à atténuer le poids dont ils pèsent sur tout individu, quand celui-ci commence à ne pas « com-prendre » ses propres motivations, à se désassembler de cette manière. 29

Duveyrier’s concluding remarks in the introduction to Les Touareg du Nord allude to the goals and obligations he associates with exploration – providing scientific information and conveying it effectively to as broad a (French) readership as possible: ‘tout en restant dans les limites d’une exposition scientifique, j’ai fait mes efforts en vue d’être clair et intelligible pour le plus grand nombre. Puissé-je avoir atteint le but proposé!’ 30 Duveyrier’s writing will continue to assume this type of Eurocentric perspective – the vérités absolues, voies univoques and choix irréversibles which Glissant condemns as the antitheses of opacity. Indeed the concept of truth becomes so closely entwined with Duveyrier’s sense of identity that it can be seen to act as its guarantor, a term employed by Finn Fordham, writing in relation to Heart of Darkness (1899) by Joseph Conrad, a text regularly analysed by postcolonial critics:

Marlow’s fetish for voice as guarantor of identity is equivalent to Conrad’s fetish of writing as guarantor of his identity. Hence there is all the attendant anxiety when the writing does not come, just as Marlow is furious when he believes he will never hear Kurtz speak. 31

For Conrad and his narrator Marlow, any undermining of the guarantor of identity – which for Duveyrier is the concept of empirical truth – has the potential to initiate anxiety and crisis. Indeed this is precisely what it would do in Duveyrier’s later career.

Duveyrier’s stated aims for Les Touareg du Nord suggest that he conceived of the explorer’s role as one of material and moral value to the world at large, i.e. that it was akin to a vocation. This concept of exploration as vocation is prominent in

30 Duveyrier, 1864, p. xvi.
Duveyrier’s biography of the Scottish explorer of central Africa, Dr David Livingstone, written for the Bulletin of the Société de Géographie de Paris in 1874, following Livingstone’s death. The text acts as a manifesto for Duveyrier’s vision of the model explorer as an individual who operates above questions of national interest in the fulfilment of a quasi-religious mission:

Joints à un grand amour de la nature, des instincts religieux et philanthropiques […] engagèrent bientôt David Livingstone dans la voie qui devait le conduire à de si généreuses destinées. Il résolut de se vouer à l’apostolat dans les pays lointains […] Nous retrouverons en lui le même génie, le même sentiment de suprême abnégation, le même zèle pour la science dont les missionnaires catholiques ont donné tant de preuves […].

According to Duveyrier, the humanitarian impulse of advancing Western science for the betterment of mankind lay at the heart of Livingstone’s work: ‘Il entrevoyait aussi l’utilité des recherches scientifiques dont l’Europe recueillerait les bénéfices en multipliant les foyers de cette civilisation dont il allait porter les premières lueurs chez des peuples ignorés et lointains.’

In their tendency to imbue the pursuit of scientific knowledge with a moral justification these notions are exemplary of the tradition of Enlightenment rationalism:

N’était-ce pas une grande entreprise de chercher dans le cours du Zambézi […] et d’y reconnaître les artères naturelles par où pouvaient s’infuser dans toute l’Afrique australe les éléments vivifiants de la civilisation européenne ?

Cette perspective, qui rayonnait dans les ténèbres comme un phare pour le pilote engagée dans des mers inexplorées, fut l’objectif des entreprises de sa vie […].

The colonialist trope of spreading the light of civilisation to illuminate the dark African continent is famously parodied in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness. As presented in Duveyrier’s biography of Livingstone, this trope additionally appears to be a reaction against emerging trends in geography and exploration in the post-1870 period. Duveyrier foregrounds a disinterested, anationalistic man of science as the paradigm of the explorer, which was, in reality, both unrealistic and highly idealised.
Duveyrier’s account evokes the aspirations of an older Romantic generation of explorers whom he implies fashioned themselves on Enlightenment ideals rather than targeting territorial conquest. Livingstone is described with reverence: ‘Cependant ses découvertes géographiques, à elles seules, suffiraient pour immortaliser le nom de plusieurs voyageurs’; ‘Ici la reconnaissance de l’esprit, là-bas la reconnaissance du cœur, rendront immortel le nom de Livingstone.’

The opening passage adopts the subsequently clichéd portrayal of the Scot as a martyr to humanism and science, thus demonstrating that Duveyrier’s perception of Livingstone concurred with an enduring public perception of the explorer: ‘Le docteur David Livingstone a succombé, victime de son dévouement à la science et à l’humanité’. In his study *Literary Orientalism, Postcolonialism, and Universalism* (2010), Abdulla Al-Dabbagh distinguishes what he perceives as a Romantic Orientalism fashioned upon a continuity with and extension of Enlightenement ideas from the work of later Orientalist scholars such as Renan and the infamous Joseph-Arthur Comte de Gobineau. Duveyrier’s writing on Livingstone strongly suggests that despite being a direct contemporary of Renan and Gobineau, he was an advocate of the former Romantic school of Orientalism which nostalgically admired rather than denigrated so-called primitive peoples.

Duveyrier emphasises the Scottish explorer’s key aptitudes of *esprit* and *cœur* which also appear in the preceding quotations. He asserts that these qualities will serve to inspire the succeeding generation of vocational explorers:

Pour nous, messieurs, la tradition écrite de son œuvre sera cette carte d’Afrique qu’il a reconstituée sur une grande partie de son étendue, précisant des données vagues, rectifiant des erreurs, comblant des vastes lacunes. […]

Il surgira, n’en doutons pas, des hommes à l’esprit éclairé, au cœur dévoué, qui s’assimileront l’exemple donné par Livingstone. Ils iront arracher à l’Afrique ses derniers mystères en apportant, comme lui, à des populations déshéritées les germes de la civilisation.

The model explorer, incarnated by Livingstone, thus acts as the living embodiment of *la mission civilisatrice*, implanting the seeds of Western civilisation in Africa.

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36 Duveyrier, 1874a, p. 8, p. 20.
37 Ibid., p. 3.
38 ‘Romantic orientalism did not pave the way for hostile orientalists like Renan, Gobineau or Bernard Lewis. On the contrary, it was the culmination of all the previous positive trends from the Renaissance until the end of the eighteenth century, and the great advance in the scientific investigation of the East.’ Al-Dabbagh, Abdulla, *Literary Orientalism, Postcolonialism, and Universalism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 8.
39 Duveyrier, 1874a, p. 20.
Duveyrier also elaborates on the key capacities which he sees as central to Livingstone’s success and also to his virtue: ‘l’esprit éclairé’ which reiterates the trope of knowledge as illumination and ‘[le] cœur dévoué’ which suggests noble commitment and compassion. These qualities bear little practical relation to the skill-driven practices of field science and convey Duveyrier’s romanticising tendencies, as well as his utopian vision of the profession of explorer as a morally elevated vocation rather than a practical endeavour intrinsically bound up in the intellectual and territorial appropriation of foreign territories by European powers whose geo-strategic imperatives are to generate profit and enhance international prestige.

Duveyrier’s remarks also reinforce another aspect of his conception of the explorer’s vocation, namely the resolution of mystery which is both explicitly and symbolically linked to processes of mapping. As an element of his discussion of nineteenth-century geography in Orientalism Said observes that: ‘geographical appetite could also take on the moral neutrality of an epistemological impulse to find out, to settle upon, to uncover – as in Heart of Darkness Marlow confesses to having a passion for maps.’ As previously observed, such impulses are at the very heart of Duveyrier’s epistemological project. Duveyrier writes of future explorers stripping Africa of its mysteries, thus expressing his desire for a transparent, knowable other, i.e. the eradication of opacity. This desire constitutes a crucial motivation of Duveyrier’s writing and one which was later employed in arguments in favour of colonial expansion such as the following statement by Jules Ferry, which, while omitting Duveyrier from the roll of honour of great European explorers of Africa, employs the same imagery of stripping away Africa’s jealously guarded secrets:


Duveyrier’s biography of Livingstone reveals that, by the mid-1870s, he had cultivated an idealised, even a mythic perception of the profession of explorer as a vocation founded upon a romanticised view of the lofty values of Enlightenment universalism. Indeed myth-making, which is directly contrary to the explicit aims of Duveyrier’s epistemological project, can be identified as one of the most distinctive

traits of his writing. Duveyrier was subsequently faced with the challenge of reconciling his mythic vision of exploration as vocation with a world whose realities were growing increasingly incompatible with any such idealised outlook. We will return to this struggle in subsequent chapters.

3.3 La mission civilisatrice

3.3.1 Urbain: foregrounding the responsibilities of la mission civilisatrice in Algeria

In 1847, two extended articles by Urbain, ‘Du gouvernement des tribus de l’Algérie’ and ‘Chrétiens et Musulmans, Français et Algériens’, were published in La Revue de l’Orient et de l’Algérie. Like the role of Les Touareg du Nord in the germination of Duveyrier’s epistemological project, these works reveal the genesis of Urbain’s programme for the French administration of Algeria. The year of their publication is significant. It coincides with the official end of armed resistance to French conquest, marked by Abd-el-Kader’s surrender in December 1847.42 The Duke of Aumale was appointed governor-general of Algeria and Urbain became one of his advisors. However, the collapse of the July Monarchy in the revolution of February 1848 removed the Duke from office and dashed Urbain’s hopes of having his vision for Algeria implemented as official policy. Furthermore the revolution precipitated a crucial development for the legal status of Algeria by incorporating the territory into the Republic under the Constitution of 1848:

Le suffrage universel permet un élargissement notable de l’opinion publique française, souveraine désormais par ses bulletins de vote. Cette liberté politique exaltante entraîne les hommes de 1848 à des mesures hardies et ils désirent en faire bénéficier les colonies. Par l’article 109 de la constitution du 4 novembre 1848, « le territoire de l’Algérie et ses colonies est déclaré territoire français. »

[…] Les colons, et seulement eux, reçoivent les droits de citoyens français […]. Le territoire civil élargi est organisé sur le modèle français en trois départements subdivisés en arrondissements et communes […].43

Against the backdrop of this period of great flux, the issues explored by Urbain in his extended articles included particularly the concept of la mission civilisatrice, which purported to elevate and improve, rather than exploit those whom

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colonial conquest brought under French rule. In the opening section of ‘Du gouvernement des tribus de l’Algérie’, Urbain highlights French hypocrisy and neglect of the promises and moral obligations associated with la mission civilisatrice: ‘Mais on oublie qu’en s’emparant de l’Algérie, la France a proclamé qu’elle avait une mission civilisatrice à l’égard des Arabes. Combattre les insoumis, déposséder les soumis, voilà donc dans quelles limites s’exercerait notre action sur les indigènes!’ Urbain reminds his readers of the lofty claims of the civilising mission and of the lack of practical effort on the part of many French representatives in Algeria to honour them:

[O]n a toujours proclamé que la France avait une mission providentielle à remplir au milieu de ses peuples dégénérés. […] Et cependant, pourquoi lorsque nous nous trouvons en présence des indigènes, pressés de jouir, oublions-nous ces nobles inspirations pour n’écouter que les suggestions d’un intérêt égoïste? Nous semblons abandonner à la Providence le soin d’accomplir les beaux desseins que nous lui prêtions, et dont nous nous étions déclarés les instruments prédestinés.

The term peuples dégénérés, is reminiscent of colonial rhetoric, which was influenced by nineteenth-century race theory, such as Gobineau’s Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines (1855). It also recalls the concept of Manifest Destiny popularised in the 1840s in the United States and this parallel is further reinforced by a strong religious tone including two references to providence and one to predestination. This particular variety of religious vocabulary is not reminiscent of

47 ‘En effet, dans l’optique de la race, le mélange est une dégradation. Plus même : toute dégradation est l’effet d’un mélange de sangs. C’est ce que Gobineau appelle son “affirmation fondamentale”. “Les peuples ne dégénèrent que par suite et en proportion des mélanges qu’ils subissent”. Que veut dire, du reste, “dégénérer”? “Le mot dégénéré, s’appliquant à un peuple, doit signifier et signifie que ce peuple n’a plus la valeur intrinsèque qu’autrefois il possédait, parce qu’il n’a plus dans ses veines le même sang, dont les alliages successifs ont graduellement modifié la valeur”. Si « dégénéré » veut dire “qui a modifié la composition de son sang”, cela ne signifie-t-il pas que tout mélange (nouveau) est une dégénérescence? C’est bien ce qu’affirme incessamment Gobineau : c’est un “malheur que les mélanges ne s’arrêtent pas”, car le mélange “mène les sociétés au néant auquel rien ne peut remédier”; la vie d’une race est faite d’« une série infinie de mélanges et par conséquent de flétrissures.” Todorov, 1989, p. 161. See also Llobera, Joseph R., The Making of Totalitarian Thought (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp. 61-64.
48 ‘The Manifest Destiny impulse fed off a mixture of crassness, truculence, and high idealism. Without question, there were those who proclaimed America’s providential mission to expand as a eulogistic cover for speculation in land and paper. But those were hardly the motives of John L. O’Sullivan, the writer who coined the term, or the other writers, loosely referred to as Young America, in and around O’Sullivan’s Democratic Review. For O’Sullivan and his allies, the
of Saint-Simonian mysticism. In fact, the passage as a whole appears to be a pastiche of the high-minded, conservative Christian rhetoric of those whose proclaimed *nobles inspirations* and *beaux desseins* were, as Urbain observes, quickly and conveniently shrugged off beyond the *métropole*.

Urbain thus aspires to the eradication of the *décalage* between the rhetoric of *la mission civilisatrice* and the reality of French actions in Algeria. He alludes to the fact that the army’s prolonged campaign of conquest was drawing to a close and states that the way forward should involve co-operation and practical collaboration between conquerors and conquered peoples in keeping with the Saint-Simonian doctrine of *association universelle*, while simultaneously distancing himself from his mentor Enfantin’s views which favoured extensive European settler colonisation. Urbain’s position aligns him with an earlier strain of Saint-Simonian thought which many veteran members, notably Enfantin, had gradually moved away from in favour of assimilation:

> Mot clé de l’aventure coloniale de la monarchie censitaire, l’assimilation s’impose au gouvernement, aux politiques, aux colons et à l’opinion française qui prétendent modeler les colonies à l’image de la France et les amener à la civilisation. […] Cavaignac, rendant compte de l’ouvrage d’Enfantin sur la colonisation de l’Algérie en analyse les avantages : « Nos vieilles sociétés se préservent aussi de l’irruption des barbares […] l’Europe civilisée part à l’assaut de l’Orient après l’Occident et sauvegarde ses richesses matérielles et morales. »

In fact, while Urbain may concur on the desirability of “civilising” the *Indigènes*, he foresees accomplishing this through a good example and a fusion of cultures, rather than by supplanting indigenous culture and society with French civilisation, which would, as he highlights, also involve the transmission of its inherent flaws:

> La guerre a abattu la résistance des Arabes, c’est à l’administration à dompter leur cœur, à les civiliser. Il sera plus facile de vaincre l’obstacle qu’ils offrent pour la colonisation, en les associant à nos travaux agricoles, qu’en les refoulant vers le désert. […] Mais ce que les Arabes attendent de notre civilisation, ce ne sont pas ses vices raffinés. Ce qu’ils demandent de nous, ce qu’ils peuvent recevoir sans compromettre ni leur caractère, ni leurs croyances c’est une organisation administrative favorable au

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*expansionist imperative was essentially democratic – not simply in the old Jeffersonian tradition of enlarging the empire of liberty, but in a supercharged moral sense, stressing America’s duties to spread democratic values and institutions. The grand national mission, O’Sullivan wrote as early as 1839, was to spread four great freedoms around the globe: freedom of conscience, freedom of trade, and what he called “universal freedom and equality.” The mission was even more precise closer to home, where, O’Sullivan claimed six years later, America enjoyed “the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the ... great experiment of liberty.” Wilentz, Sean, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W.W Norton, 2005) p. 562.*

développement de l’agriculture et du commerce ; c’est une organisation du culte et de la justice, un large système d’instruction publique et quelques institutions de bienfaisance.\footnote{Urbain, 1848a, pp. 7-8.}

The term *vices raffinés* foreshadows the satire of Daudet’s *Tartarin de Tarascon* (1872), whose eponymous hero describes the *Indigènes* as: ‘[u]n peuple sauvage et pourri que nous civilisons, en lui donnant nos vices.’\footnote{Daudet, Alphonse, *Aventures prodigieuses de Tartarin de Tarascon* (Paris: Flammarion, [1872] 1968), p. 161.} Urbain affirms that French rule can and should accommodate the retention of traditional religious beliefs and culture in Algeria; while his fusionist vision proposes a system of organisation to oversee the development of agriculture and commerce which is exemplary of Saint-Simonian emphasis on the importance of modernisation and industrial development as a means of reinvigorating the Orient. The proto-socialism of Saint-Simonian doctrine is also represented in references to systematising the administration of justice, public instruction and charitable institutions, thus directly attempting to address the needs of the working and peasant classes, but also raising the difficult and complicated question of how the French could or should administer justice among an Islamic population.

### 3.3.2 Duveyrier: the Tuareg as allies of *la mission civilisatrice*

The civilising mission derived its rationale from the purported capacities of Europeans to understand and improve foreign regions: ‘Cette mission civilisatrice ne peut être que le fait « des nations de race européenne et de civilisation chrétienne ». Tout spécialement, les « races latines et en particulier la race française... sont de merveilleuses éducatrices des peuples ».\footnote{Thobie, in Meyer et al., 1991, p. 617.} An aspect of Duveyrier’s idealised construction of the Tuareg character in *Les Touareg du Nord* – this idealisation will be further addressed in subsequent chapters – which is particularly relevant to his conception of *la mission civilisatrice* is the contention that the Tuareg, more than other North Africans, are positively disposed toward the French as potential defenders of their interests: ‘[Les Touareg] ont le sentiment instinctif que, de tous les gouvernements avec lesquels ils peuvent être en relations, celui de l’Algérie est le seul assez éclairé et assez puissant pour sauvegarder leurs intérêts menacés.’\footnote{Duveyrier, 1864, p. 274.} In his ‘Avant-propos’, Duveyrier observes:
Pour m’accompagner, Ikhenoûkhen avait négligé ses intérêts ; d’ailleurs, dans l’Ouest, Mohammed-ben-’Abd-Allah aujourd’hui interné à Bône, préparait une nouvelle attaque contre le Sahara algérien ; le chef targui sentait la nécessité de se rapprocher du centre des intrigues, pour préserver ses sujets de la contagion.54

This quotation is interesting on a number of levels. It presents a perceived friendly Tuareg attitude toward Duveyrier as a French traveller in the Sahara. It also depicts Tuareg leaders as allies of, and sympathetic to, French interests by describing Ikhenoûkhen’s concern that his subjects should avoid becoming embroiled in a potential insurrection against the French in the Algerian Sahara. The language of the concluding line is also worth noting, for the linkage established between insurrection and anti-French sentiment among North Africans and the spread of contagion, implying images of disease, which are suggestive of un wholesomeness and moral degradation. The depiction of the spread of political unrest, or the threat of insurrection as a disease is a common colonialist trope and draws attention to Duveyrier’s propensity to ignore conclusions to which available information logically points – here, that the threat of insurrection among North Africans ultimately stems from the inherently problematic nature of the French presence as a conquering power in the region – where such conclusions are difficult to reconcile with the concept of a benevolent, superior French civilisation which has a right and even a duty to impose itself on foreign territories. Duveyrier was by no means unusual in this regard.

Elsewhere in Les Touareg du Nord, Duveyrier asserts that contact and the formation of alliances with the French will benefit nomadic tribes by increasing security and social stability, another promise of la mission civilisatrice:

Le Cheikh-’Othman seul est apprécié des Ahaggâr, non parce qu’il est marabout,* chef d’une tribu puissante et frère de leur amghâr,* mais parce qu’il a contribué, par ses relations avec les Français, à rendre la sécurité à la route de Ghadâmès et à faire arriver à In-Sâlah plus de marchandises.55

According to Spurr these types of comment are typical of the manner in which colonial rhetoric seeks to justify the appropriation of foreign territories:

Colonial discourse […] effaces its own mark of appropriation by transforming it into the response to a putative appeal on the part of the colonized land and people. This appeal may take the form of chaos that calls for restoration of order, of the creative hand of technology. Colonial discourse thus transfers the locus of desire onto the colonized object itself.56

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54 Ibid., p. vii.
55 Ibid., p. 372.
Similarly, Duveyrier suggests that French intervention has already benefited North Africans, cultivating peace between the Tuareg and other tribes: ‘La limite septentrionale […] sépare les Touâreg du Nord des tribus algériennes […] avec lesquelles ils sont aujourd’hui en bonnes relations après de longues luttes que l’administration française a fait cesser.’

Duveyrier thus foregrounds alleged positive developments and constructs all French actions as disinterested and virtuous, selectively interpreting information to conform to his desired conclusion that the French conquest was justified and would ultimately benefit and improve the lives of “worthy” Indigènes such as the Tuareg. The quotation above also draws a geographical demarcation between the northern territories of what are deemed Arab tribes and the more southerly Saharan territories, suggesting a spatial separation which systematically distinguishes the Tuareg from Arabs. In the concluding chapters of Les Touareg du Nord, Duveyrier asserts that the Tuareg constitute important allies of la mission civilisatrice in the Sahara:

Un médecin, adhabib, qui accepterait avec dévouement la mission d’aller passer quelques années au milieu des Touâreg, non-seulement serait considéré par eux comme un personnage sacré, mais encore y exerçait la plus heureuse influence pour l’avenir de nos relations commerciales ou politiques.

As an acknowledged expert on the Tuareg, assertions of this nature, along with the depiction of the Tuareg as largely benign, would later prove costly for Duveyrier. Furthermore, the concluding line above exemplifies the proprietary colonising gaze, which is concerned with mapping potential gain for French national interests: ‘The gaze is never innocent or pure […] The writer’s eye is always in some sense colonising the landscape, mastering and portioning, fixing zones and poles, arranging and deepening the scene as the object of desire.’

Duveyrier also attributes many qualities valued in contemporary European society to the Tuareg tribal leaders he encounters; reinforcing his case that they are potential allies for French expansion in the region, as they bear a closer resemblance to Europeans than to the Arab population or tribus algériennes to which he contrasted them in the earlier quotation. Furthermore, the Tuareg are seen to manifest embryonic forms of traits associated with universalist humanism:

Des hommes […] aussi passionnés méritent, au plus haut degré, la considération de toutes les personnes de cœur de toutes les religions et de toutes les civilisations. Aussi le gouvernement

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57 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 3.
58 Ibid., p. 438.
français doit-il être félicité d’avoir accueilli le Cheikh ‘Othmán et ses deux disciples, avec la distinction dont il les a entourés pendant leur voyage en France, et je ne doute pas que la bienveillance dont ces marabouts ont été l’objet ne produise les meilleurs effets chez les Toûâreg.60

Quant à moi, qui, pendant près de sept mois, ai vécu avec Ikhenoûkhen, l’observant attentivement, je suis convaincu que les qualités de son cœur et de son esprit, la générosité et la droiture de son caractère, ont autant contribué à son élévation que son habileté à manier les armes. […] Tout, dans ses allures, dans sa voix, dans sa manière de commander, révèle l’homme d’une civilisation encore barbare, mais, au milieu des défauts inhérents à sa race, on ne tarde pas à reconnaître en lui une grande solidité de principes, un dévouement sans bornes à ce qu’il croit son devoir, et un respect inaltérable pour la loi jurée.61

He balances his praise with references to Tuareg inferiority, such as the ‘défauts inhérents à sa race’ and the paradoxical concept of ‘une civilisation barbare’ to suggest a foundation upon which the French can build, i.e. that the Tuareg are deserving candidates for la mission civilisatrice, but that they cannot ascend the ladder of racial hierarchy without French tutelage.62 This type of discourse inflected with paradox and contradiction – for it is the perceived primitive innocence of the Tuareg that appeals to Duveyrier – is typical of the civilising mission and of the Enlightenment tradition in which it claims its roots, emphasising the value, even the obligation, associated with instilling universal values among primitive peoples, in order to elevate them in the perceived hierarchy of races and civilisations; an ascent which they could not, however, make without the intervention of the supposedly superior French:

[C’est] l’argument d’ordre humanitaire, de la mission civilisatrice de la France. Les “races supérieures” ont des devoirs par rapport aux “races inférieures”. Une République qui se réclame des grands principes de 1789 se doit d’apporter, aux hommes qui ne les ont pas encore, les bienfaits de la Science, de la Raison, de la Liberté.63

It is noteworthy that the key concepts of cœur and esprit which were later foregrounded in Duveyrier’s depiction of Livingstone also feature in his character sketch of the Tuareg leader Ikhenoûkhen: ‘l’observant attentivement, je suis convaincu que les qualités de son cœur et de son esprit, la générosité et la droiture de son caractère …’. This conveys the extent of Duveyrier’s esteem for the tribal leader and what he perceived as his elevated status among the Indigènes.

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60 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 333.
61 Ibid., p. 352.
62 ‘the doctrine that France’s great cultural tradition has made it supremely qualified for the work of la tutelle coloniale, a phrase that combines the sense of tutelage with that of guardianship over colonized peoples.’ Spurr, [1993] 2004, p. 120.
63 Thobie, in Meyer et al., 1991, p. 617.
In contrast, Urbain in his 1861 pamphlet *L’Algérie pour les Algériens*, criticises what he identifies as a common misrepresentation of Kabyle society as a model of democratic organisation. Such representations were often used as the basis for claims that Kabyles (a Berber people) were more civilisable than Arab populations, in much the same way as Duveyrier claims that the Tuareg are superior to Arabs and potential allies of the French. In a marked contrast to the tone of Duveyrier’s writing and to broader colonial discourse, Urbain depicts Kabyle society as inward-looking and concerned with individual, or at best parochial, interest rather than being progressive and proto-democratic:

> On a préconisé cette organisation comme le prototype de la démocratie républicaine. On n’y avait pas regardé d’assez près, car on a bientôt reconnu que les divisions sont poussées à l’infini : un même village a quelquefois un amin* [sic] pour chaque quartier, et la guerre civile se fait de quartier à quartier ; les élections sont souvent l’occasion de rixes sanglantes. Si la Kabylie est un exemple, c’est pour nous enseigner le danger du morcellement à l’infini des intérêts sociaux.64

In his *Sociologie de l’Algérie* (1958), Pierre Bourdieu arrives at a similar conclusion regarding Berber social organisation and the inaccurate Western perception of traditional Kabyle society as democratic in its organisation.65 If Urbain does express admiration, it is not for Kabyle social organisation, but rather for the Arab Emir Abd-el-Kader’s66 capacity to unite and organise Algeria’s disparate population in the

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66 ‘Deriving prestige from belonging to a family with a religious position, connected with the Qadiri order, [Abd al-Qadir (1808-1883)] became the point around which local forces could gather. For a time he had ruled a virtually independent state, with its centre lying in the interior, and extending from the west into the eastern part of the country. [...] The symbols of his resistance to the French were traditional ones – his war was a jihad, he justified his authority by the choice of the ‘ulama and respect for the shari’a – but there were modern aspects of his organization of government.’ Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner Books, 1991), p. 270.
pursuit of a nationalist struggle for independence: ‘Qui peut dire ce que cet homme illustre eût fait pour la création d’un gouvernement régulier et pour donner la vie à la nationalité algérienne!’ Urbain further addresses this issue in *De la tolérance dans l’islamisme*, branding the equation of Abd-el-Kader’s patriotism with religious fanaticism a misconception based on observers’ lack of authentic contact with Arabs:

> Combien de fois n’a-t-on pas représenté Abd-el-Kader comme un sectaire implacable, […] surexcitant les plus farouches passions religieuses. Les propagateurs les plus ardents de ces accusations étaient des personnes qui n’avaient jamais vécu au milieu des musulmans […]. Quant aux personnes qui ont pu entretenir des relations suivies avec les Arabes, leur opinion est en général toute différente. Elles ont compris que le patriotisme avait, bien plus que le fanatisme, inspiré la résistance des Arabes. La religion était le seul drapeau autour duquel la nationalité pût se rallier pour coordonner ses efforts […] mais lorsque la fin de résistance a été déclarée, par Abd-el-Kader au mois de décembre 1847, impossible à continuer, la religion n’a pas été un seul instant un obstacle à la pacification.

Kanya-Forstner makes a similar point regarding French misconceptions of the armed resistance led by Abd-el-Kader. He also observes the development of a pathological fear of further Muslim uprisings. Such thinking can be detected in some of Duveyrier’s writing on religious fanaticism and will be relevant to the analyses of subsequent chapters:

> The confrontation between Europe and Islam was never quite as clear-cut as it appeared. Even in Algeria, the anti-European *jihad* was part of a tradition of resistance to alien domination. […] In Algeria [the French] had felt the full impact of an anti-European *jihad*, and this experience instilled in them both a pathological fear of Muslim resistance and a fanatical determination to eradicate all traces of independent Muslim power.

In contrast, Urbain clearly did not partake of the ‘fanatical determination to eradicate all traces of independent Muslim power’. As previously stated, following Abd-el-Kader’s surrender in December 1847, Urbain established a friendship with the Emir who had good relations with the French state and many officials in the years following his surrender and exile: ‘Abd al-Qadir […] spent his later years in Damascus, much respected by the population and on good terms with the representatives of France and other European powers.’ Less conventionally, while working as a military interpreter in 1843, Urbain was present at the capture of the Smala (camp) of Abd-el-Kader by the French where he distinguished himself from combatants by refraining from drawing his weapon, demonstrating his assertive individuality and willingness to diverge from his peers and colleagues:

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67 Urbain, 1861, p. 70.
Horace Vernet’s painting of this iconic event supports Urbain’s claim. He is depicted close to the Duke of Aumale and his weapon is not drawn.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Although the writings of Urbain and Duveyrier asserted a similar approval of the civilising mission and suggest that they both viewed their role as representatives of France in colonial Algeria as a vocation, it was paradoxically the trained field-scientist Duveyrier who manifested the more idealised outlook, while Urbain, a failed poet, a social utopian and an official agent of the colonial project, formulated a penetrating critical appraisal of French actions, identifying what he saw as shortcomings in translating the rhetoric of the civilising mission into action. Driven by his commitment to specific Saint-Simonian principles, Urbain was largely to avoid the pitfalls of the romanticised vision of the *Indigènes* cultivated by Duveyrier with respect to nomadic tribes such as the Tuareg. In fact, the would-be Romantic poet, rather than the scientist, emerges over time as less naïve, particularly in his understanding of *la question indigène*. Writing on Urbain in 1891 for *Le Journal des Débats*, Émile Masqueray stated:

[C]’est lui qui, le premier, a mis en plein jour cette formidable question indigène que tout le monde aujourd’hui semble découvrir. Il l’a étudiée sous toutes ses faces, il l’a théoriquement résolue avec la justesse d’esprit d’un homme d’Etat, l’élévation d’un philosophe, le détachement d’un religieux.

Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings demonstrate the linkage between their personal conceptions of the vocations to which they were drawn in North Africa, as cultural intermediary and humanist explorer respectively, and the views which they espoused regarding *la mission civilisatrice*. Chapter 4 will extend this focus on the interplay of conceptions of identity and important issues of colonial relations by

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72 Vernet’s painting ‘La prise de la Smalah d’Abd-el-Kader à Taguin. 16 mai 1843’ (1844) is held at the Musée national du Château de Versailles. The same subject was also favoured by Vernet’s contemporaries, including Joseph Louis Hippolyte Bellangé (1800-1866), Jean-Adolphe Beaucé (1818-1875) and Alfred Decaen (1820-1870).
examining the depiction of Islam, and approaches toward collaboration with and administration of the indigenous population in Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings.
Chapter 4: Relating to the colonial other: Ambiguity, myths and utopias

4.1 Introduction

In *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), Judith Butler posits the contingent interdependence of individual identity and how one relates to others, particularly the other, and links this to opacity, a concept which has already informed our analysis of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writing:

Moments of unknowingness about oneself tend to emerge in the context of relations to others [...]. If we are formed in the context of relations that become partially irrecoverable to us, then that opacity seems built into our formation and follows from our status as beings who are formed in relations of dependency.

This postulation of a primary opacity to the self that follows from formative relations has a specific implication for an ethical bearing toward the other.¹

Ambiguity in the context of relations with others can be indicative of moments of unknowingness about oneself such as those alluded to by Butler. In this chapter we will observe the prevalence of opacity as a feature of colonial contact with the other and how it is addressed by Urbain and Duveyrier, who were reputed for establishing intimate contact with representatives of the colonial other during their careers.

In *Quand les murs tombent : L’identité nationale hors-la-loi ?* (2007), Chamoiseau and Glissant contend that monolithic concepts of identity lead to inflexibility and atrophy, on both the national and individual levels: ‘Aujourd’hui, l’identité nationale ne peut plus être à racine unique, sinon elle s’étiole et se raccourcit.’² This is pertinent to our analysis of the work of Urbain and Duveyrier. Butler’s thinking is also informative in this regard and broadly supports Chamoiseau’s and Glissant’s conception of authentic identity as contingent and resistant to narrow definitions:

If the identity we say we are cannot possibly capture us and marks immediately an excess of opacity that falls outside the categories of identity, then any effort “to give an account of oneself” will have to fail in order to approach being true.³

Butler makes a case for the impossibility of any attempt to capture and express identity, or the identities of others, in finite and fixed terms. In direct contrast to such an approach, Duveyrier was propelled by his faith in the reductive discourses which circumscribed and defined his own identity, and consequently

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³ Butler, 2005, p. 42.
attempted to create a definitive portrait of Islam, the Tuareg and North African identity in *Les Touareg du Nord*, which Butler posits as an undesirable impossibility. Conversely, Urbain channelled his experiences of a hybrid, colonised identity, and as an advocate of religious and cultural syncretism on the Saint-Simonian model, to stimulate collaboration between the victors and the vanquished of colonial conquest, without seeking to assimilate the *Indigènes* to European social and cultural norms or to understand their identity in fixed and thus inherently limited terms. Despite these mitigating factors, Urbain’s engagements in colonial debates were frequently far from unproblematic. This chapter will provide an overview of some examples of the textual tensions and ambivalences which reflect the complexity of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s individual encounters with the colonial other, as well as the development of their attitudes as acknowledged experts on North Africa.

### 4.2 Ambiguity and internal tensions

#### 4.2.1 Urbain: Paternalism, practical measures and internal paradox

A paternalistic approach to the *Indigènes* is a strong feature of Urbain’s programme for French rule in Algeria. This paternalism consists largely in a conviction that the dissemination of certain universalist values and principles would benefit *indigène* society. Urbain seeks to translate such assumptions into a practical approach for honouring, through transmission, the best that France could offer to the *Indigènes*. His intentions were thus pragmatic, but nonetheless grounded in perceptions of European civilisation as more advanced than others, and of European modernity as desirable for all societies. Following a broad preamble, Urbain’s article ‘Du gouvernement des tribus de l’Algérie’ outlines the institutions which he believes should be used to maintain order in Algeria in the short term, with the *Bureaux arabes* to the fore:

> Les bureaux arabes doivent suffire pour donner l’impulsion à l’administration secondaire, surveiller l’esprit public, diriger et contrôler toutes les opérations concernant l’impôt, s’occuper des écoles, des zaouïa, des kahdi, encourager les Arabes à chercher des modèles pour leurs travaux agricoles parmi nos colons, favoriser les plantations d’arbres et la construction des maisons.\(^4\)

The *Bureaux arabes* have been identified by Burke as an important source of the French tradition of the sociology of Islam in Algeria.\(^5\) Between the *Bureaux arabes* and individual *Indigènes*, Urbain proposed that local tribal leaders should act as intermediaries, a system which is reminiscent of British indirect rule in India:

> Mais l’ordre ne peut pas arriver directement du bureau arabe à la population […]. C’est le rôle du kaïd* ; […] c’est lui qui nécessairement doit servir d’intermédiaire entre l’autorité française qui dirige, qui donne l’ordre, et l’Arabe qui obéit.\(^6\)

The tone in the latter quotation is suggestive of a rigid racial hierarchy of superior French and subaltern *Indigènes*, exemplified in the use of the verbs *diriger* and *obéir*. However, French superiority is not consistently formulated as a rigid hierarchy in Urbain’s wider body of work. Although other unresolved tensions and contradictions regularly occur, the former quotation is more representative of his typical writing style. It achieves a gradual modulation of tone – the verbs *surveiller*, *diriger* and *contrôler* give way to *s’occuper*, *encourager*, *chercher* and finally *favoriser* – to echo the goal of progress from conflict to co-operation.

Urbain concludes by proposing a three-phase plan, thus moving from a critique of failures to proposals for their correction:

> Dans la première […], il faut conserver les habitudes administratives et les chefs anciennement investis du pouvoir. […]

> La seconde phase du gouvernement indigène commence lorsque l’influence française a pris racine dans le pays et que les administrés eux-mêmes désirent l’intervention du chef français. A ce moment […] les bureaux arabes doivent administrer. […]

> La troisième phase serait celle où, par les progrès de la colonisation, la tribu arabe pourrait, soit se jump-poser [sic] à la commune française, soit se fondre dans celle-ci, de manière à relever comme elle de l’autorité civile. On comprend suffisamment que ce résultat ne pourrait être atteint qu’avec le temps, et après une série d’efforts intelligents et heureux. Alors un peuple nouveau, conservant des idiomes, des mœurs et des croyances divers, se développera sous la tutelle de la France, confondant ses intérêts, s’inspirant d’un même sentiment patriotique. Ce n’est pas la fusion inintelligente des races, des habitudes, des doctrines religieuses ; c’est l’association des travaux pour atteindre un but commun : la paix et le bien-être.\(^7\)

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\(^5\) '[T]he French tradition of the sociology of Islam [...] can be seen to consist of three broad strands [...]. The most important of the three was the tradition of the Arab Bureaus. It began in 1844 with the appointment of Eugène Daumas (1802-71) by General Bugeaud as head of Direction of Arab Affairs. From these “Robinson galonnés,” as Jacques Berque has called them, came a major share of the most important works on Algerian society, customs, and religion. Closely involved with the life of the tribes, the native affairs officers of the Arab Bureaus knew from direct observation and experience what the civilians and the academics seldom grasped: the attractiveness of Muslim society, its endless capacity for resistance, its subtleties as well as its vulnerabilities.’ Burke, Edmund III, ‘The sociology of Islam: The French tradition’, pp. 154-73, in Burke, Edmund III, Prochaska, David, eds, *Genealogies of Orientalism: History, Theory, Politics* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), pp. 160-61.

\(^6\) Urbain, 1848a, p. 22.

The third, and most aspirational phase, is reminiscent of Saint-Simonian utopian rhetoric and Urbain’s early poetry, for example in its references to un peuple nouveau and l’association des travaux. Urbain recapitulates his theory that the fusion of cultures and association of common interests will ultimately prove beneficial to both France and Algeria. This fusionist vision differs substantially from Duveyrier’s favoured strategy of intellectual appropriation, which tends to involve unilateral assumptions that French rule will universally benefit the Indigènes.

In the extended article ‘Chrétiens et Musulmans, Français et Algériens’, Urbain counters accusations of Muslim intransigence and an intrinsically anti-Christian sensibility among the Indigènes by questioning what if any practical efforts toward reconciliation, collaboration, or improving their day-to-day living conditions have been made by the French:

> On répète avec assurance : les musulmans sont incorrigibles. Mais qu’avons-nous fait en Algérie pour les corriger, pour leur persuader que nous respections leurs croyances, que nous voulions faire d’eux nos frères? […] Avons-nous relevé et réparé les mosquées que la guerre avait ruinées? Avons-nous encouragé l’instruction publique, fondé des hôpitaux, des crèches, des salles d’asile pour tant de malheureux que la misère accable? Avons-nous appelé l’Arabe à se mêler à nos travaux agricoles et industriels? Bien loin de là, on a accusé le gouvernement à la Chambre des Députés, parce qu’il a fait construire quelques mosquées avec l’argent fourni par les musulmans […]

Urbain’s demands for self-awareness and respect for cultural difference chime with the critical thinking advocated by Maalouf in the context of postcolonial identity politics. Both thinkers foreground these concepts and display a general pragmatism in their approaches to intercultural relations, thus suggesting that these aspects of Urbain’s outlook were progressive for their era:

> Le XXe siècle nous aura appris qu’aucune doctrine n’est, par elle-même, nécessairement libétratrice […] Si l’on souhaite poser […] un regard neuf et utile, il faut avoir, à chaque étape de l’investigation, le scrupule de l’équité. Ni hostilité, ni complaisance, ni surtout l’insupportable condescendance qui semble devenue pour certains, en Occident et ailleurs, une seconde nature.

The opening line of the quotation from Urbain has a sharp ironic tone. This dissipates to an extent when he evokes the potentially symbiotic outcome of a mutually tolerant, rather than an adversarial encounter of French and the Indigènes:

> Il ne s’agit pas de faire des Arabes des chrétiens, ni de rendre les Français de l’Algérie musulmans. Que chacun garde sa foi, ses instincts, ses habitudes; mais que le travail soit un lien entre les deux populations; qu’elles associent leurs intérêts, et soyez sûr que, sans

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The image of a productive *rapprochement* consistently recurs in Urbain’s writing. He summarises his programme in the conclusion to *De la tolérance dans l’islamisme*, emphasising other key concepts, such as respect for religious and social difference, a fair system of administration, patience and a paternalistic attentiveness to education and the material needs of the *Indigènes*. It also features the recurring trope of the conquest of hearts which must follow military conquest, this trope also occurs in the writing of many advocates of colonisation up to and including in the twentieth century such as the French minister of colonies Albert Sarraut’s text *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (1923):

> Le temps, qui guérit bien des blessures morales, un respect sincère pour la religion et pour les mœurs, une grande équité dans notre administration, une sollicitude constante pour le bien-être des populations, et pour leur instruction, nous aideront à faire la conquête des cœurs, comme par la bravoure de nos soldats nous avons dompté la résistance armée.  

Earlier optimistic assertions that the enmity between the French and the *Indigènes* (and between Christians and Muslims) could be permanently resolved – ‘on peut dire qu’il n’y a pas d’ennemis irréconciliables’– also recur, at least in relation to common practical concerns. The hearts-and-minds trope also recalls Duveyrier’s preference for formulations defining exemplary figures as men of *esprit* and *cœur*.

A brief passage in ‘Chrétiens et Musulmans, Français et Algériens’ challenges the racial and ethnic hierarchies employed to justify colonisation: ‘Il est toujours dangereux, lorsque deux peuples se trouvent en contact, de rechercher lequel est supérieur à l’autre.’ Urbain thus questions the right of one country, or people, to rule over another because of an assumed moral, racial, ethnic or intellectual superiority, and hence the very rationale of the civilising mission to which he understandably pledged his support, given that his employment and opportunities for promotion derived from the colonial project. The statement hints that Urbain’s pragmatism had its limits and that the strength of his convictions had the potential to override his diplomatic approach to writing and his desire to advance his career – and, as we shall see, in later life this is precisely what occurred. The ambivalence which is a feature of Urbain’s writing on colonial rule is also prominent in Duveyrier’s writing, despite overt differences in subject matter and genre.

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10 Urbain, 1848b, p. 41.
12 Urbain, 1848b, p. 35.
4.2.2 Duveyrier: fieldwork and local informants

In the ‘Avant-propos’ to Les Touareg du Nord, Duveyrier balances references to European experts with expressions of gratitude to various tribal chiefs and guides:

Plusieurs chefs indigènes m’ont également secondé de tout leur pouvoir : Sidi-Mohammed-el-‘Aïd, grand maître de la confrérie Tedjâdijn ; le marabout Si-‘Othmân-ben-el-Hâdj-el-Bekri, chef de la tribu des Ifôghas ; l’émir El-Hâdj-Mohammed-Ilkhenoukhen, chef des Touareg Azdjer ; le marabout Sidi-el-Bakkây, cousin du célèbre cheikh de Timbouktou ; Si-Selimân-el-‘Azzâi, moudîr de Faççêto, dans le Djebel-tripolitain.

Que tous reçoivent, ici, mes sincères remerciements.

Qu’il me soit aussi permis de donner un témoignage public de l’inaltérable dévouement d’Ahmed-ben-Zerma, du Soûf, homme droit, intelligent, énergique, qui fut mon compagnon pendant la partie la plus difficile de mon voyage.13

Given that Les Touareg du Nord was published in Paris, in French, it was unlikely that those mentioned would read or learn of these acknowledgements. Duveyrier may have been aiming to boost the academic clout of his text by demonstrating his success in gaining the trust of Saharan tribal leaders, and/or conceived his work as a collaboration marrying European scientific method with local experience to achieve more than could be accomplished by Europeans working alone. If the latter is true, then in practical terms Duveyrier advocated a form of fusion of Orient and Occident, which might support the academic tendency to align him with the Saint-Simonians.

It is also interesting to note that Duveyrier alludes to the important role played by oral testimonies gathered from locals, stating that they are valuable sources of relevant information, this in fact amounts to quite a modern approach on his part:

[J]e crois avoir avancé l’état des choses […] en appuyant sur mes propres travaux de nombreux renseignements oraux, recueillis avec le soin le plus scrupuleux ; en étudiant la nature des lieux, le caractère des hommes ; en affémissant des relations déjà préparées ou en en créant de nouvelles14

However, Duveyrier includes the caveat that such information only forms a valid basis for scientific inquiry when collected with ‘le soin le plus scrupuleux’, thus knowing which questions to ask, how to phrase them and interpret answers is essential, i.e. there must be a consistent application of scientific method. Indeed, this approach is still true of current standards and guidelines for scientific practice.

Recourse to information gleaned from local informants is such a regular element of Duveyrier’s research methodology in Les Touareg du Nord that its omission is noted:

14 Ibid., pp. vii-viii.
Duveyrier also cites as indispensable the advice regarding the practicalities of Saharan travel, and how to conduct himself in the company of local guides and fellow travellers, which he received from tribal leader Sidi-Othmman. In the same extended passage, he also discusses the profession of guide and its respected status in Saharan society:

Avant d’entrer dans l’Erg, le Cheikh-‘Othmán, chargé de me conduire chez les Touâreg, me fit quatre recommandations :
« M’armer de beaucoup de patience et de résignation ;
« Ne pas intervenir dans les discussions des guides ou khebîr, relativement à la marche de la route ;
« Faire provision de beaucoup d’eau ;
« Être libéral envers les guides, envers mes serviteurs et mes compagnons de voyage. »
L’expérience avait dicté ces conseils à la sagesse du Cheikh-‘Othmán.
Mes compagnons de voyage, connaissant les dangers de la traversée, recommandèrent leur âme à Dieu, au prophète, à tous les marabouts, en réclamant leur puissante intervention pour les faire sortir sains et saufs d’un pays qu’ils qualifient de champ de la mort.
Des guides sont indispensables pour voyager dans l’Erg ; quand je quittai El-Ouâd, l’autorité locale exigea que j’en eusse deux, comme garantie de sécurité.
La profession de guide est héréditaire dans certaines familles et elle constitue chez elles une sorte de sacerdoce, car de l’expérience du guide dépend souvent le salut ou la perte d’une caravane. On juge de l’importance de cette profession par le respect dont tous les khebîr sont entourés et par les honneurs qui leur sont rendus au départ et à l’arrivée de chaque caravane.

This demonstrates Duveyrier’s adherence to the advice of a local tribal leader and a refusal to dismiss all natives as superstitious savages. He asserts that he respected and valued Othman’s judgement and he acknowledges the risks run and sacrifices made by his guides, and their essential contribution to his expedition, a common omission in travel accounts. There is a precedent for similar type of recognition of guides in *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger*:

Dans l’après-midi je décidai de faire une excursiion dans le but d’examiner de près le K’obr roumîa.* Mothay, le menuisier de M. Warnier, et le maçon s’offrirent pour m’accompagner, ce que j’acceptai avec empressement ; car, ignorant comme je l’étais du chemin et du terrain, j’aurais grandement risqué de me fourver, peut-être même de disparaître dans quelque ravin, si je n’avais pas eu de guide.

In a further break with Eurocentric and orientalising practices, in the passage from *Les Touareg du Nord* Duveyrier circumvents the convention of negating all

oriental history and civilisation since the age of Greek and Roman antiquity by providing an account of the hereditary profession of guide, its function and status in Saharan society. He establishes the presence of social conventions and the development of practices over time, thus offering an alternative to depictions of the desert as an untouched and unchanging space by reminding readers that the Sahara has its own culture and social organisation, and thus rendering problematic the Eurocentric position that through colonisation the West would bring civilisation to socially atrophied regions. Duveyrier also appears to be staging, although almost certainly unconsciously, what Bhabha identifies as a conceptual difficulty of modernity, which is foregrounded in encounters with colonial space:

For the emergence of modernity – as an ideology of *beginning, modernity as the new* – the template of this ‘non-place’ becomes the colonial space. It signifies this in a double way. The colonial space is the *terra incognita* or the *terra nulla*, the empty or wasted land whose history has to be begun […]. But the colonial space also stands for the despotic time of the Orient that becomes a great problem for the definition of modernity and its inscription of the history of the colonized from the perspective of the West. […] In that double-figure which haunted the moment of the Enlightenment in its relation to the otherness of the Other, you can see the historical formation of the time-lag of modernity.18

Duveyrier’s experiences made him aware that the Orient was not a *terra nulla*, but had its own society which had evolved over time and continued to evolve, also positioning it beyond the scope of despotic time and thus generating tensions within his writing which could be associated with Bhabha’s concept of the time-lag of modernity. Despite his encounters with the realities of the Orient as distinct from Orientalist tropes, Duveyrier also self-consciously perpetuates some of these tropes. This is probably undertaken in order to insert his text into a self-legitimising, Western scholarly tradition that identifies its point and moment of origin not in the Enlightenment, nor in the Renaissance, but rather in Hellenic, Roman and even Egyptian civilisations. In *Orientalism*, Said identifies this tendency with Western hegemonic discourse; while in *Imagined Communities* Anderson establishes a link with the post-revolutionary period in France and across Western Europe: ‘the new imagined communities conjured up by lexicography and print-capitalism always regarded themselves as somehow ancient.’19 The insertion of modern French society into an antique lineage is illustrated by the following quotation from nineteenth-century historian Henri Martin which explicitly aims to reconcile concepts of

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continuity with an ancient past with revolutionary ideals of universalism and fraternity in the process:

Ces vastes réunions rappelaient tout ce qu’il y avait eu d’héroïque et d’enthousiaste chez nos aïeux les Gaulois, tout ce qu’il y avait eu de beau et de poétique chez les Grecs. […] La grandeur et la simplicité des temps antiques revivaient dans ce peuple rajeuni et se mêlaient au sentiment nouveau de la fraternité universelle.20

This prevalent trope reinforced a tendency to refer to the texts of antique scholars as trustworthy academic sources. Duveyrier’s text is peppered with references to Pliny and Herodotus, referred to in the same fashion as works by his immediate European predecessors. The following passage from Les Touareg du Nord is a representative illustration:

du temps du roi Juba, au commencement de notre ère, le grand fleuve saharien avait de pareils caprices, à ce qu’il paraît.

D’après les Libyques du roi Juba citées par Pline, le grand fleuve de la Libye, « indigné de couler à travers des sables et des lieux immondes, se cache l’espace de quelques journées. Absorbé de nouveau par les sables, il se cache encore une fois dans un espace de vingt journées de désert. »

Cette citation, que j’emprunte au grand ouvrage de M. Vivien de Saint-Martin, Le Nord de l’Afrique dans l’antiquité, me permet de constater, tout d’abord, combien le savant géographe a été heureusement inspiré…

The tone of this and other similar passages in Les Touareg du Nord are in keeping with hegemonic Western discourse as analysed by Said in Orientalism,22 including its ambivalences. Duveyrier’s writing displays a general tendency to struggle with the challenges of reconciling his admiration for concepts of both modernity and tradition. The aspects of Saint-Simonian doctrine which most appealed to Duveyrier were those associated with scientific progress, and thus modernity, while one of the aspects of Tuareg society and of the Orient in general which he appeared to find most appealing was their apparent emphasis on tradition, that is, of maintaining continuity with a distant and/or mythic past. Duveyrier’s difficulties are typical of the tensions within modern concepts of time and historical continuity which are suggested by the quotations from Bhabha and Anderson above. A radically different

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21 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 43.
22 ‘From at least the second century B.C. on, it was lost on no traveller or eastward-looking and ambitious Western potentate that Herodotus – historian, traveller, inexhaustibly curious chronicler – and Alexander – king, warrior, scientific conqueror – had been in the Orient before. […] The Orient therefore alternated in the mind’s geography between being an Old World to which one returned, […] and being a wholly new place to which one came as Columbus came to America, in order to set up a New World […] The Orient at large, therefore, vacillates between the West’s contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in – or fear of – novelty.’ Said, Edward W., Orientalism (London: Penguin, [1978] 2003), pp. 57-59.
concept of time is that associated with the region’s predominant religion, and it is to Islam that we now turn our attention.

4.3 Islam: construction and destruction of binary oppositions

A significant divergence in Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writing, with wide-reaching implications for their approaches to both French engagement in North Africa and la question indigène, concerns Islam and the presence or absence of Islamic religious fanaticism. Not surprising, the practice of Islam in Algeria was also a major concern for the colonial administration at large.

4.3.1 Urbain’s critique of the colonial preoccupation with Islamic fanaticism

Although not the article’s explicit focus, ‘Du gouvernement des tribus de l’Algérie’ (1847) addresses perceived Islamic fanaticism:

Le fanatisme des Arabes a servi de prétexte à de nombreuses déclamations ; et ce fanatisme cependant est une de nos erreurs sur le caractère arabe, presque un préjugé. [...] Il y a chez les Arabes quelque chose de plus vénére que le djehed, c’est la paix (afia), la sainte paix ![23] Urbain thus refutes the identification of fanaticism and holy war as intrinsic to Islam and suggests that such equivalences foster dangerous prejudices. Despite Urbain’s disavowal of the notion of an innately fanatical Islam, his status as an agent of the colonial project renders his position decidedly ambivalent. As such an agent, Urbain was expected to support some, if not all, of colonialism’s basic tenets, which as Burke observes included precisely this assumption:

Already by the 1850s, the central assumptions of what I have elsewhere referred to as the colonial vulgate on the nature of North African society can be observed [...]. These assumptions included the [...] innate fanaticism of Islam, and the division of the society into dichotomous, mutually exclusive groupings: Arab and Berber, nomad and sedentary, rural and urban. From this it was but a step to conclude the congenital incapacity for independence of North Africans, and the legitimacy of French rule and of its civilising mission.[24]

Despite his active role in the colonial project, in the opening section of De la tolérance dans l’islamisme (1856), Urbain again links perceived Islamic fanaticism to European prejudice, thus making an implied criticism of conventional European attitudes toward Islam:

Le premier progrès à accomplir … doit consister à s’affranchir des préjugés étroits et des préventions injustes que l’ignorance, la routine et l’esprit de secte entretiennent contre l’islamisme. [...] le harem, la polygamie, les coutumes de la vie privée n’apparaissent encore

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23 Urbain, 1848a, pp. 23-24.
24 Burke, in Burke, Prochaska, 2008, pp. 158.
qu’à travers les voiles de la légende ou les exagérations des récits naïfs des premiers voyageurs ou des missionnaires catholiques. […] Nous voulons seulement soumettre quelques réflexions sur la plus grave des accusations dont on poursuit les musulmans : sur leur fanatisme. 25

The opening line above alludes to several contemporary Western criticisms which exemplified the assumed ‘innate fanaticism of Islam’ – narrow-mindedness, ignorance and sectarianism. However, unconventionally and even subversively Urbain directs these criticisms at Western observers rather than Muslims, highlighting ‘des préjugés étroits et des préventions injustes que l’ignorance, la routine et l’esprit de secte entretiennent contre l’islamisme.’ Urbain also goes on to attribute the dissemination of these prejudices to the exaggerated accounts of early European travellers and Catholic missionaries, two groups which might more typically have been treated with respect and even veneration.

In the later pamphlet, L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants (1862), Urbain further undermines what Burke refers to as the colonial vulgate by criticising stereotypes that depict Islamic societies as hostile to scientific innovation. Such representations typically describe Western science as derived predominantly from Roman and Hellenic traditions, and thus negate any history of an exchange of ideas between Christians and Muslims. In contrast, more recent scholarship, for example The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs transformed Western civilisation (2009) by Jonathan Lyons, 26 elaborates the influence of Arab scholarship upon mathematics, medicine, astronomy and the interpretation of Aristotelian philosophy, which stimulated the transformation of a comparatively primitive medieval Europe. This is precisely as observed by Urbain in the following quotation:

N’est-ce pas dans les académies de l’Espagne mahométique, dans les riches et nombreuses bibliothèques fondées par les émirs et les khalifes, que les docteurs de la chrétienté, les grands esprits de France et d’Italie, allaient s’initier aux mystères de l’astronomie, aux principes des mathématiques et de la médecine, aux secrets d’une nouvelle formule d’art, aux doctrines philosophiques d’Aristote, aux subtilités de la scolastique, aux procédés de l’agriculture rationnelle, puiser, en un mot, la science universelle, dont la barbarie de l’Europe catholique leur refusait le bienfait ? 27

The cumulative effect of Urbain’s repeated questioning of French critiques of Muslim society is a gradual subversion of the Eurocentric idées reçues framing such perceptions:

On cède au préjugé sans le discuter ; on s’indigne contre le musulman qui apostrophe les chrétiens de la qualification de chiens, sans examiner si, pour être moins grossier, on n’est pas tout aussi injuste envers lui, en le flétrissant comme un fanatique brutal, et en lui fermant à jamais l’accès de notre civilisation. Des deux côtés on ne s’aime pas, parce qu’on ne se connaît pas, ou parce qu’on se connaît mal. Ajoutons cependant que cette supériorité dont nous nous targuons devrait nous imposer plus de réserve et une plus large impartialité vis-à-vis de nos propres faiblesses.\(^{28}\)

Urbain encourages the revision of reactionary responses and asks the French to consider that, from an Islamic perspective, Christians may appear to be intransigent and belligerent. His call for empathy operates under similar principles to Glissant’s formulation of opacity, acting as a countermeasure to schematic, intellectually blunt modes of perception. This vision of opacity was alluded to in relation to Duveyrier in Chapter 3.\(^{29}\) Urbain’s choice of the reflexive verb *se targuer* highlights that French superiority is precisely a French claim and therefore highly questionable. Furthermore, he points out that if the French are superior to the *Indigènes*, they should be capable of exercising reserve in their judgement of them. Thus, in short, Urbain seeks to stimulate critical thinking and self-awareness to generate greater empathy toward the *Indigènes* and Islam.

### 4.3.2 Depictions of Islam in *Les Touareg du Nord*

It is striking that references to Islam in Duveyrier’s *Les Touareg du Nord* employ the very term fanaticism against which Urbain cautioned. For instance: ‘Il est regrettable que le fanatisme des habitants de la ville de Zouïla ne permette pas à un géologue expérimenté d’aller explorer librement les deux Hároûdj ; car on pourrait y faire une ample collection de grands fossiles.’\(^{30}\) The statement also adheres to the common colonial rhetorical opposition between Western reason and Oriental unreason: ‘The rational discourse of Western knowledge opposes reason to madness and truth to falsehood, placing its enterprise on one side of each such antistudy.’\(^{31}\)

In the ‘Centres religieux’ chapter of *Les Touareg du Nord*, Duveyrier contrasts two Sufi brotherhoods or *confréries* active in North Africa in the mid-nineteenth century, the Sanusiyya and the Tijianiyya. He constructs a system of binary oppositions qualifying them as respectively fanatical, hostile or friendly.

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\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 5.


\(^{30}\) Duveyrier, 1864, pp. 75-77.

Duveyrier’s mentor Barth had established an affiliation with the Tijaniyya which the younger explorer renewed. It is not then surprising that Duveyrier depicts this brotherhood sympathetically; more striking is the extent to which he demonises the Sanusiyya.

Duveyrier describes the Sanusiyya’s founding principles in terms of what the brotherhood opposes, implying that it is reactionary and unwilling to engage with outsiders, particularly Europeans:

_Confrérie des Senoûsi_

La pensée fondamentale de cette association est donc une triple protestation : contre les concessions faites à la civilisation de l’Occident ; contre les innovations, conséquences du progrès, introduites dans divers États de l’Orient par les derniers souverains ; enfin, contre de nouvelles tentatives d’extension d’influence dans les pays encore préservés par la grâce divine. [...] Entre le Nil et l’Océan, entre l’Afrique septentrionale et l’Afrique centrale, s’étend un vaste désert où, jusqu’à ce jour, de rares voyageurs, à la discrétion des populations qui l’habitent, ont seuls pu pénétrer, où même plus d’un point reculé a été à l’abri de la souillure des pas de l’infidèle : c’est ce désert qu’Es-Senoûsi choisira pour champ d’application de ses projets ; c’est ce désert sans eau, dévoré par un soleil ardent, qu’il opposera comme un cordon sanitaire à la contagion européenne.  

The latter section initiates a depiction of the Sanusiyya as a clandestine movement. Duveyrier will pursue such depictions of a secretive, scheming Sanusiyya brotherhood in his later writing. There is also a striking and rather poetic image of the scale of the Sahara, reflecting Duveyrier’s fascination with it as a vast, cruel and enigmatic space. Duveyrier blames the Sanusiyya for hostile treatment and blocking his itineraries, and he alludes to its use of the Sahara as a barrier against European contagion, thus employing one of his own favoured images, in what appears to be an ironic mode. He also contrasts the brotherhood’s perceived anti-French hostility with the protection provided by Sidi-Bakkay, Ikhenoukhen, and loyal Muslim servants – rendering explicit the _Indigènes_-as-servants trope noted in Chapter 2. He additionally advocates surveillance as a means of exerting power and control over the Sanusiyya, a gesture which is reminiscent of Michel Foucault’s extensive analyses of power and the construction of order in the Western imagination:

Grâce à l’appui moral de Sidi-et-Bakkây et à l’autorité toute-puissante de l’émir Ikhenoukhen, j’ai pu braver, pendant quinze jours, sur le marché _extra muros_ de Rhât, la colère des khouân d’Es-Senoûsi, mais je n’ai pu pénétrer en ville, et ceux de mes serviteurs musulmans qui y sont allés pour faire des provisions de bouche y ont été maltraités. […] Tout voyageur européen qui parcourra les mêmes contrées, surtout s’il est Français, doit s’attendre à rencontrer le même obstacle.

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32 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 302.
La conclusion de ce qui précède est qu’il est nécessaire de surveiller cette confrérie religieuse et de s’opposer à son développement partout où on le pourra.34

There is a sharp contrast when Duveyrier introduces the Tijaniyya:

*Confrérie des Tedjâdjna*

Par les exemples de vertu et de piété de son père, par les leçons de ses professeurs, par les connaissances acquises dans des voyages à Fez et à la Mekke, et de longs séjours auprès des savants les plus renommés de l’islamisme, Sîdi-Ahmed était l’homme de son époque et de son pays le mieux préparé à fonder une confrérie religieuse sur la double base du *triomphe du droit par le droit et de la tolérance dans la voie de Dieu.*35 (original emphasis)

Much like Saint-Simonian leadership, according to Duveyrier, the Tijaniyya was founded by a virtuous and pious father. He emphasises that the founding father travelled extensively, exchanging ideas with other scholars, implying that a cosmopolitan openness defines the Tijaniyya rather than the immobility and sequestration which he associates with the Sanusiyya. This assertion points to Duveyrier’s capacity for the selective exclusion of information, since he ignores a comparable level of cosmopolitanism in the biography of the founder of the Sanusiyya.36 Duveyrier reinforces oppositions by insisting that the Tijaniyya were founded upon values of tolerance and justice, the binary opposites of his vision of a fanatical Sanusiyya.

As with the Tuareg, Duveyrier advances from describing the Tijaniyya as virtuous to suggestions of a tolerant, pro-French attitude:

> « Laissez donc faire aux Français ce qu’ils veulent, car ils paraissent avoir pris un chemin juste et sage, qui doit faire fructifier le bien de tous. » M. le colonel de Neveu, auteur des *Khouân*, livre auquel j’emprunte cette réponse, en garantit l’exactitude.

Elle doit être authentique, en effet, car elle n’est que la paraphrase du mot de passe de la confrérie : *triomphe du droit par le droit, tolérance dans la voie de Dieu.* […]

Ainsi, quoique chrétien, quoique Français, titre aggravant pour tous ceux qui croient leur indépendance menacée, j’ai voyagé comme frère de l’ordre des Tedjâdjna, et j’ai été accueilli comme tel par tous les khouân.37

The implication is that tolerance and intellectual openness are directly linked to aiding Duveyrier, i.e. that there are friendly and enlightened Muslims who are potential French allies, but that there are also fanatical and hostile ones who must be transformed or destroyed. This friend versus foe binary is restated in the conclusion of the Tijaniyya section, as is the concept of fanaticism as characteristic of the unenlightened variety of Islam:

34 Duveyrier, 1864, pp. 305-06.
37 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 309.
En terminant ce paragraphe sur les centres religieux sahariens, je ne puis m’empêcher de constater que quatre marabouts m’ont prêté le plus grand appui dans mon voyage [...]. Il est vrai que ces marabouts sont des hommes éclairés, et non des ignorants obligés d’abriter la pauvreté de leur esprit et de leur cœur sous le manteau si facile à porter de fanatisme.  

References to the linked virtues of *esprit* and *cœur*, which were highlighted in relation to vocation and the civilising mission in Chapter 3, are employed here to refer to the marabouts (holy men) of the Tijaniyya, while enlightenment is again juxtaposed and contrasted with ignorance in a recurring motif of Duveyrier’s analyses of human behaviour.

Elsewhere, Duveyrier asserts that the Tuareg are morally averse to Islam because of the subordinate status which the religion accords to women: ‘L’islamisme est-il assez difficilement accepté par les Touâreg pour que leurs convertisseurs les surnomment les *renégats*, la faute en est à la nouvelle religion qui subalternise la femme à l’homme.’  

He also repeatedly emphasises Tuareg virtue, thus further reinforcing binary oppositions with Arabs, who are depicted as corrupt and corrupting, for instance: 

> Les femmes arabes, mariées à onze ans, mères à douze, vieilles à vingt, employent le tabac comme aphrodisiaque en s’en saupoudrant un certain organe.

> Pour l’honneur de l’humanité, je m’empresse de dire que cet usage exceptionnel et impudique, inconnu des Touâreg, est circonscrit dans le Sud-Est du Sahara algérien.  

Duveyrier suggests that the Tuareg do not merely abstain from the denigrated practice, but are entirely ignorant of its existence, foregrounding what he perceives as their innocence as well as their moral rectitude. The Orientalist preoccupation with Arab female sexuality, which was a prominent feature of the writings of numerous travellers over the same period, such as the British traveller Richard Burton (1821-1890),  

is recalled by Duveyrier’s depiction of a depraved and sexually degraded Orient to which the Tuareg are seen to mark a positive contrast. 

Duveyrier suggests that the Tuareg were only nominally Muslim, remaining  

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41 ‘His translation of the *Nights* is replete with references to the sexual voracity of women. “Egyptians hold, and justly enough, that their women are more amorous than men,” Burton declares in one of his provocative footnotes. In another he claims that “the venereal requirements and reproductive powers of the female greatly exceed those of the male,” especially in “hot-damp climates” [...]. This [...] has been taken as evidence that Burton constructed an Orientalist interpretation of desire, equating the Muslim world in particular with a realm of unrestrained sexuality.’ Kennedy, Dane, *The Highly Civilised Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World* (London: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 234-35.
essentially pagan. This image of the Tuareg as internally resistant to forces of social change is compatible with Duveyrier’s nostalgic and Romantic conception of them as an ancient people, unaltered by the passage of time developed elsewhere in *Les Touareg du Nord.*

Si on interroge les croyances, les superstitions des Touâreg, on retrouve vivantes encore dans leurs âmes les traces des diverses religions qu’ils ont professées. […] Probablement, ils n’ont pas été meilleurs chrétiens qu’ils ne sont aujourd’hui bons musulmans. Les traditions païennes devaient, à cette époque, comme de nos jours, dominer dans leurs croyances.

These statements also distance the Tuareg from Duveyrier’s criticisms of Islam, thus supporting his claims regarding their suitability as allies of *la mission civilisatrice* and reinforcing the Tuareg/Arab opposition. Deleuze and Guattari identify binary logic, such as that employed systematically by Duveyrier in *Les Touareg du Nord,* as characteristic of arborescent thought and fundamental to the analytical processes underpinning Western science:

cette pensée [la pensée racine unique] n’a jamais compris la multiplicité : il lui faut une forte unité principale supposée pour arriver à deux suivant une méthode spirituelle. […] La logique binaire et les relations biunivoques dominent encore la psychanalyse, la linguistique et le structuralisme, même l’informatique.

Duveyrier’s analyses of Islamic brotherhoods as pairings occupying opposing poles on a hierarchically structured scale of behaviours – open versus clandestine, friendly to outsiders versus hostile, progressive versus primitive, and so forth – and of Tuareg tribes versus a generic Arab society described in similarly judgemental terms, thus demonstrate that he was heavily influenced by early forms of this binary logic and associated arborescent concepts of identity.

### 4.3.3 Urbain’s tolerant Islam

While Duveyrier conceived of good and bad Muslims and accordingly split North Africans into binaries, Urbain’s writing pursues a vision of a largely tolerant Islam which is neither inferior nor superior to Christianity or Judaism. Paradoxically, the titles of several of Urbain’s published texts are constructed as binary oppositions most prominently ‘Chrétiens et Musulmans, Français et Algériens’ and *L’Algérie*
française, Indigènes et Immigrants. However, within these texts Urbain seeks to deconstruct rather than perpetuate such oppositional pairings:

> Ce sont les intérêts politiques et commerciaux qui président aux alliances, et, sur ce terrain-là, on peut dire qu’il n’y a pas d’ennemis irréconciliables. L’événement a déjà prouvé que la paix et la bonne harmonie étaient possibles entre des musulmans et des chrétiens.45

In such passages, Michel Levallois identifies Urbain’s determination to dismantle the binary oppositions typically fostered by colonial rhetoric:

> Chacun de ces ouvrages montre qu’[…] Ismayl Urbain […] a incarné un humanisme réformiste qui entendait concilier par l’association les apories formées par les couples colonisation et civilisation, assimilation républicaine et respect des autochtones.46

This once more exemplifies Urbain’s tendency to adopt formulations familiar to Western readerships only to reformulate, subvert and thus discredit them, while simultaneously undermining the prevailing systems for eradicating opacity and rendering the colonial other transparent and knowable.

Urbain’s argument for a tolerant Islam is advanced by two principal methods in *De la tolérance dans l’islamisme*: ‘nous allons invoquer tour à tour les textes du Koran et les preuves historiques.’47 Elsewhere he also argues that Islam developed as a reaction against the idolatrous practices of certain Arabian tribes and never sought the conversion of adherents to Christianity or Judaism – considered along with Muslims to be peoples of the book, possessing a shared monotheism and reverence for prophetic figures such as Abraham and Moses – nor did it promote religious intolerance:

> Ce verset ne s’adresse ni aux juifs, ni aux chrétiens, pour les doctrines desquels le chapitre III est plein de témoignages de respect. Il faut l’appliquer exclusivement aux Arabes que l’apôtre de Dieu voulait détourner de certaines pratiques idolâtres […]. [Les chrétiens et les juifs sont] des hommes dont il reconnaissait les livres saints et les prophètes. [Mohammed] n’a jamais commandé l’intolérance, ni donné l’exemple du fanatisme.48

> La doctrine du Koran, qu’on taxe de matérialisme, était, au moment de sa promulgation, une réaction spiritueliste contre l’idolâtrie […] qui régnaient en Arabie. Ce glaive […] n’a jamais été tourné contre les juifs ni contre les chrétiens, en dehors du champ de bataille, pour les forcer à abjurer leur foi.49

Urbain also invokes striking historical counter-examples to support his study:

> Les annales de l’islamisme offrent-elles des actes d’intolérance comparables à ce qui s’est passé en Espagne contre les Maures et contre les Juifs ? Les conquêtes religieuses des

45 Urbain, 1848b, p. 35.
48 Urbain, 1848a, p. 9.
49 Urbain, 1848b, p. 36.
Arabes ont-elles présenté des circonstances aussi regrettables que l’invasion de l’Amérique par les Espagnols?  

*De la tolérance dans l’islamisme* proceeds from the specific to the general through an account of the Islamic conquest of Jerusalem and then of religious tolerance in subsequent Islamic conquests:

> [L]es musulmans allèrerent mettre le siège devant Jérusalem […]. Reconnaissant enfin que la défense était devenue impossible, les chrétiens se résignèrent à capituler, […] Omar […] leur accorda le libre exercice de leur religion, les maintint en possession de leurs églises, et ne leur imposa qu’un tribut modéré.

> [L]a domination des musulmans […] a pu opprimer, elle n’a jamais dégénéré en persécution. […] c’est que les peuples conquis ont conservé, jusqu’à nos jours, leur foi, leurs mœurs et même leur langue […]. Les conquérants avaient pour règle de conduite politique de respecter l’indépendance municipale ; ce respect a été si fidèlement pratiqué que chaque race, quelque faible qu’elle fût, elle est devenue une sorte de république au milieu de la grande théocratie musulmane. On peut même ajouter que l’islamisme a compromis son avenir politique, en Espagne aussi bien que dans l’Europe orientale, par son esprit de tolérance.

Urbain highlights the concept of respect and observes that historically Islam tolerated the existence of independent, alternative communities living side by side with its adherents. Maalouf’s analysis of the history of Islamic conquest makes observations which echo the points raised by Urbain:

> Il y a dans l’histoire de l’islam, dès ses débuts, une remarquable capacité à coexister avec l’autre. À la fin du siècle dernier, Istanbul, capitale de la principale puissance musulmane, comptait dans sa population une majorité de non-musulmans […]. Imaginerait-on à la même époque une bonne moitié de non-chrétiens, musulmans ou juifs, à Paris, à Londres, à Vienne ou à Berlin ? Aujourd’hui encore, bien des Européens seraient choqués d’entendre dans leurs villes l’appel du muezzin.*

> […] L’islam avait établi un « protocole de tolérance » à une époque où les sociétés chrétiennes ne toléraient rien. Pendant des siècles, ce « protocole » fut, dans le monde entier, la forme la plus avancée de coexistence.

Urbain’s vision of Islamic empire as tolerant of religious diversity is thus partially reminiscent of his proposals for the French administration of Algeria. However, ambiguity re-emerges via his contention that a tolerant approach was ultimately prejudicial to Islamic conquests in Spain and Eastern Europe. Thus, to an extent, he undermines his own case for religious tolerance as a feature of durable French rule in Algeria and perhaps inadvertently reveals what may amount to a serious reservation regarding the moral validity of colonial conquest in general.

Nonetheless two pages later, Urbain launches a plea for religious tolerance as a desirable feature of sustainable colonial conquest: ‘en laissant chaque race, chaque

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50 Ibid.
peuple, chaque secte conserver les signes distinctifs de son caractère, de ses moeurs et de ses croyances : on réaliserait ainsi l’unité dans la diversité. The concept of realising unity in diversity alluded to by Urbain was to become intimately associated with the vision of France as la République une et indivisible, particularly under the Third Republic from 1870 onwards. Among other things, this mythic image belied colonial inequality and exploitation in Algeria. Despite his inconsistencies and ambiguities, and the paradoxes inherent in the views which he expressed, Urbain’s primary message to his readers remained the call for a rapprochement of the Indigènes and the French as different, yet equally deserving of respect and tolerance.

4.4 Theories of race and Duveyrier’s portrait of the Tuareg

4.4.1 Early ethnography and racial Darwinism

Duveyrier’s prefaces to the works of fellow explorers typically promote the study of human behaviour: ‘sur notre planète, ce qui est le plus intéressant pour l’homme, c’est l’homme’; or again ‘Votre rapporteur devine […] que l’état des populations au sein desquelles [de Foucauld] a voyagé vous intéresse aussi, car l’homme se préoccupe toujours d’abord de son semblable.’ The latter quotation evokes the French humanist tradition exemplified by the Essais of Michel de Montaigne, to which Duveyrier may have seen his work as a form of modern, scientific successor. Duveyrier’s recent biographer, Casajus, aligns him with an emergent strain of ethnographic sensibility in French academia: ‘le géographe Duveyrier [a] parfois ressemblé à ce qu’on a plus tard appelé un ethnologue.’ Over the same period scientific works on the evolutionary adaptations of plants and animals, including

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55 ‘By 1808, as Hippolyte Taine asserted in his preface to The Origins of the Revolution in France, “all of France’s traits” were “set and definitive.” This is pretty much what the schoolbooks of the Third Republic taught: one people, one country, one government, one nation, one fatherland. This is what historical studies expounded and still expound, an axiom most recently repeated by Albert Soboul: “The French Revolution completed the nation which became one and indivisible.”’ Weber, Eugen, Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of rural France 1870-1914 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1998), p. 95.
most famously *On the Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin, were also enormously influential for European colonial endeavours, in Eric Hobsbawm’s words: ‘for the nineteenth century conquest provided the Darwinian proof of evolutionary success as a social species.’ Many scientists linked human races and the environments where they lived to physical and moral variations. Duveyrier’s writing manifests the influence of these theories of racial hierarchy:

[L]’expérience avait démontré qu’il fallait être noir pour supporter impunément l’insalubrité du climat pendant les grandes chaleurs.

Serait-ce cette insalubrité qui aurait conservé au pouvoir de la race primitive les contrées insalubres du Fezzân* [...]. Il est permis de le croire, car on remarque que les populations blanches intercalées entre ces contrées insalubres habitent toutes des territoires plus sains. Encore un fait d’observation pratique à noter pour la colonisation du Sahara.  

*Les Touareg du Nord* reveals a naïve and deterministic practitioner of ethnographic description, including statements which would be considered overtly racist today: ‘L’impossibilité, pour les blancs, de vivre et de se reproduire à Ouarglâ, crée donc une seconde cause de faiblesse pour cette ville. Enfin, tout est en ruine à Ouarglâ : habitation, habitants, moral même.’ This type of moral and climatic equivalence is noted by geographer David Livingstone in *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise* (1992):

The idea that climatic regions [...] implied an ethnic moral topography [...] weaves its way throughout the corpus of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century geographical writings.

[...] Moralistic terms were still being presented as settled scientific maxims with the result that human mental and moral behaviour was thoroughly naturalized through the deployment of what I have labelled ‘climate’s moral economy’.

However, alongside statements which typify Livingstone’s notion of ‘climate’s moral economy’; Duveyrier’s writing also suggests that the French should instruct and improve the *Indigènes*, making a conflicting implication that North Africans were not intrinsically inferior to Europeans, but merely lagged behind in

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61 ‘Classical evolutionism [...] brought together a series of interrelated assumptions: that human social phenomena are essentially natural phenomena, and thus follow laws that science can discover; that cultural development arises out of the interaction between human nature and an external natural environment; that different human societies can be classified hierarchically according to how well they control external nature: and finally, that any given society progresses independently, at a greater or lesser rate, in the single direction of more advanced development.’ *Spurr*, [1993] 2004, p. 161.
62 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 281.
terms of education and modernisation. Spurr observes these confused and competing modes of thought as characteristic of racial Darwinism and associated justifications of colonisation:

The dual axes of time and space in Darwin’s thought create a tension which sees humanity as historically capable of improvement, but which also reifies the existing hierarchy of human societies. The notion that societies can be classified according to their degree of advancement along the same path works, paradoxically, to support the notion of inherent ethical differences among races, that is, differences in character. [...] the two views tend to reinforce one another when it comes to a system of classification for the actual state of peoples.65

Burke notes the impact of Duveyrier’s proto-ethnographic analyses, but is deeply critical of Duveyrier’s intellectual contribution, and in agreement with the analyses of this study thus far, he comments on the young explorer’s tendency to reflect the interests of French settlers.66 In contrast, while Urbain’s vision for French engagement in North Africa was undoubtedly paternalistic, as a self-aware figure of mixed-race and colonial origins, his writing tends to explain differences between Europeans and North Africans in terms of social conventions, cultural traditions and established precedents, without seeking to appraise non-Europeans in accordance with theories of racial hierarchy. This suggests a relational perspective on cultural interaction. Conversely, Duveyrier seeks reassurance through codification – classifying races in accordance with hierarchical schemas – once again manifesting his discomfort with opacity, which we may regard, following Chamoiseau and Glissant, as a defining trait of arborescent identity.

66 “[A] major strand of French sociology of Algeria was the work of civilian amateurs and explorers, men like Camille Sabatier and Henri Duveyrier. The civilians possessed neither the motivation nor the direct access to the Muslim populations. Their intellectual contribution to the field was therefore the weakest [...] the few civilians who could speak with real authority on Algerian matters tended primarily to advance views of Muslim society that reflected the interests of French settlers.” Burke, in Burke, Prochaska, 2008, p. 162.
4.4.2 An exceptional Tuareg

A key feature of Duveyrier’s purportedly definitive portrait of the Tuareg is his depiction of the prominent and socially powerful role of women in their society:

S’il est un point par lequel la société targuie diffère de la société arabe, c’est par le contraste de la position élevée qu’y occupe la femme comparée à l’état d’infériorité de la femme arabe.

Chez les Touâreg, la femme est l’égale de l’homme, si même par certains côtés, elle n’est dans une condition meilleure. Jeune fille elle reçoit de l’éducation. […] Dans la communauté conjugale, elle gère sa fortune personnelle […].

Son autorité est telle que, bien que la loi musulmane permette la polygamie, elle a pu imposer à l’homme l’obligation de rester monogame, et cette obligation est respectée sans aucune exception.67

Heffernan asserts that Duveyrier’s depiction of a matriarchal Tuareg society played a significant role in establishing mis-representations in European academia and popular culture:

Unfortunately, Duveyrier’s analysis formed the basis of more picturesque descriptions provided by subsequent travellers who claimed Touareg women enjoyed considerable sexual licence, that divorce was frequent and easy, and that even after marriage, Targui women were expected to keep a number of male lovers. […] These myths have only recently been discredited.68

As Heffernan observes, Duveyrier’s role in fashioning long-sustained, mythic perceptions of the Tuareg should not be overlooked. Furthermore, Casajus credits Duveyrier’s writing – although mainly his later text on the Sanusiyya – with inspiring influential writers such as Pierre Benoît and Jules Verne, thus suggesting that Duveyrier’s writing had a considerable and wide-reaching cultural legacy.69

Duveyrier’s portrait fuses key preoccupations of literary Orientalism, such as enigmatic desert nomads and the fantasy world of medieval courtly romance. To this end the roles of marabouts and women are explicitly rendered analogous to European medieval feudalism:

Dans la société targuie, le rôle du marabout et celui de la femme semblent plutôt procéder de la civilisation chrétienne que des institutions musulmanes. […] il est hors de doute que leur société exceptionnelle, au milieu de tant d’éléments de destruction, s’est maintenue, telle que nous la retrouverons, par la femme et par le marabout.70

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70 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 341.
Although he falls short of introducing the idea of priestess-like *maraboutes*, Duveyrier identifies a refined class of privileged women similar to medieval noblewomen, who act as custodians of Tuareg culture:

Les dames Ifôghas sont renommées pour leur savoir-vivre et leur habileté en toutes choses. Mieux que les femmes des autres clans targuis, elles savent jouer de la rebâza, sorte de violon avec lequel elles accompagnent leurs chants improvisés. Dans l’art musical, elles ne sont surpassées que par les princesses Imanân.\(^71\)

Duveyrier’s claims for the superiority of Tuareg peoples over Arabs, based on the role of women in their society, echo McClintock’s observations regarding Ryder Haggard’s depictions of isolated South African tribes as superior to the more numerous Zulus, similarly on the basis of the social role of women:

True to the pseudo-scientific narratives of race, the [Kukuana] women (typically thought to be the “conservative” element, retaining ancestral traces longer than males) reveal physiological features eloquent of their lost white ancestry […]. These atavistic traces of a superior founding race elevate them, we are told, above the Natal Zulus.\(^72\)

Notably, McClintock attributes this feature of Haggard’s writing to the prevalence of nineteenth-century theories of race. Haggard was the celebrated author of texts including *She: A History of Adventure* (1887), which exerted considerable influence on the works of contemporaries and of successive generations of European writers such as Benoît, author of the best-selling *L’Atlantide* (1919) – alluded to above as partially inspired by Duveyrier’s later writing on the Sanusiyya.

Duveyrier’s depiction of the Tuareg suggests that he may have harboured similar convictions to Haggard regarding the presence of submerged European ancestries within certain isolated African tribes. Such theories gained considerable popularity in colonial Algeria, with Duveyrier’s mentor and surrogate father-figure Warnier among the prominent proponents of the so-called Berber myth which echoes certain key aspects of Duveyrier’s portrait of the Tuareg.\(^73\) Although he was not alone in the tendency to liken isolated North African peoples, such as the Tuareg, to feudal Europeans, the unprecedented level of contact which Duveyrier established

\(^71\) Ibid., p. 362.
\(^73\) The Kabyle were believed to be potentially assimilable into French civilization by virtue of the supposed democratic nature of their society, their superficial Islamicization, and the higher status of Kabyle women. [...] Elements of the Kabyle myths can of course be found in the writings of [...] precolonial French travellers. What is new about its post-1870 manifestations is the effort, no doubt influenced by the racialism of the late nineteenth-century social theories, to erect these differences into a systematic policy. The Kabyle myth and other elements of the colonial vulgate exercised a particularly unfortunate impact on French writings on Algeria in the period up to the First World War.” Burke, in Burke, Prochaska, 2008, pp. 163-64.
with senior Tuareg tribal figures meant that his portrait became an enduring and authoritative point of reference for other travellers and explorers.

4.4.3 A mythic portrait

Duveyrier’s portrait implicitly depicts the Tuareg as an exceptional people: ‘En général, les Touâreg sont de haute taille, quelques-uns même paraissent de vrais géants. Tous sont maigres, secs, nerveux : leurs muscles semblent des ressorts d’acier.’

They consequently exceed his capacity to formulate detailed scientific explanations, ‘leurs muscles semblent des ressorts d’acier’ and ‘quelques-uns paraissent de vrais géants’, thus constituting an apparent intrusion of the mythic into the realm of reality, a collision of giants and empirical truth or le vrai. As with Duveyrier’s account of the Tijanniya, the Tuareg are evoked as cosmopolitan. They are trustworthy and honourable, never reneging on their pledges, thus establishing a systematic and highly deterministic linkage between physical and moral superiority which recalls the analyses of previous sections of this chapter:

Il est une qualité, spécial aux Touâreg, [...] leur aptitude aux grands voyages, au milieu de dangers de toute nature. Essentiellement cosmopolite, le targui est passé sans transition du climat sain de ses montagnes dans les marécages de l’Afrique centrale, d’une température quelquefois au-dessous de zéro à celle de la zone torride, d’un pays où il pleut rarement dans des contrées où les pluies tropicales amènent des déluges d’eau. Dans ces pérégrinations, il résiste à des épreuves qui tient les animaux les plus robustes. [...] Un peuple qui a de telles qualités, au milieu de quelques défauts inséparables de l’humanité, ne mérite pas la réputation que lui ont faite des écrivains renseignés par ses ennemis.

Having explicitly set out to dispel myths and misconceptions, Les Touareg du Nord fabricates its own mythology, populated by a benign Tuareg reminiscent of the traditions of medieval chivalry:

On a cru, d’après des informations inexactes, que les Touâreg portaient le voile parce qu’ils ne voulaient pas être reconnus comme auteurs des cruautés qu’ils exercent sur leurs ennemis. Cette interprétation est fausse pour trois motifs : d’abord les Touâreg ne sont pas cruels : puis, malgré leur voile, ils se reconnaissent entre eux comme s’ils n’étaient pas voilés ; enfin, ils repoussent les armes à feu, qu’ils appellent armes de traîtrise, considérant comme seul honorable le combat à l’arme blanche, corps à corps, face à face.

Spurr points out that tropes such as idealisation, emerge from a Western hegemonic perspective which leans heavily on a characteristically Romantic pursuit of exotisme:

this idealization always takes place in relation to Western culture itself: […] it conceives an idea of the Other that is readily incorporated into the fabric of Western values. […]

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74 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 381.
75 Ibid., pp. 384-85.
76 Ibid., p. 392.
The idealization of the savage has always taken place alongside a more general idealization of the cultural Other. [...] French writers like Théophile Gautier and Gérard de Nerval traveled to North Africa and the Middle East, gathering material for an *exotisme* that became an essential component of the Romantic aesthetic.  

Scott’s writing in *Semiologies of Travel*, referred to extensively in the opening section, also supports this type of analysis. *Les Touareg du Nord* yields occasionally conflicting information regarding Duveyrier’s stance on the moral basis and practical execution of conquest in Algeria. The final section of the portrait captures the core elements of Duveyrier’s romanticised, mythic and greatly influential depiction:

Dans leurs rapports avec les Français, les Touâreg se sont montrés, jusqu’à ce jour, fort dociles. On leur a demandé de venir à Alger ; ils y sont venus. On m’a envoyé au milieu d’eux, ils m’ont bien accueilli. On leur a invité leur principal marabout à visiter la France ; malgré l’imprévu de la demande, malgré l’inconveniant [...] pendant plusieurs mois, [...] le Chikh-'Othman s’est rendu à nos désirs. En vain Mohammed-ben-'Abd-Allah a sollicité le concours des Touâreg dans la prise d’armes qui l’a fait tomber en nos mains, les Touâreg se sont abstenus.

Espérons qu’il en sera toujours ainsi. D’ailleurs, en terminant, je constate un fait capital : jusqu’à ce jour, aucun des voyageurs européens qui ont exploré l’intérieur de l’Afrique n’a été victime d’un acte de brutalité ou de fanatisme, ni sur le territoire des Touâreg, ni de la main d’un targui.

Cette honorable exception répond à toutes les calomnies que les Arabes, leurs ennemis, avaient propagées sur leur caractère indomptable.

Duveyrier incorporates the Tuareg into his good servants trope. They are docile, i.e. good-natured, and he lists a string of examples illustrating Tuareg accessions to French requests. Crucially, the second paragraph dissociates the Tuareg from religious fanaticism. Furthermore, Duveyrier emphasises – ‘je constate un fait capital’ – that they have an unblemished record in refraining from attacks on Europeans. In addition to its unknowing irony, the passage establishes Duveyrier’s subsequent vulnerability to accusations that he was misleadingly generous in his depiction of the Tuareg as benign, relatively civilised and sympathetic to the French.

Duveyrier’s portrait reveals an author who mistook Tuareg isolation and traditional lifestyle for innocence, stasis and fixed characteristics. This mythologising voice operates alongside and within the scientific observer, which Duveyrier was keen to present as his public image. His portrait of the Tuareg thus reflects Scott’s assessment of Western travel as a project primarily concerned with processes of myth-making and aestheticisation of the other:

Every travel text thus, in exploring the myth of the other, produces, in the writing-up process, a myth of its own. [...] Here the other is viewed through the focused lens of a dominant European culture, [...] reinforcing a native myth as much as questioning or

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78 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 453.
transforming it in the light of the other. [...] Additionally, the travel text can operate as the confirmation and/or transformation of the other as an aesthetic myth.\textsuperscript{79}

The extent to which Duveyrier later defended his mythic portrait is indicative of his conviction that he had captured an unchanging Tuareg essence, i.e. the belief that he had completed ‘the confirmation and/or transformation of the other as an aesthetic myth’. In an observation which is relevant to Duveyrier’s tendency to adhere rigidly to the conclusions drawn from his observations, Butler asserts that the conviction of having arrived at complete knowledge of a subject is undesirable in that it forecloses further inquiry:

As we ask to know the other, or ask that the other say, finally or definitively, who he or she is, it will be important not to expect an answer that will ever satisfy. By not pursuing satisfaction and by letting the question remain open, even enduring, we let the other live, since life might be understood as precisely that which exceeds any account we may try to give of it. If letting the other live is part of any ethical definition of recognition, then this version of recognition will be based less on knowledge than on an apprehension of epistemic limits. [...]"

“Oh, now I know who you are”: at this moment, I cease to address you, or to be addressed by you.\textsuperscript{80}

Duveyrier’s account of the Tuareg seeks to accomplish precisely what Butler counsels against, refusing to recognise human complexity and potential for change and thereby reducing the Tuareg to a limited number of fixed characteristics. Duveyrier assumed that he had achieved a perfect understanding which precluded further inquiry or revision. This stance is characteristic of an arborescent identity borne out of the Western myth of a fixed essence as the core of human identity. Bhabha identifies fixity as a feature of colonial discourse and of its methods for the construction of otherness, going on to state that: ‘[f]ixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy, and daemonic repetition.’\textsuperscript{81} An inability to deal with paradoxes of this nature lies at the heart of Duveyrier’s conflicted attitude toward the colonial other as expressed in \textit{Les Touareg du Nord} and subsequent texts. His writing communicates both admiration for the radical difference of peoples such as the Tuareg and advocates their transformation into homologues of the French as an assertion of the latter’s intellectual and cultural superiority.

\textsuperscript{80} Butler, 2005, pp. 42-43.
\textsuperscript{81} Bhabha, [1994] 2006, p. 66.
4.5 Urbain’s *L’Algérie pour les Algériens*: polemical analysis and proto-sociological thinking

If *Les Touareg du Nord* was unquestionably Duveyrier’s *chef-d’œuvre*, Urbain’s vision of a French-led Algerian society is acknowledged to appear in its most definitive form in his pamphlets of 1861 and 1862, *L’Algérie pour les Algériens*, published under the pseudonym Georges Voisin, and *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants*, published anonymously. They together constitute the most high-profile and politically influential writings of Urbain’s career and summarise much of his thought: ‘On peut donc voir *L’Algérie pour les Algériens* comme une mise à jour et une synthèse de ce qu’il a écrit depuis 1847.’

*L’Algérie pour les Algériens* addresses many practical concerns, such as the establishment of schools, judicial administration and the modernisation of agriculture and irrigation techniques. *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants* addresses controversial issues including the legal status and rights of the *Indigènes* as French subjects, as well as their relations with French colonists and European immigrants, which will be explored in greater detail in the final section. The title of the 1861 pamphlet was provocative in itself as under French rule native occupants of Algeria were referred to as *Indigènes* rather than as Algerians.

Urbain’s pamphlets mark a concerted effort to translate his utopian vision for franco-indigène co-operation into a series of practical, realisable measures. Thus, whereas Duveyrier’s immersion in the nomadic existence of the Tuareg and other isolated tribes nourished a mythologising tendency at the heart of his proto-ethnographic intellectual project, Urbain’s experiences and deepening knowledge of *indigène* society fostered a proto-sociological form of engagement. This approach promoted greater attentiveness to the customs and needs of the *Indigènes* and encouraged the fusion of French and indigène societies in preference to the exploitation of the latter. Burke alludes to the proto-sociological tendencies of...

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certain colonial officials, mainly members of the *Bureaux arabes* like Urbain, emphasising their marginalised position in relation to broader French academia:

French ethnography of Islamic societies developed in a kind of intellectual ghetto, clearly subordinate to the metropolitan world, a little tradition against the greater French tradition. This explains why, despite what is a vast ethnological literature, no significant contribution to general sociological theory can be found in French studies on North Africa.\(^\text{84}\)

Nonetheless, Burke remains critical of the agenda of domination underlying such proto-sociological writings. Urbain’s sustained involvement with colonial administration thus remains problematic for any project of reconciliation or *rapprochement* to which his pamphlets lay claim, and also for the retrospective attribution of proto-sociological status to his writing:

Colonial sociology was directly involved from the outset in the process of domination. What the men of the Arab Bureaus sought was finally not sociological understanding of these societies, but the key to their operation, the secret or secrets that, once known, would permit their domination. That is to say, from the beginning their quest was oriented by the very nature of their relationship to the tribes whose destinies they controlled. The men of the Arab Bureaus were not social scientists. It is thus anachronistic to tax them with not being what they could not have been.\(^\text{85}\)

Despite these contradictions and conflicts of interest, Urbain’s 1861 pamphlet renews his call for an empathetic approach to the *Indigènes*. This call is made in conjunction with a Saint-Simonian emphasis on progress achieved through fusion. For Urbain, demands that the *Indigènes* adopt French cultural norms constituted a fundamental problem of assimilation. However, the opening lines of the following quotation have a pejorative tone suggestive of ethnic essentialism. They establish a binary division between French and Arabs similar to that employed by contemporaries who sought to block *indigène* access to the rights granted to French citizens and European settlers by emphasising their essential difference. As in previous examples of Urbain’s writing, through subsequent elaboration he somewhat softens and provides greater detail regarding his position:

> Le progrès ne pourra avoir les mêmes formes et les mêmes aspects pour l’Arabe que pour le Français, pour le musulman que pour le chrétien. Si on reconnaît la justesse de ces considérations, lorsqu’on voudra constater les progrès faits par les musulmans, on aura soin de ne pas se placer sur le terrain français, mais on examinera leur situation d’après le milieu spécial créé par leurs croyances, par le climat qu’ils habitent, par les conditions de leur vie sociale et politique. Pour apprécier le mouvement de leur marche en avant, nous irons au milieu d’eux, nous les comparerons à eux-mêmes, leur jour présent à leur jour passé. Si nous les transportions subitement dans un autre milieu social pour les mettre en parallèle avec un Français, avec un chrétien, une confusion funeste se produirait dans notre esprit ; le mouvement de leur vie nous

\(^{84}\) Burke, in Burke, Prochaska, 2008, p. 157.  
échapperait, et nous tomberions dans l’injustice en leur assignant un avenir identique au nôtre.

The quotation from Butler featured in the preceding section of this chapter is also relevant to the argument put forward by Urbain in the concluding lines above, suggesting that his intellectual perspective was precociously multicultural for his era, since it rejected both analogy and the direct comparison of foreign cultures with the Occident, together with attempts to understand such cultures in the repressive sense of intellectual appropriation.

Unlike Duveyrier, whose fear of Islamic fanaticism was to deepen as the century advanced, Urbain maintained his position on the compatibility of Muslims and Christians. In the ‘Avant-propos’ to L’Algérie pour les Algériens, Urbain makes a scathing reference to what he depicts as conspiracy theories regarding Islamic brotherhoods: ‘déjà les brochures rattachent les confréries religieuses (khouans) de l’Algérie à l’immense conspiration du fanatisme musulman dont la Mekke est le centre ; déjà on reproche au gouvernement français d’avoir traité les indigènes avec trop de douceur.’ In L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants, Urbain suggests that fanaticism constitutes the natural defensive impulse of any society faced with the sudden imposition of radical change: ‘Toute société est susceptible de se laisser entraîner au fanatisme de la conservation lorsqu’elle est surprise par des secousses violentes’. In order to avoid generating Islamic fanaticism, Urbain thus promotes a gradual and tolerant approach to cultivating social change. This advocacy of a gradualist approach to integration constitutes the most persistent theme linking the various issues addressed over both pamphlets. However this remains a distinctly utopian ambition, and one which is characterised by ambiguity, paradox and contradiction.

Once again, Urbain’s writing has parallels with Maalouf’s twentieth-century writings on relations between contrasting identity groups, which assert that the promotion of social change is never served by seeking to denigrate and destroy a people’s existing cultural identity, and that such measures have the undesirable consequence of provoking a defensive response. Yet, in contrast to Urbain, Maalouf does not advocate a gradual process of cultural homogenisation:

87 Butler, 2005, p. 42.
88 Urbain, 1861, p. 5.
Chapter 4: Relating to the colonial other: Ambiguity, myths and utopias

Lorsqu’on sent sa langue méprisée, sa religion bafouée, sa culture dévalorisée, on réagit en
affichant avec ostentation les signes de sa différence ; lorsqu’on se sent, au contraire,
respecté, lorsqu’on sent qu’on a sa place dans le pays où l’on a choisi de vivre, alors on
réagit autrement.\textsuperscript{90}

Urbain summarises his thesis as ‘[un] progrès qui est une évolution et non une
révolution’, \textsuperscript{91} which is posited as a practical means of fulfilling \textit{la mission
civilisatrice} through the recognition that any purportedly moral conquest confers not
so much rights and privileges as responsibilities and obligations, a binary partnership
as distinct from a binary opposition:

\begin{quote}
L’indigène serait en droit de dire : […] « Je veux bien vous ressembler comme un disciple
ressemble à son maître, mais je veux garder mon passé et ne pas sortir violemment de ma vie. Quoique partis de points différents, nous pouvons nous rencontrer
dans un avenir commun, sans que vous m’absorbiez en vous. » En présence de cette
hésitation des indigènes à changer subitement leurs mœurs et leurs croyances, celui qui
pensera qu’ils sont réfractaires à la civilisation ne serait pas plus dans la vérité et la justice
que celui qui prétendrait que les Français sont des initiateurs inhabiles, parce que les
indigènes ne veulent pas, du premier coup, adopter notre civilisation. Soyons patients,
soyons modestes : si l’infatuation vient se heurter contre l’orgueil, rien de bon ne sortira du
choc.\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

Among the practical tools which Urbain argues can assist the French in
honouring their responsibilities are patience and restraint: ‘Soyons patients, soyons
modestes’, another symbiotic rather than adversarial pairing, which is further
evidence of Urbain’s tendency to appropriate conventional rhetorical modes in order
to redeploy them strategically for a different purpose; in this case, a typically
divisive rhetorical technique is reappropriated to promote reconciliation and the
generation of alliances. Although the passage is invested with a paternalistic tone
seeking to justify the introduction of French civilisation to Algeria, Urbain defends
\textit{indigène} opposition to demands for the abandonment of traditional cultural values
and identities as both natural and understandable, and his advocacy of a hybridised
society effectively refutes assimilation, reinforcing his view that a fusion of French
and \textit{indigène} societies was highly desirable. In \textit{Le Désempire : Figures et thèmes de
l’anticolonialisme} (1993), Chagnollaud and Lacouture summarise Urbain’s
pragmatic approach as follows:

\begin{quote}
Répudiant la tentation assimilationniste, Urbain ne se donne pas pour ambition de « civiliser
les Arabes », mais de respecter leur identité et de maintenir un contact à distance. […]
Modestie et patience dans l’action, amour et protection des indigènes, voilà la philosophie
d’Urbain.\textsuperscript{93}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{90} Maalouf, 1998, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{91} Urbain, 1861, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} Chagnollaud, Dominique, Lacouture, Jean, \textit{Le Désempire : Figures et thèmes de l’anticolonialisme},
Urbain repeatedly calls for the just treatment of the *Indigènes* by their French *initiateurs* – those responsible for cultivating in the colonised the advantages of a purportedly more developed civilisation. In the above passage, Urbain also allows the subaltern to speak and by replicating direct speech he humanises the *Indigène* as a rational, thinking, human being, rather than presenting a silent, undifferentiated, colonial mass, hence marking a departure from tropes which not only deny the other the opportunity to speak, but also his/her capacity for speech:

[This is] the rhetorical tradition in which non-Western peoples are essentially denied the power of language and are represented as mute or incoherent. They are denied a voice in the ordinary idiomatic sense – not permitted to speak – and in a more radical sense – not recognized as capable of speech.\(^{94}\)

In addition to providing a voice for the *Indigènes*, Urbain also renews his challenge to the French to live up to their self-congratulatory conception of civilisation. He does this by returning to the reflexive verbal structures employed in earlier extended articles to highlight colonial hypocrisy and double-standards: ‘A la place de l’indigène, serions-nous aussi énergiques, aussi courageux, contre les privations et les périls, tout en restant les hommes civilisés que nous nous vantons d’être ?’ (my emphasis).\(^{95}\) However, in the passage above Urbain speaks for rather than allowing *Indigènes* to speak for themselves, thus somewhat undermining his unconventional gesture.

Among the practical measures proposed in *L’Algérie pour les Algériens* are the establishment of franco-*indigène* schools. In these schools, French directors assisted by Muslim colleagues would utilise French teaching materials and approaches: ‘d’après nos méthodes les plus rationnelles’.\(^{96}\) The section on education also contains a rare condemnation of perceived Islamic fanaticism:

> Il restait quelque chose à faire pour, ou plutôt contre, les hautes études musulmanes. La théologie, la jurisprudence, les sciences grammaticales s’enseignent dans des zaouïa, sortes de chapelles privées, entièrement soumises à l’influence des personnages religieux plus ou moins fanatiques. Cet enseignement peu éclairé s’applique à entretenir et à exciter les haines religieuses.\(^{97}\)

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\(^{95}\) Urbain, 1861, p. 35.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., p. 39.

\(^{97}\) Ibid., p. 41.
A zaouïa is defined in Schwartz’s ‘Glossary of Franco-Arabic Words’ as a ‘moslem school; mosque of refuge’. They provided one of the main sources of education for Muslim children in the pre-colonial era; for example Ageron alludes to: ‘Ces établissements d’instruction et de piété d’où ruisselaient encore les aumônes et les aides aux plus pauvres étaient parfois de véritables monastères’. Ageron also notes the suspicion with which they were frequently regarded in the colony: ‘le mot d’ordre de la colonie était depuis 1871 à la fermeture de toutes « les zaouias, ces foyers de fanatisme [...] ». Urbain proposes circumventing this perceived threat of fanaticism by establishing alternative institutions with a similar curriculum, but taught by French appointed and salaried teachers. He promotes the approach summarised in his optimistic maxim: *le progrès qui est une évolution et non une révolution:*

> Prenons garde aux méfiances légitimes contre une absorption trop brusque : les préventions qui existent sont assez vives et assez fortes pour qu’on ne les aggrave pas par un zèle intempestif. [...] si ces écoles [...] ne conservaient pas leur cachet musulman, on perdrait bien vite le bénéfice d’un début si favorable, et la confiance des familles indigènes se retirerait de nous.

Urbain condemns those who call for the immediate suppression of all schools as a counter measure to religious fanaticism and insurrection, branding them fanatics in turn, and drawing deliberately unfavourable comparisons with the Spanish Inquisition:

> Nous ne ferons pas l’injure à nos lecteurs de combattre ici les idées qui se sont produites sous des patronages élevés pour recommander la suppression de toutes les écoles musulmanes. L’enseignement, disaient ces fanatiques d’un nouveau genre, reposant sur le Koran, ce livre prescrivant la guerre aux infidèles, nous [les conquérants français] perpétuons la lutte en laissant les écoles ouvertes. Cette théorie, pour l’absorption immédiate des indigènes, était par trop naïve [...] A ces paroles, dignes de l’inquisition espagnole [...], nous nous contentons d’opposer un mot du plus jeune des gouverneurs généraux de l’Algérie : « L’ouverture d’une école au milieu des indigènes vaut autant qu’un bataillon pour la pacification du pays. » [...] Enseigner même l’erreur vaut mieux que la fermeture des écoles [...] tandis que l’absence complète d’instruction voue la population à la dégradation et à la barbarie.

101 Urbain, 1861, p. 42.
103 *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45. The governor-general of Algeria at that time (1860-1864) was Marshall Pélissier, who later sought to have Urbain removed from his position as a civil servant in Algeria but was blocked by the Emperor.
Urbain’s subversive use of habitual criticisms of the *Indigènes* and Islamic societies to criticise French behaviour in Algeria has parallels with Judith Butler’s account of the power of performative utterances to counter and even deconstruct concepts which dominant discourses construct as natural and given, and thus points to the possibility of considering Urbain as possessing a performative identity:

One need only consider how racial or gendered slurs accumulate over time, dissimulating their history, taking on the semblance of the natural, the sedimented history of the performative […].

Within the political sphere, performativity can work in […] a counter-hegemonic way. That moment in which a speech act without prior authorization nevertheless assumes authorization in the course of its performance may anticipate and instate altered contexts for its future reception.  

In the earlier quotation, Urbain’s writing attempts to reappropriate concepts sedimented as natural truths in the Western consciousness, such as that of a fanatical, brutal and retrograde Islam, relating these characteristics to Christians instead, thus breaking down the boundaries which Western rhetoric constructed and reinforced over time to demean and distance Oriental subjects and thereby to convince and reassure the West of its cultural and moral superiority.

### 4.5.1 Cantonnement

In addition to his interests in the day-to-day running of colonial society, such as schools, judicial administration, and agriculture, Urbain’s pamphlets also demonstrate a willingness to engage in contentious political debates. In this vein, Burke observes a strong trend toward political engagement in the French sociology of North Africa:

Although it was marginal to metropolitan science, the sociology of North Africa was much closer to the French political arena […] the study of the nature of the system of landholding in rural Algeria was from the outset a highly charged political question for French settlers, and the literature on *arsch* land [tribal territory held in common] reflects this fact. As a result of the interpenetration of the academy and politics in Algeria, and the leading role played by Algerian politicians in the *parti colonial* in the Chamber of Deputies like Eugène Étienne, the scholars of the École d’Alger could often display considerable political clout even in France itself.  

As this quotation also suggests, the issue of the redistribution of land was vigorously debated by colonists who largely favoured the seizure of tribal lands and their redistribution to French and other European settlers through a process known as

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cantonnement. Urbain took up this crucial and emotive issue in L’Algérie pour les Algériens. Rey-Goldzeiguer identifies Urbain’s observations on these issues as the most important of the pamphlet’s intellectual and political contributions and alludes to the centrality of the land question: ‘Ismail Urbain a publié à Paris une brochure l’Algérie pour les Algériens […]. Il démontre que le nœud gordien de l’Algérie est le problème des terres, d’où dépend la sécurité et l’avenir économique’. As Burke observes, the settler population of Algeria established considerable political clout in the métropole, making any attempt to criticise the seizure and redistribution of lands a daunting task.

As with criticism of representatives of France in his publications of 1847 and 1856, Urbain’s approach to the inflammatory issue of cantonnement in L’Algérie pour les Algériens is not to condemn colonisation, but to argue for tighter controls and careful monitoring of colonial officials and settlers, with the optimistic aim of eliminating exploitation of the Indigènes:

L’opération du cantonnement est indispensable, mais elle offre des dangers qui ne peuvent être conjurés que par une grande prudence et avec le secours du temps. Pratiquée avec intelligence, elle doit être profitable aux indigènes aussi bien qu’aux Européens ; mal dirigée, elle sera funeste aux uns et aux autres.

To support his position, Urbain refers to a French Act of 1851 which provides for protection against the expropriation of individuals from their ancestral lands. He criticises a blatant disregard for the provisions of this Act by certain settlers in Algeria, who frequently demanded greater integration with the métropole:

Hélas ! il nous faut confesser que la loi de 1851 a été comme non avenue et qu’on a traité les indigènes en pauvres parias, dont les réclamations n’ont pas d’autre valeur que celle de la prière, et qui ne savent pas qu’ils pourraient invoquer les tribunaux français pour défendre leurs droits même contre l’administration.

Characteristically, the solution proposed is based on compromise and the gradual modification of cultural norms. Urbain suggests a transitional period of indigène collective land ownership rather than an immediate rupture with tradition:

Certainement la propriété individuelle est la forme la plus avancée et la plus favorable pour faciliter les développements et les perfectionnements de l’agriculture […]. La forme

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106 ‘Le « cantonnement », en principe l’échange de droits d’usage en droit de propriété n’affectant qu’une partie des terres, était une autre revendication déjà ancienne des colons et c’est surtout parce que les militaires s’étaient opposés à la généralisation de cette pratique qu’ils avaient encouru leur courroux. […] Les seize tribus cantonnées de 1857 à 1863 avaient vu leurs territoires réduits de 343 387 à 282 024 ha.’ Ageron, [1969] 1979, pp. 11-12.


108 Urbain, 1861, p. 117.

109 Ibid., p. 120.
collective est une excellente transition pour passer du droit de jouissance à la propriété individuelle [...] 110

This attempt at a solution through compromise is also deeply optimistic, perhaps even genuinely utopian, or proto-communist. Indeed other nineteenth century French utopian thinkers such as Charles Fourier and Étienne Cabet (1788-1856) also promoted harmonious communities with similarly proto-communist characteristics. 111 Nonetheless, considering that Urbain wrote for a largely metropolitan audience which had limited interest in Algeria, 112 his pamphlets, although they may seem restrained to a twenty-first century audience, were actually quite daring in their detailed elaboration of a wide variety of issues pertinent to colonial Algeria, and particularly the controversial question of cantonnement. Measures such as cantonnement were vigorously defended by the colonist lobbies as representatives of those who enjoyed a privileged existence, largely at the expense of exploited Indigènes:

In the 1840s the government began more systematically to take part of what was regarded as the collective land of a village for settlement by immigrants (colons). This went largely to those who had the capital to cultivate it, using either immigrant peasants from Spain or Italy or Arab labour. What remained was assumed to be sufficient for the needs of the villagers, but the partition in fact destroyed ancient modes of land-use and led to the dispossession of small cultivators, who became sharecroppers or landless labourers on the new estates. 113

Many of the issues highlighted in Urbain’s pamphlets are depicted with a focus on indigène rather than settler interests, or at the very least a concerted effort is made to view such issues from both perspectives. This suggests that Urbain represented and was determined to promote a relational concept of identity, based on collaboration and mutual interests rather than on the unquestioned primacy of settler interests.

110 Ibid., p. 124. ‘droit de jouissance’ means the legal right to use, in this case land use.
4.6 Conclusion

Conceptions of identity constitute some of the most important influences on the ways in which Urbain and Duveyrier in their respective writings observed, analysed and depicted colonial Algeria for a French readership. Arborescent versus relational conceptions of identity have helped to inform our investigation of the numerous tensions which characterised much of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s respective writings on North Africa. However, both Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s conceptions of their own identities, of French (understood also as European or Eurocentric) identity and of the colonial other in Algeria would undergo a period of sustained and deepening crisis, particularly from 1870. The later writings of Urbain and Duveyrier will furnish the primary textual basis for the following concluding section, while the theme of crisis will constitute its principal thematic framework.
Chapter 5: Troubled times

5.1 Introduction

This final section of our study will examine some of the later writings produced by Urbain and Duveyrier amid a climate of flux in France, Western Europe and French-ruled Algeria. It will assess how events nationally and internationally combined with personal crises to push Duveyrier and Urbain to their limits, challenging their conceptions of identity and their attitudes toward North Africans. The most critical of such events were the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the fall of the Second Empire on 2 September 1870 and the inauguration of the Third Republic on 4 September 1870.1

5.1.1 War with Prussia and the transition from Empire to Republic

The Second Empire came to an abrupt end when Emperor Napoleon III capitulated at Sedan following a disastrous military campaign against Prussia.2 The war continued under the Third Republic, leading to a famous siege of Paris. An armistice was declared on 28 January 1871 imposing harsh penalties on the French.3 The humiliating defeat had enormous psychological and economic repercussions:

Defeat cost France one hundred and fifty thousand men, an indemnity of 5,000,000,000 francs, the industries of Alsace and the iron deposits of Lorraine. It destroyed her ambitions for primacy in Europe and left her diplomatically isolated. It disrupted her political life and shattered her social stability.4

Over the succeeding decades, these developments sparked a drive among certain political figures in France to recover a sense of national pride through colonial expansion: ‘la mémoire toujours présente de l’humiliation de 1870 […]. On [la] retrouve à l’arrière-plan du débat colonial, stimulant […] la volonté de reconquérir outre-mer une grandeur compromise en Europe.’5 Expansionism also led to increased competition with rival European powers in geographical exploration.6

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2 Ibid., p. 286.
3 Ibid., p. 292.
6 [La]on constate l’esquisse de ce qui va bientôt devenir une véritable politique d’expansion coloniale. Il faut cependant attendre 1880-1881 pour voir pleinement s’en développer les effets.
5.1.2 The turning point of 1870 for French rule in Algeria

With the regime change of 1870 the majority of colons (settlers) aligned with republicanism, and men like Urbain who had held office in the Bureaux arabes, were now branded imperialists and pressured to resign: ‘l’autorité des Bureaux arabes est remise en cause par les foules européennes et leur départ est peu glorieux’. From 1870, a series of pro-settler policies were implemented, such as the Crémieux Act of that year which naturalised North African Jews living in Algeria (without extending an equivalent right to Muslims), and the Warnier Act of 1873 (named after Dr Auguste Warnier) which allowed for the dispossession of indigène ancestral lands for redistribution to European settlers. These and other Acts, the repression of an insurrection in 1871, and the implementation of an official policy of assimilation, superceded the policies of franco-indigène co-operation promoted by Urbain from the 1840s. As Burke observes, the outcome was increased, institutionalised repression of the Indigènes and the end of the proto-sociological endeavours of Bureaux arabes officials like Urbain:

The collapse of the regime in 1870 and suppression of the Moqrani rebellion opened the way to the triumph of settler interests […]. The ensuing settler backlash led to the dismantling of the Arab-Bureaux, and the enactment of a series of punitive regulations known collectively as the code de l’indigénat. The years that followed, 1870 to 1900, were disastrous ones for Algerian Muslims. But they were equally disastrous for the sociology of Algeria. From a quasi-autonomous intellectual by-product of the Arab Bureaus, the ethnography of Algeria became increasingly dominated by the discourse of French colonial politics.

9 Strachan, p. 219.
11 ‘On efface l’Orient, on recrée un tissu français aux couleurs tricolores. L’assimilation triomphe avec l’élimination physique de toutes les résistances « indigènes » qui se mutent en « rebellions ». […] Pour les « Algériens », la victoire est totale, il leur reste à l’exploiter et à modeler le pays à leur guise.’ Ibid.
The war had resulted in the cession of Alsace and Lorraine to the Prussians. One strategy for absorbing the resulting refugees was to offer concessions of land in Algeria. Warnier and the Archbishop of Algiers (Charles Lavigerie, 1825-1892) were prominent spokesmen for these measures: ‘l’archevêque d’Alger fut aussi l’un des premiers, avec Warnier, à offrir aux « Alsaciens et aux Lorrains exilés » de venir s’installer comme colons en Algérie.’ This strategy was in keeping with the fact that under the new Third Republic, Algeria became France’s only colonie de peuplement – although Europeans of various nationalities accounted for a large proportion of the settler population due to a lack of an excess population in the métropole and a general reticence on the part of its citizens to resettle in Algeria.

This chapter will examine the proposals contained in Urbain’s pamphlets of 1861 and 1862, which were vigorously opposed by the conservative settler lobby known as the colonistes. It will specifically assess how Urbain negotiated this period of crisis via his relational conception of identity. It will also examine Duveyrier’s later writing to observe whether, and in what ways, his mindset can be seen to evolve from an identité racine unique into an example of Glissant’s and Chamoiseau’s conception of an identité mur or fortress identity following the turning-point of 1870. It will assess how, despite Duveyrier’s discomfort with increasing nationalism and rivalry among the European powers, that these forces also exerted considerable influence on his sense of identity and on his later writing.
5.2 A Romantic explorer in a post-Romantic age

Through personal contacts and membership of several of the rapidly growing number of scholarly organisations across Europe, Duveyrier kept abreast of developments in the natural sciences from the 1860s to the 1880s. His personal papers in the Archives Nationales, Paris demonstrate that he maintained his correspondence with scientists and geographers from across the globe.\textsuperscript{17} However, the conflict of 1870 to 1871 triggered a more open politicisation of the fields of geography and exploration, culminating in the so-called scramble for Africa, associated with the Berlin conferences of 1884 to 1885,\textsuperscript{18} and stimulated growth in nationalist sentiment in France and across Western Europe. As Hobsbawm observes: ‘Europe […] shifted steadily in favour of the national centre […] rais[ing] the politically much more sensitive issues of citizen loyalty to, and identification with, the state and ruling system […] nothing stimulated nationalism on both sides as much as international conflict.’\textsuperscript{19} The linkage between identity and nationalism is a key nineteenth-century issue. Landmark texts such as Anderson’s \textit{Imagined Communities} (1983) have demonstrated how nationalism and nation-states are historically recent phenomena, but construct an imagined origin in an antique past to generate continuity and thus credibility, and to mobilise large numbers of citizens in the national interest.\textsuperscript{20}

Despite these crucial developments Duveyrier considerably underestimates the relevance and importance of European nationalism to the activities of Europeans and to their interactions with native tribes in \textit{Les Touareg du Nord}. For example, in one passage Duveyrier implies that members of a given tribe were naïve to assume

\textsuperscript{17} AN AP 47, Archives Nationales, Paris.
\textsuperscript{18} Thobie, Jacques, ‘Le temps des conquêtes (1879-1900)’, pp. 577-674, in Meyer et al., 1991, p. 621.
\textsuperscript{20} Theorists of nationalism have often been perplexed, not to say irritated, by these three paradoxes; (1) The objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. (2) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept […]. (3) The political power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence. […] it is imagined as a community, because […] the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.’ Anderson, Benedict, \textit{Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism} (London: Verso, [1983] 1996), pp. 5-6.
that as allies of any English-backed explorer or traveller they were bound to show hostility to French- or German-affiliated ones:

Les Bakkây seraient entrés plus tôt en relations avec nous, s’ils ne s’étaient crus engagés par l’alliance que M. le docteur Barth a négociée avec eux au nom de l’Angleterre et s’ils n’avaient supposé, à tort, la France, sinon en hostilité, du moins en continuelle rivalité avec le gouvernement de la Grande-Bretagne : mais la lettre de pressante recommandation que M. le docteur Barth m’avait donnée […] a dû faire disparaître l’erreur, accréditée d’ailleurs dans tout le Sahara […] que, pour conserver de bonnes relations avec les Anglais, il faut refuser tous rapports avec les Français.21

Travelling between 1859 and 1861, it was possible, if short-sighted, to consider exploration as primarily disinterested and politically disengaged. Duveyrier failed to recognise a crucial shift – cemented by the humiliation of the Franco-Prussian War – towards exploration’s explicit role in territorial expansion as part of a battle for dominance with other European nations; in this sense he lagged behind the development of what emerged as the dominant ideas of his time, and, indeed remained unaware that the very concepts of time and history were secularised and nationalised over the second half of the nineteenth century. McClintock identifies how the ‘secularized time’ of nationalism facilitated expansionism and reinforced colonial power structures:

In the nineteenth century, the social evolutionists secularized time and placed it at the disposal of the national, imperial project. […] Secularizing time has a threefold significance for nationalism. First figured in the evolutionists’ global Family Tree, the world’s discontinuous nations appear to be marshalled within a single, hierarchical European Ur-narrative. Second, national history is imaged as naturally teleological, an organic process of upward growth, with the European nation as the apogee of world progress. Third, inconvenient discontinuities are ranked and subordinated into a hierarchical structure of branching time – the progress of “racially” different nations mapped against the tree’s self-evident boughs, with “lesser nations” destined, by nature, to perch on its lower branches.22

Drawing on the work of Anderson, Bhabha also notes this strategic relationship between modernity, nationalism, colonial expansion and a secularised vision of time, which seeks to smooth out or gloss over the inherent tensions between modernity and tradition:

[T]he political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of the anxiety of its irredeemably plural modern space – representing the nation’s modern territoriality is turned into the archaic, atavistic temporality of Traditionalism. The difference of space returns as theSameness of time, turning Territory into Tradition, turning the People into One. The liminal point of this ideological displacement is the turning of the differentiated spatial boundary the ‘outside’, into the authenticating ‘inward’ time of Tradition. […]

21 Duveyrier, 1864, p. 313.
22 McClintock, Anne, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 358-60.
Chapter 5: Troubled times

[T]he ‘primal scene’ of the modern Western nation [...] is the problematic historical transition between dynastic, lineage societies and horizontal, homogeneous secular communities.23

Duveyrier’s difficulty in dealing with the paradoxical strategies which attempted to provide a reconciliation of modernity and tradition to satisfy the Western imagination was alluded to in Chapter 4. In addition to a discomfort with the schematic modes of thought and the oppositions between Western powers, fostered by nationalist discourses in the post-1870 period, Duveyrier’s conception of exploration as an atemporal activity, isolated from modern worldly developments, grew increasingly irrelevant over the same period: ‘Héros des années 1870, l’explorateur solitaire guidé par sa seule vocation n’a pratiquement plus sa place en Afrique française à la fin des années 1890’.24 Duveyrier’s nostalgia for the era of Romantic explorers, a tendency which has already been observed in previous chapters resisted the teleological concept of a progressive secular time, outlined above as a feature of both nationalism and colonial power structures. Duveyrier’s Romantic, vocation-driven perception of the explorer was therefore anachronistic. Heffernan identifies Duveyrier precisely as an anachronistic thinker, observing that: ‘His inspiration came from a utopian political philosophy which was a product of early nineteenth-century French Romantic thought.’25

Heffernan also notes that Duveyrier’s vision of colonial expansion was profoundly naïve: ‘By the end of the nineteenth century, in a political climate of military imperialism, Duveyrier’s colonial ideals, built on the notion of mutual spiritual and commercial exchange between Europe and Africa, seemed hopelessly impractical and naïve.’26 In a letter to Duveyrier dated 4 May 1871, the Prussian explorer Gerhard Rohlfs – who was a correspondent of Duveyrier both before and after the war – advises on the best way forward for France in North Africa. It is a revealing counterpoint to Duveyrier’s ‘impractical and naïve’ views on colonial expansion and relations between Europe and Africa:

Tant qu’une tente peut être bâti[e] à côté d’une maison européenne tant il n’y aura pas colonisation. Faites comme les Anglais ! Si aujourd’hui les peaux rouges auraient encore la faculté de chasser leur buffet dans les jardins de New York, l’Amérique ne serait [sic]

26 Ibid.
pas le pays qu’il est à présent. Il y a des nations et des peuples destinés à disparaître, c’est la struggle for existence […] wie Darwin sagt. Les idées philanthropiques sont très bonnes mais une expérience assez longue a montré que l’arabe ne se veut pas civiliser alors comme dit Ernest Renan : l’Arabe est né pour le désert, expellez-le dans le désert. 27

Significantly, Rohls aligns himself with the views of the previously mentioned figure of Ernest Renan (1823-1892), the famed French linguist, and an influential theorist of nationalism. 28 Rohls also invokes the Darwinist concept of the survival of the fittest to suggest a scientific basis for a French entitlement to appropriate North African territories and to redefine them as national space by transforming, or – given the tone of the passage – preferably by ejecting the current occupants from any desirable lands. Rohls maintained a successful career as a Saharan explorer long after Duveyrier’s own had lost its momentum, and he was honoured with a diplomatic appointment as Consul General of Zanzibar in 1884. 29 Over the same period, Duveyrier failed in his attempts to expand his professional activities, such as in his candidacy to succeed Adrien Berbrugger as head librarian in Algiers – he lost out to his former mentor Oscar Mac Carthy. 30 He also published La Tunisie (1881) 31 – by his own standards an under-researched text – which sought to provide a geographical and sociological overview of France’s newest overseas conquest in an apparent effort to regain scholarly relevance and notoriety.

Whether or not he agreed with Rohls’ hard-line attitude, it was clear to Duveyrier that the opinions of men like Rohls and Renan – Duveyrier’s friend, correspondent and former instructor 32 – now set the tone for the Western powers, who overwhelmingly saw themselves as simultaneously engaged in a competition with their European rivals and in the sort of Darwinian struggle for dominance over the Indigènes evoked by Rohls. Duveyrier’s success in gaining privileged contact with the Tuareg suggests that respect for foreign cultures was central to his approach

27 AN 47 AP 8, Archives Nationales, Paris, Letter from Gerhard Rohls to Henri Duveyrier, 4 May 1871.
30 ‘Des amis d’Alger ont eu la bonté de me pousser à poser ma candidature de bibliothécaire. J’apprends de divers côtés que ma nomination serait vue avec plaisir, mais je sais aussi que M. MacCarthy appuyé par son vieil ami le gouverneur général, a les plus grandes chances de réussite.’ ARS Ms 13739 Fol. 155, Letter from Henri Duveyrier to Isma‘yl Urbain, 7 July 1869.
to the *Indigènes*, or at least to nomadic tribes. Duveyrier’s earlier encouragement of isolated tribes to engage with France as a trading partner and his status as a scientific innovator in *Les Touareg du Nord* was relatively easy to reconcile with a romanticised fascination. However, by the 1870s and even more so the 1880s, he could no longer ignore the growth in support for the kind of views expressed by Rohlfs and Renan, particularly from proponents of large-scale settler colonisation such as his former mentor Warnier.

### 5.2.1 Crisis of vocation

In *Quand les murs tombent : L’identité nationale hors-la-loi ?* (2007), Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau analyse links between colonisation and the nineteenth-century construction of Western identities, which coincided with the codification and global dissemination of European nationalism:

> En Occident et d’abord en Europe, les collectivités se sont constituées en nations, dont la double fonction fut d’exalter ce qu’on appelait les valeurs de la communauté […] et, si possible, de les exporter dans le monde. La nation devient alors un État-nation […]. Une telle organisation est au principe des conquêtes coloniales, la nation colonisatrice impose ses valeurs et se réclame d’une identité préservée de toute atteinte extérieure et que nous appellerons une identité racine unique.33

Here we see the important linkage between nationalism and the monolithic conception of identity characteristic of both modern Western societies and colonisation. Despite the fact that Duveyrier founded his career upon understanding non-European territories and peoples, his rigid approach to scientific analysis fuelled a compulsion to abstract fixed conclusions from his observations, defining the identities of others as well as his own in the fixed, Eurocentric terms of *une identité racine unique*.

The deaths of Heinrich Barth in 1865 and David Livingstone in 1874, both of whom Duveyrier saw as like-minded explorers, increased his intellectual isolation. Furthermore, as indicated above, not only the era of the Romantic solitary explorer, but also that of exploration itself, was drawing to a close by the 1890s:

> Le devoir patriotique écrase si bien les autres motivations que l’exploration en Afrique est bientôt présentée par les officiers coloniaux comme une tradition interne […]. Ce dernier tableau prépare la clôture symbolique de l’ère des explorations. […] L’aventure s’achève, les mystères africains deviennent des attractions touristiques et l’étude scientifique des espaces et des populations relève désormais de la gestion ordinaire.34

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These developments conspired to compound a growing sense of irrelevance, isolation and crisis experienced by Duveyrier over the 1870s and 1880s. In this climate his esteem for the Tuareg fed rather than dispelled the essentialism underlying his views on North African peoples and coloured his attempts to diversify his writing into other areas.

The 1860s and 1870s similarly emerged as a period of developing crisis for Urbain, with debates surrounding settler colonisation and how best to deal with the *indigène* population intensifying in Algeria. However, unlike Duveyrier, Urbain did not cede to the temptations of essentialism in his approach to the *Indigènes*, but instead redoubled his efforts to propagate his opinions regarding fusion and the *rapprochement* of French and the *Indigènes* without the necessity of cultural homogenisation typically involved in assimilationist approaches to integration. The following section will examine the circumstances of this period and Urbain’s activities as a writer of polemical pamphlets, which sought to engage with some of the most controversial contemporary issues of colonial society and metropolitan administration.
Chapter 5: Troubled times

5.3 Colonisation and immigration

5.3.1 The legal status of the Indigènes and the desirability of European immigrants

Urbain’s pamphlets of 1861 and 1862 explore many of the issues which came to the fore in Algeria as the community of French and European settlers grew.\(^\text{35}\) They were published against the backdrop of the escalating animosity, between Urbain and Warnier, stemming from the 1850s, which has been noted by historians:

Le docteur Warnier […] poursuit d’une haine féroce son ancien coreligionnaire en saint-simonisme, Ismaïl Urbain, qu’il dénonce à l’exécration publique et aux services administratifs du ministère.

[…] la guerre idéologique, menée par des colonistes décidés, prépare un réajustement du système colonial ; elle ameute l’opinion publique, débauche des alliés et même des piliers de la position impériale et prépare des événements spectaculaires.\(^\text{36}\)

Warnier ! C’est maintenant la bête noire […] d’Urbain. Il est colon lui-même, mais surtout politicien déjà éprouvé. Il rêve de devenir député républicain d’Alger, et le deviendra. Les électeurs ne sont pas des Arabes ou des militaires ; ce sont des colons revendicateurs, à la tête chaude. Il faut les flatter en défendant la petite et la moyenne propriété européenne.\(^\text{37}\)

Both Urbain and Warnier had contributed to the Saint-Simonian periodical *L’Algérie*, which was edited by fellow Saint-Simonian Louis Jourdan during the 1840s, and they had also collaborated on a government report on the province of Constantine.\(^\text{38}\) The extent of their rupture, given their shared Saint-Simonian affiliations, professional associations and common friendships with Enfantin and Charles Duveyrier, demonstrates how divisive questions concerning Algeria became, splitting the remaining community of Orientalist Saint-Simoniens:

la transformation d’un orientalisme romantique, littéraire et religieux contemporain de leur expédition en Egypte, en un orientalisme fusionnel, puis en un engagement pratique et

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\(^{36}\) Rey-Goldeguier, in Meyer et al., 1991, p. 510.


politique en faveur des musulmans d’Algérie et, pour quelques‘uns [sic], les « colonistes », en faveur des immigrants européens.39

Urbain and Warnier came to represent two opposing political camps known as the *arabophiles* and the *arabophobes*:

Des camps opposés et irréductibles défendent avec âpreté leur vérité en attaquant avec féroce tout contradicteur, adversaire en puissance. Les colonistes et les anticolonistes deviennent arabophiles et arabophobes. […] Le vrai problème n’est plus de coloniser ou de repartir mais de savoir ce qu’il faut faire des indigènes dans cette nouvelle France. […] Les arabophobes démontrent que l’implantation d’une agriculture européenne est un leurre, que le vrai travailleur de la terre c’est l’indigène et que le colon doit se consacrer au développement commercial et industriel. Les arabophiles prétendent que l’indigène, barbare, est incapable de mettre en culture son sol et doit se « cantonner » sur une étendue restreinte pour laisser aux hardis colons une exploitation rationnelle de ces terres […]. En 1860, les tensions sont telles qu’elles ne peuvent plus être masquées : les conséquences s’en ressentent dans toute l’Algérie qui traverse d’abord une véritable crise économique, puis une crise de confiance et une crise d’autorité.40

In addition to the points of opposition outlined in the quotation above, the *arabophobes* claimed that the *Indigènes* should only be integrated into French society and granted citizenship on condition that they renounced the defining features and beliefs of their cultural heritage and assimilate the French language and European cultural and social norms; whereas the *arabophiles* favoured association between settlers and the *Indigènes*, rather than the latter’s assimilation. Such an association was intended to allow the *Indigènes* access to rights which resembled, but were not directly equivalent to full citizenship without the precondition of negating their heritage and subscribing to alien cultural practices. It was amid the escalating tensions prompted by these oppositions that Urbain wrote his best known pamphlets of 1861 and 1862. The ‘Avant-propos’ of *L’Algérie pour les Algériens* warns of a bloody future of insurrection and war if both the colonial exploitation of the *Indigènes* and European hypocrisy remained unchecked:

En Algérie aussi, nous avons des docteurs qui parlent de haines irréconciliables entre les Français et les indigènes, de progrès impossible, de guerre sainte et d’insurrections éternelles. […] Si les exagérations ont prise sur l’opinion publique, on peut fausser et envenimer les rapports entre les Européens et les musulmans. […] Lorsqu’au lieu d’atténuer les motifs d’antipathie toujours trop nombreux entre les vaincus et le conquérant, on fournit à la haine des aliments nouveaux, c’est le meurtre, la révolte, la guerre qu’on prépare. […] Les discussions maladroites et injustes sont un acheminement aux insurrections, aux vengeance, aux combats ; nos soldats payent alors au prix de fatigues, de privations, de leur vie peut-être, les erreurs de malencontreux déclamateurs. Ces conséquences possibles méritent qu’on y réfléchisse.41

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Urbain’s remarks inflamed the *arabophobes* and the majority of settlers. They were also eerily prophetic of the injustice and hatred which ultimately characterised colonial Algeria and led to the Franco-Algerian war, described by Todd Shepard as: ‘the most traumatic case of decolonisation in the French Empire’.

The opening of *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants* notes the territory’s transformation into a legal part of France and emphasises Urbain’s view of conquest as generative of *droits et devoirs*:

> La Constitution de 1848, et plus tard celle de 1852, lui donnèrent son certificat d’origine. L’Algérie cessait d’être une conquête ; elle était annexée au territoire national. L’inscription de son nom dans nos chartes politiques lui créa des droits et des devoirs vis-à-vis de la France.

Urbain then addresses one of the most difficult and divisive questions arising from this unique development. What was, and what should be henceforth, the legal status of the *Indigènes*? This was the essence of *la question indigène*: ‘la terre étant devenue française, la situation se trouve radicalement modifiée, car notre droit politique ne peut admettre sur une partie de l’Empire l’existence d’une population qui ne serait ni nationale, ni étrangère’.

In contrast, and despite his favourable depiction of the Tuareg, Duveyrier’s writing never directly addressed this challenging issue.

Urbain’s pamphlet concluded that the *Indigènes* could not be treated as foreigners in their homeland and were entitled to a legally recognised status, thus demonstrating his relational perspective on colonisation as a Western project which should protect the welfare of non-Westerners: ‘Ils ne sont pas des hôtes […]. Ils ont

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42 [European settlers] would not willingly give up their position of strength [...] their strong and longstanding influence over the local administration and the government in Paris could prevent any changes which were to their disadvantage. A manifesto issued by a group of educated Algerians in 1943, calling for an autonomous republic linked with France, met with no response [...] a more violent movement in 1945 was suppressed ruthlessly, [...] In the years after 1945, the party of those who were prepared to settle for a better position within the French political system lost much of its influence, and within the nationalist party there was gradually formed a revolutionary group [...] The momentum of revolution and the actions of the French government, however, gradually turned it into a national movement with widespread support.’ Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples*. (New York: Warner Books, 1991), pp. 369-70.


45 ‘Algerians faced greater difficulties than most other Arab peoples in their struggle for independence. Officially their country was not a colony but an integral part of metropolitan France, and the demand that it should break away met with the resistance of those to whom the land of France was indivisible.’ Hourani, 1991, p. 369.

46 Urbain, 1862, p. 3.
tous les droits à la qualification de régnicoles. En nous appropriant la terre, nous avons accepté les habitants ; nous les avons admis dans notre grande unité politique.\textsuperscript{47} Although not full citizenship, the proposed status of régnicole\textsuperscript{48} implied entitlement to basic equality with French citizens living in Algeria and also the protection of indigène private interests on a par with those of European immigrants:

Ces restrictions ne les placent pas cependant dans une position de subalternité, ni d’infériorité, par rapport aux Français qui habitent l’Algérie. […] L’indigène est l’égal, comme régnicole, du Français venu du continent européen, en ce sens qu’il a droit, de la part de l’État, à la même protection pour sa liberté, pour sa propriété et pour son culte. […] […] Quant aux intérêts privés des immigrants, ils ne doivent jouir d’aucun privilège à l’endroit des indigènes. L’État n’a pas deux buts en Algérie : l’un européen ou chrétien, l’autre indigène ; il n’a qu’un but : la prospérité du pays par la civilisation des indigènes.\textsuperscript{49}

Urbain’s call for indigène equality of rights with metropolitan-born French citizens is exemplary of the approach to la question indigène which he promoted, on the basis of a greater fidelity to the spirit of universalism, as a desirable alternative to assimilation:

Du jour où notre drapeau a flotté vainqueur dans toutes les parties de l’ancienne Régence, il ne pouvait plus être question de fonder une colonie. L’Empire français avait gagné une immense province, vaste comme un royaume, peuplée de trois millions d’âmes. […] L’honneur et l’intérêt de la France commandaient, non plus de détruire, de refouler ou de déposséder les indigènes, mais de les bien administrer et de les rattacher à nous par la civilisation.\textsuperscript{50}

Urbain’s rhetoric foregrounds a French ethical obligation to safeguard indigène interests, to earn their respect, and ultimately their desire to participate in French civilisation, thereby expanding what being part of the French Empire – in this special case, part of France – could mean for colonial subjects. Urbain’s variety of colonialist rhetoric thus echoes some of Butler’s observations regarding the expansive potential within restrictive utterances. By extending the regenerative potential to those against whom they had previously been employed to discriminate, such utterances may become radically inclusive: ‘The task […] is to compel the terms of modernity to embrace those they have traditionally excluded […]. The opening up of unknown contexts, however, is clearly a source of anxiety for some.

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{49} Urbain, 1862, pp. 9-10.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 16-17.
The desire not to have an open future can be strong. Butler’s caveat identifies the potential for violent resistance from those who fear that change and/or reinterpretation could impinge upon their – in the colonial context highly advantageous – position. This hostility is very similar to the reaction of conservative settlers in Algeria such as Warnier and Archbishop Lavigerie to Urbain’s pamphlets.

L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants also explains the rationale behind Urbain’s controversial proposition that Algeria does not require agricultural immigrants. He claims that importing agricultural labour and dispossessing the Indigènes of their ancestral lands would have disastrous implications for franco-indigène relations and furthermore would fail to increase agricultural productivity, an argument which was taken up by the arabophile lobby and opposed by the arabophobes as well as Urbain’s mentor Enfantin in his text Colonisation de l’Algérie (1843). Urbain appeals once again for empathy with the indigène perspective:

En effet, on redoute les haines irréconciliables des indigènes, et on ne trouve rien de mieux, pour les conjurer et les apaiser, que d’exciter plus vivement encore les griefs et les ressentiments. […] Ce qu’ils constatent immédiatement, c’est qu’on leur enlève une partie de leurs moyens d’existence : […] qu’on les déclare barbares, ignorants, perdu de vices, et que, sous prétexte de civilisation, on voudrait les chasser hors de leurs coutumes, de leurs lois, de leurs croyances. […] Nous voulons féconder la terre, lui faire rendre tous ses trésors, et nous n’avons pas de meilleur expédient à recommander que de changer, à la fois, l’ouvrier, l’instrument de travail, la semence, le mode de culture, sans nous inquiéter si le sol et le climat seront pour ou contre ces changements.

The striking phrase les haines irréconciliables, which Urbain employs repeatedly in his writing, underlines criticisms of French colonial representatives and exposes the hypocrisy of encouraging large-scale agricultural colonisation, while professing a desire to improve the lives of the Indigènes. The pamphlet counters exaggerations

53 ‘Les arabophiles démontrent que l’implantation d’une agriculture européenne est un leurre, que le vrai travailleur de la terre c’est l’indigène et que le colon droit se consacrer au développement commercial et industriel. Les arabophobes prétendent que l’indigène, barbare, est incapable de mettre en culture son sol et doit se « cantonner » sur une étendue restreinte pour laisser aux hardis colons une exploitation rationnelle de ces terres’, Rey-Goldzeiguer, in Meyer et al., 1991, pp. 450-51.
54 Urbain, 1862, p. 19.
and burgeoning fallacies, such as claims regarding the fertility of the land and its suitability for large-scale commercial cultivation of non-indigenous crops: ‘On exagérait les résultats partiels obtenus, comme on avait fait pour la fertilité universelle du sol. On passa les échecs sous silence, pour n’avoir pas à reconnaître des erreurs et à renoncer à des illusions.’ Urbain suggests that failures are glossed over, or denied, to enhance the image of a supposedly infallible French scientific approach. Having been branded ‘une tête à illusions’ by his first commanding officer in Algeria, General Bugeaud, it was in fact Urbain who ultimately went on to identify and sought to draw attention to colonial illusions regarding Algeria’s agricultural potential:

Serait-ce le café, le thé, la vanille, les épices ? C’est à peine si les jardins d’acclimatation ont fait des expériences sans conclusion. Les observateurs désintéressés qui habitent l’Algérie n’hésiteront pas à souffler sur ces chimères. Après vingt ans d’efforts, de primes d’encouragement, l’État n’a pas pu faire produire du tabac ayant une valeur commerciale notable.

[…] On ne créera pas la prospérité de l’Algérie en y naturalisant, à grands frais et sans certitude de succès, des végétaux exotiques. Il faut demander au sol ses productions naturelles.

Urbain’s observations concur with those of colonial historians such as Rey-Goldzeiguer. They also differ considerably from Duveyrier’s writing in *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* and *Les Touareg du Nord*, both of which present a more straightforwardly utopian account of French achievements in agriculture and other fields, as well as reasserting the infallibility of Western scientific method.

Urbain calls European superiority into question by raising the possibility that traditional, extensive agricultural practices may be more productive than modern, intensive ones. He thus questions European technical and intellectual superiority, and positions himself in direct conflict with Saint-Simonian thought on modernisation:

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56 Bugeaud, Thomas, quoted in Émerit, Marcel, *Les Saint-Simoniens en Algérie*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, [1941] 1949), p. 80. See also ARS Ms 7789, Letter from Urbain to Lambert, Oran, 6 December 1837. General Thomas Bugeaud led the brutal military campaign of conquest in Algeria in the 1840s and negotiated the short-lived treaty of Tafna (1837) with Abd-el-Kader; Urbain’s first appointment in Algeria in 1837 involved working under Bugeaud as an interpreter for the army.
58 ‘Les illusions de culture tropicale, sucre, café, épices, ont mis quelques années à se dissiper. Le jardin d’essai d’Alger recherche la plante miracle qui permettra les bénéfices considérables, sans concurrencer les productions métropolitaines. La légende du grenier de Rome effraie les céréaliers français qui craignent une chute des prix. […] le coton encouragé par l’Administration et réclamé par les filateurs français ne parvient pas à se développer […] les productions algériennes restent sous haute surveillance et souffrent des défiances métropolitaines’, Rey-Goldzeiguer, in Meyer *et al.*, 1991, p. 401.
En présence des capricieuses péripéties du climat, les cultivateurs sagaces se demandent si l’indigène, labourant légèrement de grands espaces, n’est pas mieux avisé que l’Européen, qui concentre ses efforts sur un point limité, jouant, chaque année, une partie de ruine ou de succès avec la sécheresse, les pluies torrentielles, la grêle, les brouillards du matin et le vent du désert. Si l’on examinait la situation agricole avec attention, peut-être découvrirait-on que les faits donnent souvent raison à ce que nous appelons la routine indigène contre la science exotique. Il n’y a rien d’universel ni d’absolu en fait d’expérience.  

Urbain’s expression *la science exotique* conveys the romanticised and exaggerated character of the prevailing expectations of what could be achieved by scientific method in Algeria. Indeed his expression could equally be applied to the whole of Duveyrier’s epistemological project. In *Nous et les Autres* (1989), Todorov highlights the distinction between science properly so called and a nineteenth-century scientism which disregarded the contingency of scientific method in order to cast science as a surrogate for religion:

> Non seulement la science n’est pas toujours parfaite, on a envie de dire qu’au contraire elle ne l’est jamais : il est dans la nature même de la connaissance scientifique qu’aucun de ses résultats ne doit être tenu pour définitif. […] Ce n’est pas la science mais le scientisme qui, ne laissant aucune place à l’exercice de la volonté et à la liberté, prétend soumettre la politique et l’éthique à la science ; du coup, comme on l’a vu avec Renan, les énoncés scientifiques acquièrent le statut d’énoncés de foi, c’est-à-dire le contraire de ce qu’ils étaient censés être.  

Todorov’s reference to Renan recalls our earlier discussion of nationalism as a project intrinsically linked to science and partaking of a shared nineteenth-century discourse which constructed empiricism and nationalism as essential to the continued advancement of humankind, as commented upon by McClintock, Anderson, Hobsbawm and others, and exemplified by Rohlfs’ comments in his letter to Duveyrier.  

Duveyrier’s quasi-religious approach to scientific method as a source of definitive, unquestionable conclusions is in keeping with Todorov’s vision of scientism as a corruption of an intrinsically contingent science. Urbain, conversely, is willing to nuance claims of European superiority according to the circumstances at hand and thus rejects narrowing definitions and conclusions: ‘[i]l n’y a rien d’universel ni d’absolu en fait d’expérience’. This contingent strategy shares common ground with Deleuze’s and Guattari’s rhizomic philosophy resisting the impulses inherent in Western thought to formulate general rules and to apply them

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59 Urbain, 1862, p. 33.  
61 AN 47 AP 8, Archives Nationales, Paris, Letter from Gerhard Rohlfs to Henri Duveyrier, 4 May 1871.  
62 Urbain, 1862, p. 33.
uniformly across varied circumstances without questioning the benefits of the outcome for each unique setting:

Le rhizome […] n’est pas fait d’unités […]. C’est un trait flâcheux de l’esprit occidental, de rapporter les expressions et les actions à des fins extérieures ou transcendantes, au lieu de les estimer sur un plan d’immanence d’après leur valeur en soi.53

Although the preceding passage quoted from Urbain related to agriculture, it highlights a fundamental divergence with Duveyrier as a thinker, and in their respective approaches to la question indigène. Duveyrier’s writing is preoccupied with the deduction of rigid categories which are considered to govern all processes in the natural and human world, and is characterised by a blind faith that scientific method is beneficial in all circumstances; i.e. it exemplifies Western hegemonic thought. While advocating attentive observation and study, Urbain’s vision of the world is contingent, taking into account the complexities and fluctuations of real-world situations and recognising the impossibility of reducing lived experience to universally coherent, singular truths; i.e. it exemplifies rhizomic thought. For Urbain, this more fluid approach embraces paradox. Indeed, the same is true of Urbain’s thought in general, which can be seen to embrace paradox as a means of reconciling the conflicting demands of his support for colonisation and his campaign to extend the benefits of French revolutionary and humanist values to the Indigènes. This may also account for the extent of his affinity with Saint-Simonianism, which, from the movement’s inception, was characterised by the embrace of paradox and multiplicity rather than attempts to seek their resolution.64

In his last major work, Humanisme et Démocratie (2005), Said emphasises paradoxical thinking as crucial to the cultivation of an inclusive and relevant form of humanism, which, more than allowing for contradiction, facilitates creative thinking through the explosion of myths and the reformulation of existing, flawed concepts:

Il nous faut donc, plus que jamais, pratiquer un mode de pensée para-doxtale (doxa : bon sens, idéaux-types) […]. L’humanisme est, me semble-t-il, le moyen, et peut-être la conscience que nous avons d’apporter ce type d’analyse finalement antinomique et contradictoire qui se fait dans l’espace situé entre les mots, leurs origines diverses, leur

64 ‘Much has been written on [Saint-Simon] and opinions differ sharply on which aspects of his sprawling, contradictory and confused oeuvre deserve attention.’ Heffernan, Michael, ‘Historical Geographies of the Future: Three Perspectives from France (1750-1825),’ pp. 125-64, in Livingstone, David, Withers, Charles, eds, Geography and Enlightenment (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 146.
Said’s gloss for the term *doxa* as ‘idéaux-types’ is reminiscent of the typical French colonial rhetoric which Barthes seeks to deconstruct and critique in the essay ‘Grammaire Africaine’. Butler also acknowledges the definition of *doxa* in the restrictive sense put forward by Said and, like Said, she conveys a conviction that appropriate action can pave the way to the eventual surmounting of these restrictions: ‘The appropriation of such norms to oppose their historically sedimented effect constitutes the insurrectionary moment of that history, the moment that founds a future through a break with the past.’ As we have observed in Chapters 3 and 4, Urbain’s writing challenged the context in which various terms associated with the *doxai* of the Enlightenment, as applied to republican values and colonial rhetoric, were employed. He sensed that such terms had been or were liable to be co-opted to justify the exploitation of the *Indigènes*, or self-interested actions by settlers and government officials. Said’s image of constructively utilising the liminal ‘espace situé entre les mots’ and of thus stimulating evolutions in thought consequently resonate with Urbain’s endeavours to strike a balance between the practical necessity of maintaining his position as a civil servant and his advocacy of the extension of the rights, privileges and respect promised by the civilising mission to the *Indigènes*.

This putatively enlightened colonial project was summarised in the paradoxical concept of Republican Empire professed, but never successfully honoured, by France from the advent of the Third Republic in 1870. In contrast to Duveyrier’s heavy investment in absolutes – good and evil, friend and foe, fact and

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superstition, European and Arab – and in sympathy with Saint-Simonian mysticism, Urbain embraced paradox and paradoxal thinking by means of various strategies such as the fusion of opposites, unity in diversity, religious and cultural syncretism, and hybridity, attempting to maximise the constructive potential of his status as a marginal and controversial figure. Urbain’s flexible approach can thus be seen to be largely intellectually compatible with Said’s requirements for a progressive humanism which actively seeks to transcend its origins in Western hegemony.

5.3.2 Anticolonist or anticolonialist? Urbain and settler colonisation

Although Urbain rejects immigrants as unsuitable agricultural colonists in *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants*, he also affirms that he is not anti-colonialist:

En résumé, le vrai paysan de l’Algérie, l’ouvrier agricole, la base la plus rationnelle et la plus solide de la propriété, c’est l’indigène. Est-ce à dire que nous répudions le concours de la colonisation européenne pour développer l’avenir de l’Algérie ? Loin de là.69

This may be an attempt to forestall alienation from the colonial administration and his surrogate father Enfantin, whose text *Colonisation de l’Algérie* (1843) advocated agriculturally-based settler colonisation.70 Enfantin’s assumption of a position in favour of widespread and government-orchestrated settler colonisation for rural Algeria71 is representative of an evolution in the activities of many Saint-Simonians away from a mystical and proto-socialist agenda to a more conventional stance on colonial expansion and venture capitalism.72 Urbain and Enfantin never resolved their divergent views on European agricultural immigrants. This impasse points to Urbain’s unorthodox status among his fellow Saint-Simonians, most of whom shed

69 Urbain, 1862, p. 35.
optimistic dreams of fusion and collaboration between Orient and Occident as the nineteenth century advanced.

Urbain clarifies the role he envisions for immigrants as industrial colonists and providers of education, supervision and capital investment for the Indigènes:

Quant aux immigrants, ils feront de la colonisation commerciale et industrielle. [...] La France fournira l’intelligence qui organise et qui dirige, le capital, les contre-maîtres, les moniteurs de l’atelier ; les ouvriers seront indigènes. [...] [Ce système] établira moralement, par le fait vivant, la vraie supériorité du métropolitain sur le régnicole indigène, sans blesser l’égalité politique et sans fausser nos mœurs sociales.

L’indigène sera paysan, ouvrier agricole ou industriel, selon son aptitude.⁷³

Early Saint-Simonianism proposed a society presided over by a highly-educated class of industriels who would provide opportunities to the proletariat and peasant classes on the basis of merit. Urbain’s closing formulation above is very close to the Saint-Simonian motto ‘chacun à sa capacité et chaque capacité selon ses œuvres’.⁷⁴

This concluding remark offsets the ethnic essentialism of the preceding lines by suggesting mobility within Urbain’s vision, i.e. once they were sufficiently educated, the Indigènes would be entitled to accede to the positions initially to be filled by French and European settlers – who would, nevertheless, act as the arbiters of indigène readiness to assume a wider range of roles, thus reinforcing an underlying paternalism. In this way, as with Duveyrier, many of Urbain’s views hark back to the early nineteenth century. However, unlike Duveyrier, Urbain attempted to translate his ideas into practical measures applicable in contemporary Algeria; this tactic is similar to a process advocated by Sibony with regard to travel and previously quoted in Chapter 2, which envisions travel as a process that should at once embrace novelty and origins through the transformative interaction of both: ‘Il ne s’agit pas d’aller vers l’origine mais de voyager avec l’idée de l’origine, de faire voyager l’origine.’⁷⁵ (original emphasis). Urbain’s writing asserted the need for contingency, allowing for revision and adjustment in accordance with individual and changing circumstances, amounting to a pragmatic, as well as an intellectually rhizomic approach based on the translation and adaptation of ideas in an effort to satisfy the unique demands of the colonial context.

⁷³ Urbain, 1862, pp. 43-44.
5.3.3 Urbain’s conclusions on the way forward for a French-ruled Algeria

Ultimately, Urbain’s pamphlets convey his aspiration to synthesise a modernised Oriental society, retaining space for aspects of indigène culture rather than recreating Algeria in the image of modern French society, the primary goal of assimilation. It would be incumbent upon the French to educate and improve the Indigènes while simultaneously endeavouring to ‘protéger[r] l’initié contre l’absorption de l’initiateur.’ Hence, in *L’Algérie pour les Algériens*, Urbain contends that no particular people or their conception of civilisation is entitled to claim superiority over others in absolute terms, including especially those of France:

> il est évident que chaque race, chaque peuple, chaque homme pour ainsi dire, part d’un point qui lui est spécial et va vers un but spécial aussi à son individualité. […] [A]ucune nation, aucune religion ne peut avoir l’orgueil de se poser comme le modèle et le type du progrès […]. C’est vrai surtout pour le Français.

In a period of increased social regulation and modernisation, the religious practices, customs, languages and culture of the Indigènes were to be afforded tolerance and respect. Furthermore, in a fashion which is to an extent reminiscent of the republican concept of laïcité Urbain calls for the separation of public and private spheres to allow for Indigènes to be afforded a status on a par with their European counterparts by affording protection for their privacy in matters of personal interest such as religious practice and other personal freedoms which are thus seen to be external to the interests of the public arena:

> Dans les sociétés modernes, a-t-on dit, les conquêtes n’ont d’autre effet que de changer les conditions politiques des gouvernements, sans toucher aux intérêts privés. Notre domination n’affecte en rien ni les biens des indigènes, ni leur liberté individuelle, ni leur liberté de conscience. […] la civilisation convertira les individus. Ce but pourra être atteint si l’on ne détruit pas trop brusquement leur organisation par tribu, et si on ne les dissème pas trop vite dans les communes françaises, où ils seraient livrés à l’exploitation des immigrants.

The latter quotation in particular can be seen to clash with the views of prominent colonists such as Archbishop Lavigerie, who favoured the systematic dismantling of tribal society.79

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76 Urbain, 1871, in Levallois, 2005, p. 17.  
77 Urbain, 1861, pp. 9-13.  
78 Ibid., pp. 8-39.  
Chapter 5: Troubled times

In *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants*, Urbain also briefly comments on the necessity of distinguishing the structures of *indigène* and European societies, thus revealing analogies, especially with medieval Europe, to be based upon a failure to grasp differences of structure and social hierarchy rather than, as Duveyrier concluded, providing evidence of the primitivity or belatedness of *indigène* society: ‘Les bases en quelque sorte officielles de cette société sont : une aristocratie militaire, une aristocratie religieuse, et au-dessous d’elles les lettrés. Chez nos indigènes, le mot aristocratie n’a pas la même portée ni la même signification qu’en Europe’. 80 This further illustrates Urbain’s relational capacity to view the world without constant recourse to European points of reference. Duveyrier’s writing does not share this relational perspective, and his Eurocentric tendencies were further reinforced by the schematic modes of analysis encouraged by occidental scientific practice and scientism.

The concluding section of *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants* recapitulates the pamphlet’s central ideas. Urbain affirms that his proposed programme and division of labour is an initial guideline, with room for change and revision:

Nous ne faisons pas non plus de l’agriculture un monopole pour les indigènes. Il s’agit seulement de signaler à la France et à l’Europe qu’on favorisera la colonisation industrielle en Algérie. Il ne sera plus nécessaire d’appeler des flots d’immigrants, en faisant luire à leurs yeux la propriété territoriale comme un leurre. On sollicitera les capitaux et on pourra prédire sûrement au travail intelligent une rémunération convenable. […] Les relations entre les deux races deviendront faciles et fructueuses, puisque immigrants et indigènes ne seront plus placés en face les uns des autres sur le même terrain, comme des antagonistes. 81

Urbain also emphasises the concept of mutual benefit, i.e. that France stands to gain from the collaborative pursuit of common interests: ‘La satisfaction des deux intérêts indigène et européen créera la véritable prospérité publique, dont l’effet se fera sentir jusqu’en France.’ 82 However, the realities and outcomes of industrial development – if and when it occurred – and French capital investment in Algeria, and in France’s overseas territories more generally, was rather different to the aspirations described above by Urbain and by other colonial officials, as Jacques Marseille demonstrates in his *Empire colonial et capitalisme français : Histoire d’un divorce* (1984). Marseille highlights the fact that both as sources of raw materials for import and as

80 Urbain, 1862, p. 45.
81 Ibid., p. 67.
82 Ibid., p. 65.
markets for export France’s colonies were not the cash-cows that colonial officials and colonists may have suggested, and that furthermore wages for workers in the colonies remained considerably lower than those in the métropole, while the development of manufacturing and service industries consistently lagged behind the colonial centre where they did exist. Colonies, even supposedly integrated ones such as Algeria, remained disadvantaged and less profitable than predicted, and on the periphery in relation to the dominant colonial centre.\(^{83}\)

Elsewhere, Urbain claims that exploitative relationships between immigrants and the Indigènes would be used to encourage assimilation:\(^{84}\)

\[O\]n voulut forcer le chiffre de la population européenne, afin de neutraliser les indigènes, et l’on tendit à exercer, sur une vaste échelle, une sorte d’expropriation matérielle et morale du peuple vaincu. On ne lui enlevait pas seulement ses terres, on voulait effacer jusqu’à ses mœurs.\(^{85}\)

Urbain’s language which is critical in tone also has parallels with the later terminology of ethnic cleansing through the use of verbs such as neutraliser and effacer. This passage suggests that many partisans of a colonie de peuplement have no interest in assimilating the Indigènes into any form of French society. Thus, Urbain accurately perceived how assimilation could serve as a pretext for the radical

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\(^{84}\)‘The immigrants wanted [...] the country to become fully French: “there is no longer an Arab people, there are men who talk another language than ours.”’ Hourani, 1991, p. 271.

\(^{85}\)Urbain, 1862, p. 63.
disenfranchisement and exploitation of conquered peoples. The fears proved well-founded with respect to colonial society in Algeria.

Urbain openly criticises the exploitative and abusive practices of many immigrants, identifying them as crimes against the French government and citizens as well as the Indigènes:

On demande trop souvent au gouvernement des secours et des subventions, comme si ses ressources avaient une autre origine que l’impôt, payé par tous et appartenant à tous. L’État n’a pas des obligations spéciales d’assistance envers telle ou telle classe de citoyens.

Si quelqu’un a fait ses affaires en Algérie, ce n’est pas l’État. […] Notons, incidemment, que les immigrants ne payent point d’impôt foncier ; que la loi du recrutement ne leur est pas appliquée ; que les taxes pour l’enregistrement et le timbre sont réduites de moitié ; que la contribution des patentes est aussi plus légère qu’en France.

Urbain promotes the Bureaux arabes which were developed under the army as a desirable alternative to civil administration. He assumes a paternalistic colonialist perspective claiming that the Indigènes require European-led instruction – equated with illumination – and discipline. A further trait of Urbain’s writing is that it exhibits less of a preoccupation with reconciling modernity and tradition than that of Duveyrier. In the following passage Urbain invokes individual responsibility and initiative as both characteristic of and desirable for modern societies, without recourse to historical precedent or claims of continuity with past traditions as a means of justification:

Les régénicoles algériens resteront provisoirement sous un gouvernement paternel […]. Ils arriveront, après une transformation successive, à un gouvernement garanti par une constitution. Cette forme politique suppose un développement complet du sentiment de la responsabilité et de l’initiative individuelle, caractère propre aux sociétés modernes. […] L’autorité politique sera partout concentrée entre les mains de fonctionnaires français ; elle sera plus préventive que répressive, parce que cette population est ignorante et défiaante. La question des circonstances atténuantes doit toujours être posée, lorsque la liberté et l’instruction n’ont pas éclairé les consciences.

86 Par assimilation et gouvernement civil, les Français de l’Algérie entendaient la plénitude des droits politiques, de citoyens, leur représentation exclusive au Parlement et dans les assemblées locales […]. La population indigène devait être tenue à écart de cette assimilation. Comme le précisait bien l’un des hommes politiques les plus écoutés de la colonie, le D’Warnier, il fallait prendre grand soin de « ne pas octroyer à une société voisine encore d’un état relativement barbare les mêmes droits qu’aux citoyens d’un peuple qui marche en tête de la civilisation ».’Ageron, [1969] 1979, p. 11.
87 Le gouverneur civil de l’Algérie […] écrivait au ministre de l’Intérieur le 6 janvier 1872 : « Il ne faut pas se le dissimuler : ce que veulent les politiciens et avec eux la majorité des colons, c’est la souveraineté des élus de la population française et l’écrasement, j’ose dire le servage de la population indigène. »’, bid., p. 12.
88 Urbain, 1862, p. 36.
89 Ibid., pp. 48-50.
90 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
Despite referring to the *Indigènes* pejoratively as *ignorante et défiant*, Urbain subsequently returns to a more characteristic pairing and states: ‘C’est donc à l’intelligence et au cœur qu’il faut s’adresser.’ The contrast is even more marked when drawn against the following passage, which refutes colonialist tropes depicting oriental societies as decadent and degenerate and expresses admiration for the valiance of the sustained *indigène* resistance to French conquest, in a struggle against a Western power with formidable advantages which ultimately tipped the balance of power in its favour: ‘on pourrait hardiment affirmer qu’une nation qui, sans organisation, sans argent, mal armée, en proie à des divisions intestines, a, pendant vingt ans, résisté à la première puissance militaire du monde, n’est certes pas une nation dégénérée.’ Urbain’s expression of admiration for the Algerian nationalist struggle – he makes two explicit references to *une nation* – has interesting and even prophetic parallels with France’s mid-twentieth-century war of decolonisation in Vietnam (Indochine). There are clearly persistent tensions in Urbain’s writing between his support for colonisation, his advocacy of fair treatment for the *Indigènes* and his admiration for them as a people in their own right. These tensions remain problematic, and are perhaps impossible to reconcile, but Urbain did not necessarily aspire to closure and resolution. Indeed, as we have already seen in relation to Said’s final work, many postcolonial theorists argue that resolution, while tempting, is not a desirable aim or outcome of inquiry. Bhabha identifies contestation from within the colonial system with a precocious contramodernity:

> [E]ncounters and negotiations of differential meanings and values within ‘colonial’ textuality [...] have anticipated, *avant la lettre*, many of the problematics of signification and judgement that have become current in contemporary theory [...] .

> [...] there is a colonial contramodernity at work in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century matrices of Western modernity that, if acknowledged, would question the historicism that analogically links, in a linear narrative, late capitalism and the fragmentary, simulacral, pastiche symptoms of postmodernity. This linking does not account for the historical traditions of cultural contingency and textual indeterminacy (as forces of social discourse)

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93 In particular there are parallels with the defeat of the French army of professional and well-equipped soldiers in the key battle of Diên Biên Phu, which marked a decisive phase in the conflict’s emergence as a revolutionary war, and went on to dominate perceptions of the American Vietnam War which succeeded it: ‘Le site du camp retranché avait été mal choisi par le commandant en chef, malgré les objections qui lui avaient été faites. Ce plan médioce reflétait une sous-estimation de l’adversaire et l’excès de confiance en soi de nombreux responsables qui avaient soutenu ce choix. […] la France quittait l’Indochine et ce fut pour les militaires une nouvelle humiliation. […] Certains, se mirent à réfléchir sur l’importance de l’action psychologique et sur les mécanismes de la guerre révolutionnaire au cas où d’autres « rebelles » mettraient la France en danger.’ Phan, 1999, pp. 128-30.
Urbain’s attempts to translate and apply universalist values to colonial subjects and his pleas for empathy and fusion reflect strategies favoured in postcolonial theory and thus support Bhabha’s vision of a disruptive intrusion of the ‘symptoms of postmodernity’ into the era of capitalism and colonisation as a counter-current within its writing. Urbain could be seen to effect a contestation from within French colonial discourse, through his questioning of Eurocentric idées reçues, his attacks on French and settler hypocrisy, and his critique of the exploitation of both the Indigènes and metropolitan government. It is also worth recalling that Urbain wrote to promote a deeply controversial agenda when the future of French-ruled Algeria, as well as his own position and at times even his personal safety and that of his family, were directly at stake. For example, Urbain’s later autobiographical writings recount how, following the fall of the Second Empire, he was forced to resign his position in the Algerian administration and fled Algeria for a time due to death threats. Further passages from Urbain’s autobiographical writings suggest that, from the 1850s, he had feared that European society in Algeria would oppose any rapprochement of the French and the Indigènes:

L’année 1857 fut pleine pour moi d’événements importants. [...] Il m’était facile de voir dès ce moment que la tentative que j’avais faite pour rapprocher la famille musulmane de la famille chrétienne, ou du moins française, avait échoué. L’élément catholique [...] dominait entièrement la nouvelle société en formation en Algérie. La conciliation et des rapports sympathiques devenaient impossible entre les deux races. Il fallait choisir et prendre position entre les deux races. [...] Je me résolus à épouser Djeymouna devant l’officier de l’État civil et à faire Baptiser Béia. [...] Les bons catholiques ne furent pas satisfaits. [...] De ce jour je connus le véritable obstacle à la colonisation de l’Algérie et les adversaires les plus redoutables de la mission civilisatrice que la France avait à remplir vis-à-vis des indigènes musulmans.96

In highlighting 1857, Urbain identified a key turning-point for colonial society in Algeria:

Depuis 1857, la phase conquérante semble terminée, en Algérie [...]. Toute polémique sur les problèmes politiques de la France est vouée à l’échec et à la répression. L’opposition libérale naissante [...] peut attaquer l’autocratie militaire, mettre en évidence l’absence de liberté et dénoncer les abus et scandales, avec l’assurance de trouver une alliance solide avec

le groupe de pression des Français d’Algérie, brimés par l’administration militaire. Une campagne bien orchestrée se développe. Les thèses de Prosper Enfantin, exposés dès 1843 dans La Colonisation de l’Algérie servent de support idéologique.97

The final lines of this quotation from Rey-Goldzeiguer reaffirm the comments made above regarding the noticeable shift in the stance of veteran Saint-Simonian figures such as Enfantin on franco-indigène relations, in favour of large-scale settler colonisation and the concerted capitalist exploitation of the territory for French benefit, in a departure from the idea of the meeting and fusion of civilisations professed in Saint-Simonian doctrine of the 1830s. Urbain’s writing identifies conservative Catholic settlers as adversaries of the civilising mission, i.e. it was such individuals’ bigoted rejections of compromise and collaboration, not the hostility of the Indigènes, which prevented his policies from achieving their goals. These ideas are linked in the chapter on Urbain in Chagnollaud and Lacouture’s Le Désempire.98

Despite Urbain’s claim to have recognised as early as 1857 that colonial society in Algiera had reached a definitive turning-point, he nonetheless concludes his 1862 pamphlet with an appeal to the values of universalist humanism which purportedly underlie la mission civilisatrice. He suggests that these values could, when applied in good faith and under a well-run and fair system of modern government, enhance the lives of the Indigènes in Algeria, together with those of other subjects of French rule:

Nous avons dit, en commençant, que la conquête de l’Algérie avait posé une question de gouvernement et de civilisation. Un dernier mot achèvera d’expliquer notre pensée. Les grandes difficultés de ce gouvernement sont des problèmes d’économie politique : - division du travail entre les immigrants et les indigènes pour la création de la richesse ; - liberté du travail, se résolvant dans le libre classement des aptitudes de chaque race ; répartition des richesses, préparée et facilitée par l’impartiale distribution des instruments de travail, c’est-à-dire du crédit. Les questions sont les mêmes en France, en Europe, dans le monde entier, partout où la civilisation a éclairé les esprits et élargi les cœurs.99

In this carefully constructed passage, which itself demonstrates Urbain’s skill as a polemical writer, he again highlights the esprit et cœur pairing also frequently favoured by Duveyrier. This formulation is closely related to the prominent colonial trope of the conquest of hearts and minds, which features variously in the rhetoric of

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99 Urbain, 1862, p. 74.
Napoleon III, Jules Ferry and Albert Sarraut, to name but a few of the more noteworthy figures from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1930s. In their writing, Urbain and Duveyrier also share a preference for the metaphor of an illuminating civilisation to promote universalist values, but whereas Duveyrier invokes it to foster a nostalgic return to Enlightenment humanism, Urbain does so in a revisionist mode to encourage a more inclusive and reformed universalism, to be led, rather than controlled and still less unilaterally dictated, by France. Urbain thus seeks to foster an interrogation of what universalist values, which have their origins in the Enlightenment humanist tradition, could and should mean, particularly in the context of rule over foreign peoples.

In *Humanisme et Démocratie*, Said calls for a revision of Enlightenment humanism for the twenty-first century. As sophisticated thinkers, Said and Urbain share a nuanced and pragmatic approach which does not call for concepts born of the Western intellectual tradition to be disregarded purely on the basis of their provenance; however, they both demand critical reevaluation and reformulation of such Eurocentric concepts, if they are to be usefully applied in real situations, for example in former colonial and non-Western societies. Said states:

> Je croyais alors, et je crois toujours, qu’il était possible de critiquer l’humanisme au nom de l’humanisme et que, fort des abus que l’histoire de l’eurocentrisme et de l’empire nous a enseignés, on pouvait élaborer une forme différente d’humanisme qui soit cosmopolite et reliée au texte et au langage de manière à engranger les grandes leçons du passé, […] tout en demeurant à l’écoute des voix et des courants qui émergent dans le présent.

Said’s analysis naturally involves a significant extension of Urbain’s much earlier and more modest plea for a more inclusive formulation of universalist humanism to be made accessible to subjects of French rule, but this is neither surprising nor is it necessarily detrimental to the comparison. Said’s comments in *Orientalism* promote attentiveness to the values and circumstances of the era which formed scholars, and thus the representations provided by their work, if we are to avoid oversimplified assessments of their merits or failings:

> The real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they are representation, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer. […] What this must lead us to methodologically is to view representations as inhabiting a common field of play defined for them […] by some common history, tradition, or universe

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101 Said, 2005, p. 36.
of discourse. Within this field, which no single scholar can create but which each scholar receives and in which he then finds a place for himself, the individual researcher makes his contribution.¹⁰²

Urbain’s individual response to fomenting crisis in Algeria was a concerted attempt to increase attentiveness to the rights of the Indigènes and the responsibilities of France as a conquering power. In contrast, Duveyrier’s response to increased European encroachment and rising death rates among European travellers in the Sahara in the post-1870 period was, as we shall now observe, reactionary and inward-looking.

5.4 Duveyrier’s Voyage au Sahara par Norbert Dournaux-Dupéré (1874)

In 1874, the French explorers Norbert Dournaux-Dupéré and Eugène Joubert were killed in the Sahara.¹⁰³ Duveyrier compiled Dournaux-Dupéré’s surviving notes, together with his personal correspondence with the explorer, and added his own commentary to create a text which illuminates his stance on the rising number of Europeans killed in the Sahara from the late 1860s. There is an early sub-narrative recounting the violent death of an arabised Italian expatriate, which introduces the themes of violence and treachery and identifies suspicious figures:

> On a vu que, dès les débuts, des soupçons s’étaient élevés contre Sidi Ma’ammarr […].

> L’assassinat d’El-‘Arbi Mamelouk n’était pas le seul indice d’un ferment hostile au milieu des populations sahariennes qui sont ou soumises à la France, ou en rapports avec l’Algérie. […]

> « À la suite de cette mort, les Ahaggâr ont fait savoir à l’agha que la paix qui régnait entre Touâreg et Cha’anba était rompue, et qu’ils exerceraient leur vengeance sur tous ceux qui, de près ou de loin, touchent à l’agha et à sa famille. Je ne suppose pas que leur vengeance s’exercerait jusque sur un Français (1) »

(1) J’ai soutenu énergiquement l’opinion contraire dans une lettre datée du 17 janvier, que M. Dournaux Dupéré reçut à Tougourt le 29 janvier 1874. H.D.¹⁰⁴ (original emphasis)

This passage combines Duveyrier’s commentary, direct quotation from Dournaux-Dupéré and Duveyrier’s footnote. Footnotes such as this one, draw on external points of reference, establishing a dialogue between Dournaux-Dupéré and the wider social and political context of the period, mediated by Duveyrier. They thus facilitate the inclusion of Duveyrier’s version of events to absolve him of any blame.

Duveyrier emphasises two main sources of hostility to the Frenchmen: Tuareg factions identified as rivals of the Aijer Tuareg, led by Ikhenoûkhen; and the marabout Sîdi Ma’ammar, whom he suggests corrupted his former guide Naçer to betray them. The narrative develops into an indictment of what are depicted as duplicitous holy men and hostile tribes – potentially allied with British or German rivals. Dournaux-Dupéré’s own tragic flaws are allegedly his trusting disposition and his conviction that inter-tribal unrest should not cause the French maîtres de l’Algérie to fear for their safety:

Pour des Français, les voyages de découverte dans l’intérieur du Sahara et de la Sénégalie sont accompagnés de […] dangers […]. Ces dangers […] proviennent […] de causes politiques et religieuses qui se confondent dans leurs effets. Une fois sortis hors de leurs possessions, il est […] imprudent aux maîtres de l’Algérie […] d’affecter le dédain et de demeurer passifs en face d’un fanatisme qui n’est plus tenu en respect par la crainte. Ce serait aussi commettre une grave erreur si on pensait qu’un voyageur chrétien et français, quel qu’il soit, puisse échapper aux conséquences qu’entraîne le fait de sa nationalité, et se dispenser, dans le Sahara, de s’y occuper de politique.\footnote{Ibid., p. 29.}

Duveyrier systematically restates perceived links between political unrest and Islamic anti-Christian – and by extension anti-French – sentiment:

[O]n voit fréquemment sévir, dans le Sahara, des luttes purement politiques […] qui enlèvent toute sécurité aux voyageurs en général; enfin les opinions religieuses d’adhérents aux sectes nouvelles y créent les plus graves obstacles aux voyageurs chrétiens en particulier.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 29-34.}

The text proceeds with the Frenchmen’s gradual realisation of their perilous position.\footnote{Ibid., p. 49.} The figure of Khetâma is presented as aligned with the enemies of Ikhenoûkhen’s Aijer Tuareg and like Sîdi Ma’ammar is evoked as a duplicitous plotter, in the guise of an ally: ‘Dournaux-Dupéré agissait fort sagement en refusant l’offre de Khetâma, malgré la confiance, bien naturelle à une autre époque, qu’aurait pu lui inspirer le fils d’un homme auquel il était recommandé par Sîdi Ma’ammar. Khetâma allait bientôt lever le masque.’\footnote{Ibid., p. 53.} The killings are related in terms of uncertainty and confusion,\footnote{Ibid.} but Duveyrier later summarises what he identifies as the most relevant threats:

La situation politique du Sahara central créait deux dangers pour Norbert Dournaux-Dupéré et Eugène Joubert. Ils couraient le risque de périr sous les coups des partisans de Boû Choûcha, ennemis de la France, […] et, comme Français, par conséquent en qualité d’alliés d’Ikhenoûkhen, chef des Orâghen, ils couraient le risque d’être tués par les alliés de son rival, chef des Imanghasâten.\footnote{Ibid., p. 56.}
Duveyrier’s hypotheses conveniently absolve the Aijer Tuareg – whom he presents as the opponents of religious zealots and hostile tribes – of culpability. This approach is replicated more extensively in Duveyrier’s final text on the Sanusiyya, which is examined in Chapter 6. The role played in the events surrounding the deaths of Dournaux-Dupéré and Joubert by Duveyrier’s former guide Naçer is accounted for by his association with Sidi Ma’ammar, who, although a member of the Tijaniyya, is painted as a duplicitous villain:

C’est à Naçer, et non à l’un des deux Français, que Sidi Ma’ammar remit une troisième lettre écrite à des personnes de Rhât dont Dournaux-Dupéré n’apprend même pas le nom. […]

Le 17 avril, les quatre voyageurs algériens sont assaillis par des ennemis. Sur les quatre hommes […] un seul échappa à la mort qui est le sort des trois autres, et cet homme, c’est Naçer Ben El-Tâhar.

The idea that loyalty to the French among Saharan tribes and Sufi brotherhoods – if it ever actually existed – was being eroded by increased Islamic fanaticism was gaining importance in Duveyrier’s writing by this point in the mid-1870s. This also facilitates his ignoring the logical explanation that such problems stem from the presence of a foreign conquering power:

La légitimité de la colonisation ne fait pour lui [Duveyrier] aucun doute : elle découle tout simplement de la supériorité qu’il attribue à la civilisation européenne.

[…] Mais Duveyrier quand il énumère les fléaux qui accablent aujourd’hui les Algériens en a oublié un : l’occupation étrangère.

The tendency to seek an explanation in terms of the erosion of tribal loyalties to France by the spread of Islamic fanaticism would reach its apotheosis in Duveyrier’s writing on the Sanusiyya during the 1880s. This move also exemplified a larger trend, particularly among French army officiers stationed in Algeria, noted by Ageron among others:

Mais le phénomène fondamental aux yeux des officiers français […] fut « sous le rapport religieux une recrudescence de fanatisme manifestée par les affiliations de plus en plus nombreuses aux associations religieuses ». Dès lors on pensa que toutes les insurrections avaient pour origine l’action d’une confrérie et que ces actions mêmes renforçaient leur prestige et leur audience.

Burke has noted the tendency to cultivate conspiracy theories linking Islamic brotherhoods like the Sanusiyya to insurrectionary plots. This tendency could be viewed as at least partially analogous to the status of Al-Qaeda in the early twenty-first century Western imagination, and has deep roots in French scholarly

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111 Ibid., p. 57.
112 Ibid., p. 58.
113 Casajus, 2007, pp. 175-76.
engagement with the region: ‘Another early theme [of the French tradition of the sociology of Islam] was the study of Sufi turuq, or brotherhoods. These were widely believed to be deeply involved in Algerian resistance to the French presence.’\textsuperscript{115} The currency acquired by such ideas combined with a succession of indigène uprisings severely restricted receptiveness to the causes promoted by Urbain and other arabophiles over the 1860s and 1870s.\textsuperscript{116} As the Dournaux-Dupéré text demonstrates, Duveyrier’s response to these crises was that he began to question the loyalty of certain brotherhoods, such as the Tijaniyya and individual figures he had previously worked with, such as Naçer, while others like Ahmed Ben Zerma and the Aijer Tuareg remained beyond reproach: ‘Ahmed Ben Zerma, sous-lieutenant des cavaliers indigènes du Soûf, l’ancien et très-fidèle serviteur de M. Duveyrier pendant son voyage chez les Touâreg, était très-apprécié d’El-’Arbi Mameloûk […]. Ahmed Ben Zerma aurait été impuissant à prévoir le complot.’\textsuperscript{117}

Also noteworthy in the light of references to Urbain’s interrogation and revision of universalist values in the preceding section, is the extent to which antagonisms and ambivalences, in Bhabha’s terms, remain present in Duveyrier’s text. Such tensions are visible in his confused approach to gauging which indigène figures now constitute good servants and bad servants, and, furthermore, how to account for the apparent transformation of previously good servants such as Naçer or members of the ‘Tijaniyya like Sidi-Ma’ammar into what Duveyrier now portrays as enemies of France and her representatives. Bhabha outlines the intellectual mechanisms at work here:

The grand narratives of nineteenth-century historicism on which its claims to universalism were founded – evolutionism, utilitarianism, evangelism – were also […] the technologies of colonial and imperialist governance. It is the ‘rationalism’ of these ideologies of progress that increasingly comes to be eroded in the encounter with the contingency of cultural difference. […] The result of this colonial encounter, its antagonisms and ambivalences, has a major effect on what Foucault beautifully describes as the ‘slenderness of the narrative’ of history in that era most renowned for its historicizing (and colonising) of the world and the word.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{115} Burke, in Burke, Prochaska, 2008, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{116} ‘De 1864 à 1866, les inquiétudes indigènes nées des bouleversements administratifs, des menaces désordonnées de pénétration coloniale, de la crainte de la désintégration sociale se conjuguent aux prémices de la Nahda (résurgence) du monde musulman dont les répercussions en Algérie sont décélables à une recrudescence de piété religieuse et confrérique. La révolte éclate en bordure des marges sahariennes occidentales dans le territoire encore inviolé des Ouled Sidi Cheikh et à l’autre bout de l’Algérie dans la Kabylie orientale. Ces explosions sporadiques décèlent un malaise latent qui permet à l’insurrection de 1864 de faire tache d’huile. […] Cette crise imprévue […] semble donner raison au clan arabophobe.’ Rey-Goldeiguer, in Meyer et al., 1991, p. 467.
\textsuperscript{117} Duveyrier, 1874b, p. 35.
The universal certainties presented by the codified narrative of nineteenth-century colonisation and in particular those developed in Duveyrier’s earlier writing – the loyalty, honesty and moral behaviour of the Tuareg and the Tijaniyya and France’s capacity to sustain peace between rival tribes in the Sahara – were being steadily undermined by high-profile insurrections, uprisings and the killing of men like Dourmaux-Dupéré and Joubert. Thus, for Duveyrier, the cracks were showing in the previously self-assured nineteenth-century project of ‘colonising the world and the word’.

5.5 Correspondence with Urbain: Duveyrier’s interest in Islamic religious hierarchies and confréries

Duveyrier’s personal archives reveal a large volume of correspondence over the 1860s and 1870s on the subject of North African tribal hierarchies, loyalties and religious affiliations with a range of individuals, including fellow explorers and Orientalist scholars, such as his former Arabic teacher, Dr Fleischer. Of particular relevance to the present study, Duveyrier exchanged a series of letters with Urbain during the late 1860s and early 1870s, in which he solicited information about the composition of various tribes and Urbain’s thoughts on the practice of Islam. Duveyrier outlined his areas of interest and offered his fledgling theories to gauge Urbain’s reaction:

[J]e vous supplie de me communiquer tous les renseignements que vous possédez dans votre mémoire sur les schismes musulmans, les sectes et les ordres religieux répandus chez les mahométans du Nord de l’Afrique. […]

Or je veux […] rédiger un livre sur les sectes musulmanes non-orthodoxes, en recherchant dans chacune d’elles ce qui peut favoriser le mouvement du progrès de la civilisation, et en signalant d’autre part leurs tendances hostiles et rétrogrades. Après avoir examiné les sectes, je passerais aux confréries religieuses qui ont un rôle politique si important.

In addition to stressing indigenous divisions, which could be exploited in an approach to colonial administration recalling the divide-and-rule method alluded to in Chapter 4 in relation to Urbain’s writing, Duveyrier maintains his preference for binary oppositions which divide Muslims into friendly, progressive and contrasting hostile, retrograde factions. He is keen to establish broad trends by simplifying complex issues of public and private attitudes to rule by a foreign power, which is

119 AN AP 47, Archives Nationales, Paris.
120 ARS Ms 13739, Fol. 157, Letter from Henri Duveyrier to Ismaïl Urbain, 31 October 1869.
anathema to his correspondent. The image of favouring ‘le movement du progrès de la civilisation’ is striking and strongly reminiscent of early Saint-Simonian doctrine, while the reference to the political role of the ‘confréries religieuses’ evokes suspicion toward the Sufi orders which was to become widespread among the French in the wake of the 1871 insurrection.\textsuperscript{121}

The correspondence between Urbain and Duveyrier appears to have been conducted in a broadly amicable fashion, with regular references to the friendship between Urbain and Duveyrier’s father Charles, who had died a few years previously. However, it also highlights differences on matters pertaining to Islamic brotherhoods and perceived religious fanaticism.\textsuperscript{122} Duveyrier gradually modulates his tone to a greater familiarity – he flatters Urbain, complimenting him on \textit{De la tolérance dans l’islamisme} – and seeks to gain specific information regarding the relationships between certain Islamic groups and representatives of colonial rule, stating that this information will be used to protect French citizens from an insidious menace – menace is a consistent preoccupation in Duveyrier’s later writings:

\begin{quote}
J’ai grand intérêt à connaître […] les rapports existants entre le gouvernement général, ou pour mieux dire entre les autorités françaises et le clergé musulman algérien. […]

A moi, vous pouvez dire franchement ce que vous savez à ce sujet, ce qui serait relatif à une police indigène secrète, […] je saurais de quelle manière je dois présenter au gouvernement les moyens de sauvegarder l’influence française partout où elle se trouve soudainement menacée.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

In a subsequent letter, Duveyrier adopts a Saint-Simonian vocabulary very similar to that employed by Urbain in his extended articles. This supports his claim to have read Urbain’s work:

\begin{quote}
Voici en un mot ma confusion : Ce qui est fanatisme est condamnable, aussi bien chez les Chrétiens que chez les Arabes et les autres musulmans.

C’est à nous en qualité d’aînés qui [illeg.] le devoir de faire le premier pas pour aller au devant des musulmans. Grâce à Dieu, leur religion nous offre assez d’armes dont on peut se servir pour amener un rapprochement pacifique entre les idées de l’Occident et celles de l’Orient. Ceux-là même qui prêchent des opinions opposées, ont été forcés d’avouer, à leur moment, des faits venant renverser leurs propres hérésies [illeg.].

Le rapprochement devant avoir lieu farouchement, je m’estimerai heureux de pouvoir y contribuer dans la limite de ce que je puis faire. […]\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{121} ‘In Algeria, after the revolt of 1871 the orders were regarded by the French with suspicion, and an attempt was made to repress those which seemed to be hostile’, Hourani, 1991, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{122} ‘S’il [Urbain] est tout disposé à fournir à son correspondant les renseignements demandés, on voit bien que sa manière d’envisager le phénomène confrérique est tout autre. Les sectes et les confréries où Duveyrier verra de plus en plus la source des menaces qui planent sur l’Algérie, sur le Sahara et sur l’Afrique tout entière ne sont pour Urbain que « le manteau du patriotisme », la réaction à l’occupation étrangère. Sa longue expérience algérienne et le rôle que lui-même joue dans cette occupation ont ouvert ses yeux sur une vérité à laquelle, nous le verrons, son correspondant restera toujours aveugle.’ Casajus, 2007, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{123} ARS Ms 13739, Fol. 159, Letter from Henri Duveyrier to Ismaïl Urbain, 21 November 1869.
Duveyrier refers to Saint-Simonian principles, employing key terms such as *rapprochement*, making allusions to the union of Orient and Occident and a desire to draw the *Indigènes* and the French closer together. Whether these references amount to a return to the Saint-Simonian doctrine he resisted in his youth, or a canny appeal to gain access to Urbain’s expertise,¹²⁵ is not clear. The concluding sections of the letter reveal Duveyrier’s assertive intellectual independence and with it his confidence that, by the application of scientific rigour, he could surpass previous scholarship to generate an innovative and even a definitive work:

> Eh bien, je crois avoir, moi apprenti, une petite leçon à donner à des hommes que je respecte, mais auxquels manque ce coin de science auquel je me suis appliqué. Je mettrai les points sur les i, je serai forcé de répéter, de redire bien des vérités connues depuis longtemps, pour arriver au moyen d’un groupement de faits, et de déductions, à ouvrir des aperçus nouveaux. […]
>
> Et comme je tiens à une entière franchise je vous dis ouvertement que je ne verrai qu’avec bonheur tout ce qui viendra de vous, mais que je conserve ma liberté de sentir et de penser.¹²⁶

This correspondence thus reveals the extent of Duveyrier’s faith in the infallibility of empirical scientific method as a tool of sociological analysis, and additionally in his own infallibility as its practitioner. It also provides a valuable insight into Duveyrier’s rigid outlook, and particularly his increasingly obsessive focus on Islamic fanaticism, all of which distanced him from Urbain at this period and points to the concerns which will be addressed in our concluding chapter.

¹²⁴ARS Ms 13739, Fol. 161, Letter from Henri Duveyrier to Ismail Urbain, 30 November 1869.
¹²⁶ARS Ms 13739, Fol. 161, Letter from Henri Duveyrier to Ismail Urbain, 30 November 1869.
5.6 Conclusion

Duveyrier’s persistent construction of the world in terms of fixed truths and binary pairings and his failure to conceive of Western science’s inability to provide unbiased analyses of non-Western cultures are exemplary of the historicist conceptions of knowledge evoked in Said’s essay ‘Orientalism Reconsidered’ (2000):

[H]istoricism meant that the one human history uniting humanity either culminated in or was observed from the vantage point of Europe or the West. What was neither observed by Europe nor documented by it was, therefore, “lost” until, at some later date, it too could be incorporated by the new sciences of anthropology, political economics, and linguistics. […]

But along with the greater capacity for dealing with […] the non-synchronous experiences of Europe’s Other has gone a fairly uniform avoidance of the relationship between European imperialism and these variously constituted and articulated knowledges. […]

The problem is once again historicism and the universalising and self-validating that has been endemic to it.127

Duveyrier’s faith in the accuracy of the Western scientific analysis of non-Western peoples makes him exemplary of what Said terms: ‘the unitary field ruled hitherto by Orientalism, historicism, and what could be called essentialist universalism’.128 For Said, such modes of thought generate insurmountable obstacles to progress and specifically preclude creativity. For academia to advance, Enlightenment thought, such as that exemplified by Duveyrier, must undergo radical reconfiguration or perish. Said’s vision of Orientalism thus goes some way to explaining Duveyrier’s eventual disintegration, under the pressures of a reality which could not be reconciled with his monocular perspective, ultimately leading to his suicide. In Said’s terms:

We cannot proceed unless we dissipate and redispose the material of historicism into radically different pursuits of knowledge, and we cannot do that until we are aware that no new projects of knowledge can be constituted unless they resist the dominance and professionalized particularism of historicist systems and reductive, pragmatic, or functionalist theories.129

In contrast, Urbain’s capacity to view the West and its dominant discourses from the perspective of a marginalised subject help to account for his more open approach to the challenges and paradoxes that confronted him both as a disciple of Saint-Simonian mystical utopianism and as a colonial administrator at the front line.

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128 Ibid., p. 211.
129 Ibid.
of interaction with foreign cultures. Even though he worked as a colonial official, Urbain is much closer than Duveyrier to the ‘dissolving’ and ‘decentring’\textsuperscript{130} called for by Said in ‘Orientalism Reconsidered’, since the latter’s dedication to empirical knowledge inhibited any engagement with practices which challenged the reflex to seek out finite responses to complex questions. On the one hand it is hardly surprising that a nineteenth-century man of science should have failed to enact Said’s post-colonial revisions. However, on the other hand Said’s critical thinking and flexibility brings us closer to Urbain’s approach to the encounter of Orient and Occident as a means of encouraging a more diverse and inclusive application of universalist values beyond the West: ‘Selon la conception que j’ai de sa pertinence actuelle, l’humanisme [est] […] un moyen de remettre en question, de bouleverser et de reformuler tant de certitudes qui nous sont présentées comme attrayantes, convenues, […] sans aucun esprit critique.’\textsuperscript{131}

It is, however, important to consider whether Urbain’s unusual background – born into a colonial society, of mixed racial origin, acceding to positions of influence within colonial government and becoming a respected scholar and writer – makes him a model of Said’s dissolving and decentring only in circumstantial and personal terms, or whether he can legitimately be considered to advocate these qualities for all Western and non-Western subjects? Said’s analysis in ‘Freud and the non-European’ (2003), casts doubt on Urbain’s credentials as an advocate for rather than merely a subject of a destabilising contingent identity in his utopian vision of a tolerant Algérie franco-musulmane:

\begin{quote}
[Elven for the most definable, the most identifiable, the most stubborn communal identity […] there are inherent limits that prevent it from being fully incorporated into one, and only one, Identity. […] In other words, identity cannot be thought or worked through itself alone; it cannot constitute or even imagine itself without that radical originary break or flaw which will not be repressed […]. The strength of this thought is, I believe, that it can be articulated in and speak to other besieged identities as well – not through dispensing palliatives such as tolerance and compassion but, rather, by attending to it as a troubling, disabling, destabilizing secular wound – the essence of the cosmopolitan, from which there can be no recovery, no state of resolved or Stoic calm, and no utopian reconciliation even within itself.\textsuperscript{132}
\end{quote}

In his later writing Duveyrier can be seen to manifest the kind of exclusive, rigid and singular sense of identity that Said identifies in the early lines of the above quotation

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{131} Said, 2005, p. 63.
as a barrier to the cultivation of a genuine understanding of the self and others. Said considers disruptive identities to offer a more authentic reflection of the human experience of the cosmopolitan than mythic Western concepts of identity as stable and monolithic. Our concluding chapter will continue to examine these issues in Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings as a sense of crisis increased in both of their lives, presenting them with new and deepening challenges. It will also address the posterity of their thought and the respective intellectual legacies which can be associated with both figures.
Chapter 6: Crisis

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will look at the final writings produced by Urbain and Duveyrier, in the wake of the collapse of their careers as colonial administrator and explorer respectively, following a decline in public and professional interest in their opinions on North Africa and its peoples over the 1870s and 1880s. It will examine how they attempted to adapt to their altered circumstances, and will specifically consider their efforts to indoctrinate inheritors to propagate their work and philosophies to the succeeding generation. It will also examine evidence of the abiding legacies of the colonial identities which Urbain and Duveyrier incarnated, up to and including the present era.

6.2 Urbain’s autobiographical writings

In the post-1870 period, Urbain produced two autobiographical texts, *Notes autobiographiques* (1871) and *Notice chronologique* (1883), neither of which was written for publication. *Notes autobiographiques* is dedicated to Urbain’s son: ‘j’espère que ce récit suffira pour faire connaître ma vie à mon fils pour la lui faire aimer.’¹ *Notice chronologique* was written at the request of friend and fellow Saint-Simonian, Gustave d’Eichthal, following Urbain’s son’s unexpected death in 1882. It agrees with the earlier text on the principal events in Urbain’s life, and reveals his growing despondency: ‘J’éprouve une hâte anxieuse à finir ce récit à mesure que l’ère des catastrophes approche.’² He had come to recognise that the principles he had worked to promote were at variance with dominant political forces, but his writing retains a characteristic spark of hope:

Je m’arrête ici, je sens que la douleur m’a trop abattu et qu’après le père ruiné, anéanti, il y a l’homme, le soldat de la société, le croyant. J’espère que les forces me reviendront et que je reprendrai mon rang parmi les combattants, ne fût-ce que pour quelques jours.³

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³ Ibid., p. 130.
6.2.1 Reflection on a controversial career

*Notes autobiographiques* discusses the composition and publication of Urbain’s pamphlets of 1861 and 1862: ‘j’écrivis la brochure *L’Algérie pour les Algériens*, dans laquelle j’essayai d’établir a priori et a posteriori que les Arabes de l’Algérie pouvaient être modifiés par la civilisation.’ He explains that his desire to ‘essayer de dégager la vérité des obscurités qui enveloppaient [le Gouverneur général] en Algérie’, coupled with an ambition to have his ideas heard by the Emperor, prompted the publication of *L’Algérie française, Indigènes et Immigrants*. These remarks are followed by a description of the violent reaction among many Europeans in Algeria to the 1862 pamphlet and to the Emperor’s letter to Marshall Pélissier (1863), which took up many of its ideas:

La brochure attaquait les procédés de colonisation employés par l’administration, on fit croire aux colons et aux citadins que l’auteur était l’ennemi acharné de la colonisation. […]

La publication de la lettre impériale fut le signal d’un déchaînement inouï contre l’auteur de la brochure qui n’était plus que la porte-voix d’une immense et puissante conspiration contre la colonisation européenne.

This violent reaction, incorporating accusations of anti-colonialism, evokes a later phenomenon observed by Albert Memmi in his celebrated *Portrait du Colonisé* (1957):

On s’est étonné de la violence des colonisateurs contre celui d’entre eux qui met en péril la colonisation. Il est clair qu’ils ne peuvent le considérer que comme un traître. Il met en question les siens dans leur existence même, il menace toute la patrie métropolitaine, qu’ils prétendent représenter, et qu’en définitive ils représentent en colonie. […] Que serait […] le résultat logique de l’attitude du colonisateur qui refuse la colonisation ? Sinon de souhaiter sa disparition, c’est-à-dire la disparition des colonisateurs en tant que tels ?

The fact that Urbain’s writing picks up on a point raised in mid-twentieth century analyses of colonisation suggests the extent to which it was perceptive and farsighted. Nonetheless, Memmi’s *Portrait* dismisses the *colonisateur de bonne volonté* – a persona reminiscent of Urbain in being characterised by the desire to reform the colonial system from within – on the grounds that a well-meaning coloniser is an oxymoron, since the system itself is fundamentally corrupt and

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5 Ibid., p. 64.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., pp. 66-67.
beyond rehabilitation. Memmi’s analysis of the self-contradictory position of the reformist coloniser has interesting implications for aspects of Urbain’s writing, such as the passage from *De la tolérance dans l’islamisme*, discussed in Chapter 4, which lauds the religious tolerance of Islamic conquests in Spain and Eastern Europe, but calls into question the sustainability of colonial conquest combined with tolerance of difference. Urbain thus betrays the inconsistencies and contradictions of the position he advocates by his critique of the colonial system he worked to sustain. Urbain was either unaware of these inconsistencies, wilfully ignored them, or his support for colonisation was a pragmatic measure devised to sustain a career and financial stability while concealing a deeper ideological ambivalence or perhaps even a latent opposition to the colonial project. Sporadic statements within Urbain’s writings such as the assertion that the *Indigènes* resistance to the French conquest marked them as anything but a degenerate people (quoted in Chapter 5),⁹ and the questioning of the right of any country to assert its superiority over another in absolute terms, (quoted in Chapter 4),¹⁰ could be interpreted as indicators of an anticolonialist stance, which as we have seen in the quotation above Urbain sought to downplay.

In her essay ‘L’Algérie coloniale, histoire d’une impossible fusion’, Brahimi notes Urbain’s role in highlighting and denouncing the increasing suffering and exploitation of the *Indigènes* under French colonisation: ‘ce cercle vicieux de la misère et de la révolte avait été parfaitement décrit et dénoncé par I. Urbain’.¹¹ However, her conclusions are similar to Memmi’s verdict on the colonisateur de bonne volonté. She asserts that military conquest and the associated repression of the *Indigènes*, their expropriation and the refusal to grant them rights on a par with European settlers, magnified cultural differences and posed insurmountable barriers to the implementation of the Saint-Simonian doctrine of harmonious fusion, which she claims consequently had little or no meaning in such a context: ‘Mais à quoi sert la justesse d’une doctrine ou, si l’on préfère un mot plus récent, d’une idéologie, lorsqu’elle n’est pas entendue ni appliquée ?’.¹²

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It would however be unjust merely to depict Urbain as an incessant optimist, who remained unaware that the greatest enemies of his philosophy of collaboration, and the harmonious fusion of material interests, cultures and races, were the self-interest and bigotry of the representatives of the French civilisation which he promoted. To an extent, in *Notes autobiographiques*, Urbain echoes Brahimi’s comments above stating: ‘si j’ai exercé une action sur les affaires de l’Algérie il faut la chercher seulement dans la sphère la plus élevée des idées’. Urbain’s optimism is thus significantly tempered in later writings such as *Notes autobiographiques* by his recognition of the rejection of his political vision for the government of colonial Algeria.

### 6.2.2 Coloniser and colonised: Urbain as a marginal and subversive figure

Memmi, a francophone Tunisian Jew, acknowledges that his analysis of colonial relations owes much to his status as an intermediary figure, neither wholly colonised nor wholly coloniser, and paradoxically partially both. Although not directly analogous, Memmi’s and Urbain’s ambiguous social status, inside knowledge of colonial society and ability to empathise with the disadvantaged afforded them an unusually clear perspective on French colonisation in their respective eras. *Arabophobe* criticism of Urbain during the 1860s focused on him as marginal to and subversive of the French establishment, questioning his loyalty on the grounds that he was too close to the *Indigènes* and a Muslim convert:

Quelles que fussent leur tendances politiques, [les arabophobes] jugèrent habile de faire de lui leur principal adversaire. « Quand des renégats comme Urbain combattent notre œuvre, il serait bon de démontrer à la France catholique que l’avenir de l’Algérie n’appartient ni aux Arabes ni à l’islamisme ». L’archevêque d’Alger, Mgr Lavigerie […] désigna à plusieurs reprises « le renégat Urbain » à la vindicte publique. Le journal de l’archevêché demanda que « le grand Khalife Urbain, créateur suprême du Royaume arabe, ne revienne plus en Algérie ».14

Warnier […] [devenu] le porte-parole des colons, qualifia *L’Algérie française* de « pamphlet anticolonial, déguisé sous le masque d’un apostolat en faveur des Indigènes ». Il accusa son auteur d’être « adversaire de la colonisation » et « membre du parti arabe. »15

The most vitriolic passages of Urbain’s own autobiographical writings are reserved for conservative Catholic Europeans who dominated Algerian society from the mid-nineteenth century, many of whom were *arabophobes* or supported their

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policies. For Urbain, the religious bigotry of individuals such as Archbishop Lavigerie, the governor-general of Algeria from 1864 Marshall Mac Mahon, and his pious wife of Spanish origin hardened opposition to the reconciliation of Christianity and Islam. Urbain makes his hostility clear in references to his first marriage and to his daughter Béia, which were quoted in Chapter 5, and also to the colony’s attempts to intervene in his second, civil marriage:

[U]ne dame (Mme Vicour) nous apprit qu’une cabale avait été organisée par la maréchale contre ma femme pour lui faire un affront le jour des courses ; qu’elle avait invitée les dames pieuses à refuser d’entrer en relations avec une femme non mariée à l’Eglise. […]

La sotte ardeur de la Maréchale de Mac Mahon avait tout compromis ; elle eut la tâche de réparer le mal. […] Je lui répondis que je n’avais pas d’ambition ; que je m’étais marié pour me créer une vie d’intérieur et non pour faire mon chemin et que ses principes de dévotion n’avaient rien à faire dans l’accueil bienveillant qu’elle devait à tous les fonctionnaires mariés civilement et d’une conduite digne, dans les résidences appartenant à l’État. Urbain evidently abhorred intolerance and furthermore it fuelled his fears for future franco-indigène relations: ‘Transformer une mosquée en église, éloigner d’Alger la population musulmane, pour lui ce sont d’impardonnables fautes, dont le christianisme comme la France subiront les terribles conséquences.’ These fears proved eerily prophetic of bitterness and bloodshed to come and are indicative of a sense of frustration which increasingly came to the fore over the final decades of Urbain’s life. In fact, for both Urbain and Duveyrier, the period following 1870 became one of disillusionment and a growing sense of disempowerment as their influence as experts on North Africa waned:

Urbain dans son désespoir, Duveyrier dans ses hallucinations, se sont peu à peu éloignés d’un monde où d’autres désormais se font entendre. Car, depuis 1870, ce sont les héritiers de Warnier et non ceux d’Ismaïl Urbain qui dictent la politique coloniale de la France.

The reference to Duveyrier’s ‘hallucinations’ concerns his preoccupation with the Sanusiyya Sufi order, which, as the following section will demonstrate was symptomatic of an evolution of his arborescent identity into a more radical variant: l’identité mur or fortress identity.

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18 Ibid., pp. 84-86.


6.3 From arborescent to fortress identity

6.3.1 Duveyrier’s last major publication

La Confrérie musulmane de Sidi Mohammed ben’alî es-Senoûsî et son domaine géographique en l’année 1300 de l’hégire = 1883 de notre ère (1884), was Duveyrier’s only publication on Islamic brotherhoods – in this case the Sanusiyya – but his personal archives and his correspondence with Urbain reveal that it was intended to form one chapter of a much larger work.\footnote{Ageron, Charles-Robert, Histoire de l’Algérie contemporaine : de l’insurrection de 1871 au déclenchement de la guerre de libération 1954 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, [1969] 1979), p. 173.} Ageron observes how the Sanusiyya was singled out as a particularly threatening Sufi order with the potential to incite anti-French hostility beyond Algeria:


Hence, conspiracy theories demonising the Sanusiyya were common in French colonial rhetoric, but in La Confrérie Duveyrier invoked theories linking the Sanusiyya to recent killings of Europeans in the Sahara with the specific goal of providing an alternative scapegoat to the Aijer Tuareg, thereby absolving them and his own 1864 account of blame. Duveyrier’s motives for demonising the Sanusiyya were thus both unusually complicated and invested with great personal significance. In this context it is also useful to consider an event which had a major impact on Duveyrier during the composition of La Confrérie, the Flatters massacre.

In February 1881, an expedition led by Colonel Paul Flatters was massacred in the Sahara by the Hoggar faction of the Tuareg. No Europeans and only a handful of guides survived. The expedition was one of several mandated by the Ministry of Public Works to explore routes for a Trans-Saharan railway to link Algeria with sub-Saharan Africa, in order to increase French interest in and control of trade.\footnote{AN AP 47, Archives Nationales, Paris.} Ambitious projects of this type, requiring vast resources and substantial technical...
innovation formed part of the Third Republic’s drive to restore French prestige in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War. Duveyrier had been a member of La Commission supérieure pour l’étude des questions relatives à la mise en communication par voie ferrée, de l’Algérie et du Sénégal avec l’intérieur du Soudan as established in 1879 by the Minister for Public Works, Charles de Freycinet.

Duveyrier urged caution, claiming that the project could be construed by local tribes as a threat to the camel trade and to their employment as caravan guides, but his appeals were not acted upon. The expedition which met such a catastrophic end, in February 1881, was actually the second Flatters expedition. Its predecessor advanced as far as Lake Mendghough in the spring of 1880, before it was abandoned by Flatters, citing hostility from Tuareg tribes. A veteran of the first expedition, Henri Brosselard, produced one of the main contemporary publications on the later massacre. He depicts a duplicitous and barbaric Tuareg, but does not refer to Duveyrier’s 1864 depiction. Casajus quotes the comments of Louis-Marie Rinn, a participant in the official inquiry into the massacre and a former officer in the Bureaux arables:

Ce ne sont pas à proprement parler des sauvages, [les Touaregs] ont une civilisation à eux, civilisation qui, bien que retardant de pas mal de siècles sur la nôtre, a cependant ses traditions et même certains côtés séduisants qui ont frappé des hommes comme Barth et Duveyrier. […] Malheureusement, les choses ont bien changé, depuis une vingtaine d’années. […]

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24 Guillaume Depping, a leader of what has come to be called the geographical movement, asserted in 1881 that during the 1870 war “It was the schoolmaster who triumphed,” meaning that the real triumphs were those of Prussian scientific geography over French strategic sloppiness. [...] Scientific geography soon gave way to “commercial geography,” as the connection between national pride in scientific and civilisational achievement and the fairly rudimentary profit motive was urged, to be channelled into support for colonial acquisition. [...] all sorts of schemes were spun out, including the enlisting of Jules Verne to head a “round-the-world campaign of scientific exploration,” and a plan for creating a vast new sea just south of the North African coast, as well as a project for “binding” Algeria to Senegal by railroad – a “ribbon of steel,” as the projectors called it.’ Said, Orientalism (London: Penguin, [1978] 2003), p. 218.


26 Ibid., p. 592.


Il nous importe donc peu aujourd’hui que le targui soit bon père et bon époux, que ses relations sociales rappellent parfois « la chevalerie du moyen âge », que la femme targuia, sous les yeux de son mari et en tout bien tout honneur, brode sur le voile et écrive

sur le bouclier de son chevalier servant des vers à sa louange. Cette société nous est fermée, nous sommes pour elles « l’ennemi », et nous n’avons à nous préoccuper que de son organisation sociale et de ses mœurs politiques. […]

Chaque explorateur, fût-il même isolé, ne sera jamais à leurs yeux qu’un espion envoyé pour reconnaître et « écrire » le pays afin d’y revenir plus tard en force et de s’en emparer. Il est facile de conclure de tout cela qu’il sera toujours impossible, comme on s’en était flatté un instant, de nouer des relations avec les peuplades sahariennes, et de leur persuader que nous avons les moyens de travail leur permettant de vivre en renonçant à la traite.30

The references in the concluding paragraph to reconnaître et « écrire » evoke the spying to which they are explicitly linked, and additionally suggest the systematically Orientalist, in Said’s sense of the term,31 tactics for the intellectual appropriation of the other, which are revealed to be intrinsic to the work of the contemporary explorer. Rinn identifies Duveyrier with an earlier explorer, Barth (1821-1865), and highlights the misconceptions generated by clinging to an outdated image of the Tuareg. Heffernan notes that others in the French media were more explicit in their criticism: ‘some newspapers held Duveyrier indirectly responsible for the massacre. Had he not tried to undermine Flatters’ sensible insistence on military precautions, and had he not painted a totally misleading portrait of these vicious, cruel and barbaric Touareg?’32

These observations suggest that contemporary experts on colonial Algeria, like Rinn astutely recognised Duveyrier as an anachronistic figure, allied to a Romantic generation of explorers and obsessed with a dangerously idealised image of the Tuareg. In his Dournaux-Dupéré text, Duveyrier acknowledged that, by the 1870s, the political situation in the Sahara was far more volatile than in 1859 to 1861, when inter-tribal rivalries were experiencing a lull and European travellers were tolerated across much of the region.33 However, his reluctance to concede that his 1864 portrait had not accurately captured a benign virtue integral to the Tuareg made him vulnerable to criticism from those, like Rinn, who regarded the Flatters

31 ‘Orientalism’ is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction but also of a whole series of “interests” which, by such means as scholarly discovery, […] landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world’ (original emphasis) Said, [1978] 2003, p. 12.
massacre and other violent deaths in the Sahara from a more dispassionate viewpoint, taking into account recent and on-going developments, including increased French military penetration.

6.3.2 La Confrérie as a text of crisis

In the wake of the Flatters massacre, Duveyrier was desperate to convince himself and others that an unspoilt Sahara, did not belong to a bygone era; and with it both a blameless Aijer Tuareg and the profession of the explorer as a heroic figure above worldly concerns. In order to achieve this, he moulded the Sanussiya into an enemy to be contrasted not only with the superior, conquering French but also with the mysterious and nostalgically heroic Tuareg, satisfying the familiar symmetry of Western colonial discourse. La Confrérie manifests methodological weaknesses linked to the pursuit of this agenda, such as the recourse to out-dated information. This is demonstrated in the following passage which draws on a source that is more than twenty years old as evidence of contemporary political sentiment: ‘Extrait du sermon prêché au mois de mars 1861, par El-Hâdj Ahmed Ben Bel-Qâsem, moquaddem de la confrérie à Rhat, aux habitants de la ville et aux Touâreg’.  

Duveyrier also leans heavily on the testimony of other European sources, even when conflicts of interest are apparent. For example, he uses the leader of a Catholic mission as a source for the description of the founder of the Sanusiyya: ‘Nous essaierons pourtant d’en donner une idée d’après un témoin oculaire, notre bon vieil ami le révérend père Angelo Maria de Sant’Agata, préfet de la mission françiscaine [sic] de Tripoli. En 1845, il rencontrera, à Derna, Sîdi Mohammed Ben’Alî Es-Senoûsî.’

In a sweeping gesture, the following passage blames the Sanusiyya for all recent killings of European travellers in the Sahara, but this gesture is representative of a systematic approach to selectively interpreting information to advance Duveyrier’s predetermined agenda:

C’est donc publier une vérité […] que la confrérie de Sidi Mohammed Ben ’Ali Es-Senoûsî est l’ennemie, irréconciliable et réellement dangereuse, de la domination française dans le nord de l’Afrique, […] on est autorisé à chercher la main de la confrérie dans les drames

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sanglants où ont perdu la vie de méritants explorateurs qui nous sont chers à des titres divers. Et d’abord, parmi les Français : Dournaux-Dupéré, [...] en 1874, le colonel Flatters, les capitaines Masson et de Dianous, le Dr Guinard, les ingénieurs Béringer et Roche, [...] en 1881, sans parler de l’attaque de la mission topographique du capitaine Massone au chott Tigré, en 1882. Parmi les étrangers, von Beurmann, [...] en 1863 ; von der Decken et ses compagnons, [...] en 1865, et mademoiselle Tinné, [...] en 1869, sont autant d’autres victimes des doctrines senouriennes.36

Specifically, scapegoating the Sanusiyya allowed Duveyrier to deflect blame from the Tuareg and to avoid confronting the explanation that the unwelcome presence of Europeans in the region motivated the killings. Thus, the Sanusiyya became the embodiment of Duveyrier’s anxieties regarding French expansion in the Sahara and franco-indigène relations. In this context, Butler’s comment that ‘the other can become the name for one’s anguish and opacity’37 is pertinent to the strategy adopted by Duveyrier, which seeks to reinforce and elaborate the negative construction of the Sanusiyya that was previously undertaken in the ‘Centres religieux’ chapter of Les Touareg du Nord. This process occurs in Duveyrier’s writing in a manner which echoes the following description of the construction and function of colonial stereotypes offered by Bhabha in The Location of Culture:

[I]t is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed.38

Unlike Urbain, Duveyrier never produced introspective or autobiographical texts. In the absence of such outlets, or due to an aversion to self-examination, Duveyrier channelled issues associated with his identity and difficulties of relating to the colonial other and to the wider world into his writing on other topics. For example, his biography of Livingstone reveals his idealistic vision of the profession of explorer, and his reluctance to accept the growing complicity between exploration, European nationalisms and colonial expansionism over the latter half of the nineteenth century. By the same token, his account of the death of Dournaux-Dupéré is a reaction to increasing European penetration of the Sahara and associated evolutions in attitudes toward European travellers. Finally, as suggested above, La

Confrérie is indicative of his difficulties in relating to the colonial other, and accepting the fundamental dynamics of colonial relations.39

Duveyrier’s difficulty in understanding others would appear to stem from his conception of all identities, including his own, in which incompatible with lived experience. As Said observes in Orientalism, ‘One myth supports and produces another. They answer each other, tending towards symmetries and patterns of the sort that as Orientals the Arabs themselves can be expected to produce, but that as a human being no Arab can truly sustain’.40 Duveyrier’s real-world encounters with the other, and in particular his attraction to the Tuareg, could only be partially explained by strategies such as making them analogous to medieval Europeans. He was thus compelled to create other means of accounting for reality’s incompatibility with mythic, romanticised Western conceptions of identity, such as vilifying the Sanusiyya. This strategy recalls Said’s ‘logic of myths’:

[I]t is in the logic of myths, like dreams, exactly to welcome radical antistudy. For a myth does not analyze or solve problems. It represents them as already analyzed and solved; that is, it presents them as already assembled images, in the way a scarecrow is assembled from bric-à-brac and then made to stand for a man. Since the image uses all material to its own end, and since by definition the myth displaces life [...]. The discourse papers over the antistudy.41 (original emphasis)

Duveyrier constructs a mythically virtuous Aijer Tuareg and a mythically villainous Sanusiyya to accommodate the binary logic through which he views the identity of the colonial other as an extension of the good and bad servants trope he had adopted from his early writing in Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger. Spurr’s colonial trope of debasement is also relevant to this polarising tendency in Duveyrier’s depictions of the colonial other: ‘[T]he obsessive debasement of the Other in colonial discourse arises not simply from fear and the recognition of difference but also, on another level, from a desire for and identification with the Other which must be resisted’.42 The concept of a repressed desire for the colonial other, as incarnated by the Aijer Tuareg, may account for the extent of Duveyrier’s hostility to the Sanusiyya as a compensatory repudiation of the other through

41 Ibid., p. 312.
denigration. It is also compatible with his earlier and perhaps more forthright account in *Journal d’un voyage dans la province d’Alger* of a powerful desire to travel to the Targui’s homeland, which he resisted, honouring his promise to his father that he would return to France, with all of the associated symbolism of the return to a European fatherland, and to a patriarchal point of origin, thereby remaining loyal to his own kind. The combination of desire and derision exhibited in Duveyrier’s differing attitudes toward the Sanusiyya and the Tuareg as representatives of the colonial other is noted by Bhabha as characteristic of colonial discourse:

In order to understand the productivity of colonial power it is crucial to construct its regime of truth [...]. Only then does it become possible to understand the *productive* ambivalence of the object of colonial discourse – that ‘otherness’ which is at once an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity.  

(Original emphasis)

Bhabha also touches on the concept of truth and its wilful construction as a form of power by colonial discourse. As we have previously observed, this type of mechanism is omnipresent in and crucially important to Duveyrier’s writing. Duveyrier’s text is structured as an exposé of the true scheming nature of a Sanusiyya which seeks to conceal its motives and its methods in order to foment insurrection against an unsuspecting and thereby vulnerable French rule. In this context, *La Confrérie* debases the Sanusiyya by referring to it as a pathogen which infects tribes: ‘Les Sia’ân, les Nouâïl et autres tribus […] que nous avions trouvées, en 1860, aussi tolérantes que possible […] ont tous été depuis lors plus ou moins fortement contaminés du virus senoûsien.’  

A similar image depicts Sanusiyya propaganda as a venom which generates fanaticism: ‘Le docteur Nachtigal nous permet ici de saisir sur le vif un aspect […] de la propagande senoûsienne, et l’éternel venin de son fanatisme.’  

Duveyrier also interprets the comments of Barth, Rohlfs, Dr Nachtigal, Georges Révoil and other European travellers – some of whom had been dead for over a decade – in order to portray the Sanusiyya as a powerful, insidious presence throughout North Africa and further afield, in Senegal, Turkey (specifically in Istanbul, the seat of the Ottoman Empire) and Somalia: ‘C’est donc indubitablement, comme nous le présentions, au fanatisme de la confrérie, que sont dus ces meurtres d’hommes utiles par les Çomâli, et nous n’hésitons plus à designer

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44 Duveyrier, 1884, p. 27.
45 Ibid., p. 44.
la race tout entière comme désormais affiliée. He suggests that if a tribe or one of its members associates with the Sanusiyya, then the entire group, and any subsequent associates, should be considered likely affiliates. By this chain of association, he links uprisings led by the Sidi Cheikh in 1864, and by Sheikh Bou Amama in 1881, together with the Flatters massacre, to the Sanusiyya:

The observations of Duveyrier’s contemporary Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) regarding Algeria have been highlighted by Brahimi. Maupassant’s writing provides an interesting counterpoint to Duveyrier’s view’s on the causes of political unrest expressed in the former’s writing and simultaneously echoes criticisms raised by Urbain in relation to the expropriation of Indigènes to provide agricultural concessions for settlers:

Although Maupassant had only arrived in Algeria in 1881, he astutely identified civil unrest and uprising as a response to the misery and injustice which characterised indigène existence under French rule rather than the Sanusiyya-incited and orchestrated phenomenon suggested by Duveyrier in La Confrérie.

Significantly, it is only in relation to the Aïjer Tuarèg that Duveyrier nuances his formulation of a pathogenic spread of murderous Sanusiyya fanaticism:

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46 Ibid., p. 53.
48 Duveyrier, 1884, pp. 40-42.
Absolument indifférente à la nouvelle doctrine religieuse et politique, en 1860 et 1861, quand nous l’étudions sur place, la confédération des Azdjer [...] les Kêl Tin-Alkoum et, avec eux, d’autres tribus des Azdjer, ont été en partie amenés au senoûsisme.

Nous soupçonnons aussi, et non sans motifs, que l’action des moqaddem de la confrérie sur les Oulâd Sidi Ech Chëkh, sur les Azdjer [...] a eu, entre autres résultats déplorables : le massacre de Mlle Alexine Tiné et ses compagnons [...] (1869) ; le massacre de Dournaux-Dupéré et de Joubert [...] (1874) ; le massacre des pères Paulmier, Bouchard et Ménoret [...] (1876), et le massacre des pères Richard, Morat, et Pouplard [...] (1881).

Despite conceding that the Tuareg were involved in a number of killings, Duveyrier claims that they acted under the influence of the Sidi Cheikh – whom he claimed above had been radicalised by the Sanusiyya – and that unlike other tribes, they were somehow only ‘en partie amenés au senoûsisme’. Elsewhere, Duveyrier depicts the Sanusiyya as an elusive enemy, exceeding the boundaries of logic. Its leadership knows of uprisings in distant territories before they are common knowledge locally.

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[L]es nomad[e]s de la Cyrénaïque ne poussent plus l’hospitalité jusqu’à une coutume très primitive, qui s’est perpétuée depuis l’époque d’Hérodote jusqu’à nos jours, et donc très probablement avaient dû s’accommoder tour à tour le spiritisme berbère, le paganisme grec et latin, le christianisme et l’islam orthodoxe [...] ! Où chercher une preuve plus convaincante de ce que, chez quelques peuplades du moins, l’influence du senoûsisme a été plus profonde, plus radicale, que celle de deux grandes religions qui ont révolutionné le monde ?

The comments above also find a significant echo in a passage from Memmi’s Portrait du Colonisé:

Si l’on y prend garde on découvre que la louange est le fait de touristes, d’Européens de passage, et non de colonisateurs, c’est-à-dire d’Européens installés en colonie. Aussitôt en place, l’Européen ne profite plus de cette hospitalité, arrête les échanges, contribue aux barrières. Rapidement il change de palette pour peindre le colonisé, que devient la fameuse hospitalité ? Puisqu’il ne peut la nier, le colonisateur en fait alors ressortir les ombres, et les conséquences désastreuses.

51 Duveyrier, 1884, pp. 40-41.
52 Ibid., p. 13.
53 Ibid., p. 21.
The discrepancy between the perceived cordial reception of a tourist and the hostile reception of a coloniser is strikingly close to Duveyrier’s account of a decline in indigène hospitality. Duveyrier was a curious visitor to the Sahara in 1857, and again from 1859 to 1861, but, as Rinn’s comments suggest, by the 1880s any European presence was no longer credibly that of a curious visitor and, in response to these changing circumstances, Duveyrier appears to have taken on the resentful, paranoid mindset of Memmi’s coloniser.

The specific tendency to identify Arabs, or a purportedly radicalised Islam with menace constitutes a very current trend in Western society – particularly following the World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks of 2001 – which is analogous to Duveyrier’s demonisation of the Sanusiyya. Among others, Said has noted:

Today, bookstores in the US are filled with shabby screeds, bearing screaming headlines about Islam and terror, Islam exposed, the Arab threat and the Muslim menace, all of them written by political polemicians pretending to knowledge imparted to them and others by experts who have supposedly penetrated to the heart of these strange Oriental peoples over there.56

More recently, in his text L’Europe et le mythe de l’Occident : La construction d’une histoire (2009) Georges Corm has observed:

Plus inquiétante encore est l’invasion des vieux lexiques européens, avec leurs im précisions et leurs équivoques, dans le monde de la recherche académique. […] pour ce qui concerne la géopolitique et l’anthropologie des civilisations et des religions, [cette invasion] se laisse en effet trop souvent asservir par ces grandes mythologies. Et elle fournit fréquemment aux médias la matière pour alimenter les peurs existentielles et les angoisses d’altérités radicales sur le chemin de la confrontation globale.

Car le monde qui s’internationalise sous le coup des idées et de mœurs européennes est toujours plus dangereux et violent, comme l’attestent l’histoire du siècle écoulé et les invasions de pays souverains du nouveau siècle (Irak, Afghanistan).57

The overlap between the observations of Corm and Said regarding trends in post-9/11 Western academia and Duveyrier’s determination to draw French attention to a perceived Sanusiyya menace and the scholarly clout imparted by his status as an expert on the Tuareg – both of which represented strange and unknown peoples for the overwhelming majority of his French readership – is striking and conveys a crucial point regarding the dangerous persistence in the Western world, of a Eurocentric, defensive mindset, l’identité mur – which Duveyrier gradually came to exemplify – and its continued relevance to contemporary global relations. These

illusory phenomena have also attracted renewed attention in the emerging context of the Arab Spring which is analysed by Hamid Dabashi in *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* (2012):

As the initial interaction between Tunisia and Egypt spread to Libya and on to Bahrain, Yemen and Syria, it became clear that [...] on the emerging map of these adjacent regions, the old categories of the ‘Islam and the West’ have disappeared. The world is in effect decentering – albeit that in reality the center was never more than a powerful delusion.

[...]

The assumption that world capitalism has a center and a periphery has always been a powerful illusion that has helped the hegemony of that figment of imagination code-named ‘the West,’ casting ‘the Rest’ of the world to the presumed margins – the ideological manufacturing of a white supremacist *mission civilisatrice.* This chimera was believed in for some time, and now in the works of Hardt and Negri it seems finally to have been challenged. (original emphasis)

Dabashi’s comments and the quotations from Corm and Said all point to the kind of misconceptions which motivated Duveyrier’s *La Confrérie* as enduringly potent forces in the world today. Furthermore Said has noted:

In newsreels or newsphotos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence hopelessly eccentric) gestures. Lurking behind all of these images is the menace of *jihad.* Consequence: a fear that the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world. (original emphasis)

These observations parallel several of the preoccupations and tropes of *La Confrérie,* such as the fear of a pan-islamic take-over if the West does not assert its authority to defuse the menace of holy war, and the tendency to refer to the enemy – for Duveyrier, the Sanusiyya – in impersonal, and thus deliberately dehumanising, collective terms. Samuel Huntington’s controversial text *The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of world order* (1996) is an exemplary manifestation of the persistence of many of these preoccupations in Western academia.

In particular, the prominence of the concept of menace in *La Confrérie* suggests the transformation of Duveyrier’s intellectual outlook from that of an arborescent Western identity to an *identité mur,* which tends to fixate on a mythic conception of Western identity as pure, stable and superior to all others, and which must be protected and preserved from potential threats. Such attitudes still give rise today to the kind of behaviours noted above:

> Ce qui menace les identités nationales […] c’est l’idée d’une « essence occidentale » séparée des autres, ou d’une civilisation exempte de tout apport des autres [...].

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Several of the terms in this quotation from Chamoiseau and Glissant, particularly *pureté*, echo the tributes to Duveyrier by Reclus and Pottier quoted in the introduction. For their part, Chamoiseau and Glissant highlight the *identité mur* as particularly destructive when, as in Duveyrier’s case, it coincides with the development of Western science and technology:

Le mur identitaire a donné les éternelles confrontations de peuples, les empires, les expansions coloniales […] tous les génocides connus et inconnus. […] mais c’est en Occident qu’il s’est avéré le plus dévastateur, sous l’amplification des sciences et des technologies.61

They also allude to a mechanism whereby nineteenth-century colonisation and scientific appropriation ultimately gave rise to self-destructive and suicidal impulses among many agents of the colonising powers:

La colonisation anglaise et française […] sont les seules qui sont absolument sûres de leur légitimité, absolument. […] Et quand le monde a été réalisé par la colonisation (les colonisateurs en ont été les fourriers ; c’est eux qui ont découvert les côtes, qui ont fait les cartes, etc.), quand tout cela a été « réalisé », la légitimité s’est effondrée, parce qu’elle ne pouvait plus s’étendre. Un peu comme certains des pionniers américains qui allaient vers l’Ouest, une fois qu’ils sont arrivés à la côte californienne et qu’ils ne pouvaient pousser plus loin, ont pensé au suicide. Il y a eu une espèce de déprime généralisée. L’agrandissement, la poussée en flèche n’était plus possible. Et je crois que cela s’est passé pour les colonisations occidentales et en particulier la française et l’anglaise.62

Chamoiseau’s and Glissant’s association of colonisation and its complicit scientific disciplines with a fragility of the psyche is crucial to the present study’s analysis of Duveyrier, since anything which cannot be accommodated within systems of this type – notably, for Duveyrier the complexities of the colonial other and his/her interactions with representatives of colonisation – precipitates their collapse, for example the decline in native hospitality toward European travellers in the Sahara and the involvement of the Tuareg in the killings of Europeans, which contradicted Duveyrier’s systematic view of Saharan nomads as superior to Arabs and as allies of *la mission civilisatrice*. The quotation also draws forth the possibility of incorporating Duveyrier’s later writing and eventual suicide into a wider, culturally significant phenomenon among pioneers and explorers confronted with the limitations of empirical science. Eugen Weber has noted fragility as a prominent trait within nineteenth-century nationalist discourses. His argument may usefully be

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61 Ibid., p. 9.
62 Ibid., pp. 77-78.
connected to the observations of Chamoiseau and Glissant above, and again points to a linkage between concepts of individual Western identity and the forces which generated nationalism, and furthermore, to Duveyrier as a figure who was both moulded by these forces and exemplary of an associated fragility:

[Difficulty arises, it seems to me, because the theory of nation and patrie is too rigid, hence too brittle. In other words, its generalizations are particularly liable to collapse under the weight of exceptions, which in this case do not prove the rule but crack it. All the familiar imagery of patriotism and nationhood is based on unity. To question the assumption of unity is like Psyche’s holding a light over sleeping Amor. Amor has to go away. Unity vanishes.]

This linkage could be extended further still, to include a paradox or irony of Saint-Simonian approaches to exploration and the practice of geography observed by Heffernan in terms of an aspiration toward their own eventual redundancy:

[The progressivism which the Saint-Simonians carried forward into the nineteenth century predicted a future world in which geographical division and barriers would be overcome. Geography [...] would therefore seem destined to have less and less relevance. In this sense, the discipline of geography might be seen as a purely instrumental and temporary intellectual requirement which needed to exist to facilitate the eradication of its own subject matter.]

This could easily have fed into Duveyrier’s growing sense of irrelevance, marginalising the profession of explorer for which he had risked his life, and estranging him from the remnants of the Saint-Simonian movement which had attempted to cultivate him as a disciple in his youth.

6.4 A prophetic voice? Urbain’s final articles for Le Journal des débats

In contrast to Duveyrier’s increasing paranoia in the post-1870 period, while Urbain’s administrative career ended, he remained loyal to the optimistic goals of franco-indigène cooperation and continued to speak out against those whom he saw as fostering hostility between Muslims and Christians, for example Ernest Renan, following the latter’s series of lectures in the early 1880s on the incompatibility of Islam with scientific and intellectual progress: ‘Les hommes politiques et les responsables doivent se garder des opinions légères et malfaisantes qui sont susceptibles de faire entrer une haine dans notre pays à l’égard de l’islam et des

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musulmans. For his part, Renan consistently denigrated Islam as intrinsically fanatical and incompatible with European civilisation:

L’islam est la plus complète négation de l’Europe ; l’islam est le fanatisme [...] l’islam est le dédain de la science, la suppression de la société civile ; c’est l’épouvantable simplicité de l’esprit sémitique, rétrécissant le cerveau humain, le fermant à toute idée délicate, à tout sentiment fin, à toute recherche rationnelle, pour le mettre en face d’une éternelle tautologie : Dieu est Dieu. (original emphasis)

Such depictions were exemplary of tendencies which Urbain’s writing sought to counteract and discredit, undermining rather than reinforcing stereotypes in marked contrast to the approach adopted by Duveyrier in his later writings observed in the previous section.

Urbain’s final articles for Le Journal des débats appeared in 1881 and 1882 in a climate of famine and uprising in Algeria. They reaffirmed his commitment to providing a voice for the rights of the Indigènes, suggesting how French rule should be administered and by whom, and attempting to draw the métropole’s attention to the political situation in Algeria:

Tout cela ne justifie pas les mesures draconiennes qu’on réclame, et qu’on voudrait, pour punir les crimes de quelques-uns, ériger en système de gouvernement contre l’ensemble de nos sujets musulmans. [...] Il ne s’agit pas ici d’arabophiles ni de philanthropes, mais de personnes douées d’un véritable sens politique et aussi soucieuses de l’honneur de la civilisation que de l’avenir de l’Algérie. [...] Ce n’est pas seulement notre droit, c’est notre devoir. [...] et on dit peut-être en France : ça les regarde, c’est leur affaire. Non, car il va falloir augmenter le chiffre de l’effectif de l’armée d’Afrique et ouvrir de nouveaux crédits au budget de la France. C’est surtout une affaire de gouvernement pour la France.

The emphasis on droits and devoirs, including France’s obligation to take the government of Algeria seriously, recalls the formulations of his earlier extended articles and pamphlets. Urbain’s final articles also demonstrate that he was greatly disturbed by what he recognised as the sustained and systematic repression of the Indigènes:

Il est profondément regrettable de voir avec quel abandon on se laisse entraîner aux récriminations et aux accusations contre la totalité des indigènes dès que des troubles éclatent, même sur les points les plus excentriques de l’Algérie [...]. On ne parle que de répression impitoyable, d’application de mesures d’exception ; on ne compte que sur la force pour établir partout la sécurité. [...] la compression fait taire pour un temps les protestations du peuple vaincu ; elle est impuissante pour faire accepter et aimer une domination étrangère contre laquelle les croyances, les mœurs, les traditions, les habitudes de travail et les intérêts économiques se liguent par la force des choses.

66 Renan, Ernest, 1862, extract in Casajus, 2007, p. 175.
With remarkable precision, Urbain sees what would become defining features of colonial society in Algeria and the conflict which ultimately brought it to an end, such as the vicious repression of an attempted indigène uprising around the town of Sétif in 1945. This is foreshadowed alongside the intended links to contemporary insurrections and other forms of resistance to French rule in the critical reference to the ‘répression impitoyable’ of the Indigènes. The reference to ‘l’application de mesures d’exception’ similarly foreshadows the introduction of so-called special powers in 1956 which allowed French troops to operate outside civil law to subdue the nationalist movement. This measure was in itself emblematic of the culture of exception which had long come to define a hopelessly imbalanced and unjust society by the time of the Franco-Algerian war in the mid-twentieth century. In keeping with these observations, Jacques Thobie has observed Urbain’s journalism to be far-sighted, but marginal: ‘Les considérations d’ordre humanitaire, ou témoins d’une vue à plus long terme, n’ont été le fait que de quelques individualités, généralement bonapartistes, royalistes ou de tendance saint-simonienne, tel Ismaïl Urbain, dans le Journal des débats.’

The opening lines of the passage above counter typical colonial rhetoric by criticising the swift recourse to recriminations against all Indigènes whenever
problems occur in colonial society. They also implicitly condemn the
dehumanisation of the *Indigènes* as a mass lacking individual identity. Theorists
such as Barthes,\(^{73}\) Maaloul\(^{74}\) and Said\(^{75}\) – as noted in the previous section – have
analysed mechanisms which depersonalised colonised peoples, identifying them as characteristic of colonial discourse. The concluding lines of the quoted passage reassert Urbain’s stance that assimilation was fundamentally unsuited to the political and social climate of Algeria in the 1880s, where it served to magnify inequalities and abuses of power.

The passage as a whole amounts to a recognition that there would be no fusion in Algeria and that perhaps such a fusion was never possible between the French – or more accurately the intolerant and socially conservative Christian majority of French and other European immigrants – and the *Indigènes*. Such a contention thus largely agrees with the proposition of Brahimi’s essay ‘L’Algérie coloniale, histoire d’une impossible fusion’,\(^{76}\) which has been referred to periodically throughout the thesis, as well as with Urbain’s own comments in his *Notes autobiographiques*, which specifically note 1857 as a defining turning point in the development of colonial society in Algeria away from his vision of fusion and the *rapprochement* of colonisers and colonised. Urbain’s final article for *Le Journal des débats* reprises his criticism of colonists and launches a scathing attack on their exploitation of the *Indigènes* and manipulation of the métropole:

> Il ne suffit pas de faire à tout propos des déclarations platoniques de patriotisme [...] il faudrait [...] accepter à côté des droits, tous les devoirs et les charges du citoyen, ne pas réclamer incessamment des privilèges, des faveurs, des subventions, jusqu’à vouloir devenir une sorte d’enfant gâté de la France, fardant avarement tout ce que la mère-patrie lui donne, refusant tout aux étrangers et aux indigènes musulmans.

> [...] La meilleure manière de préparer la paix et de faciliter la défense du pays contre toutes les agressions, c’est d’intéresser les indigènes au maintien de-la-paix *[sic]*, de rendre leur cause commune avec la nôtre, de les organiser de manière à les surveiller et à les


\(^{76}\) Brahimi, in Levallois, Moussa, 2006, pp. 223-36.
diriger, de les bien administrer, pour qu’ils n’aient pas à envier leurs voisins, pour qu’ils ferment l’oreille aux suggestions et aux promesses venues du dehors.

Cette question est plus importante en présence des complications actuelles, que la création des 300 villages, que la vente aux enchères des lots de fermes, que le classement avec plus d’ordre des demandes de concessions gratuites. Persister dans ces préoccupations exclusives, ce n’est pas préparer la paix, c’est au contraire donner à la guerre un aliment dangereux […]. Au lieu d’augmenter chaque jour le nombre des mécontents [sic], nous avons tout intérêt à rallier les populations autour de nous. 77

Alongside the paternalistic and even repressive tone of the references to surveiller, diriger and administrer, which are similar to those noted in Urbain’s earlier extended articles of the 1840s, this passage and his final articles viewed collectively convey a conviction that Europeans and North Africans had much to offer one another and that a segregated Algerian society amounted to the loss of a great opportunity, which constituted a key theme of the later rhetoric surrounding decolonisation. 78 Urbain criticises the invocation of patriotism by settlers to excuse their actions and to make demands of the métropole. The extent of the unifying and mobilising power of patriotism as a concept in post-1871 French political life is suggested by nationalist discourse of the period such as the following example from the writing of historian Henri Martin. Martin elevated ‘la Patrie’ to the status of a secular religion, in much the same manner that Renan elevated science: ‘On apportait les nouveau-nés pour les baptiser sur l’autel de la Fédération. On y célébrait des mariages, des adoptions; cela devenait une vraie religion de la Patrie’. 79

Urbain’s apprehension for the future of colonial society in Algeria, given the political climate there and in France, conveyed above, was echoed in his private writings; for example, the following extract from a letter of February 1883 to his daughter Béia, in which, with an economy of words, he conveys the malaise of Algiers society as well as how this reinforced his pessimism for the future of franco-indigène relations, and his personal disappointment with such an outcome:

A part ces deux visites je n’ai vu personne qui ait pu modifier mes anciennes impressions sur la population [européenne] d’Alger, caractère exagéré de mœurs relâchées […]. Je n’ai encore vu que très peu d’Arabes. Ils me paraissent plus défiant que d’avant. […]

Ce que je vois de ce monde algérien me confirme dans la pensée qu’en prenant le parti héroïque de venir s’établir à Paris pour éléver tes enfants, tu as bien fait, moi je n’y suis revenu que pour y mourir. 80

80 ARS Ms 13744 Fol. 24, Letter from Urbain to his daughter Béia, 13 February 1883.
6.4.1 Disputed legacies: colonial modernity and fractured identity

In the edited collection *L’Orientalisme des Saint-Simoniens* Michel Levallois identifies Urbain’s approach to dealing with *la question indigène* with a far-sighted, humanist strain of Saint-Simonian Orientalism: ‘C’est sans doute, ce dernier combat pour l’homme et son humanité, en pleine euphorie coloniale, qui rend l’évolution de L’Orientalisme des Saint-Simoniens si actuelle, et la voix d’Urbain si proche de nous.’ 81 As Levallois’ statement asserts, and this study has shown, Urbain’s approach to *la question indigène* combined paternalism and humanism against the backdrop of an increasingly assertive colonialism. Urbain’s approach therefore has certain parallels with strategies for the contestation of hegemony which Butler extrapolates from her work on numerous philosophers and theorists, particularly Michel Foucault under the rubric of ‘The tacit performativity of power’:

The task, it seems, is to compel the terms of modernity to embrace those they have traditionally excluded, and to know that such an embrace cannot be easy […]. This is not a simple assimilation of a sense of difference and futurity into modernity […] the key terms of its operation are not fully secured in advance, […] this will be a politics of both hope and anxiety, what Foucault termed “a politics of discomfort.” 82

In the colonial context and in relation to Saint-Simonianism, modernity was incarnated by deeply Eurocentric thought which depicted oriental societies as incapable of cultivating modernity in the absence of Western instruction, expertise, and narrowly defined models. In *The Colonial Present* (2004), cultural geographer Derek Gregory refers to how:

[M]odernity produces its other […] as a way of […] privileging itself […] colonial transculturation is inherently asymmetric, and colonial modernity’s productions of the other as other, however much they are shaped by those various others, shape its constitution of itself in determinate and decisive ways. 83 (original emphasis)

Urbain’s writing was informed by deeply Eurocentric, Saint-Simonian concepts of colonial modernity similar to those described by Gregory above. However, as his final articles confirm, he nonetheless ambitiously sought to expand and extend these concepts to Algeria and its people as a form of agency to be reinterpreted and constructively employed by them, rather than as a one-sided imposition establishing and maintaining their subaltern status in relation to the West. Hence, Butler’s notion

of compelling ‘the terms of modernity to embrace those they have traditionally excluded’ may aptly be applied to the goals of Urbain’s polemical writing such as his final articles for *Le Journal des débats*. Nevertheless, this constitutes a prodigiously ambitious aspiration, which, as Urbain was acutely aware when writing his final articles, would certainly not be achieved within his lifetime, hence the despondent tone of his letter of the same period to his daughter Béia which closed the previous section.

Duveyrier, in contrast, did not display the same will to question either Saint-Simonian or more general concepts of modernity, as attested to by the penchant for binary oppositions and hierarchical systems of classification in his writing, which were supplemented and reinforced by a veneration of science and technology, predicated on a teleological vision of Western civilisation. These tendencies are exemplary of the productions of modernity described above by Gregory. Duveyrier also exhibited nostalgia for pre-modern cultures – namely the Tuareg – which Gregory notes as a further trait of a divisive modernity, enduring as a destructive force in the present:

[N]ostalgia works as a sort of cultural cryonics. Other cultures are fixed and frozen, often as a series of fetishes [...] the triumphal show of colonialism and its effortless, ethnocentric assumptions of Might and Right are visibly and aggressively abroad in our own present. For what else is the war on terror other than the violent return of the colonial past, with its split geographies of “us” and “them,” “civilization” and “barbarism,” “good” and “evil”? 84

By accepting the dominant ideas of colonial modernity, Duveyrier made his writing susceptible to various associated traits, many of which this thesis has noted, such as an obsession with establishing fixed truths and an aversion to opacity. Gregory addresses opacity and its antithesis transparency in the context of late modernity and cultural performativity, but his analysis can very fittingly be applied to the epistemological project which underpins the majority of Duveyrier’s writing:

The claim to “transparency” is one of the most powerful God-tricks of the late modern world [...] vision is always partial and provisional, culturally produced and performed, and it depends on spaces of constructed visibility that – even as they claim to render the opacities of “other spaces” transparent – are always also spaces of constructed invisibility.” 85

Concepts related to vision will be taken up in the final section of this chapter, but at present we will return to Urbain’s writing, which in contrast to that of Duveyrier seeks to establish a precedent for the interrogation and reformulation of colonial

84 Ibid., p. 10.
85 Ibid., p. 12.
modernity, including advocating tolerance for the opacity of the other in preference to the appropriative desire to know and understand him or her in Western terms.

Had conservative forces not dominated French-ruled Algeria, Urbain’s programme for a colonial society based on fusion may have offered a practical means of achieving a politics of discomfort in order to question and decentre the very modes by which colonial modernity fabricates a restricted, binary world-view. This contrasts Brahimí’s depiction of his optimistic vision as an impossible fusion. However, if we return Said ‘Freud and the Non-European’, Urbain’s position, and particularly its entanglement with the oxymoronic and paternalistic concept of a humanist approach to colonisation, once again becomes problematic. Said dismisses pleas for tolerance and compassion as ‘palliatives’, if they are not accompanied by a concerted push by individuals to explore the fractures and the painful instabilities of their own identities, rather than seeking a ‘resolved or Stoic calm’ and a ‘utopian reconciliation even with the self’. Chapter 2 explored Urbain’s cultivation of a self-image as an errant exile, doomed never to achieve a sense of stability and belonging. Yet despite this, Urbain’s writing aspired to the utopian resolution of oppositional (colonising and colonised) identities by means of the production of stable hybrid identities, against the backdrop of a harmonious composite society. This suggests that although Urbain saw his own fractured and destabilising identity as imbued with valuable strengths and aptitudes, he nonetheless sought to lead others to the utopian goal of a resolved, stable sense of identity. Although this tempers the cosmopolitanism of Urbain’s vision, it also grounds it more explicitly in his era, an era which constructed such resilient and convincing myths – including the desirability of a stable and clearly defined sense of identity – that many of them endure to the present day. In this context, how do we account for Urbain’s hybrid colonial identity and the philosophy which he promoted in terms that afford recognition both to his precocious relational traits and to his status as an exemplar of a colonial identity which remained to a significant extent a product of the dominant Western ideologies of the early to mid-nineteenth century?

6.5 Colonial echoes and postcolonial resonances

As noted in Chapter 3, the itinerary followed by Urbain foreshadowed later patterns observed by Glissant in his *Poétique de la Relation*, of the individual’s displacement from a Caribbean point of origin, leading him/her to work as a proponent of the rights of other vulnerable or exploited peoples. Elsewhere Glissant acknowledges that the origins of the processes which he identifies with *créolisation* in the postcolonial era extend back some three hundred years:

> Ce qui se passe dans la Caraïbe pendant trois siècles, c’est littéralement ceci : une rencontre d’éléments culturels venus d’horizons absolument divers et qui réellement se créolisent, qui réellement s’imbriquent et se confondent l’un dans l’autre pour donner quelque chose d’absolument imprévisibile, d’absolument nouveau et qui est la réalité créole.

Experiences of *créolisation* thus extended back sufficiently far to have encompassed Urbain’s family heritage and his experiences of Guiana. We have already witnessed how Urbain’s writing drew upon his colonial-hybrid identity in order to gesture precociously toward strategies and modes of thought which came to prominence during the second half of the twentieth century such as hybridity, empathy, tolerance of opacity and *errance*. Consequently there is a case for locating the posterity of some of Urbain’s ideas, or perhaps more accurately for locating a resonance with them, in the theoretical formulations of prominent postcolonial figures. Anne Levallois’ analysis, presented in the introduction, that the posterity of Urbain’s thought is reflected in the cultural theories of modern-day Caribbean theorists such as Glissant thus proves persuasive.

However, as the various ambiguities in Urbain’s writing highlighted thus far attest, alongside traits associated with relational identity, he was not immune to the dominant Eurocentric discourses and modes of thought of his era. Over the decades following Urbain’s demise, certain figures associated with the French colonial project expressed desires similar to Urbain, aiming to improve the lives of colonial subjects and to avoid the errors of previous colonisation. Thus, concurrent with postcolonial resonances, Urbain’s writing has significant echoes within the colonial tradition.

In the following quotation Michel Levallois posits Urbain as a forerunner of a reformist brand of French colonial thought that emerged in the wake of the First

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World War: ‘Ismayl Urbain […] a incarné un humanisme réformiste […] bien avant « l’humanisme colonial » que Raoul Girardet […] situe au lendemain de la première guerre mondiale.’ Examples of this current of thought include figures such as the French Minister of Colonies Albert Sarraut (1872-1962), who promoted a return to association as a model for colonial relations within the French Empire, which had reached its apogée in terms of territory and population in the years following the First World War. In *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (1923), Sarraut promoted an approach which he called association and defined in terms of the collaboration of France and her colonies for mutual gain: ‘L’opération n’est plus unilatérale ; elle est conçue pour l’avantage et le bien des deux parties. Il n’y a plus spoliation d’une race par une autre, mais association, suivant la formule heureuse qui est devenue la devise de notre politique coloniale’ (original emphasis). Like Urbain, and indeed like Memmi’s *colonisateur de bonne volonté*, Sarraut aspires to a reformed colonial system which corrects previous flaws. He emphasises that colonial administrators should refrain from exploiting distance from the métropole to abandon the responsibilities of the civilising mission, a stance which further aligns him with opinions expressed in Urbain’s writing. In fact Sarraut’s text promotes a number of Saint-Simonian principals which Urbain championed throughout his career:

> [La politique coloniale française] affirme non plus seulement les droits de la nation colonisatrice, mais ses devoirs […]. A son effort civilisateur, elle veut, à mesure de leur capacité à associer ses protégés, les appeler progressivement à la gestion de leur pays, les habiliter par l’éducation à cette collaboration et, partageant avec eux les responsabilités comme les bénéfices […]. Dans l’argile informe des multitudes primitives, elle modèle le visage d’une nouvelle humanité.

Telle est la doctrine générale. Et si l’honneur de la Troisième République est de l’avoir expressément formulée, il faut dire que la République en a trouvé les éléments dans la tradition profonde de la France. Plus ou moins nette, plus ou moins explicite, mais toujours

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92 ‘C’est qu’un grand pays comme le nôtre) doit pouvoir regarder même sa politique « coloniale » bien en face, comme un miroir de sa conscience, et ne pas avoir honte ou remords d’une contradiction choquante, d’une antinomie brutale entre ce qu’il fait au loin et ce qu’il fait dans sa métropole. C’est qu’enfin il doit franchement envisager et accepter les conséquences logiques des principes selon lesquels il conduit l’entreprise extérieure dont il a pris la responsabilité. […] la France, au dehors, ne peut pas abdiquer l’essence même de son génie, de sa mission humaine, qui est d’agir dans le droit et pour le droit, de civiliser au sens plein du mot, d’affirmer en tous lieux une inspiration où se retrouvent les grands traits de la tradition nationale.’ *Ibid.*, p. 84.
Sensible, on en distingue en effet l’inspiration à travers toute la trame de notre expansion extérieure.\footnote{Ibid., p. 89.}

Sarraut refers to devoirs, obligations and an effort civilisateur, to appraising the colonised in accordance with the capacities that they demonstrate, to collaboration and to shared responsibilities and benefits, all key terms of early Saint-Simonain doctrine on the union of Orient and Occident which feature prominently in Urbain’s polemical writing on Algeria. Despite these striking similarities, the passage above also promotes a number of concepts which were treated ambiguously, or actively opposed, in Urbain’s writing, such as the assumed primitive barbarity of colonised peoples, and the praise for the manner in which the Third Republic conducted territorial expansion. Sarraut’s text as a whole replicates this pattern, combining elements which are sympathetic to Urbain’s views on colonisation and la question indigène with others that directly conflict with them.

Thus, Urbain’s writing both foreshadows and conflicts with aspects of what appear to be two largely contradictory phenomena, postcolonial relational approaches to identity, and the reformist colonial policies of the high imperial age, again showing paradox and eclecticism to be major features of Urbain’s thought. In this sense it is especially useful to consider Urbain as the possessor of a performative identity who draws upon the unique wealth of social and cultural influences which intersected in his life and in his mixed cultural heritage:

The performative is not a singular act used by an already established subject, but one of the […] ways in which subjects are called into social being from diffuse social quarters, inaugurated into sociality by a variety of diffuse and powerful interpellations. […] The performative is not only a ritual performance: it is one of the influential rituals by which subjects are formed and reformulated.\footnote{Butler, 1997, p. 160.}

Butler’s concept of performative identity as the enactment of a complex combination of influences – which for Urbain included particularly those which stemmed from his mixed race and colonial origins – accounts for this figure’s ability to relate to the Indigènes in Algeria and to their grievances more effectively than many of even the most well-meaning of colonial administrators and citizens of metropolitan origin, including Duveyrier. The concept of being ‘formed and reformulated’ undoubtedly applies to Urbain. Indeed it is reflected in the passages quoted from Anne Levallois in the introduction, such as her allusion to ‘[s]a capacité à mettre en jeu son identité de sang-mêlé – « ni blanc, ni noir » – dans un réseau complexe d’appartenances’,
which itself echoes Glissant’s statement regarding ‘les mutations mutuelles que [l]e jeu de relations génère’. This concept of performatve identity speaks to the numerous pragmatic adjustments and adaptations which Urbain made throughout his career in Algeria, working under disparate French regimes to advance his political vision for a colonial society based on fusion, diversity and the Saint-Simonian goal of the rapprochement of Orient and Occident. Thus, Urbain’s own performatve identity stimulated his unsuccessful attempts to reform the colonial system from within and to modify future patterns of behaviour in the French empire.

Furthermore, Urbain can be seen to exemplify what Glissant and Chamoiseau in Quand les murs tombent : l’identité nationale hors-la-loi ?, identify as a lineage of the vaincus of colonisation:

La grande force des vaincus […] est d’avoir reçu […] les merveilles et les ombres des vainqueurs. […] Une plénitude optimale, loin des conquêtes, des aigreurs, des revanches ou des soifs de dominations, et qui s’appelle mondiaïlité. Par là nous sommes dans « l’Occident », mais aussi nous nous orientons : nous connaissons notre Orient.96

This vision of the vaincus of colonisation as a productive force capable of the interrogation and reformulation of the concepts of Orient and Occident which they inherited from the West by imposition, echoes Urbain’s attempts to instigate reform and to cultivate more inclusive and egalitarian forms of humanism as a result of his awareness of the advantages and drawbacks – ‘les merveilles et les ombres’ – of French civilisation. Bhabha has also identified this type of aptitude among colonial subjects: ‘a range of contemporary critical theories suggest that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement – that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking.’97

This type of constructive capacity is perhaps the ultimate strength and the most distinguishing feature of Urbain’s thought. The limited but enduring interest in Urbain as a figure of French colonial history could thus be attributed to his performative exploration and expression of his hybrid colonial identity, which stimulated his engagement with the most challenging and crucial questions surrounding colonial relations in Algeria.

Although Duveyrier was exposed to the same Saint-Simonian social utopian doctrine as Urbain, and was influenced by many of the same members and affiliates of the movement in France and in colonial Algeria, the manner in which he interpreted such teachings and was himself moulded by personal influences yielded results that were dramatically different to those of Urbain. This occurred not least because Duveyrier emerged from a very different geographical and cultural background to Urbain, and because of their differing professional interests; i.e. in writing and the administration of colonial society versus geographical exploration, empirical science and early ethnography respectively.

It has become clear that Duveyrier was profoundly influenced by Enlightenment-inspired conceptions of Western civilisation and in particular by the cult of science or scientism which developed amid the post-revolutionary secularisation of France and Western Europe. We have also observed that Duveyrier’s scientific training and his affinity for concepts of progress and modernity, as promoted by Saint-Simonian doctrine and by nineteenth-century European societies in general, instilled him with an arborescent conception of identity. In his own case, this arborescent identity reacted to the encounter with the colonial other and with the emerging realities of nationalism with the reactionary and defensive responses characteristic of an identité mur or fortress identity. A letter of 1891 to the explorer-turned-monk, Charles de Foucauld, quoted in Pottier’s biography of Duveyrier, demonstrates that Duveyrier recognised that he had become inward-looking, defensive and consumed with self-loathing, describing himself as: ‘un vieux cheval, un reclus, un hérission, un sauvage au masque grincheux, un vieux dur-à-cuire au cœur ulcéré, un homme atteint de décrépitude sénile.’

Through the examination of his correspondence with Urbain and texts such as his account of Dournaux-Dupéré’s doomed Saharan expedition, and of his attempted analysis of the Sanusiyya Sufi order as a thinly-veiled effort at self-vindication, we have identified the inherent brittleness of Duveyrier’s Eurocentric identity, which responded to crisis with an increasingly rigid and schematic outlook. In addition to its intellectual fragility, the personal sense of identity and the attitude toward colonial relations consequently adopted by Duveyrier in the final decades of his life can usefully be

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linked to concepts of “Occidentalism” and to phenomena of self-induced intellectual blindness or obfuscated vision.

Occidentalism is frequently posited by theorists – including both critics and advocates of Said – as the implicit goal of Orientalism, that is, by engaging in the detailed description, categorisation, definition and associated appropriation and domination of the Orient, the West produced itself, generating an opposite or negative mirror-image against which it could thus be defined.99 Gregory identifies a number of themes in Western discourse which are relevant to Duveyrier, such as the myth of a unique Western world with a vocation to lead what it defines as primitive peoples toward progress and modernisation which can only be achieved through its intervention and agency. He links such tropes to the concept of Occidentalism and to the image of self-induced blindness:

In his critique of Orientalism, Edward Said describes th[e] unequal process [of colonial transculturation] as the production of imaginative geographies, and anthropologist Fernando Coronil connects it umbilically to what he calls Occidentalism. [...] the stories the West most often tells itself about itself [...] a practice that (in this case) does induce blindness. They are myths of self-sufficiency in which “The West” reaches out only to bring to others the fruits of progress that would otherwise be beyond their grasp. (original emphasis)100

Burke and Prochaska make a similar reference to self-blinding as a feature of Orientalism.101 Ironically, for an individual who pursued an obsessive interest in establishing truth, and who rigorously applied scientific method with the aim of providing clear and concise explanations of every available aspect of the natural and human world, Duveyrier can be characterised as a victim of a narrow Eurocentric conception of identity. This obscured his analysis of the colonial other and effectively blinded him to the limitations and misconceptions inherent in his Occidentalist conception of his own identity.

100 Gregory, 2004, p. 4.
6.6 Conclusion

The following quotation from Butler evokes what Urbain, drawing on his life experiences, gestured towards without fully realising, and also that which Duveyrier’s world view caused him to reject – namely, to permit oneself to be undone by the other, thereby escaping the myth of unified and stable identity:

[W]e must recognize […] when our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human. To be undone by another is a primary necessity, an anguish, to be sure, but also a chance – to be addressed, claimed, bound to what is not me, but also to be moved, to be prompted to act, to address myself elsewhere, and so to vacate the self-sufficient “I” as a kind of possession. If we speak and try to give an account from this place, we will not be irresponsible, or, if we are, we will surely be forgiven. 102

Duveyrier failed to capitalise on the potential within his interactions with the colonial other to open up to other cultures on their own terms. As Glissant states, for arborescent identities: ‘la question sera toujours de ramener cet autre à la transparence vécue par soi : ou bien on l’assimile ou bien on l’annihile.’ 103 The explorer’s obsessive pursuit of a transparently knowable other in turn led to psychological disintegration when faced with the accelerating pace of French colonisation. This imperial expansion increasingly failed to adhere to his expectations and ignored his promotion of the non-interventionist scientific observation of foreign peoples just as it rejected Urbain’s calls for better treatment of Algeria’s Indigènes. However, this shared disappointment with events on the ground in North Africa should not blind us to the two men’s very real differences.

Urbain and Duveyrier can thus be seen to resemble what Glissant and Chamoiseau compare and contrast as relational and fortress identities:

Là où le côté mur de l’identité renferme, le côté relation ouvre tout autant, et si, dès l’origine, ce côté s’est accordé aux différences comme aux opacités […] [c]’était simplement une affaire de survie : ceux qui duraient le mieux, qui se reproduisaient le mieux, avaient su pratiquer ce contact avec l’autre, compenser le côté mur par la rencontre du donner-recevoir, s’alimenter sans cesse ainsi : « à cet échange ou l’on se change sans pour autant se perdre ni se dénaturer. » 104

Our analysis of Duveyrier’s writing, particularly in this concluding chapter, has observed his preoccupation with the menace of precisely the kind of denaturing or dissolving of identity evoked as characteristic of l’identité mur by Chamoiseau and Glissant. On the other hand, the analysis of Urbain’s writings has demonstrated how the intersection of experiences of créolisation and Saint-Simonian Orientalism

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rendered him a keen and pragmatic observer of the dynamics of colonial relations and a precocious if optimistic advocate of the progressive potential of hybrid colonial societies. Duveyrier, in contrast, incarnated an anachronistic, Eurocentric school of thought, which aspired to the lofty Saint-Simonian ambitions of improving the lives of all humanity, but failed to elaborate a practical means of realising these aims or of thinking critically about the colonial project:

Par la candeur même de ses oublis, Duveyrier est plus saint-simonien qu’il ne l’admettait. Il y en aurait encore bien d’autres après lui, généreux et ingénus comme l’avaient été les reclus de Ménilmontant, pour entretenir le même rêve d’une fraternité islamo-chrétienne, ou franco-algérienne, en oubliant que sa réalisation supposait au préalable la fin du cauchemar colonial.105

However, excluding the opening line, Casajus’ comments also lend themselves quite well to a description of Urbain and the imperialist humanism which Michel Levallois identifies as the succession of his brand of Saint-Simonian Orientalism. Urbain and Duveyrier both aspired to a utopian vision of French colonisation in North Africa as a potentially positive phenomenon, which if executed with care and consideration could be employed to improve the lives of colonisers and colonised alike. As such, their thought bears the imprint of early Saint-Simonian Orientalist doctrine in its most ambitious and aspirational form. Urbain, nonetheless, distinguishes himself from Duveyrier by his attempts to translate this ‘rêve d’une fraternité islamo-chrétienne’ into a practical programme in the form of a patient and gradual process of évolution et non révolution, although this was ultimately rejected by the politically powerful settler lobby which had been established in Algeria by the final decades of the nineteenth century. As we have highlighted, Duveyrier adhered unrelentingly to a naïve, purely utopian view of colonial relations and of French capacities to act as purveyors of benevolent civilisation. In the process, his intellectual position was stifled by narrow and oppositional definitions of Western and colonial identities and a by monocular perspective which could not be reconciled with a world full of contradiction and characterised by flux rather than fixed essences. Whereas, by virtue of a more open approach to the task of defining his own colonial hybrid identity and the identity of the colonial other, Urbain successfully foreshadowed aspects of postcolonial relational identity politics.

Conclusion

Both Urbain and Duveyrier were initially drawn to North Africa by curiosity, and specifically the desire to learn about and gain an authentic experience of an exotic, foreign culture. For both men, the people of North Africa became the predominant focus of their interest and engagement in the region. As regards Urbain this thesis has argued that Saint-Simonian mysticism introduced him to the concept of the rapprochement of Orient and Occident through mutually beneficial collaboration. When combined with his hybrid, creolised origins, this allowed Urbain to demonstrate a capacity to relate to the colonial other in Egypt and later in Algeria, largely avoiding the snares of essentialism and paranoid fear of cultural dissolution or contamination. Urbain’s creolised background informed his ambiguous status as both product and agent of French colonisation, which was performatively enacted and allied to his practical reformulation of Saint-Simonian thinking on colonial Algeria. This outlook has been shown to have afforded Urbain a more innovative approach to la question indigène than many of his contemporaries and to have assisted him in avoiding some of the misconceptions and generalisations of more conventional colonial mentalities. Furthermore, it has also been highlighted that such misconceptions and generalisations proved destructive for Duveyrier, leading him to succumb to his own Romantic fascination with the Tuareg and to be ensnared in the occluding myths regularly employed to justify colonisation in the nineteenth century, including ethnic essentialism, which in his case underpinned an attempted intellectual appropriation of the colonial other via empirical science.

Edmund Burke III and David Prochaska elaborate how contemporary reconsiderations of Orientalism have the potential to move beyond current political and cultural difficulties generated by the tendency to think in terms of opposed Western and Arabo-Islamic worlds:

Ultimately, a reconsideration of orientalism leads us to rethink the Enlightenment from a world historical point of view […] [and] to rethink the place of the West in the long-term history of humanity. […] After some notable advances in thinking the history of modernity in world terms, the post-9/11 terrain has seen a regrettable regression toward civilisationist narratives. […] The critique of orientalism is not over. Indeed, it is not even past. […] Taken together, the hegemony of the discourse on terrorism and on Muslims is an act of self-blinding perhaps unique in the modern era. It shapes perceptions, channels discussion, and forestalls critique. […] No, the study of colonial forms of knowledge is not just an esoteric
academic pursuit. It is crucial to the political and intellectual future of the United States, of the United States of the world.¹ Burke’s and Prochaska’s comments could be extended to include the socio-economic and cultural divisions which bred the riots that swept France in November 2005 and the United Kingdom in the summer of 2011, and events occurring from January 2011 across the Middle East and North Africa – including revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and civil war in Syria – evoked in popular terminology as the Arab Spring. As the present work has shown, the concept of the clash of civilisations was addressed, both directly and indirectly, in the writings of Urbain and Duveyrier, and additionally in their work in colonial Algeria in the context of franco-indigène relations. Their experiences, difficulties and (limited) successes form part of a lineage identified by Burke and Prochaska among other scholars, including notably Georges Corm and Derek Gregory, which continues to exert an influence on international relations, particularly between the West and the Arabo-Islamic world, and indeed within Western societies between citizens of Western and immigrant origins. The concept of self-blinding was discussed in Chapter 6 in relation to Duveyrier, but it is also relevant in a more general way to the exploration of colonial identities in the writings of both Urbain and Duveyrier in this thesis, since it was this type of outlook and the blunting of critical thought which it engenders that Urbain’s polemical writing sought to counteract and which Duveyrier’s came to exemplify, most obviously through his failure to recognise the French presence in North Africa as problematic and his construction of the colonial other – in the form of the Tuareg – as a mythologised exaggeration and even a fabrication. Benedict Anderson draws attention to the obfuscating tactics employed to (mis-)represent Western colonial projects, referring to the ease with which the memory of former colonial possessions like Algeria – which it must be remembered was considered a part of metropolitan France from 1848 until the signing of the Evian accords in 1962 – was effaced from the French collective consciousness in the wake of decolonisation:

> Imperialist ideology in the post-1850 era thus typically had the character of a conjuring-trick. How much it was a conjuring-trick is suggested by the equanimity with which metropolitan popular classes eventually shrugged off the ‘losses’ of the colonies, even in cases like Algeria where the colony had been legally incorporated into the métropole.²


Urbain regularly sought to expose and to speak out against the proliferation of ‘conjuring tricks’ of this nature in colonial Algeria in his polemical writings. Duveyrier, by accepting numerous mythic and quasi-mythic Western constructions as reality, and by clinging rigidly to the schematic mental world of binary logic upon which such tricks were founded, has been shown to be among their ideological victims.

The concluding lines of the quotation from Burke and Prochaska above have important implications for the analysis offered by this thesis. They reaffirm the reality that we continue to live, not merely in the shadow, but rather under the active influence of the colonial mentalities and concepts of identity which we have sought to explore and to account for. Said’s preface to the 2003 edition of *Orientalism* along with Corm’s and Gregory’s analyses of colonial modernity concur with Burke’s and Prochaska’s claims for the persistent, problematic hegemony of colonial forms of knowledge in contemporary societies. This postcolonial perspective affirms that the mythic concepts of identity which proved to be so damaging for Duveyrier and his epistemological project, and which to a certain extent Urbain’s relational identity diluted or mitigated, must be inoculated against in the present day by the exercise of vigilant critical thought. In this vein, Gregory has also commented that: ‘for us [Westerners] to cease turning on the treadmill of the colonial present [...] we need to set ourselves against the unbridled arrogance that assumes that “We” have the monopoly of Truth and that the world is necessarily ordered by – and around – Us.’

Consequently, this thesis has highlighted that there remains much to be learned from Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s respective experiences, successes and failures, and also from the advantages and weaknesses of the attitudes that they each developed toward colonial identities in their own era, a process which the present work also seeks to encourage. The Eurocentric concepts of identity which have been shown to have exerted such a potent influence upon Duveyrier’s writing, and the course of his life, have also continued to cloud the intellectual and cultural vision of many subsequent generations of Westerners. Through the accompanying fabrication of the so-called “clash of civilisations”, such thinking has also negatively impacted on relations with non-Western societies up to the present day, thus replicating

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Duveyrier’s self-blinding tendencies and propagating cycles of mutual distrust, particularly in recent times between the West and the Arabo-Islamic world.\(^5\) In this sense, despite his largely forgotten status as an explorer and writer, Duveyrier’s Occidentalist inheritors are numerous, even unquantifiable.

In locating the successors to Urbain’s intellectual outlook in the twenty-first century, this thesis broadly concurs with Anne Levallois’ assessment, set forth in the introduction, that Urbain was a precocious forerunner of the relational identities and errant intercultural intermediaries advocated by postcolonial theorists such as Glissant.\(^6\) However, we have concurrently sought to demonstrate that in accordance with Butler’s concept of performative identity, Urbain was also a product of the era in which he lived and was thus still receptive to its dominant values, including the justification of the extension of modern Western civilisation in all corners of the earth. This ideological embedding resulted in the observed paternalism and ambivalence of Urbain’s writing. However, we have also noted how Urbain, the fils mal aimé, harnessed his hybrid and stigmatised colonial origins to cultivate a performative identity reminiscent of Sibony’s concept of l’entre-deux. Urbain employed his intermediate identity constructively to distinguish himself as a singular figure in his time through his ability to think in relational terms particularly in regard to the colonial other in Algeria. The foregoing analyses of Urbain’s writing have thus charted the process whereby he cultivated a relational view of the world which afforded him a less Eurocentric perspective on the peoples of North Africa, loosening the restrictions and the blinkered outlook of the identité racine unique which ultimately dominated Duveyrier’s existence. In this way, Urbain became an exemplar of something more akin to Glissant’s and Chamoiseau’s preferred

\(^5\) ‘An exclusive and self-enclosed conception of Western culture is not only contrary to the facts, but also detrimental to any genuine advance in historical, cultural, and literary studies. [...] The call for a new humanism and a new universalism based on understanding the ultimate unity and common destiny of humanity goes hand in hand with recognizing the connection of this program to classical Islamic civilization and to the Islamic Renaissance, as the integral precursor to early European civilization. Similarly, the denial of the need, and even the justifiability of this universalism, goes with the denial of the unity of human civilization, and by implication of human destiny, the erection of insurmountable barriers between culture, and the advocacy of the inevitability of the so-called clash of civilisations.’ Al-Dabbagh, Abdulla, *Literary Orientalism, Postcolonialism, and Universalism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 84-85.

Conclusion

relational identities, which do not impose themselves upon and homogenise others, but instead seek to engage in productive exchange:

Aujourd’hui, l’identité nationale ne peut plus être à racine unique, sinon elle s’éteint et se raccourcit. La nation qui au contraire s’amplifie et se partage réaffirme du même coup sa place, non pas hégémonique, dans le monde. […]

Ce n’est pas parce que les identités-relations sont ouvertes qu’elles ne sont pas enracinées. […] [L’identité à racine multiple] ne tue pas autour d’elle, elle trace à la rencontre d’autres racines avec qui elle partage le suc de la terre.⁷

In addition to achieving a precocious form of relational identity and a relational perspective on the identities of the colonial other, we have witnessed how Urbain, through his polemical writing, sought to fight against the reactionary and insular tendencies of arborescent identity among Europeans in Algeria. Chamoiseau and Glissant encourage their readers to fight against the same tendencies in the present era:

Nous demandons que toutes les forces humaines […] élèvent, par toutes les forces possibles, une protestation contre ce mur-ministère qui tente de nous accommoder au pire, de nous habiter peu à peu à l’insupportable, de nous mener à fréquenter, en silence et jusqu’au risque de la complicité, l’inadmissible.

Tout le contraire de la beauté.⁸

As our extended juxtaposition and comparative analysis of Urbain’s and Duveyrier’s writings has highlighted, and as the work of various cited commentators seeks to remind us, the present era is also that of the globalisation of Western concepts of identity and their concomitant myths and delusions, which together constitute our continuing cultural inheritance from the mass colonisations and decolonisations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is imperative, therefore, that we remain mindful of this in our own time, for the benefit of our shared futures.

⁸ Ibid., p. 26. The reference to a mur-ministère is Chamoiseau’s and Glissant’s own term which refers to the institutionalisation of what may be seen as divisive, reactionary or xenophobic attitudes in the public sphere, for example by the institution of governmental or semi-state bodies such as the Ministry of Integration associated with the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy in France.
Glossary of North African terms

**amghâr:** a subgroup within the Tuareg peoples.

**amin:** literally meaning faithful, this word describes an individual who fulfils a role as a secretary/administrative official within a given community.

**dika:** the edible fruit of an African tree, sometimes referred to as a wild mango.

**fezzân:** a south-western region of modern Libya.

**ghilleh (narghilé):** a traditional tobacco pipe in which the smoke is drawn through water before reaching the lips. It is also commonly referred to as a hookah.

**h’aïk (haik):** an outer garment consisting of a large piece of white cloth; worn by men and women in northern Africa.

**kaïd (caid):** a type of governorship found in North Africa.

**khadi (cadi):** a judge in a Muslim community.

**khouân (khouan):** literally meaning brothers, it is how members of Islamic brotherhoods or other organisations referred to one another.

**le K’obr roumïa:** the tomb of the roumi (European).

**lethâm (letham):** a style of dress in which a veil is folded in half and used to partially cover the wearer’s face.

**marabout:** a Muslim holy man or hermit of North Africa, and/or a shrine or the grave of a such a holy man or hermit.

**moquaddem:** an official who reports to the ruling caid of a given community.

**muezzin:** the chosen person at a mosque who leads the call to prayer (*adhan*) at Friday services and the five daily times for prayer from one of a mosque’s minarets.

**nizam:** a Turkish regular soldier derived from the Arabic *nizām* meaning order or arrangement.

**zaouïa (zawiya):** a North and West African term for an Islamic religious school or monastery, roughly corresponding to the Eastern term madrassa. It often contains a pool, and sometimes a fountain.
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Note on abbreviations: Documents sourced from the Archives Nationales, Paris are referenced by the general abbreviation AN. The subsequent abbreviation AP indicates documents from a private archive and the abbreviation LH indicates documents relating to the Légion d’honneur. Documents sourced from manuscripts held in the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Paris are referenced by the abbreviation ARS Ms.

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