LE CORBUSIER, NEGOTIATING MODERNITY: REPRESENTING ALGIERS 1930-42

BY

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation investigates the six plans devised by Le Corbusier for Algiers between 1930 and 1942, situating them within the representations given to the French presence in Algiers and their volatile political and cultural milieu. The problem was to identify these canonized, avant-garde plans as particular forms given to a specific view of colonialism. In relating them to colonialism and its cognates race, gender and nationalism, it was also necessary to distinguish their perceived difference from those more readily associated with French colonial policy and thus account for Le Corbusier's failure to ultimately wrest the commission from the competing beaux arts designers. The task was to calculate the conditions and constraints under which the meanings given to these plans could emerge, take effect and have consequences.

The plans and their amplification in exhibitions, journalism, paintings, sketches, literature and film are analysed as representations given to the various discourses through which both modernism and colonialism circulated. The intersection of these discourses with others on orientalism, folklore and most importantly gender and nationalism are plotted so as to position these plans within the discursive map by which Algiers was known in the Metropole and in Algeria. Post-colonial histories are used to offset the archival gaps in both the personal archive of the architect and in national institutions.

The dissertation concludes that Le Corbusier's canonical avant-garde plans did participate in colonialism. However, that participation can be distinguished from that of the competing plans not only according to aesthetic considerations of formal vocabulary and spatial arrangement but also according to the representation which they each presented of the nation—the interrelationship of aesthetic vision and political vision being essential. Significantly, Le Corbusier's repeated reference to the women of Algiers through postcard collections and sketches, his feminization of the Algiers landscape or fascination with the
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INTRODUCTION: "Everything is meaningful, nothing is meant"

While meaning is already inscribed in the decision to build, the process of 'naturalizing' this meaning continues in various forms during and after the actual making of the object. In other words, the legitimizing campaign proceeds to construct the intended meaning through processes existing within the culture while the building is in construction and after its completion. Reproduction, in its various forms, takes its place among these cultural processes. Seemingly concerned with the object itself, reproduction utilizes the object to establish both the acknowledged program and an often unacknowledged agenda. (Jon Michael Schwarting) 1

Writing of Le Corbusier's Obus plans in 1976 Manfredo Tafuri understood them to be the single most important exemplar of modern urbanism, essentially as objets à réaction poétique, ciphers of an emancipatory modernity (Figure 1). Lamenting the fact that they were never realized, he praised the Obus Plans in the following manner:

Absorb that multiplicity, reconcile the improbable through the certainty of the plan, offset organic and disorganic qualities by accentuating their interrelationship, demonstrate that the maximum level of programming of productivity coincides with the maximum level of the productivity of the spirit: these are the objectives delineated by Le Corbusier with a lucidity that has no comparison in progressive European culture. ...More precisely,

form assumes the task of rendering authentic and natural the unnatural
universe of technological precision. And since that universe tends to
subjugate nature totally in a continual process to transformation, for Le
Corbusier it is the whole anthrop-geographic landscape that becomes the
subject on which the reorganization ... must insist.... and finally with the
Obus plan for Algiers, Le Corbusier formulated the most elevated theoretical
hypothesis of modern urbanism. It is, in fact, still unsurpassed from the
point of view of both ideology and form.2

In his preoccupation with Le Corbusier's formulation of intellectual solutions to universal
urban problems, Tafuri fails, however, to account for the actual geographical and cultural
destination of the plans (Figure 2). The juxtaposition of the plans with their physical and
social context produces a disquiet which calls into question the representation which this
Plan "Obus," and its subsequent modifications, may have given to the colonial problematic
which Algiers was during the years of their development between 1931 and 1942. In what
ways did this urbanism and its architecture negotiate the cultural strategies by which
political positions were defined and redefined during this highly volatile period? In what
ways did the architectural debates and exhibitions so prominent in Algiers in the 1930s
(Figure 3) function in the articulation of cultural difference and dominance, or of
Modernism's ideals and realities? What cultural and social collateral did they offer?

Le Corbusier is reputed by Tafuri to have created in the Obus plans "poetic objects" of
landscape, technology and vernacular form and to have achieved their reconciliation.3 But
what meaning or currency would his poetic objects of redents, viaduct, passerelle, gratte
mer, his feminized landscape (Figure 4) and aerial surveillance have in the context of

2 Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press,
1976) 125, 126, 127.
3 Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia 129.
Algiers in the 1930s? Could they resonate with any of the meanings given to the more prosaic objects of dams and dikes, highways and airfields, or to the more politically charged debates on the role of women in the societies of Islam and of the West--all of these so poignantly and pointedly juxtaposed on the pages of Algerian newspapers and in French cinema of the period (5)? How might Le Corbusier's poetic objects have circulated among these during the period?

From the present perspective of the 1990s the identification of these plans with colonialism is perhaps the most obvious thing that might be said about them, a French architect in an occupied land acting at the behest of a subjugating élite. However, the more interesting question is why this simple relationship has for so long remained unobserved. Why were these plans perceived as different from those of the French administrator Maréchal Lyautey's paternalistic militarism and his architect Prost's architectural embodiments of both this policy and the Municipal desires of Algiers (Figure 6)? How did the different representations of the contemporary city which each constructed implicate one, Prost, while exonerating the other, Le Corbusier, from criticism as colonizing projects? Conversely, should these disparate plans now be understood as having performed exactly the same function?

This thesis is a response to those questions and revolves around two central issues. The first relates to the complex factors precipitating the alterations to Le Corbusier's six plans for Algiers produced between 1931 and 1942. The second is concerned with explaining why it was that none of these more modern plans by Le Corbusier could dislodge the more

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4Le Corbusier wrote at some length about the advantages and enlarged scope of vision offered by views from the airplane, for example in The Radiant City. Aerial surveillance was originally developed by the military and the topographical map used by Le Corbusier was produced from such military techniques. It represents a very abstract way of thinking about the land and contributed to Le Corbusier's idea of molding the landscape perhaps. See Jean-Christophe Tougeron, "Donat-Alfred Agache, un Architecte urbaniste! Les Cahiers de la Recherche Architecturale" 8 (Apr. 1981): 30-49.

conservative and periodically contested plans favored by the Municipal Council of Algiers (Figure 6). Implied in this investigation is a determination of the relationship that these plans had to contemporary issues of colonialism, that is to colonialism's supportive discourses and disciplines as well as its oppositions and conflicts, and the extent to which these played a role in the alterations, support and ultimate defeat of Le Corbusier's projects. These inquires entail certain problems which it will be the task of this introduction to examine. The introduction will also outline the context of the plans, their acknowledged program and unacknowledged agenda, and methodology.

This initial overview sets out to introduce the objects of analysis, the Obus plans by Le Corbusier, and to identify the terms of that analysis. It seeks to justify why it is felt necessary to relate the individual, Le Corbusier, usually interpreted within Western architectural history and theory as an independent, humanist, avant-garde, "architect of the century," to a collective, historical, and political project, French colonialism. It will argue that it is only in such an extension of our view of the Obus plans, "projectiles" fired by an avant-garde architect on a recalcitrant "frontier," to that of the specific history of French operations in Algeria that Le Corbusier's own, personal "bombarde ment d'Alger" can be interpreted; it is only against the history of French colonizing efforts in Algeria that these "plans Obus" can be understood.

Obus "A," produced between 1931 and 1932 (Figure 1), included the skyscrapers of the business complex, two thirty-one story, intricately configured, barbed, projectiles that shattered the existing dense fabric of the ancient Quartier de la Marine, above it a luxurious

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7 "Projectiles" refers to the translation of "Obus;" frontier" is used by Edward Said in his description of Algeria as it was understood by the French during this period, see "Narrative, Geography and Interpretations, New Left Review 180 (1990): 86. The notion of 'frontier' will be returned to in the conclusion, where, following Ann Stoler's work, it will take on amplified significance.
housing complex of curving redents which "captured" the heights of the Fort de l'Empereur and the views their siting provided; joining the two sites was an elevated passerelle which cast its ominous shadow and compelling form over the Casbah. Flanking the skyscraper to the south was a long viaduct, a super highway from which working-class apartments were suspended.

Obus "B," designed between 1932 and 1933 (Figure 7), replaced the complicated forms of the earlier skyscrapers with a pair of skyscrapers shaped like sleek metallic shields, from which the passerelle, now of enormous buttresses and daunting scale, connected the business center to the elite housing of the Fort de l'Empereur; salvaging the "adorable Casbah," as Le Corbusier called it, with this use of technology. The concept of staged development was recognized at this point and only 70,000 of the projected 200,000 population for the elite housing was to be accommodated initially. A civic center was added to the immediate vicinity of the business center as Le Corbusier more firmly anchored his plan into the existing geopolitical moorage of Algiers. The worker's housing that had stretched to the south was sacrificed to this new reality.

Obus "C," developed between 1934 and 1937 (Figure 8), was a further reduction of the original concept, it consisted merely of a Business center set within an array of European and Moslem institutions; the passerelle and its redent housing consigned to a future date.

Obus "D," of 1938 (Figure 9), followed Le Corbusier's appointment to the Permanent Committee for the Regional Plan of Algiers in 1937. The revised plan focused attention on the Marine District with a three-pronged, trépied, skyscraper, its angled facades, differentiated according to sun insulation, were projected toward the sea and splayed across the Marine District. The role of the skyscraper was to concentrate business within it and thus preserve the original housing functions of the surrounding area; it was to work
dialectically between an entrenched free-market land use policy and an idealized technology. Gathered at its feet were a range of European Civic institutions.

Obus "E," emerging between 1938 and 1940 (Figure 10), reworked the skyscraper into a lozenge-shaped structure with its narrow, prow-like facade looking out to sea and across the Casbah while its broad richly variegated facades faced the sea to the north and the European city to the south. *Brise-soleil*, dimensioned by the golden section and scaled according to internal functions, became key signifiers of this skyscraper's synthetic cultural potential through vague references to Moslem decorative window treatments and a building program enhanced by restaurants, hotels and tourist facilities catering to Europeans. The Civic center remained a group of buildings in a park-like setting symmetrically arranged and hierarchically scaled to the skyscraper. Juxtaposed to these technologically produced and systematically placed edifices were the remains of the Turkish city, its mosques and palaces, their idiosyncratic alignments and orientations set free by Le Corbusier's planning tactics yet disabled by them; the mosques are no longer able to call around them the *medersas* or palaces that had been their prerogative in the past.

Finally Obus "F" (Figure 11), the *Plan Directeur*, dating from 1941-1942, dislodged the skyscraper from the Marine District, relocating it at the base of the European city to become its new center. Taking up its now abandoned site would be Moslem institutions, vaguely sketched memories of Le Corbusier's earlier travels in the East and intangible projections for the future. The Civic center now, seemingly, "drifted" across the seafront between the Marine District and the European city, flotsam of more grandiose dreams. Le Corbusier's plan had returned to the configuration, albeit modernized, of the colonial city which he had sketched on his very arrival in Algiers in 1931 and as French naval officers had done a
hundred years before, a point which links Le Corbusier's viewing habits to the colonial visions of the past (Figures 12 and 13).  

Apparently preoccupied with abstract notions and formal issues, all the plans produced between 1931 and 1942 do have their contradictions, suggestions of ideological conflicts. For example, Obus "B" (1932-1933) provided an abundant supply of housing for an elite, a European population desired but not forthcoming; the real housing need was for workers and Moslem Algerians. The profusion of such elite housing therefore betrayed--while it sought to dispel--the colonists' fear of being overwhelmed by indigenous populations, or a mixed and consequently degraded French population. Another contradiction is found in Obus "E" (1938-1940) which proffered an enhanced program of restaurants and hotels, which in their enticement of Europeans in a time of falling tourism, sought to make more secure the Western presence in the city. One reason for such inconsistency in the plans was the specific problem of the Casbah which haunted the French imagination and Le Corbusier. While economically and socially divested of its former importance, and its surroundings understood as a hinterland, free, vacant and open to European expansion, the Casbah's physical fabric problematized the European presence. It was the unstated interlocutor in Le Corbusier's designs for both the city and beyond it.

Given the geographical and historical context of Algiers, one must rethink the positioning of the plans within an "avant-garde" architectural tradition, defined as an autonomous artistic practice wedded to "extra-artistic styles and tactics of provocation," and question the nature and limits of that positioning. In doing this I am indebted to the questions raised

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9) Thomas Crow, "Modernism and Mass Culture," Modernism and Modernity: The Vancouver Conference Papers (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983) 216. In 1928 CIAM defined its avant-garde position in the La Sarraz Declaration (28 June 1928). This defined the responsibilities of architects towards society, their relationship to the economic system, town planning, public opinion and the State. It emphasized that the basis of architecture was rationalization and standardization and stressed the urgency of "abandoning the outmoded conceptions connected with the class
by Edward Said in his discussion of Camus where he argues that "only in widening the historical perspective from Camus as an attractively solitary writer of the 1940s and 50s to the century-old French presence in Algeria would it be possible to understand not just the form and ideological meaning of Camus' narratives but also the degree to which his work further inflects, refers to and in many ways consolidates and otherwise renders more precise the nature of the French enterprise there." The same questions can be posed with respect to Le Corbusier's interventions and plans for Algiers. Their answer resides in relating the Obus plans to previous French architectural and planning exercises, to the assumptions Le Corbusier made about the French presence in Algeria, and to the systems of knowledge from which he drew.

The Obus plans were never realized. What exists is a series of six plans presented in various contexts and the discussions provoked by them. These six plans together with the diverse forums in which they were exhibited, the various public bodies and officials to which they were referred, the newspapers and journals in which their merits were debated, that is, their extensive reproduction in both the Metropole and Algiers, raises another major issue of this thesis, that of representation. Writing in Architectureproduction Jon Michel Schwarting questions "whether it is architecture itself or the various forms of its

of craftsmen, henceforth to rely upon the present realities of industrial technology..." The essence of urbanization was defined as that of a functional order with "the key to town planning residing in technical facilities." A public campaign against academic proposals and sentimental notions of the home. It is in the latter concern, with public opinion, that many of the tactics of provocation took place. The discussion of the State also indicated that architecture could operate alongside the state. Point number seven under the title "Architecture and its relation with the state," specifies: "Architecture's new attitude, according to which it aims of its own volition to re-situate itself within economic reality, renders all claim to official patronage superfluous." Ulrich Conrads ed., trans. Michael Bullock, Programs and manifestos on 20th-century architecture (Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 1971) 109-113. However, for a discussion of the importance of the State to CIAM thinking in actuality see Martin Steinmann, "Political Standpoints in CIAM 1928-1933," architectural association quarterly 4.4 (Autumn 1972): 49-55. In 1933 the Charter of Athens updated CIAM concerns. New emphasis was given to "biological and psychological constants (which) are subject to the influence of their environment--the geographical and topographical condition, the economic circumstances, the political condition, the constitution of the elements, land and water, nature, soil, climate." Le Corbusier and Jean Giraudoux, The Athens Charter (The Viking Press, 1973) 43-49. Much of The Athens Charter is in defense of an enlarged notion of town planning such that it would include the region.

10 Said, "Narrative, Geography and Interpretation" 87.
reproduction that determine the discipline's ideological character."\textsuperscript{11} Especially pertinent to the study of architecture produced in a colonial context is Nezar AlSayyad's assertion that: "The problem of representation is central to our understanding of the First World/Third World discourse."\textsuperscript{12} That is, both Schwarting and AlSayyad believe representation to be, in the first instance, the trace of how architecture is conceived and received and, in the second, an important player in the relationship between different cultures. These descriptions of representation lead in turn to questions about what these Obus plans may have meant in the 1930s, as well as in the present where they continue to powerfully affect architectural discourse.\textsuperscript{13} Upon this insight and questioning my investigation will begin. It seeks to analyze the ways in which the Algiers plans and their methods of representation functioned to direct our understanding of them, to elide their specific colonial context and indebtedness to the French presence in Algiers. Schwarting neatly sets out the theoretical basis for such a discussion of architecture as representation. Drawing from Gombrich who "argued that meaning accrues through conventions created within a particular cultural ambiance,"\textsuperscript{14} and Foucault, "who described the role of power in deciding what is real and unreal, permitted and prohibited, rational and irrational, true and false," and thus enlarges on the dynamics of that cultural ambiance, Schwarting concisely outlines the basis for a

\textsuperscript{11}Schwarting, "Postscript" 246.
\textsuperscript{12}Nezar AlSayyad, "Urbanism and the Dominance Equation: Reflections on Colonialism and National Identity," Nezar AlSayyad ed. \textit{Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture of the Colonial Enterprise} (Brookfield, Vermont: Avebury, 1992) 2. In addition, T.J. Clark has perhaps most concisely summarized some of the concerns attendant upon the study of representations and it is worthwhile to quote him on this. "Orders of this sort (social) appear to be established most potently by representations or systems of signs, and it does not seem to me to trivialize the concept of "social formation" --or necessarily to give it an idealist as opposed to a materialist gloss--to describe it as a hierarchy of representations. That way avoids the worst pitfalls of vulgar Marxism, in particular the difficulties involved in claiming that the base of some brute facticity made of sterner and soldier stuff than signs--for instance the stuff of economic life. This is not to discount the determinant weight of arrangements we call economic." T. J. Clark, \textit{The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984) 7.
\textsuperscript{13}For example see Manfredo Tafuri, \textit{Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development} (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1976).
contemporary investigation of meaning in the context of Algiers and the structures of power through which the plans for the city were "made public" and discussed.

The public realm in which the plans were debated is of particular interest in the politically and socially complex field of Algiers; it was to public opinion that Le Corbusier constantly appealed against the established powers of the Metropole and the General Government of Algeria. This public realm was a much beleaguered one in the 1930s. Dissenting indigenous élus demanded political representation and claimed the status of a legitimate constituency. Colonial Municipal mayors contested these dissenting voices as the local Moslem population made ever greater demands for access to the public sphere in which power was bestowed. This power was also manifest in architectural and urban projects. For example, it was through the public realm that decisions were made and ratified on housing, its program and location, or the retention and use of mosques. The various meanings given to the architectural and urban projects of Algiers, the grand travaux, by the architect, local or Metropolitan critics, municipal councilors, or Moslem representatives provide a richly detailed ideological map of Algiers. Architecture and urbanism, whether as exhibition, realized projects or journalism, were demonstrations made to the fractured and shifting public sphere which developed in the 1930s.

Also of concern is how these plans were interpreted, and thereby modified by such discussion within Algiers and the Metropole. Equally important is how our understanding of them has been limited in certain ways "so as to circumvent the fact that when in most societies individuals are left free to interpret symbols as they please... Everything is meaningful, nothing is meant."15 What this study intends to do is to situate this ideological content within the arena of meaning-formation constituted by Algiers for both the

Metropole and the colony. In so doing Le Corbusier and his goals will not be ignored, but rather the effect on his concepts of the ideological debates and socio-cultural and political conditions in Algiers will be more clearly established.

Architecture and urbanism did play a prominent role in defining, facilitating and representing the opposing positions of a dominant but fractured European culture and a subordinated, but increasingly confrontational, Moslem one. Complicating the situation were the divisions within each culture. France was rent by differing views on the relationship of the Metropole to its subjects and citizens in Algeria. Economic and technical modernization, Algiers' new port and planned highway system for example, collided with the picturesque and orientalist perceptions, postcard views and the Casbah, which had held Algeria and other colonies ransom to touristic pleasures and Metropolitan profits while justifying France's civilizing prerogatives. In other words, in Algiers in the 1930s, a lingering popular exoticism confronted a nascent idée colonial based on industrialization, economic development and Imperial restructuring. Modernism in the West was also a splintering entity and the role which it could legitimately play as a liberating force in a colonial context was especially problematized during this period. There were disputes and divisions within the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) for example, and a general disillusionment with Western culture existed in the aftermath of World War I.16 Equally divided were the colonized, united in their shared Moslem faith but opposed with respect to acceptable relationships to modernization, be they assimilation or association with the West, or other, Islamic, forms of modernization coming from the East.

The importance of architecture and urbanism in Algiers and to Algeria was emphasized by the frequent exhibitions and conferences devoted to these pursuits which were held in the 1930s and the participation which they garnered from both governmental figureheads and oppositional interest groups. There were two international architecture and urbanism exhibitions held in the colonial city, in 1933 and 1936. In conjunction with these several widely attended public lectures were organized where controversial figures debated urban issues. A wider public was addressed by the extensive coverage given to urbanism by the local press. In addition, architectural and urban representations of Algeria were made evident and topical by the Exposition Coloniale of 1931, the Exposition Internationale of 1937 and the Exposition de la France Outre-mer of 1940. In these exhibitions, where Le Corbusier and both the Metropolitan and Colonial governments were actively involved, conflicting representations of Algeria were displayed. It could be argued that these conflicts arose from the inherent contradictions of French colonial policy at this time. However, they may also be understood as inflections of problems within Modernism itself; as well, they also reveal tensions shared between colonialism and Modernism.

These diversities, conflicts and stresses impinged upon, infiltrated and bounded architectural discourse as they shaped urban perceptions. Gwendolyn Wright has argued that architecture and urbanism were significant tools of cultural domination, with both shaping the "Other," the terrain of the colony, in terms of the Metropole, its problems and failings.17 Paul Rabinow has described the crucial role of Modernist architecture in the French colonial context as the site of a projected idealism, and its function as the intensified milieu for the enforcement of an ordering power via institutions and scientific discourse.18 Both authors emphasize the part which architecture and urbanism played in not only

creating images of the social order but also in soliciting their implementation and its privileged culture of use. Both implicate architecture and urbanism, institutionally, perhaps without exception, in the colonizing process.

To examine Algiers and the Obus series within this context I will require a conceptual framework which situates the plans within a broader field of representations and within the oeuvre of Le Corbusier. By representation I mean those forms, their contexts and meanings, which defined and explicated a certain entity called "Algiers" in the 1930-42 period, and which, in so doing, wrestled with issues of colonialism and its key classificatory entities class, race and gender. My reason for extending the field of analysis in this way is that these Corbusian plans, or figures, were presented in various contexts: colonial, international and local exhibitions; proposed and executed films; texts by and about Le Corbusier; local newspapers and the professional press throughout the successive eras of Third Republic, Popular Front and Vichy. These contexts sometimes echo with refrains from the "imaginary Orient" which continued to shape both popular and intellectual views on Algiers. What is at issue then is the manner in which these plans strategically used various and specific topics, venues and milieu to distinguish and propagate a particular identity for Algiers.

It is particularly important to emphasize that these Algiers plans, as blueprints for social organization, were also about Modernism. Le Corbusier, as architect and urbanist, positioned the plans and then the city of Algiers itself, within both local discussions of urban development and the doctrinal debates of the CIAM. Le Corbusier also inserted them into political debates which directly addressed the systems of power by which a contemporary Algiers was to be defined. For this reason the plans will be looked at as sites

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19 The term and concept of representation as it refers to architecture and its analysis will be discussed later. It can be stated at this point however that I draw upon the work of Jon Michael Schwarting, Beatrice Colomina and others writing in Architectureproduction (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988).
of two impinging discourses—those of colonialism and those of Modernism—as they are historically situated. The plans can be understood as "strategic exemplars", a term borrowed from Paul Rabinow in his discussion of "French Modern" where he explains: "Foucault did not read the 'Panopticon' as a Weberian ideal type, i.e., as the sociologist's generalized abstraction of the various currents of empirical activity of an age; rather he proposed an alternative use of such plans as strategic exemplars. Foucault suggested finding real schemas and tracing their strategic uses and transformations, as well as the resistances they provoked, as a means of illuminating not an entire age but particular nuclei of knowledge and power." 

These "strategic exemplars," the six plans produced for Algiers over eleven years, consist of all or some of certain recurrent elements: a skyscraper, curved housing buildings, redents, an elevated highway between housing and skyscraper, and a horizontally extended complex with roof-top highway, viaduct housing. There are two salient features in the development of these plans. The first is that significant changes occurred to these plans over time, as they evolved from very generalized statements about the modern city with the first to the more reduced but increasingly specific of the subsequent plans. Although always implying the capabilities of a staged implementation, an incremental refashioning of

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20 By 'discourses' I am referring to the understanding given to this term by Michael Foucault, among other contemporary philosophers and historians. I mean by this term the historically grounded discursive practices where the regularity of statements define the object of these practices and supply a set of concepts which can be used to analyze the object, delimit what can be said about it and demarcate who can say it. Discourse defines its object, therefore there is no Truth external to it; its truth is a rhetorical imposition. The discourses of colonialism and Modernism are therefore historically variable institutions which mediate relations between producer and that produced. According to Foucault discourse echoes or transforms the uneven distribution of power within societies. See Roger Fowler ed. A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987) 62-66. Lisa Lowe's discussion of the relationship between discourse and orientalism is also an important contribution to the understanding of how discourse operates. First it is historically specific in its working, is constantly re-articulated to meet the needs of power, and should be understood as one representation among many, including those of the oppressed, that is, it exists within the context of a heterotopicality and subject to change. She also relates it to hegemony to underline the instability of the discursive terrain and the possibility for the dominated to have some effect. Lisa Lowe, Critical Terrains. French and British Orientalisms (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) 10-15.

21 Rabinow, French Modern 212.
the city to meet immediate needs became an expediently emphasized advantage: ornamental decorative features became design options for what Le Corbusier termed "elite" housing of Obus "B," Moslem cultural institutions augmented Western ones in Obus "C" and brise-soleils fleshed out the skyscraper of Obus "E." These alterations were tactical responses to local critiques, and to a more general architectural discourse on Modernism. The second aspect of the plans to be remarked is the specific disposition of the planning elements.

Le Corbusier's discussion and presentations of these plans, however, went beyond their mere technical description. Obus "A" was portrayed as the conquering of inaccessible terrain, the *Fort de l'Empereur*. Obus "B" placed Algiers as one of the capitals of a new Mediterranean federation along with Paris, Rome and Barcelona. Obus "D" gave reality to "Algiers, capital of Africa." Obus "F" in turn spoke of the French Empire. With such references Le Corbusier broadened the context in which his conception and representation of Algiers was to be understood. He amplified the milieu in which these plans were to be situated by his reproduction of letters to officials, administrators and politicians along side the plans and by the sketches and verses, easily allied to certain orientalist traditions of literature, art and tourism, with which he annotated them, and by his engagement with local controversy over the Casbah and land development within this dual-culture land. His references to Mediterraneanism, Capital city and Empire resonate with contemporary colonial debate.

There are four prominent themes in Le Corbusier's enlarged presentation of the Algiers plans. One is Modernism and its related cognates, modernization and the progress of civilization. The second is folklore and its affiliates, primitivism and the vernacular. The third is gender, and the fourth is orientalism. These were themes having complex and urgent relationships to the development of the colony in cultural, political and economic terms as well as to the evolution of the plans. Le Corbusier's understanding of the
relationship of Modernism and progress to folklore is not a simple one and he often juxtaposed the two for an ironic reversal of their meanings, as for example, when he questioned whose city was really "barbaric" the tranquil Arab city or the congested European one, although the Arab city was far from tranquil and the European city far from bustling. Repeatedly, his discussion of folklore in the context of Algiers colluded with or rearticulated orientalism, a theme and discourse which is both present and repressed, while discourses of gender impinged upon and rearticulated this orientalism. An interdependent theme that will be important to this thesis, although one that is the less immediately evident is nationalism. It is the seemingly inconspicuous discourse which configures and disassembles, works with and then against, the discourses of Modernism, folklore, orientalism and gender.

Modernism has been given diverse meanings and interpretations, and its specific signification with respect to Le Corbusier will be developed throughout the present study. However, there are some general distinctions in its practice in the inter-war years that should be recalled. Modernism referred to those varied practices of the Modern Movement in architecture—De Stijl, Constructivism, Futurism—which shared a concern for the progressive use of innovative technologies and materials united with an attention to a new abstract, non-historical architectural vocabulary, language and self-critical practice. All countered Academic practices and sought to upset what they considered to be conservative attitudes, taste and values. At the same time, these movements differed in their commitment to aesthetic, technological and political change. Le Corbusier was often chastised for being blindly committed to aesthetics, while Hans Meyer was considered politically engaged to the detriment of Architecture. Reyner Banham would find only the Futurists truly modern because of what he understood to be their uncompromising

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22 Le Corbusier, The Radiant City, 230.
23 See the discussion in chapter two.
technological definition of architectural practice.24 Banham and Alan Colquhoun among others have proposed that: "What distinguishes modern architecture is surely a new sense of space and the machine aesthetic."25

David Harvey has succinctly delineated the relationship between modernity, Modernism and modernization in the following manner: "Modernism is a troubled and fluctuating aesthetic response to conditions of modernity produced by a particular process of modernization."26 How Harvey posits the interrelationship of these different modes of the modern is particularly insightful for the consideration of any claims to an architecture of technical innovation, Mediterranean lineage and apolitical signification such as was made by Le Corbusier in a place and time of constant change. Harvey proposes that:

if flux and change, ephemerality and fragmentation, formed the material basis of modern life, then the definition of a modernist aesthetic depended crucially upon the artist's positioning with respect to such processes. The individual artist could contest them, embrace them, try to dominate them, or simply swim with them, but the artist could never ignore them. The effect of any one of these positionings was, of course, to alter the way cultural producers thought about the flux and change as well as the political terms in which they represented the eternal and immutable.27

26David Harvey, The Condition of Post Modernity. An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 98. Generally modernity is here defined as part of the Enlightenment Project, as the era of Man with its distinction in the late nineteenth-century being "the constitution of an empirico-transcendental doublet called man," where "Man is the object of knowledge and a subject who knows." It is also the development of new representational modes, new norms and new forms to ensure those norms; its historical development in the twentieth-century is one toward ever greater abstraction. It is similar to the description of modern "progress," although more pessimistic, by Henri Lefebvre and other critics of modernism-as-progress, such as the Surrealists.
27Harvey, Condition of Post Modernity. 20.
Banham positions Le Corbusier, as a major theorist and designer of the Machine Age, within this dynamic as one who:

produced a Machine Age architecture only in the sense that its monuments were built in a Machine Age, and expressed an attitude to machinery... It may well be that what we have hitherto understood as architecture, and what we are beginning to understand of technology are incompatible disciplines. The architect who proposes to run with technology knows that he will be in fast company, and that, in order to keep up he may have to emulate the Futurists and discard his cultural load, including professional garments by which he is recognized as an architect. If, on the other hand, he decides not to do this, he may find that a technical culture has decided to go on without him.28

What is significant about this portrayal of Modernism is the tension which it reveals between technology and what Banham calls the architect's "cultural load." Many historians have articulated the classical content of Le Corbusier's cultural load and something of its shaping influence on him; it has been described as the irresolvable contradiction inherent in Le Corbusier's utopia.29 Ken Silver has suggestively placed Le Corbusier's classical references and rhetoric of the 1920s within the contemporary conservative trends of French nationalism, while Brian Brace Taylor has raised serious questions about Le Corbusier's technical proficiency and intentions in the early 1930s.30 Le Corbusier's retained "cultural load" and use of technology produced conflicts within his work and theory. The resolution

of these tensions positioned him within Modernism. There are also conflicts powerfully operative in the Obus plans and their colonial context. These situate Le Corbusier within colonialism.

Similarly, those varied technical, aesthetic and political responses pointed to by Harvey have been outlined in work by architects and urbanists in North Africa by Paul Rabinow in French Modern. Norms and Forms of the Social Environment. Rabinow seeks to delineate the path of what he terms "middling Modernism," the normative processes and effects which operated between "high Modernism" and everyday life. He identifies different registers of Modernism in architecture and urbanism, "middling modern," "technocosmopolitanism," "pure Modernism." They are distinguished according to the degree to which purely technical qualifications, and notions of efficiency, science, progress and welfare predominate over historical factors and cultural locale as "sources of legitimacy and solidarity."  

Modern urbanism is here understood as part of the "norm and form regulating exercise," where, "Urbanism's synthesis of the historical and natural elements into an object--the planned city as a regulator of modern society--can be seen as one of the most complete examples of modernity." Rabinow is interested in the influence of "middling modernists," those who operated in-between "high Modernism" and the quotidian, individuals such as Henri Prost and Maréchal Lyautey. As Harvey has suggested, the position which the architect might take with respect to changes in everyday life will be determined by their understanding of modern society. Rabinow proposes that this understanding has oscillated between two possibilities: "one has sought to capture man's nature through analyzing underlying, law-like universal mechanisms; the other has sought historical or interpretive methods adequate to the notion that knowledge was produced by men formed in certain historical, social or economic conditions...and that

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31 Rabinow, French Modern 322.
32 Rabinow, French Modern 12.
history was the means by which empirical understanding could be given adequate form."33 Prost has been identified as an exemplar of the latter, culturalist approach.34 Theorists of the modern, like Rabinow, Foucault, Lefebvre, among others, posit the development of norms, standardization and abstraction as key trajectories in the development of modernity and in Modernism's responses. Such a development forces the dual question, extremely relevant in the context of colonialism: if norms and forms of difference could be developed how might they be sustained in modernity's wake.

In contrast to "Modernism," avant-garde, a more inclusive term, includes tactics of provocation and considerations in addition to those of artistic styles.35 Renato Poggioli, in his history of the avant-garde, identifies two avant-gardes, one political and the other aesthetic, with their inter-relationships and relative weight varying through time.36 In Poggioli's history the aesthetic avant-garde had usurped the originally political meaning of the term by the dawn of the twentieth-century; the subsequent relationship between them would be contradictory and equivocal.37 In addition, the notion of the avant-garde allows for those, such as the Surrealists, who challenged bourgeois values and who extended

33Rabinow, French Modern 24.
36Renato Poggioli relates the Parisian influence on the modern notion of the avant-garde noting that "the representatives of the radical-revolutionary avant-garde, even while they extended the phrase in some measure to the sphere of art, considered it first as bound up with the vague ideas of an inclusive and generalized avant-gardism." The Theory of the Avant-Garde, trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1968) 9. Interestingly, the first example of the use of the term avant-garde that Poggioli gives is that of a Fourierist (a follower of that 19th century utopian Fourier often cited as having a formative influence on Le Corbusier) who emphasized "the idea of the interdependence of art and society, but also the doctrine of art as an instrument for social action and reform, a means of revolutionary propaganda and agitation." (9). Le Corbusier's notion of architecture or revolution re-configures these ideas such that architecture would achieve social revolution without the need for a political revolution. Also interesting is the fact cited by Poggioli that La Chaux de Fonds, Switzerland, Le Corbusier's hometown, was the site of Bakunin's periodical of political agitation L'Avant-garde in 1878. Le Corbusier's political commitment would never be so explicit.
representational techniques but who did not embrace Modernism with its notions of material and technological progress.

One of those responses made to an inescapable modernization noted by Harvey was a heightened interest in folklore, the primitive and natural. As a response to change it also had political associations in the 1930s. The intersection rather than amalgamation of different discourses is seen in the relocation of discussions about folklore from the Metropole to the colonies. Folklore was a much fought over terrain by conservative and progressive forces attempting to forge a definition of the nation which would suit what were contesting political or world views. It was a frequently discussed topic and field of study in arguments about what constituted the "True France" and, by contradistinction, all that was false, improper, tainted. The debate about folklore took several forms as it influenced relations between France and North Africa in the inter-war years. Indigenous Algerian culture, largely divested of its monumental artifacts and traditional patrons of the arts was invariably identified with its craft traditions and vernacular practices; North Africa generally being a key site for French anthropological studies also helped to define the context of folklore. In addition, studies of folklore bolstered those disaffected with Western civilization while it simultaneously supported notions of the supremacy of the West.

Stereotypes of an Eastern "other" had formed a part of the writing of architectural history and production throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Sir Bannister Fletcher maintained recognizable stereotypes about the East in his History of Architecture on the Comparative Model where the architecture of Islam, along with China, Japan and India, is classified as Non-Western and judged against Western values and architectural canons. Similar stereotypes about Algerian indigenous architecture are to be

found in the 1930 Cahiers du Centenaire. These, evident in the emphasis on the ornamental rather than constructive aspects of Islamic architecture, and on its technical inferiority and lack of development, were frequently cited in the 1930s. Le Corbusier's relationship to this tradition of architectural criticism has not been systematically studied. He did rely on Auguste Choisy who had in turn drawn heavily from Fletcher, but, in his emphasis on an abstract structural analysis Choisy deleted many of the cultural preoccupations and judgments underpinning Fletcher's history. In the discussions of "oriental" architecture in Prélude, (the publication of the Regional Syndicalist group to which Le Corbusier belonged in the 1930s) the architecture of Algiers is usually described as rural and often from a generalized and nostalgic past, whereas Le Corbusier commented on it as representative of a way of life having value to the "second machine age."

Orientalism, was cogently described, theorized and critiqued by Said in 1979 as "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience, it is the West speaking for the Orient... it is a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinctions made between the Orient and the Occident...Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient...the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West."39 Lisa Lowe has more recently elaborated on this formulation, describing orientalism as, "the body of occidental representations of the oriental world which both constitute the Orient as Other to the Occident and appropriate the domain of the Orient by speaking for it. Orientalism is a discourse ... which is on the one hand homogenizing--the Orient is leveled into one indistinguishable entity--and on the other hand anatomizing and enumerative--the Orient as an encyclopedia of details divided and particularized into manageable parts. The discourse manages and produces information about an invented Other, which locates and

justifies the power of the knowledgeable European self."40 It both dichotomizes and essentializes.41 Significantly, Lowe has also reformulated Said's notion of Orientalism in order to display its subtle workings, specificities and constantly shifting discursive practices as they intersect with other discourses, such as class, race and gender. The ambiguities, inconsistencies, and tensions which she is thus able to plot are more descriptive of Orientalism's shifting presence in Algiers and in Le Corbusier's statements and works. This understanding of Orientalism points out the mutating aspects of discourse often overlooked as part of Foucault's definition of discursive formations--regularities of statements, institutions, practices as an irregular series of regularities.42 Lowe allows for discursive transformation, the plurality of discourses, as the use of the plural, Orientalisms, in the title of her book, Critical Terrains. French and British Orientalisms, indicates, as well as the presence of challenges and resistances from other practices. Orientalism thus emerges as a dynamic entity; not a binary system but a multiple one, it is neither monolithic nor omnipotent.43 Lowe also cautions that "the means of representation of various discourses are fundamentally heterogeneous and unequal, they differ over time and across national and cultural boundaries."44 Lowe's conception of Orientalisms offers extremely useful methodological tools in understanding the ambiguities, contesting indigenous

40Lisa Lowe, Critical Terrains 3.
41The influence and importance of Said's identification of Orientalism is indicated in several ways--the continual conferences dedicated to it, such as that organized to explore its presence in non-Islamic areas by the Asian Studies Center at Michigan State University, Reflections on Orientalism: Edward Said, Roger Bresnahan, Surjit Dulai, Edward Graham, and Donald Lammers, ed. Warren I. Cohen (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1983); interest in and critique of recent scholarship among Oriental scholars as in Orientalism, Islam, and Islamists ed. Asaf Hussain, Robert Olsen, Jamil Oureshi (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1984); or its relationship to anthropology in James Clifford's, The Predicament of Culture, Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). The current architectural interest in, research about, and revision of the discipline of Orientalism is clearly indicated in the list of books reviewed by the Design Book Review 29/30 (Summer/Fall 1993): 6-78. Twenty-five titles were reviewed and two essays on the topic were presented.
42Lowe, Critical Terrains 6.
43Lowe speaks of heteropicality, the dynamic through which discursive conditions are transformed. It refers to the sense of multiplicity and interpenetration, the continual, yet uneven overlapping intersections of discursive articulations. What she seeks to emphasize is the fact that orientalism is produced from a variety of positions and other representational relations, including those of race, class, gender, some may contest orientalist formations, some may reiterate them. See page 15.
44Lowe, Critical Terrains 4
practices, unstable positions and often uncoordinated but related discussions of gender and "Otherness" in the representations given to the city of Algiers by Le Corbusier and others. Her formulation also demands that architecture be understood as a practice and discourse which is not necessarily subsumed by "Orientalisms."

Fundamental and underlying discourses of modernism, orientalism and nationalism is the subject of gender. Women were assigned various roles in defining East and West, colonizer and colonized, in Algiers. Le Corbusier drew upon established stereotypes of Islamic women in several ways; his reformulations of the experience of the Casbah and his discussions of private space are two examples. Gender had ramifications in architecture ranging from room layout, size according to single or extended family, and communal or independent housing, to the geographical separation or mixing of cultures. Differences of gender and culture were maintained in the popular press which through its extensive women's sections reinforced the stereotypical identification of women's freedom in the West with their oppression in the East (Figure 5). Thus European women were used as a sign for civilized culture while, as Lisa Lowe has shown, female enslavement was used to signify a male fantasy emerging from the context of suppressed sexual relations in nineteenth-century Europe. According to such fantasies, for example, Turkish women were objectified as entirely sexual.\(^{45}\) Ann Stoler has usefully demonstrated the role of gender definitions in the maintaining of both physical borders between nations and interior frontiers of psychological and moral identity with the nation.\(^{46}\) Western women's dress and public visibility were much celebrated, as were European beauty pageants which reinforced gender and national stereotypes while also establishing a canon of beauty and


female definition unsuitable or unattainable for Islamic women. *Cités indigènes*, French housing for Moslem Algerians, attempted to identify and mark out cultural differences and needs. It served Western purposes of racial differentiation and Islamic requirements for the sequestering of women and family so important to their beliefs. At the same time, Islamic customs and practices to ensure privacy such as the veil, inward looking domestic space and untraversable neighborhoods frustrated Western ordering principles and the surveillance procedures which they were intended to ensure. Thus, throughout the 1930s the condition of women under Islamic law was subtly manipulated in discussions surrounding citizenship; veiled and bound by marriage, dowry and inheritance customs, the Algerian woman became the sign of a primitive society not sufficiently evolved for the responsibilities of citizenship.⁴⁷

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In order to examine the expanded realm of analysis hinted at by the architect himself and often occluded by discipline-specific histories, a thematic as well as chronological ordering of the material has been adopted. Each chapter will be concerned with a specific theme, or problematic, related to the plans, each theme being focused on a particular point in the chronology of the 1930-1942 involvement of Le Corbusier with Algiers.

Chapter one will be concerned with the relationship of the "poetic," the imaginary yet disciplined representations by which Algiers was identified and constructed, and the pragmatic realms of knowledge and power.⁴⁸ It seeks to show how the cultural and

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⁴⁷Alloula, Lowe, and Megherbi have analyzed the ways in which gender played an important role in power relations under colonialism. The issue of Islamic customs with respect to women are amply illustrated in the Senate debates of the late 1920s and mid-1930s. This will be discussed further in chapters two and three and four.

⁴⁸By poetic I intend the general but meaningful way in which the term is used, for example in the title of *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), where "persistence of allegorical patterns and rhetorical tropes" in cultural description is understood to be as powerful as politics in cultural intervention; or in the essay "A Poetics of Displacement: Victor Segalen," *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth Century*
political context of Algiers contributed to Le Corbusier's Obus plans and thus make their meaning more resonant. It is not the intention here to elevate the political over the cultural but rather to show their interconnectedness. Certain strains of Modernism, Le Corbusier's theory of the 1920s included, had placed the cultural realm, the "poetic," as a utopian realm beyond the political which was understood as contingent and self-interested. The first chapter therefore questions if, and how, this distinction was maintained, and to what effect. Of all the planning proposals which Le Corbusier undertook perhaps only Paris engaged him more than did Algiers. During the 1930s and early 1940s he produced schemes for Montevideo, Buenos Aires, San Paolo, Rio, Anvers and Barcelona, but Algiers was his preferred site; he produced several schemes for the city in the initial period during which he had no commission. He continued working on his ideas for Algiers for an additional four years with only a nebulous appointment to the Regional Plan Committee. It was an eleven year involvement with very little financial remuneration. This commitment raises the question of why Algiers? Some resolution of this question will be the objective of this chapter which deals with Algiers as it was presented and known to the Metropole via various mass and official media, in the popular imagination and in official and concrete actions; that is, Algiers as "the poetics of space" and the "pragmatics of power."

Chapter two addresses issues surrounding the "public sphere," a term, by which I seek to call up that sphere of action and consensus formation which mediates between the State and the individual. It is a term which encompasses "civil society," its forms of publicity and as well evokes a historical location within the advent of the bourgeoisie. The origin and workings of the public sphere have been effectively described by Jürgen Habermas:

> the bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public

*Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988). This will be discussed further in chapter one.
sphereregulatedfromaboveagainstthepublicauthoritiesthemselves, to
gaugemethem in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the
basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and
social labor.49

Originally written in 1962, this bourgeois public sphere for Habermas is activated by the
exercise of reason. Nancy Fraser has both criticized and updated Habermas' analysis of
the social structures of the public sphere which she continues to define as "the sphere of
political participation, debate, and opinion formation (which) is linked to the state
administrative system."50 As such, it is also a concept and designation needing some
finessing to fit the colonial context. For, as Habermas describes it, "the public sphere" was
singular, bourgeois in its history, eurocentric and largely masculine. It also refers to a
participatory realm largely denied to Moslem Algerians; the involvement "as if all were
equals" was impossible in Algiers as it was in reality in eighteenth-century France. In
addition, the idea that Moslem Algerians had no concept of "civil society" and only a weak
bourgeois culture was cast by European scholarship as an explanation for the absence of
entrepreneurial spirit and achievement motivation, the lack of modern industrialization and
the presence of despots.51 However, reference to the "public sphere" is useful to delineate
the ambiguous contours of the spaces, literal and metaphorical, in which different factions
within Algiers met to express their competing views, and attempted to gain consensus or
acceptance of their contesting points of view.

49Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of
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50 Nancy Fraser, Unruly Practices. Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) 123. Fraser finds some major "lacunae" in Habermas' model of the relations between public and private institutions and classical capitalism, although she continues to defend it as a "powerful and sophisticated model." She deems his model to be blind to the significance and operation of gender, lacking in a thematization of the masculine subtext of the citizen role and he fails to describe the multiple interrelations between the private and public spheres. See "What's Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender," in Unruly Practices 113-143.

51 Bryan S. Turner, "Orientalism and the Problem of Civil Society in Islam," Orientalism. Islam and
The idea of a public sphere spawned specific kinds of buildings and forms, in turn influencing cities. Liberal institutions: universities, city halls, parliament buildings, museums, prominently marked and ordered public infrastructure. The specific geographical and political entity of Algiers during the inter-war years produced a warped version of the "public sphere" as described by Habermas. But it was in its semblance that municipal aspirations, definition of urban issues and demands by Moslem Algerians were decided and made visible. The first Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture held in the city in 1933 was one such appeal of a specific public within the public sphere. The architecture and urban plans proposed by Le Corbusier for Algiers can be situated within this historically, geographically and culturally specific context. He came at the invitation of a particular group within the city, the Amis d'Alger. Le Corbusier's invitation to Algiers occurred at a very important juncture in the history of the city and its cultural representation--the aftermath of the Centenary Celebration of 1930 and a period of grand travaux which the Centenary initiated and largely financed. The 1933 Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture identifies economically the ways in which the various groups in Algeria were given expression. The grand travaux associated with the Centenary Celebration, and the plan for the Quartier de la Marine approved in March of 1931 function as windows onto the development of architectural and urban projects for the city. The 1933 Exposition will be compared with the 1931 Exposition Coloniale held in Paris and organized by Maréchal Lyautey with the intent of establishing the relationship between Metropole and colonies. Le Corbusier's two invited lectures of 1931 and the 1933 Exposition, in which he figured prominently as a representative of a certain kind of Modernism, can be usefully discussed against the backcloth of both the earlier and contemporary French imperial interventions in the city. This chapter will therefore seek to identify the various factions of the public sphere for which the architectural and urban representations were intended or influential, and the audience that was present but not made party to the aims or decisions, and that waited in the wings.
Chapter three will look at the Algiers plans from yet another vantage point, that of "strategic exemplars." It will examine the ways in which Le Corbusier's plans struggled with and sought resolution to the increasingly complex problems confronting urbanists in the mid 1930s. Le Corbusier's first plan, Obus "A," was a generalized, universalized diagram of Modern planning principles, related to "La Révolution architecturale accomplie par les techniques modernes" and the "La Ville Radieuse," the titles of his two 1931 lectures in Algiers. His subsequent and amended Obus "B" (1932-33) and "C" (1933-34) were tailored to particular sites of development within the city, particularly, the Quartier de la Marine and its immediate adjacencies. They were also altered according to a topographical relief map, government aerial photographs, information provided by the Amis d'Alger and local newspapers, *La Dépêche algérienne* and *Chantiers nord-africains*. Both Obus "B" and Obus "C" were produced against a backcloth of intense lobbying. A campaign of intense propaganda on Le Corbusier's behalf was maintained in a series of articles by Jean Cotereau, Edmond Brua, and J.-P. Faure in local Algerian newspapers. Obus "C" especially was defended during the period of the repressive Régnier decree of 1935, the hopes raised by the victory of the Popular Front in 1936 and its proposed Blum-Viollette reforms to extend the voting privileges to a small number of Moslem Algerians. A heightened awareness of the role of North African colonies within the Empire which was prompted by Mussolini's competing claims to the Mediterranean, indicated by his intervention on the behalf of Italians in Tunisia, also elicited interest in the plans. The 1937 Exposition des Arts et Techniques dans la vie moderne included and defined the colonies within this newly valorized French Empire. Because of the new specificity of Obus plans "B" and "C" in terms of the political geography of Algiers, they will be analyzed to determine how they may have functioned as effective models within the competing views on Algiers and how they responded to the alternative and ultimately successful plan by Prost & Socard which was voted a public utility in 1937.
Chapter four, will trace the evolution of Le Corbusier's "blueprints" for the new Algiers within the official and collaborative position which he assumed in Algiers in 1938 and his political advocacy and involvement in Vichy after June 1940 where his earlier representations were reinvested with an altered significance. Between 1938 and 1942 Le Corbusier worked for Algiers under slightly different circumstances. He had, for the first time, after much lobbying of Metropolitan political figures, an official commission as an advisor on the Committee for the Regional Plan of Algiers and he began collaborating with Algiers' chief engineer, Renaud. By 1939 he had produced two much reduced plans, Obus "D" and "E," which he inserted cinematically into the 1940 Exposition France Outre-mer, held at the Grand Palais in Paris and for which he was one of the curators. After June 1940 Le Corbusier worked within the context of Vichy organizations. His interventions in Algiers after May 1941 were authorized, he felt, by the position which he had garnered from Vichy as a member of the Study Commission for Questions Relating to Housing and Building. This chapter will analyze the effects of this truce with both local and Metropolitan policies and representatives, and attempt to identify the limits of Le Corbusier's Modernism. That is, it will be concerned with the sources and motivation for the alterations to the Obus plans through time and their relationship to the definition and representation of the colonial subject at a time of disturbed and anxious concerns about the integrity of the nation.

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In summary, it is to be emphasized that an identification of the most prominent features of the plans as simply colonialism could confine their interpretation to the colonial policies of Maréchal Lyautey, and his architect Prost. It would fail to explain the very real differences understood to exist by their Algiers and Metropole public between the Algiers plans of Prost and those by Le Corbusier. It would be to miss the point of the very large dissimilarities between the architectural products and cultural positions which each
represented. Prost and Le Corbusier understood their work to be in hostile camps in the
debate over modern urbanism and what it meant in Algiers in the 1930s. As a result, both
pursued, first openly and then more discreetly, an oppositional polemic. Later historians
would oppose Prost and Le Corbusier as representatives of culturalist or progressivist
positions, both distinguishing and setting the limits of their actions.52 But one of the major
problems which must be addressed is the nature of the difference between Prost and Le
Corbusier and how it was a significant one with respect to the colonial project of France.
Understanding these plans as simply colonial, a generic production of colonial domination,
would also be a simplification leaving still unexplored the mechanism by which
conservative and modern planning operated. It would fail to address the issue of context, of
how these plans worked to position modernist avant-garde architectural practice in a certain
way and the limits of that production.

To begin with, what crises in colonialism made a radical departure from previous
architectural representations necessary? Algiers as a site for the production of meaning
about colonialism, be it avant-garde or conservative, by the Metropole or colon society,
was an unstable ground. The French immigrant population was no less divided than that in
the Metropole where there were both colonialists and anti-colonialists. In Algeria those
granted French citizenship were divided with respect to the priorities to be given to State
intervention in economic development and policies toward the Moslem Algerians. There
also existed a Moslem population, in Algeria and France, that was divided into Pro-
nationalist and pro-French groups— the "evolved" and the masses. Various positions were
taken by the Oulema (Moslem religious leaders), by businessmen, elected officials, and
nationalists. During the 1930s nationalist groups first in the Metropole and then later in
Algeria and across North Africa grew and solidified their positions. The Étoile nord-
africaine founded in Paris in 1926, banned in 1929 and reconstituted in 1933 when its

52François Choay, Urbanisme, réalités, et utopies, 1965.
influence in Algeria began, was more influential than ever. Moslem newspapers multiplied, a growing number of them in Arabic. Demonstrations became more frequent as the Moslem peoples increasingly utilized the public arena to present their views; some of the demands made would be relevant to any plan for the city having a regard for Moslem interests: self-determination of the mosques, schools for Arabic instruction, and housing appropriate to Islamic customs and beliefs.

Clearly, Le Corbusier's plans for Algiers were framed by the colonial context in which they were formulated and shared this and several other aspects with competing plans for the city. However, they did express an architectural idea which was significantly differentiated from those of his competitors as an alternative "blueprint" for colonial society. Both Le Corbusier's plans and those of the municipal administration, that is the plans of Prost & Rotival, and later Socard, had in common the sites chosen for intervention. All looked to those sites repeatedly identified as important to the type of social and economic structure desired by French colonists in the past. They shared the colonizer's predilection for the Marine District as the traditional site of cultural intermingling; the port with its commerce; and the hills with the class segregation which they had provided. Both assumed the uneven development of free market land exploitation and of varied levels of state intervention. The planning concepts--hygiene and modernized infrastructure, for example--were however, even to Le Corbusier's mind, sufficiently similar such that he could find his ideas in that of his opponents by 1936 and by 1937, and was willing to collaborate with the municipal administration's planners. However, there were great differences between the architectural and urban ideas--expression of innovative technology, non-historicized form, aesthetics--expressed by Le Corbusier and those of his competitors. The latter drew their architectural and urban concepts from Beaux Arts traditions: enlarged axes fronted by conventional, familiar, buildings and a scattering of small squares and gardens envisioned within a closed system delimited by the immediate area designated for redevelopment (Figure 6). Le
Corbusier's plan contained free-standing buildings of remarkable height within a park-like setting, a distribution which drew upon technological and material advancements in progressive Western nations and which was influenced less by a French national institution, the French Academy or the French Society of Urbanists, than it was by an international body, the CIAM which monitored architectural and urban production by its members and throughout the world. It is perhaps in this international consciousness or surveillance, and idealism, that the appeal, and ultimate defeat, of Le Corbusier's plans resides. The plans were proposed at a time when even the most ardent supporters of colonialism and Empire recognized the need for change; when Pierre Lyautey concluded that the expansion of the French Empire, to which his father Maréchal Lyautey had so extensively contributed, was over; when the most prominent French theorist of colonization, Albert Sarraut, articulated a need for change, the reorganization and redirection of the colonial Empire; and when many "sought accommodation to a newly reapportioned world view where the geographic sweep of imperialism was no longer considered a noble gesture."53

In the aftermath of the First World War solutions to the ideological problem of colonization and empire had been sought and a new, enlarged perspective on colonies in general had developed. The mandate system had introduced an internationalization of colonial affairs through the principle of accountability to the League of Nations and greatly sensitized colonialists to outside opinion.54 The affect of this new forum for the colonial enterprise in Algeria can perhaps best be conveyed by two simple but telling examples. In 1919 Emir Khaled, in hopes of improving the situation in Algeria, appealed not to the French President but to Woodrow Wilson, a key proponent of League supervision of colonial development in the interests of "a world safe for democracy," thus indicating the enlarged

54 Betts, France and Decolonisation 24.
international sphere in which this Algerian Moslem felt he could have most effect. The second example is the competition that developed between Germany and France in the 1930s as they attempted to legitimate their respective positions in the European system of power by an appeal to international public opinion. In the 1920s Albert Sarraut would claim for France, and with full cognizance of this altered international forum, that:

Colonizing France does not only work for itself; its advantage is confounded with the world's advantage; its efforts must be as beneficial to the colonies as to itself, for there France assures economic betterment and human development.55

Albeit more rhetorical reaction than practicable response to the problems of Empire in the inter-war years, it does betray a need to heed this unprecedented international surveillance. It is perhaps here that the appeal of Le Corbusier's images for a new Algiers might be found; they too promised to catch the gaze of a disinterested international elite which, attracted to its advanced technological shimmer and vistas onto past cultures and future economies, would see such "betterment" and "development" rather than purely national interest.

Finally, a comment about the title to this thesis, "Le Corbusier, Negotiating Modernity: Representing Algiers 1930-1942." One question which must be addressed is that of Modernism and its avant-gardes and why they are found in Algiers. It has been argued that modernity is both essentially Western and fundamentally colonalist in implication, both being products of an expansionist industrial capitalism.56 Nezar AlSayyad has investigated

55Albert Sarraut. La mise en valeur des colonies françaises (Paris, 1923) 91, quoted in Betts, France and Decolonisation 23.
this proposition within the arena of modern colonial architecture and urbanism and concludes with a qualified refutation of its Western essence while concurring with its colonial aspirations. The collapsing of modernism and colonialism into a totalizing view disallows an avant-garde practice or utopian sphere and it leaves unexplained the function which such constructs might serve in Western production--in this instance the built environment. While not denying the systematic paradigm offered by AlSayyad, a more complex understanding of the relationship of Modernism and avant-garde architecture to colonization is required. That is not to condone such architecture and urbanism by recourse to a distanced and disinterested avant-garde, problematic in itself, but to open up the discussion. To do so is to allow closer scrutiny of the notion of an avant-garde or utopia, so important to Western architecture and where a significant contestational "space" has conventionally been assigned.

An example of such scrutiny applied to the Modernist model of the city is James Holston's analysis of Brasilia. Holston has identified Brasilia's design as stemming from a Modernism "defined as a set of critical attitudes, the disenchantment of the avant-gardes--dada, surrealism, constructivism, futurism--which stood against European capitalism and its bourgeois society." He continues, Modernism's "intent was subversive--its aim--disrupt the imagery of what bourgeois society understood as the "real" and the natural, to defamiliarize, decode, disorient, de-authenticate, the normative, moral, aesthetic and familiar categories of social life." Although Le Corbusier drew from these avant-gardes, Constructivism and Futurism particularly, and used their techniques of fragmentation, shock and montage, he was, never, ideologically, a colleague among them and maintained an admiration for certain aspects of traditional and vernacular architecture. However, the city of which Holston speaks, Brasilia, was a product of both Le Corbusier's ideas and

direct influence there, and CIAM principles. In addition, Holston's proposal that "to juxtapose the familiar and the strange in a systematic description of the world's cultural diversity is to erode the prejudices of the former while increasing the respect for the latter,"... to show "that culture-history-truth-making are contested domains of power... ideas that relativise the foundation of the natural and real wherever these are claimed" suggests how their reading from an avant-garde position might be formulated. It recommends that we look carefully at Le Corbusier's strange and estranged juxtaposition of Western and Islamic city in the light of avant-garde tactics, and their limitations. It also cautions against falling into the trap of finding fault with architects and urbanists so as to leave intact the commissioning, professional, and political systems which gave power to their position and presence. Finally it is useful to keep in mind Foucault's response when asked if there were any examples where an architect was successful in proposing a liberating architecture:

Up to a point there is Le Corbusier, who is described today--with a sort of cruelty that I find perfectly useless--as a sort of crypto-Stalinist. He was, I am sure, someone full of good intentions or what he did was in fact dedicated to liberating effects. Perhaps the means that he proposed were in the end less liberating than he thought, but, once again, I think that it can never be inherent in the structure of things to guarantee the exercise of freedom. The guarantee of freedom is freedom.

The task is therefore to understand the limitations imposed on the "liberating effects" proposed by the plans and on the usefulness of avant-garde propositions in a non-Western context.

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59 Holston, The Modern City 6.
Chapter One: The Poetics of Place, the Pragmatics of Power.

It is no more a matter of tracing influences and continuities, or of delineating a canon, corpus or oeuvre, but rather of calculating the conditions and constraints under which certain productions of meaning can, or cannot, emerge, take effect, and have consequences for the overlapping fields of practices and relations across which they erupt. (John Tagg.)

Introduction

The argument will now trace the relationships between those imaginative but nevertheless disciplined, formally structured and culturally regulated representations of Algiers, that is, the "poetics" of its conception and expression, and the institutions, bureaucracies and political forums through which power was pragmatically exercised. The reference to the "poetics of place" also seeks to convey something of the manner in which Algiers existed, spatially and figuratively, in the French imagination and, at the same time, how this contributed to the exercise of economic, cultural and political power. Viewed as reciprocating agencies, the juxtaposition of the "poetic" and "pragmatic" realms provides the opportunity to comprehend and register the exchanges of meaning that occurred between them.

What I mean by "poetics" is the general and disciplined, imaginative and repeated, representations given to Algiers which claim to be aesthetic, "free," non-political, and non-instrumental. In contemporary usage the term has been assigned many meanings ranging from one related specifically to literary criticism and a general theory of literature, to one of a more flexible conceptual structure interested in an interdisciplinary relevance, as well as to

a meaning that harks back to Heidegger's opposition and eventual reconciliation of poiesis and techné. 2 That the relationship of the poietic to the pragmatic might be a significant consideration in the evaluation of Le Corbusier's Obus plans has been noted both half-consciously in vague references to the architect as a poet in the 1930s and more self-consciously in articulate disquisitions on the subject in the 1980s. Although poetry and poetics are not synonymous, they share, if distantly and rather ambiguously, in both etymology and common parlance, a concern with the demarcation of an imaginative realm from that of instrumental reason, or the transcendent from the prosaic, the universal and essential truth or authority from the transitory.3 While critics writing in the 1930s posed Le Corbusier as a poet to mark his distinction from hard-line functionalism, Tafuri, writing in the 1980s, proposes Le Corbusier's Obus plans as an expression of poiesis, that is, the architect's comprehension of the distancing and alienation that follow in the wake of technology, techné, and his attempts to offset it.4 Tafuri suggests that a select number of Le Corbusier's projects, among them the Obus plans, attempted to break from an

2See "poetics" in A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms, ed. Roger Fowler (New York: Routledge & Kegan, rev. ed. 1987) 184. Linda Hutcheon, A Poetics of Postmodernism, History. Theory. Fiction (New York: Routledge, 1988) ix, xii. Hutcheon also clarifies that she is not intending poetics in a structuralist sense of the word in that she wishes to go "beyond the study of literary discourse to the study of cultural practice and theory." (14). Poetics is a term whose modern meaning has been transposed from literary criticism where it refers to the quest for, or analysis of, the universals and general laws of the various literary genres with an aim to establish a general theory of literature to less specific and varied concerns. It expresses a concern to identify the general properties which make literature possible; it is related to questions of style. Linda Hutcheon uses poetics to mean "a flexible conceptual structure," which allows "the general characteristics found across a wide spectrum of genre and media to establish 'essential' defining characteristics that structure postmodernism," which happens to be the object of her analysis. She opposes poetics as "an open, ever-changing theoretical structure by which to order both our cultural knowledge and our critical procedures" to any fixed and fixing definition of the objects to be studied. Others have also fashioned their own meaning for the term.

3Perhaps the influence of structuralism in the 1980s explains the spate of titles indicating a concern with poetics, in space (Bachelard); in post-modernism (Linda Hutcheson); in cultural anthropology (James Clifford) in architecture (Manfredo Tafuri, Helene Lipstadt).

4Manfredo Tafuri, "Ville. Machine et mémoire: la ville dans l'oeuvre de Le Corbusier," Le Corbusier: une encyclopédie (Paris: Editions Centre Georges Pompidou, 1987) 460-469. For an informative analysis and critique of this essay by Tafuri see Helene Lipstadt and Harvey Mendelsohn "The Poietic in Contemporary Architectural Culture: Le Corbusier, Heidegger, and Manfredo Tafuri, International Research Symposium: Architecture and Culture (Ottawa, Carleton, 1992) 340. Heidegger defines poiesis with a constellation of significations. It is something which "brings forth," that "constructs." However, it is not just the physical expression of that bringing forth but also a "revealing" and a "truth:" a revealing of nature not a challenge to it. For an example of the 1930s reference to Le Corbusier as a "poet" see Jacques Felze, "L'architecture, art eminemment social," Chantiers nord-africains (July 1933): 715-17.
instrumental conceptualization of nature which objectified and alienated everything it considered through a valuing of "Otherness." Tafuri is drawing upon Heidegger who, subsequent to Le Corbusier's efforts, articulated the relationship of modern technology to poiesis. Heidegger stated: "The poetical brings the true into the splendor... Because the essence of technology is another technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it... Such a realm is art." However, the poetics of place evidenced in Algiers suggests not a final confrontation with technology, and the West, but its continued although troubled collaboration and development.

The poetics of colonial representation and a pragmatic dispersal of power defined both Algeria and Algiers. Poetics and power were strands of the same colonial material; the poetic gave efficacy to power while power bestowed an aptness on the poetic. The intention in plotting their interrelationship is to establish the basis from which Le Corbusier began his conceptualization of Algiers through his particular design for spaces that were cultural and economic as well as formal expressions. The topographical views, landscape sketches, references to a Mediterranean ethos and images of the female figure were stock items of military stratagems, voyages, film, literature and journalism, to name just a few (Figure 12). Each represented a genre which Le Corbusier employed in the presentations of his Algiers projects (Figure 13). The architect made textual references to Algiers that resounded with often repeated refrains about the city: the common conventions of the "white city" of the Casbah, the "mystery" of Islamic women, the "refuge" of the courtyard

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5 The other projects included in this category are: the Beistegui roof terrace, the Femmes d'Alger, and Chandigarh. They are given as examples within Le Corbusier's oeuvre which are exceptions, not because they are inconsistent with his planning theory and statements but rather are so because they seek to resolve other issues, to break with the tyranny of technology as an objectifying device. Tafuri, "Machine et mémoire."

house, the "Capital of Africa," the "Capital of a new Mediterranean Federation," a key city of a renewed "French Empire." Beyond Algiers were the M'zab and the Sahara that both the architect and Western tradition imbued with a purity and simplicity of life not found in Europe nor in what was considered the corrupted North African societies of the coastal area. These were fragments of pre-existing, culturally embedded and mythic constructions of Algiers that served very specific functions in the relationship of the colony to the Metropole. Le Corbusier's constant reference to topography and geography evoked spatial myths that were, as will be explored here, poignantly understood in the Metropole from which he had come.

The representations and understandings offered by the poetic imagination are especially relevant to any consideration of Le Corbusier's involvement with Algiers. He was at this time casting himself as the poet in contradistinction to the intractable functionalists of *Neue Sachleitike*, thus the poetic and imaginary realms were useful to Le Corbusier in his articulation of what constituted Modern architecture and urbanism. His supporters constantly referred to him as a poet, articles in *Chantiers nord-africains* made pointed references to this characteristic of his work. However, what constituted the modernity of Algiers was not always clear in the imaginative evocations of the city available to him in the inter-war years, just as it was not clear in the political and economic discussions of a modern Algeria. The representations of Algiers in literature, film and the popular press formed what John Tagg has identified as the "conditions and constraints under which certain productions of meaning (could) emerge."

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7 Le Corbusier, letter to Bruat (sic), 11 Oct. 1932, Archives of the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris. (Hereafter AFLC) In 1929 Le Corbusier wrote that: "For a year or two I feel I have been denounced like a poet, like a lyric poet without rules, like a man lost in his time." cited in Giorgio Ciucci, "The Invention of the Modern Movement," *Oppositions* 24 (Spring 1981): 83.
8 For example, Jacques Feltze, "L'architecture, art eminence social," *Chantiers nord-africains* (July 1933): 715-17.
9 Tagg, Grounds of Dispute 118.
"Algiers" and "Algeria" were ambiguous propositions referring to different ideas according to colonial policy or national need. As the requirements of power altered over the period from 1830 to 1942, so too did the representations given to Algiers and Algeria; alternative definitions and images also coexisted, accumulations through time that would serve the different interest groups involved in the colony. The period under consideration is marked, temporally, by both the introduction and growth of the cinema which recast the colonies of North Africa within its fictive structures and the creation of a vast propaganda network by the French Minister of Colonies with its institutional, technical and performative displays. Situated on the south shores of the Mediterranean, it was also marked spatially within what the French Algerian Gabriel Audisio would understand to be in 1935, "a liquid continent," an apt term for a site that eluded a consensual placement and representation.

In terms of cultural urban representation Algiers was, symbolically at least, already a French city when Le Corbusier arrived in 1930. Street names, such as those of French battles "Marengo" and "Isly," or French Generals such as "Randon," or French ideals such as "République," and "Liberté," or of French cities, "Chartres" and "Orléans," had already replaced Arabic names and clearly marked French possession of the city by the 1860s. Statues of Generals and French heroes of colonization demarcated and oriented denizens within it. Another form of possession existed in a colon dialect, pataouète, and literature.

pied noir, both of which existed before World War II.\textsuperscript{14} An idea of French North Africa as the "melting pot," annealing a new people, a race superior in intelligence and energy, which excluded Arabs and Moslems, had already been popularized by André Gide, among others.\textsuperscript{15}

The problem, in the 1930s, might have been perceived more as one of keeping Algiers French than in making it so. The European population, which had dominated the city, began to diminish sharply. Where there had once been seven Europeans for every Moslem there were now only six, as the inter-war period saw both the influx of Moslems--Arabs Berbers and Kabyles from the bled, the "wastelands," from which they had been displaced by forced land transfers and the financial depredations of large landowners--and the decrease in European immigration. The proportion of Moslems to Europeans would continue to grow throughout the decade. Moslem Algerians also added to the increasing numbers of the educated elite and military veterans who sought positions in the city. What was alarming to the colons was that, with political promises of assimilation, these Moslem Algerians could, in the not too distant future, overwhelm them in those democratic institutions which had once protected colon privileges. Histories of the city by J.-P. Faure, René Lèspes and the 1930 Cahiers du Centenaire commented repeatedly upon this heavy migration of Moslem Algerians into urban areas. These new immigrants to the city, overcrowding the Casbah, deforming its original functions, were perceived as a threat to the social structure of the settler city of Algiers. Now an exploited labor force, or


\textsuperscript{15} Prochaska, \textit{Making of Algeria French} 206. Prochaska identifies Algiers as a settler colonial city. As the European sector grew, with increasing population and economic expansion, an articulation and elaboration of the social structure of the city was necessary. With the greater complexity of the city, parallel structures for the separation of ethnic and racial groups were required. Supervised contact would be affected via these 'intercalary' institutions and places, which separated and coordinated. He asserts that a panoply of settler political organs with or against official government developed. (22) "Intercalary" structure may be a useful concept to apply to the Amis d'Alger and the various groups involved in the development of Algiers. The "intercalary" might also be a useful descriptive term for Le Corbusier's Islamic cultural institutions added to the Obus "C" plan.
disappointed professionals, such immigrants were excluded from postcard images of the city, of people, streets and monuments and reconstituted as a potentially frightening descriptive presence in urban demographics. Both postcard and demographic representations are abstractions, culturally muted masks for the social and economic system that produced them. Yet it was to such constructions that Le Corbusier turned in his analysis of the problems confronting urban planning in Algiers.

Between 1930 and 1942 Le Corbusier gave expression to his impressions of North Africa and Algiers through an array of media: postcards, sketches, film, among others. Le Corbusier used postcards, often of nineteenth-century vintage, as one basis for his imaging of the city. His personal archive contained over one hundred postcards of North Africa; those depicting women far out-numbered those of a purely architectural interest. Views of veiled women in narrow Casbah streets and cloistered interiors predominated. Only one postcard presented men, and no doubt its architectural setting, a Moorish bath, was its attraction. Among his collection were scènes et types postcards which portrayed non-European ethnic groups in primitive non-industrial occupations (Figure 14), and women were shown in sexually revealing poses (Figure 15) and as accessories to forbidden spaces (Figure 16). The traditional city, the Casbah, was characterized as a picturesque precinct of dark and narrow streets, decaying ornament, impenetrable moucharabieh and grilled windows, children and veiled women (Figure 17). Its spaces were seemingly bereft of men. The Casbah was temporally isolated, contained literally and figuratively outside the

17 Prochaska, "L'Algérie Imaginaire" 77, notes a discrepancy between the postcard representation in "scènes et types" and the census records of occupations in the city of Bône, with a disproportionate number of vagabonds and prostitutes over industrial workers etc. He also asserts that women are commodified as sex objects, shown as implicitly inferior to men and that this representation was meant to recapitulate a more general inferiority of the Algerian to the European. These postcards are an example of specific discursive practices where the construct of mental types and the strategies of the picturesque are combined.
progressive time of the European city (Figure 18 and Figure 19). Such postcards offered subtle forms of possession. They exoticized while they distanced politically, culturally and temporally the non-European occupants of the city.

The predominance of postcards with Moslem Algerian women as their subject matter in Le Corbusier's archive was more than a personal fantasy. Women were a chief focus of postcard production in Algiers. The *scenes et types* rubric gathered representatives of *femmes Kabyles, Mauresque, Bedouine* and *arabes voilées* (Figure 20). From the *Vie Quotidienne* series there were Moorish women on the terrace, women dressing, dancing, cooking (Figure 21). These images conform to what David Prochaska has termed an "informal economy" of prostitutes, vagabonds, and dancers, and rely on picturesque conventions rather than on what might be termed a documentary "realism."  

This "informal economy" however, has broader cultural signification. The denigrating and destructive aspects of these "imaginative" and "poetic" representations and the manner in which they served the colonial project specifically as "illustrated forms of colonial discourse" has been argued by Malek Alloula, a post-independence Algerian poet living in France. He passionately and persuasively conveys the effects suffered by Moslem Algerians due to these seemingly benign tourist mementos and fantastic photographic documents. Alloula reveals these postcards to be a deeply felt provocation to Moslem cultural honour. The models for the postcards, usually posed and dressed according to Western fantasies of traditional life, functioned as symbols for all Algerian women; their visual capture, by the Western photographer or tourist, a metaphor for the possession of the city and the land. Postcards record, in their studio conceits created by and for the

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18 AFLC.
19 Prochaska, "L'Algérie Imaginaire" 77.
Western psyche, the "distorting effects in Algerian society" of the French presence as it produced a profound falsification of the social order.20

Recent studies describe such depictions of women and private space as key signifiers in the colonial strategy of usurpation and domination, where they served as a "surrogate for and means to the political and military conquest of the Arab world."21 Alloula, has described the way in which these postcards also trafficked in political innuendo, of defeat and, in their languishing denizens and harem life-style, of despotic rule.22 For Alloula, the fragmented and reconfigured world portrayed was a "simulacrum of colonial desire," where what was left out was the power and prohibition of the Moslem male; the postcards implied by his absence, both his defeat and that of the Moslem nation.23

All of the postcards cited above, which illustrated not only the classifying, naming and organizing objectives of their colonial commerce, but also their deceptively documentary and fantastic aspect, were collected by Le Corbusier. Such postcards, with all the deception and French longing that they incorporated and reflected, would become part of the documentary legitimation for his designs (Figure 22). Le Corbusier, thus unconsciously or consciously, accepted the representation of the city by its simulacra of Algerian women and their absent men, and constructed his avant-garde city accordingly. In so doing he re-established the connection between the phantasm and the political agenda

21 Harlow, "Preface" xv
which is the function of the postcard.24 And, if further proof were needed of Le
Corbusier's acceptance of the general ideological and colonial structure indicated in the
postcard, included in his archive of North African postcards was a "phantasm" of Obus
"A" blocked-out for the printer where it could be mass produced, labeled and entered into
the colonial world of the postcard, and travel between colony and Metropole, where it too
would form what Alloula has called "a defense of the colonial spirit."25

Le Corbusier's first trip to Algiers initiated a twelve year obsession not only with reforming
the very contours of its architecture and plan, but of creating a bulwark for the "colonial
spirit." It also inaugurated another obsession, which in different ways gave expression to
that colonial spirit, his Femmes d'Alger series of drawings, paintings and murals (Figure
23). Its subject matter and theme mark the confluence of postcard images, personal
experience and high art. As the postcards directed, Le Corbusier went to the Casbah in
search of exotic subject matter.26 Sketches made there of young women, their poses
conforming Le Corbusier's dictates, were then reworked, first according to the artistic
lessons learned from the study of Delacroix's Femmes d'Alger, a painting given much
publicity in 1930 as part of the centenary celebrations of the French "taking" of Algeria.
Later, in 1937, Le Corbusier's interest in the subject was reawakened by another study of
conquest, Picasso's black and white mural Guernica. He continued to work on this theme
until his death in 1965. What is most interesting about the Femmes d'Alger is its genesis
and the associations which radiated out from that origin for the architect-painter. Le
Corbusier's theme had first been conceived as Femmes de la Casbah in emulation of the

24Harlow, "Preface" xv.
26The two main accounts of this foray into the Casbah are given by Samir Rafi "Le Corbusier et les
Femmes d'Alger," and Stanilaus von Moos, "Le Corbusier as Painter," they are mostly interested in the
stylistic changes initiated at this time with the rediscovery of the nude and Le Corbusier's position within
the historical treatment of this theme. Rafi stresses Le Corbusier's continuing Purist preoccupations with
contour and standardization, von Moos emphasizes the cosmic laws which are expressed in the conflation of
woman with nature, the particular and the universal. Neither author is concerned with the political or social
aspects of the works. Both do note the derivation of the theme in postcards, Delacroix's painting of the
same subject and later Picasso's.
supposed brothel inspiration of Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*. This initial title suggests that Le Corbusier believed the mythic representation of the postcards, and readily perceived the city in terms of the seduction and subduing of women. This is especially poignant when the *Femmes d'Alger* were recast in the afterglow of *Guernica* as a surrogate for military and political subjugation. As Le Corbusier retraced his images he divested them of their specificity, standardized their forms, reduced them to contour lines and overlapping shapes, while he captured them within a centralized and closed space. These *Femmes d'Alger* were also stripped of their veils, and as such reverberate with establishment positions on women and empire as well as assumptions on the dominance of French culture.

For many Moslem Algerians the veil was not just a prop for Orientalist reverie, it was an opaque border, a screen between public and private space, traditional and modern life, retained by the Moslems. It played complex symbolic roles in both the relations between Europeans and Moslems and within Moslem society itself. The veil became a central issue in the 1930s, shaping debates on citizenship in the French Senate and discussions of the Islamic way of life among the Oulema of Algeria; it symbolized both the contradictory aims of and conflict between modernism and tradition. It is in this context that something of the resonance of Le Corbusier's *Femmes d'Alger*, seemingly liberated from their veils and Orientalist decor, might be established.

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These figures in fact existed within a French tradition that unveiled Moslem Algerian women in an attempt to dismantle Islamic society, and take possession of its city and land. As Octave Dupont wrote on the eve of the centenary celebrations:

As long as...the miserable condition of the native woman is not improved, as long as endogamy causes Muslim society to close in on itself, the door to this society will open to outside influence only with difficulty. We can attempt rapprochement and fusion, but these efforts are liable to weaken, if not shatter, at the feet of this woman, unyielding and faithful guardian of the home, its traditions and, in a word, the preservation and conservation of the race.28

Thus, Moslem women were understood to be both a site of resistance and of vulnerability. The postcard views, like Le Corbusier's assault on the Casbah, feigned to make visible what the opacity of the veil hid and to render defeated the resistance to assimilation that it symbolized. However, as Frantz Fanon, David C. Gordon and Winifred Woodhull have explained, the veiling of women in Moslem culture was also an act of defiance against the West and a unifying symbol for the East.

Contrastingly, the Femmes d'Alger are modern women, although only within the limits that Le Corbusier allowed. They are representatives of nature and the irrational, rather than of culture and the rational, and they unified a Western audience around them.29 In ways similar to the postcards which preceded them, the conception and subsequent development of Le Corbusier's Femmes d'Alger, engaged in the colonial project:

Far from merely giving voice to a preexisting colonial ideology of justifying violence serving "real" economic and political interests, postcards articulate a dream of ravishment, a colonizing desire that not only invests and orients

administrative activity but helps to produce the interests it serves, for example by establishing a libidinal charged solidarity between colons divided by class, ethnicity, and nationality. And since postcards form part of the growing tourist industry and the everyday correspondence between France and its colony, they also forge ideologically loaded bonds between the French in Algeria and those in the metropolitan center. In short, they work to make *L'Algérie Française* a credible proposition.³⁰

The various forms of Le Corbusier's representations of the *Femmes d'Alger*—sketch, mural, painting, high art and popular print—also served to unite an elite audience in the Metropole and colony around the subject of a seemingly autonomous work of art and a more professional audience around the urban and aesthetic theory of "organicism" which the conflation of the nude drawings and the Obus plans declared and seemingly confirmed.³¹

For a Moslem Algerian nationalist audience just nascent in the 1930s, the *Femmes d'Alger* works would not evoke the organic unity it did for Le Corbusier's supporters. Instead, the representations, and the act which precipitated them, would be understood by this public as a contravention of the Moslem code of honor. Such images of unveiled Moslem women would however, contribute to the catalogue of images by which a nation degraded by France was identified and in contradistinction to which the Algerian nation came to define itself. It should be noted that more recent feminist discussion identifies the danger inherent in casting veiled women as the symbol of not just tradition but also the nation, and which must thereby serve as the "containment of significant changes... in the name of a patriarchy which has become the woof and warp of Algerian political culture," and "in the name of

³⁰ Woodhull, "Unveiling Algeria" 121-122.
³¹ Most accounts of the Obus plans attribute to their forms a greater organic quality which in turn is accounted for by one or all of three things: the new interest in the nude figure in which the *Femmes d'Alger* are usually cited, the distancing experience of the airplane viewpoint, and his Regional Syndicalist political beliefs. See von Moos, "Le Corbusier as Painter," Tafuri, "Machine et mémoire," and Mary McLeod, "Le Corbusier and Algiers." *Oppositions* 16/17 (Summer 1980): 79.
national cohesion and stability.\textsuperscript{32} What this serves to point out is the complex ground on which these images were made and continued to function. Veiled, these women might be read as actors within a vital tradition unsubjected to the West and its modernism; unveiled they might be understood as trophies taken from a subjugated Moslem world. \textsuperscript{33}

Le Corbusier's aim, according to Samir Rafi writing in 1968, was to produce standard forms which would allow infinite variety, forms that could, like the postcard or his mass produced houses, be created "en serie."\textsuperscript{34} The women of Algiers, perhaps ultimately less exotic than their postcard sisters, were, nevertheless, products of the colonial "gaze." Now captured by drawing, "the masculine sex of art" according to Charles Blanc, an author much studied by Le Corbusier, and quoted by von Moos in his 1980s exegesis on the drawings, the women are still projections of Western fantasies onto the colonial context, and this is recalled in the persistence of their title.\textsuperscript{35} In contemporary historiography the women are to be understood as metaphors of nature, as one expression of the architect's desire to harmonize urbanism with a cosmic plan.\textsuperscript{36} In such accounts the \textit{Femmes d'Alger} may no longer serve to evoke and contain the "Other" of Algeria which, by 1937 and the


\textsuperscript{33}However, as contemporary feminists have noted, once resurrected, that Moslem world was another patriarchy where women must be veiled in self-protection against "the fundamentalist charge of fitna, the dangerous force that disrupts the community of believers." Woodhull, "Unveiling Algerian" 116. This issue will be returned to in chapter four.

\textsuperscript{34}Rafi, "Le Corbusier et les Femmes d'Alger" 61.

\textsuperscript{35}von Moos, "Le Corbusier as Painter" 100. Von Moos describes the mural paintings thus: "swells, twists, contortions, and dangerous mutilations of the bodies in the paintings of the thirties announce the explosion of dark, stormy feelings. Monstrous figures with mountainous limbs are often threatened by tool-like objects and pieces of cord (cordage), a sense of demonic masquerade revels in their ecstatic gestures: parody and pathos, despair and strength." 95.

\textsuperscript{36}von Moos, "Le Corbusier as Painter" 99. In this, Le Corbusier's \textit{Femmes d'Alger} also functions in a similar manner, ideologically rather than stylistically, to Matisse's Odalisques of the 1920s where women are equated with nature and contrasted with men and culture, where women are equated with immanence, men are equated with transcendence. Matisse's Odalisques perform a double function, they convey through the male artist's transformation of raw matter into culture, the virility of the artist and as representations of Oriental women, they insist on the subjugation of Eastern culture to that of the West. See Marilyn Lincoln Board, "Constructing Myths and Ideologies in Matisse's Odalisques," \textit{Genders} 5 (Summer 1989): 21-49; Roger Benjamin, "Matisse in Morocco: A Colonizing Esthetic?" \textit{Art in America} (November 1987): 157-164, 211, 213; Kenneth E. Silver, "Matisse's Retour à l'ordre," \textit{Art in America} (June 1987): 111-122, 167.
military and social aftermath of Guernica, was a threat less easy to sublimate with surrogate victories. However, in their new forms the Femmes d'Alger were reconfigured by the desire for progress marked by the constant evolution of their dismembered forms as they became subsumed into the "tableau machine," a sophisticated restatement of assimilation. They were also according to Tafuri, a significant basis for Le Corbusier's rethinking of the Obus plans.

A similar desire to standardize and harmonize with mathematical formula is recorded in Le Corbusier's quick sketches of landscapes and villages made on forays across North Africa; they are annotated with measurements and references to both architectural components and social contents (Figure 24). They do not record the Moslem laws which determined window dispositions and size, for example, or the social processes facilitated by these apertures. They are instead translated into the terms of Western mathematical traditions. These sketches and the postcards, appended to Le Corbusier's plans and projects, became the basis for his theoretical pronouncements. With such an easy transference of imagery from the popular realm of tourist memento to theoretical construct and then into built form, it is clearly important to understand something of the way in which such images may have functioned in the cultures for which Le Corbusier designed. None of these images can be divorced from the colonial context and structure that produced them; they are not innocent. Travel writing, literature, film and photography functioned within the colonial milieu in quite specific ways; to their products meanings adhered which were neither necessarily nor entirely re-semanticized by Le Corbusier's use of them.

37 Rafi, "Le Corbusier et les Femmes d'Alger" 61.
39 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks, preface by André Wogenscky; intro. by Maurice Besset; notes by Françoise de Francieu, vol. 1, 1914-1948 (New York: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982) 21, (entry 454). In his sketchbook recording his trip across North Africa, Mozabite was distinguished from Arab and more significantly, the former was elevated above the latter according to the hierarchy imposed by colonial discourse. For a discussion of the different ethnic groups residing in Algeria see Pierre Bourdieu, trans. C.M., Ross, The Algerians, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962) 37-50.
Le Corbusier's personal archive of postcards, sketchbooks, newspaper clippings, journals and other publications functioned in a comparable fashion. It contained an array of articles selected from Algerian periodicals and newspapers *Travaux Nord-Africains*, *Chantiers nord-africains*, *Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments* and a few articles cut from *La Dépêche algérienne* and *L'Echo d'Alger* that had been sent by his supporters in Algiers. Consisting primarily of articles about or by Le Corbusier and a few on competing projects and recent construction in Algiers, they provided highly edited references to architecture and urban issues in the city. Occasionally, still affixed to them, would be articles on *les affaires indigènes* or on other concerns of the European audience which such publications largely addressed. Le Corbusier's understanding of the Moslem Algerians seemed to rest on these archival fragments—newspaper clippings, the large collection of postcards of Algiers mentioned above, his sketchbooks and perhaps from some of the books contained in his library: Paul Achard's *La vie extraordinaire des Frères Barbaroue, Corsaires et Rois d'Alger*, a translation of *One Thousand and One Nights*, a novel by the Algerian author Edmond Brua, a 1925 copy of René Lespès' *Étude de Géographie et d'Histoire Urbaines*, Edna Nicoll's 1931 *A Travers l'Exposition Coloniale* with its preface by Maréchal Lyautey and *L'Exposition Internationale de Paris en 1931*.41 There were no doubt sources now lost, or undocumented: the visits to the cinema, the exhibitions organized by Georges-Henri Rivère, the reports on Algeria read in Parisian newspapers.

Yet almost more striking are the omissions in, and fragmentary nature of, Le Corbusier's research material on Algiers. He seems to have relied little on sociological reports. Nor is there anything to indicate an interest in the cultural or political aspirations of the Moslem Algerians as they themselves conceived them in the 1930s; nothing remains concerning the debates on colonialism then occurring. None of the critiques against colonial policy in

41 All these books and excerpt articles are found in the Paris Archives of the Fondation Le Corbusier.
North Africa are extant in Le Corbusier's archive. Such critiques would have identified the origins of the poverty that he saw in North Africa not with a racial predilection for the simple life, as Le Corbusier appears to have thought, but with the colonial system itself. Le Corbusier relied instead on his own, albeit brief, foray into the Casbah, a topographical relief model and photographs of the site. He used postcards produced for tourists and others requiring recognizable signposts of the social and varied characteristics of the non-European encountered in the streets of the city. He drew upon the highly selective array of facts pertinent to the development of the city extracted from newspaper reports and won from informers within the Municipal Council. The questionnaire that he and Ernst Mercier created to assess popular opinion on urban issues in Algiers was more a polemic for his own planning policies than a fact-finding mission, it asked leading questions such as: "Alger deviendra-t-elle Capitale de l'Afrique du Nord? Cette expansion d'ALGER se réalisera-t-elle dans un délai de 20 années, de 1932 à 1953?" It is not clear that the Questionnaire was in fact ever carried out and no references to it support any of Le Corbusier's subsequent claims. Instead, his sources were largely popular; they were rarely scientific in the sense of objective studies of health and education requirements for example, and the celebrated financial assessments of his proposals were produced by others.

Le Corbusier's knowledge of Algiers and his consequent representations of the city were clearly based upon these diverse and inconsistent structures of knowledge, orientalist objectification and stereotyping. However, Sibel Bozdaogan has argued that Le Corbusier's views of the Orient, at least in his early 1910-1911 _Voyage de l'Orient_, were

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42 Questionnaire "A," AFLC. There were four questionnaires which merely repeated the questions with slightly different emphases. For example, in Questionnaire "C" the first question was rephrased: "Si l'on admet: Alger, Capitale de l'Afrique du Nord, et sa conséquence: un centre intense de transactions (port, arrière port, habitation des ouvriers du port, cité d'affaires, habitation du personnel de la cité d'affaires), n'y a-t-il pas lieu de considérer Alger, son littoral et son hinterland comme un centre touristique gigantesque que les progrès incessants des transports mettront à disposition facile de l'Europe occidental et centrale?"

43 The firm of J.-P. Faure and Flon did the financial studies for Obus "C," and financial information was provided by Emery and Breuillot.
"not an affirmation of the West by the construction of the East in ways that sought to identify an alien or exotic 'other' based on ontological or epistemological distinctions, such as 'rational/spiritual' or 'progress/stagnation.""  

Le Corbusier is absolved by Bozdogan on two accounts; he did not objectify what he recorded but rather gave expression to his experience of the harmony of time and place, and his knowledge and style were not informed by the institutionally endorsed systems of the academy.  

However, by binary opposition Le Corbusier does contrast the mystical and pre-industrialized Berber to the progressive and technical West; the virile spaces of port and commerce to the spaces of the Casbah that were portrayed as feminine due to their identification with a predominant domestic function and Moslem customs of sequestering women there.  

Algiers during the 1930s was hardly the harmonious place that Le Corbusier claimed. Although not a member of the French Academy, he did bring a knowledge and style informed by the Congrès Internationaux de Architecture Moderne (CIAM) with its Western assumptions and institutional biases. What is to be determined is whether Le Corbusier’s Orientalist references are to be understood as inversions of popular constructions, that is, a critique of Western progress, and if so if this is not but another transference of a Metropole problem onto the colonies. Le Corbusier also based his knowledge of the site on popular representations of Algiers offered by pied noir writers such as Edmond Brua with whom he corresponded in the early 1930s, and occasionally the facts and statistics offered by French institutions. Although not derived from the French Academy his knowledge of Architectural history was greatly influenced by Auguste Perret and Auguste Choisy who not only predisposed him to the fundamentals of Classical architecture proposed by these

47Le Corbusier corresponded with Brua during 1932-35; he also owned a copy of one of Brua's books. Brua was a major supporter of Le Corbusier's work and was very active in the campaign to have his plans actualized. This will be discussed in chapter two.
authors, but also to a more general understanding of architecture in terms of structural progress—a development that Choisy stated was absent in Islamic architecture.  

Richard Ingersoll has pointed out that Le Corbusier had exploited the Orient for its "Otherness" from the early years of his career. He financed his trip to the Orient in 1911 by selling installments of this voyage, and thus catered to and understood the popularity of exotic tourist accounts. He exhibited his water colors in the 1912 Salon d'Automne exhibition "Langage de Pierre," and in his knowledge about Moslem customs and life he drew upon a most renowned nineteenth-century historian, philosopher and Orientalist, Ernest Renan.

In 1931 Le Corbusier was able to add to his sketched observations the following information: "L'oasis des mozabites est le paradis, les cités des arabs au désert sont une déchéance," revealing how susceptible his objective gaze was to essentially colonial racial

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48 Auguste Choisy, *Histoire de l'Architecture*, vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions Vincent et Fréal et Cie), 1954. Choisy establishes that Moslem architecture, while developing in parallel with Byzantine, and from the same Persian sources is completely foreign to Greek architecture. He then goes on to include the familiar stereotypes about Islamic architecture, although less blatantly racist than one of his sources, Sir Bannister Fletcher. Choisy notes that the "Arabs have little inventive spirit" in construction (80) "invention" only occurring when the architecture is produced of a métis mixing of Arab and conquered (109). Although they have an ingenious elegance in vaulting, their predominant concern is decorative (81). He points out the lack of concern for maintenance of monuments among Arabs (108). Choisy concludes his comments on Moslem architecture by implying that its period had finished, that it was an obsolete architecture: "With Moslem architecture we have finished the review of arts deriving from eastern antiquity by direct filiation, the architecture remaining to be discussed belongs to Christian civilization reconstituted after the barbarian invasions; we will find there the basis of antique traditions but revived in the heart of a society rejuvenated and animated by an entirely new spirit, the spirit of analysis of the modern age." It should also be noted that when Choisy speaks about private, as opposed to monumental or public structures, he points out how the Moslem house is similar to the Roman courtyard house, but with a greater separation of public and private spaces. The plan is identified as inspired by Roman, Persian and nomadic life. Of customs which influence the dwelling he points out the importance of the harem(103) the need for defense and the duty of hospitality which demands a vaulted court (khan) in which to invite guests and the caravanserail for quest accommodation as three key determinants of the plan (105). The Casbah, he identifies as a citadel, of tortuous streets, mosques hidden among hovels, monuments in ruins. It is for protections from "within as much as from without." (108).

49 Richard Ingersoll, "to the Editor," *Journal of Architectural Education* 42.4 (Summer 1989): 61. Ingersoll, responding to Bozdogan, also remarks that Le Corbusier derived his brise soleil from the mouchkari feh of Algiers, gallicizing an Algerian form, and that he never intended to reverse the dominant position, although he may have been sympathetic to the culture. Le Corbusier's friend Eric Ritter apparently was also an Orientalist, of unspecified type.

50 Ingersoll, "Letter to the Editor" 61.
distinctions that elevated the Mozabite over Arab, and the sedentary over the nomad, in the French policy of divide and rule.\textsuperscript{51}

Finally, Le Corbusier also explored the use of film as a vehicle through which he might publicize his ideas about Algiers and persuade the public about the merits of his plan.\textsuperscript{52} He first proposed a film to amplify his intentions for the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture held in Algiers in 1933. In 1940 his proposal was, at least partially, realized for the France d'Outre-mer exhibition for which he was one of the curators.\textsuperscript{53} The 1932 proposal offered distanced views of port, military obelisk and Casbah as seen from out at sea. This recreated for its European viewers the route by which the French had conquered Algeria a century before. From afar the Cap d'Alger appeared, the "true" site focused by the camera. Then, using the capabilities of cinematic production, the silhouette of Le Corbusier's proposed skyscraper appeared, etched into the existing silhouette of the city, and with this the film ended.\textsuperscript{54} The later film abstractly montaged the traditional arts and crafts of Moslem Algerians with works of "modern civil engineering characteristic of a modern spirit, dams, bridges, and his new project for the Marine District."\textsuperscript{55} Although these films could be assessed within an avant-garde film tradition—the consumer educational films of the Bauhaus, the experimental aesthetic exercises of Man Ray, the technical and theoretical productions of Eisenstein, or Le Corbusier's promotional films about his own work—they might also be usefully positioned within the established conventions of cinematic representations of colonial North Africa as they existed in France.

\textsuperscript{51}Le Corbusier Sketchbooks, 22 (entry 454). For a description and definition of Mozabite see Pierre Bourdieu, The Algerians, 37-50. The Mozabite inhabit a very inhospitable landscape in the North Sahara. They have been termed the "Protestants and Puritans of Islam." (38)

\textsuperscript{52}Le Corbusier to Ponsich 21 Feb, 1932 and Le Corbusier to Emery, 15 May 1932, AFLC

\textsuperscript{53}Le Corbusier, letter to Emery, 30 Apr. 1940 and Le Corbusier, letter to Renaud 21 May 1940, AFLC.

\textsuperscript{54}The first film was proposed by Le Corbusier in conjunction with the Architecture and Urbanism Exhibition of 1933. He had suggested the film maker Chenel, with whom he had in the past made films including those on his own works. Le Corbusier, letter to Ponsich 21 Feb. 1932, AFLC. The film described above was proposed for the 1936 La Cité Moderne Exhibition. Le Corbusier, letter to Emery, 15 May 1932, AFLC.

\textsuperscript{55}Le Corbusier, letter to Renaud, 21 May 1940, AFLC
in the inter-war years.\textsuperscript{56} What would make the film persuasive, especially in the context of a colonial exhibition, would depend to some extent on the successful employ of familiar cinematic references to the colony.

In the film for the 1940 Exposition de la France d'Outre-mer Le Corbusier offered segmented views of Algiers, intercut with stills of his Obus projects and the Regional Plan as part of a larger presentation of the colonies. After views of the existing city and previous French construction, the camera swept past the nineteenth-century buildings and dense urban fabric, drawing the eye forward in space and through time, to focus on his urban project for the Marine District. In doing so he insinuated his Obus project into the history of French endeavours in Algiers.\textsuperscript{57} He also entered into the world of cinematic representation where highly developed strategies for depicting the colonies and manging the public relations between Metropole and colony had been developed.\textsuperscript{58}


\textsuperscript{57}I have been unable to locate any copies of this film. The description of the film exists in letters from Le Corbusier and Emery. Although documentation in somewhat scanty and any conclusive account impossible, it is still important to consider how this film may have functioned in Le Corbusier's representation of Algiers.

\textsuperscript{58}Algeria was delineated in two cinematic genres, documentary and fictional. Both had their specific conventions and uses, however, the fictional film had the most influence on popular opinion. See Pierre Sorlin, "The Fanciful Empire: French Feature Films and the Colonies in the 1930s," \textit{French Cultural Studies} 2.5 (June 1991): 135. Le Corbusier's film was many ways fictional, despite its use as a documentary within the context of the exhibition.
Pierre Sorlin has claimed that, "(t)he picture-houses were probably the only places where the French could observe the colonial world."59 At least sixty-two films were produced between 1930 and 1939 which had the colonies as their theme. As fictitious or fantastic as these films might appear, recent Algerian cinema critic Abdelghani Megherbi has pointed out their underlying ideological content.60 Where the French historian Sorlin sees the representation, or construction, of a "fanciful Empire," the Algerian critic discerns a colonizing project and Moslem humiliation. Similarly, the colonial and ideological content of Le Corbusier's cinematic portrayals may have been overlooked due to their displacement into the equally inventive realm of the avant-garde.

Le Corbusier did not employ the easily recognizable themes of the fiction films on the colonies--the denigration of the colonized, inter-racial sexual relationships, the colonized woman and European deviants.61 His proposed and executed films did not offer up portrayals of Moslem Algerians as slaves to a primitive culture, held back by Islam and stunted by Turkish occupation; he included no camels or traditionally costumed figures by which to suggest an arrested culture. There were no cunning Arab men or eroticized Moslem women to convey immorality, no ruined aqueducts or churches to evoke a prosperous Latin or Christian past and thereby legitimate French claims to occupation. He depicted no marauding desert tribes by which to call up an irrational foe or suggestions of inter-tribal warfare to justify the presence of the French military. Nor were there illiterate and destitute children in need of the mission civilisatrice.

Although not employing the overwrought plots characteristic of the colonial fiction film there are several ways in which Le Corbusier's films do participate in their colonizing

59 Sorlin, "The Fanciful Empire" 135.
60 Abdelghani Megherbi, Les Algériens au miroir du cinéma colonial(Contributions à une sociologie de la colonisation (Paris:SNED, 1982).
61 The other themes identified by Megherbi are: romance in an exotic setting, the colonizer, Christianity, and the Military. See Megherbi, cinéma colonial 58-60.
As he cinematically added his westernizing project to the lineage of French intervention in Algiers, Le Corbusier also assumed the morality of the French occupation. In focusing attention on the Marine District and the Casbah his fantastic architecture and radical urban surgery might resonate with the heroism of solutions proffered to the seemingly irresolvable problems called up by these sites in other cinematic presentations of them. Le Corbusier's audience would be one well versed in the conventional tropes of fiction films, and their understanding of his intentions would be filtered through these. In showing the Marine District destroyed and the Casbah purified, Le Corbusier's proposal would find endorsement from a Metropolitan public well primed to see these sites as dangerous and corruptible for the proper French way of life. The very popular 1937 adventure story, Pépé le Moko, opposed the Casbah and those living within its entangled walls, such as Pépé, with the moral order of the European city. The depiction of the Casbah as sordid, home to an indiscriminate mixing of cultures, misery and debauchery was used to amplify the moral degeneracy of those criminals and unsavory characters who abandoned European culture for the dishonourable, "lax" and different world of the Arab city. What the film conveyed clearly was the necessity to protect the French moral order from any contamination from the Casbah or those choosing to live within it. Like the knowledge offered by the map of the city through which the police were able to track Pépé's movements and finally apprehend him, Le Corbusier's film demonstrated the superior surveillance and disciplining of the plan, and hence French structures of knowledge and power.

Le Corbusier's central motifs--the business skyscraper, modern infrastructure, daring feats of engineering, sites of French land and resource exploitation, and an expanding French territorial administration--could also be found in the colonial fiction films of the period. These motifs depicted not only progress via the technological mastery of the land and its people, they were also key signifiers of westernization. The protagonist in Le Corbusier's
1940 film was the skyscraper. It, like the tractor in the 1929 film Le Bled, highlighted Western technology as the means to French domination. Expressly commissioned for Algeria's centenary, Le Bled successfully paired Renoir's modern cinematography with the colonial program of the Commission for the Célébration Centenaire. It extolled the colonial infrastructure, the harmony of Moslem Algerians and Europeans, the peaceful and civilizing presence of French institutions and technology. Conquest and aggressivity were reduced to a seemingly benign symbol, the tractor, set within a spectacular landscape linking Algeria with the myth of the promised land. Although a eulogy to agriculture was desirable and workable at the time of Le Bled, by 1940 when Le Corbusier came to make his film agriculture no longer offered the assurance of European predominance in North Africa. Le Corbusier's skyscraper might therefore be understood as the proffering of an alternative insurance. Likewise, Le Corbusier's emphasis on technological innovation and the social progress to be won from it repeated the theme of a "humanitarian" as well as profitable modernization as was found in the 1936 Les hommes nouveaux, which profiled Lyautey's work in Morocco. Lyautey had himself supported the production of a fiction film and had augmented his military strategies with the production of a documentary film directed at North African Europeans, the Metropole, and a small minority of Moslem Algerians consisting of evolués, caids, and sheiks. The superior technology demonstrated in the film was intended to impress upon its audience the futility of insurrection and the certainty of French sovereignty.

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62 It had been noted by 1936 that, regrettably, agricultural settlement of Algeria by Europeans was unsuccessful and most were gravitating toward the city.
63 Sorlin, "The Fanciful Empire" 135. Les Hommes nouveaux avoided any criticism or comment on how colonization was established. The rebellions of local tribes were never shown as legitimate political opposition but rather as irrational violence directed against the French and their promised enlightened government. It also portrays a conflict between an older generation of successful but violent European colonists and a younger generation promising a more humane prosperity enabled by machines and mechanization.
64 Megherbi, cinéma colonial 39, 169-170. The fiction film which Lyautey supported was L'Appel du Silence (1936). It was about Charles de Foucauld.
Therefore, Le Corbusier's film may not have recalled directly the melodramas of conventional cinematic presentations of the colonies they but it did participate in their larger ideological practices and discursive intentions. In fiction films about the colonies themes and narrative structure were revised according to the anxieties which they sought to sublimate or manage. This is succinctly encapsulated in the two versions of L'Occident, a film altered to suit the different colonial concerns of 1923 and 1938. Particularly relevant to a discussion of Le Corbusier's representation of Algiers are the modifications necessitated by changing attitudes to modernization and the relationship between cultures. In the earlier version, modernization is depicted as the civilizing process which "liberates" a Moslem woman from her family, tribe and clan to become a collaborator with French military and cultural initiatives. Produced in the context of the Rif war, the film spoke assuringly of French military and moral victory via the defeat of the insurgents and the destruction of family bonds and hence Islamic social codes of honour which were attached to the Moslem woman. The plot's resolution also speaks of assimilation into Western culture which is assumed to be progressive; it is the justification for French presence in a resisting land. In the later rendition of L'Occident modernization as the adoption of Western values, collaboration with French powers and cohabitation of Moslems and Europeans no longer worked to soothe the French anxieties about the military and moral strength of the nation now facing a looming European war and more pronounced demands by Moslem Algerians for independence. In 1938, assimilation would not have the calming effect it did in 1928 and the Moslem Algerian woman, although Western-educated, was re-scripted to return to her home and culture. The civilizing mission could no longer find justification for its program in westernization, nor did its public feel secure with assimilation proposals. Two years later Le Corbusier's film justified westernization by references to the visual cues of modernism and progress while any global assimilation into this modernization or intermingling of cultures was avoided by the neat division which portrayed Western civilization via the modern cinematic technology and the colonized via the simpler media of photographs and
the curatorial discipline and cultural containment of display cases. As in the conventional films where Moslem Algerians were often shadow figures and abbreviated caricatures so too in Le Corbusier's film they were largely relegated to the artifacts and folklore on display which formed the spatial and historicized backdrop to the film. They became the objects of a peripheral vision for those Europeans focussed with the cinematic eye on the "fanciful empire" of Le Corbusier's film.

The fictional films of North Africa formed the field of signification in which Le Corbusier's audience, the Governor General, administrative officials, and Metropole citizens, would have understood his cinematic references. His films would have been interpreted by this colonial world in which he now recognized his own participation, by the precedent of fiction films. In addition, these fictional films might also explain the relevance of Le Corbusier's obsession with Moslem women and why he might have felt it necessary to include them in his discussion, if not his films, of the city, although he was not inclined to include such references to women in his urban plans for other foreign sites. In the fiction films, as in the postcards, women played a significant part in articulating the relationship between metropolitan policies and public opinion. They were the tokens by which Western dominance was judged and French morality confirmed. What appears to have been central to the ideological structure of the fiction film was that French culture, pure and uncorrupted, was portrayed such that would recognize their duty to France and Moslems would understand their difference. For this reason the promise of equality was permanently withheld and fears of inter-racial alliances allayed. It would seem that Le Corbusier's "plot line" which celebrated the technology, progress, industrial activity and institutions by which France was recognized and his visual strategies of juxtaposition and montage which kept cultures separate and their relationship vague could serve this ideological purpose. He, like the fiction films, indicated that the French presence in Algeria

65Le Corbusier, letter to Renaud, 21 May 1940, AFLC.
was unproblematic, simply a question of providing the appropriate built form and
amenities. Although recalcitrant indigenous people and primitive cultural practices were
absent from his film, they were evoked by the dense, overcrowded and archaic segments of
Algiers which were the antagonists of his film. Pierre Sorlin has argued that the popularity
of the colonies was due to the cinema which established France as superior to the backward
civilizations of its Empire, and to the need of colonial populations for the impending war.
However, the relaxing of those barriers that had protected French citizens from native
populations and other civilizations for pragmatic and national interests would produce new
stresses also requiring inventive resolution. The cultural difference between France and its
colonies as portrayed on the screen therefore maintained the sense of peril, not always
explicit, of French cultural dilution; it remained a haunting apprehension among those of
the Metropole. The fiction films about the colonies reveal something of the profound
apprehension about French identity which existed while Le Corbusier tried to design a city
and its cinematic representation which would accommodate those fears. A "purified"
Casbah and ordered Marine district would be his proposed solution.

Cinema not only served to construct imaginatively the social and cultural relations within
the city, it was also envisioned as a lucrative industry for the colony; Le Corbusier would
include a cité cinéma in his Plan Directeur for Algiers in 1942 acknowledging the
importance of film to the orderly administration of the colony. The industry itself, as well
as the representations which its technology afforded, were understood by the architect and
planner to constitute an element of the modernity of Algiers. However, the forms by which
to articulate that modernity appear to have not been forthcoming in the films Le Corbusier
himself proposed. Rather, preexisting images and old plot lines were merely revamped.
Le Corbusier's proposal for a cinematic production in 1933 simply imposed the new and
modern on the traditional form, while the 1940 film for the Exposition de la France
d'Outre-mer merely juxtaposed ethnographic objects with cinematic representations of the
contemporary and modern Algiers in an abstract space of montage and a highly edited, strategically elliptical, history.

All of these poetic endeavors--exhibitions, lectures, exhibits, models, postcards, films and plans--were representations which worked in complex ways with the "reality" of the city. The word "reality" is used with some caution, for any overarching description of the "reality" of Algiers to which these representations might refer ultimately rests upon yet further representations and upon whose Algiers one is referring to. At the same time, as Timothy Mitchell has cautioned, these representations are not to be understood as misrepresentations, but rather as powerful agents in the on-going creation of what he has termed "the effect of external reality." It is an effect achieved by the seeming factuality or insight which the representations, in contradistinction to lived experience, objectively or imaginatively offer of some "larger truth." Such representations are premised, Mitchell argues, on a Western objectifying approach to the world which quantifies and commodifies as it seeks to secure the "certainty of truth." This "truth" might here be understood, for example, as progress, modernization, empire, or cultural sensitivity. It is a "truth" however which had its opponents in Algiers.

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66 As Timothy Mitchell has argued in his study of the city of Cairo, the question to be asked is not about what "reality" but about which or whose reality is being discussed. Colonizing Egypt. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 19. About the idea that the disclosing of the fraudulent nature of such representations Mitchell argues "the weakness of accepting the distinction already begins to appear as soon as one asks what the 'transparent and rational' reality, which capitalist representation misrepresents really is." Or as Edward Said has said of Orientalist representations "The Orient is put together as this 'representation,' and what is represented is not a real place but a set of references, energies of characteristics, that seems to have its origins in a quotation... of a bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these." quoted in Mitchell Colonizing Egypt 31. Consequently I have preferred to let the "reality" of Algiers evolve from the debates between the various representations of European Culture--Metropolitan, French Algerian, naturalized French--and Berber, Arab and Kabyle Moslem Algerian.

67 Mitchell Colonizing Egypt 18. He also describes the complex working of representations which must distinguish themselves from "the real political reality it claimed to portray," to objectively evoke a larger truth while also determining how that reality would be recognized, where the "real world turns out to be further representations of this reality." 7, 13-14.
For Moslems the traditional urban tissue of Algiers, the medina, evidenced a "truth" that differed from a notion of the city based on innovation, progress or spaces of public appearance. It was one which conformed to the representations of Islam where land was held in stewardship rather than privately, and where a clear demarcation of residential from commercial and public districts was essential. Fundamental to the configuration of the traditional city was the separate roles and spaces assigned to men and women such that public space was considered a male prerogative to be avoided by women, who were assigned to the domestic realm. This had degrees of severity according to sect, interpretations, degree of urbanization and customs. The accommodation of horma, or feminine space, was a powerful environmental determinant which resulted in a dense network of filtered spaces in streets and houses. Generally, cohesive neighborhoods provided protected semi-public spaces and a succession of progressively sequestered and more restricted spaces in the interest of privacy and female modesty. A network of major streets, configured by the houses of the differentiated neighborhoods, led to the gates and commercial center around which all but the more noisome activities were gathered; secondary streets led to other public functions such as the Friday prayer mosques, schools, public baths and lesser markets. In contradistinction to Western concepts of the city, large collective or civic spaces (with the exception of the mosque and the open square around a castle or palace) were deemed relatively unimportant (Figure 25).

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68 Although, as will be explained later, Janet Abu-Lughod cautions against homogenizing the Islamic city, what is intended here is a brief description of some general points regarding Algiers.

69 Cyrus Mechkat, "The Islamic City and the Western City: A Comparative Analysis," in The Middle East City: Ancient Traditions Confront a Modern World, ed. Abdulaziz Y. Saqqaf (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987) 25-41. The essentially Islamic aspects of a city, or whether one can speak of "the" Islamic city is a much debated question with respect to the modern period. See the "Introduction" by Ervin Y. Galantay, in The Middle East City 3-4. A late nineteenth-century map of Algiers (Figure 25) indicates a large Esplanade in the vicinity of the old Turksih citadel which may be a vestige of the pre-conquest city. The existing Mosque de la Pecherie and the Grande Mosque both in the Marine District, along the Ancient Harbour, date from the sixteenth century according to Georges Marçais.
Janet Abu-Lughod has described the gendering and consequent segregation of space, as "perhaps the most important element of the structure of the city contributed by Islam." What was relevant in this segregation was not just physically distinct areas but, more significantly, visually insulated ones. Where wealth did not allow the elaborate duplication of spaces within the residence and servants to traverse the outside public world, signs and codes were substituted: dress, the use of shared space according to regulated times and the extension of family rules to the immediate neighborhood. In the 1920s and 1930s Moslem Algerian demands for segregated housing adapted to such needs. Demands for Arabic schools and medersas, control of the mosques and separate cemeteries were predicated on this alternative vision of the city. It is with this in mind that the following description of the "reality" of Algiers which European representations constructed and to which they referred will be sketched.

By 1930 the former Turkish city, its fortress (quaba or Casbah) and its walled city, or medina, had been significantly altered. Its physical and social form of the medina had been dismembered by first the military occupation in the 1830s and then by the European settler's who arrived soon after. The great Souk el Kebir, which had once stretched from the Gate of Azoun to that of El Oued, had been dismembered by a system of enlarged streets and open parade spaces; palaces and mosques had been demolished or mutilated so as to serve European institutions, the walls of the city had been dismantled, the citadel rendered inoperative. In 1830 one hundred and twenty-two mosques had been recorded, thirteen of which were large mosques responsible for the Friday prayer. Thirty two small funerary monuments and thirteen confraternities offering accommodation for travelers were also noted. A century later Georges Marçais could account for only nine mosques, of

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70Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City" 167.
71Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City" 168-169.
which three had been converted to churches; no medersas were mentioned. The medina of the traditional city had been largely destroyed by the process of modernization which favored public spaces and Government buildings, a prefecture, a consulate, a Fine Arts museum, a residence for the Archbishop and wide streets commensurate with the speed and efficacy of modern communications and levels of production and distribution. By the early twentieth century the term Casbah, a North African Arab dialect word, kas (a) ba or quaba, meaning fortress, had come to refer to an Arab quarter surrounding a castle or fortress in a North African town. Its use clearly signified the functional impoverishment of the more complex city designated by the term medina and the presence of a European center to which it now functioned as a district.

The social fabric of the city had also been altered. Throughout the nineteenth-century the Moslem population crowded into the upper Casbah, abandoning the lower city and the Marine District to European settlers and a well established Jewish population. Although the population of Algiers had been a mixed one since the sixteenth century when Turks, Andalusian Moors, Arabs, Berbers, Mozabites, Jews and transients cohabited, they had been organized into districts according to occupation and origin. However, the presence of Europeans and the modernization requisite of their colonization of the city and its hinterland, upset this earlier spatial configuration of social relations. The creation and expansion of the capitalist system of free enterprise concerned with mass production, predictability and profit had begun to rationalize the organization of space and to demand a

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73 As the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) notes the term was given slightly different connotations throughout the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, referring to a citadel, a palace in a native quarter different from a citadel, a walled-in section of the ruler's city. Similarly the term "medina" which refers to the Arab term for "town" had come to mean by the early twentieth century, the non-European section of a North African town. As the description of Algiers by Mechkat indicates the meaning of the term "Casbah" was rather general: "The first urban operations took place within the limits of the old city,...An extension of the Kasbah began on adjoining land which culminated in a new fortified enclosure around the Kasbah. Most of the old port area was pulled down..." "The Islamic City " 35.
74 For a description of the social geography of the city see René Lespès, Alger: Étude de géographie et histoire urbaine (Alger: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1930).
modern city built for the purposes of commerce, speculation and administration. The traditional endeavors of the Islamic city--business, handicraft, the practice of law and scholarship suffered from the competition from an industrial economy and the influx of new techniques and values.75

Old social relations were broken by the relocation of groups once united by occupation and common origin, ethnic identity, kinship and sectarian allegiances. Moors predominating in the upper city and old city of the Turks, had begun to move from these congested areas to St. Eugène and Hamma. The Jewish community had moved from the rue Bab Azoun, in the lower Casbah, to the middle Casbah and the Marine District and then to the rues La Lyre and Randon to the south. They replaced Europeans moving even further south towards the newer, more expansive areas of the city, to Isly, Agha and Lower Mustapha. Spaces reconfigured by industrialization also produced new ethnic intermingling, Kabyles attracted to factory jobs mixed with Moors and Europeans in Hamma, while Spanish, Jewish and French were mixed at Bab el Oued to the north, and Belcourt to the south. The very poorest, usually new arrivals from rural areas settled in makeshift villages at Mahieddine, El Kettar, Ouchaya, Oued and Harrach.76 Thus the Casbah, which literally and metaphorically, had held Moslem populations in place could no longer perform this function as the city was reshaped. for an increased role in the economic exploitation of the colony.

The Europeans effected the most profound changes to the historical fabric of Algiers. In contradistinction to the Islamic model of the modern city, and with varying degrees of commitment, the colonists evidently regarded the city as chiefly a place of optimal economic exploitation accommodated and legitimated by references to modernization,

75Bourdieu, The Algerians 119-129.
76Lespès, Alger 547-578.
efficiency and a *mission civilisatrice*. This was based on a perception of the city as a structure where goods, capital and people could move efficiently and unimpeded with a minimum of cost and time. Hence wide boulevards, large public squares and institutions, spacious commercial precincts, and extensive port installations had been built in a separate city development to the south of the former Turkish garrison town (Figure 25). Here the topography was flatter and more amenable to western techniques of laying out straight streets bounded by easily marketed regularized building plots.

By the 1920s the culturally fragmented and erratically laid out city could no longer accommodate the new levels of capital accumulation, greater State intervention and visions of a more comprehensive organization of Empire in which Algiers could play a major role. The uncoordinated array of roads, boulevards, new subdivisions, and public institutions provided an inadequate framework around which the processes of industrial, commercial and Imperial development could take place. The European institutions established in the early years of French occupation continued to be housed in the former palaces of the Turks along the southern limits of the old city, and at ever greater distance from the majority of Europeans now living in the southern extension. Here were broad boulevards and large blocks that stretched parallel to the harbor along the Rue d'Isly and rue Magador and westward along the Boulevard Gambetta which carried European culture from the port, through the Square Bresson to the heights of the city. Along the waters edge stretched the usual accoutrements of modern port installations--the railway station, customs house and various seafront boulevards (Figure 25). These modern sites were however hemmed in by a hilly topography that made east west movement difficult, while deep ravines complicated north south movement except along the water's edge. The narrow streets of the Marine District restricted traffic between the newly developing industrial sector of Bab el Oued to the north and the port to its south. Private automobile traffic and commercial transport was
hampered by a chaotic system of narrow streets. While the limitations imposed on rents discouraged private sector housing construction the expense of building materials, depression economics after 1930, variations in exchange rates and delays in port expansion, public works and services which were understood as serious impediments to economic development.

Population dislocation within Algeria and the city had produced a housing crisis complicated by concerns for cultural differentiation in spatial and siting matters. The Casbah had become over built and overcrowded, reaching a population density by 1926 of 2255 per hectare while the Marine District had a density of 871 per hectare. And, despite a speculative boom in construction, the demands for housing could not be met. The 1930s began to experience the ill-effects of a chaotic and an uncoordinated speculative building of the previous decade. Between 1922 and 1929 twenty-five new subdivisions were created and numerous administrative offices were constructed, the General Government Building, the Agricultural Building, a new City Hall. Discussions through the 1930s would be focused on the infrastructure needs occasioned by this development. A metro service, airport, multi-purpose station linking sea, rail and truck transit and highway construction became key points of discussion within the municipal council.

There were new levels of State and private involvement in the city. Bureaucratic urbanism had been introduced by the laws of 1919 which made a Directive plan for all cites over 100,000 mandatory. Algiers complied with this law in 1925, and completed its first Directive plan in 1931. It viewed the city as an organization of functionally determined zones--commercial, residential, pleasure and industrial, coordinated by extensive transit systems. State interests in Empire building also suggested that the "reality" of Algiers was

77 As will be discussed later, private automobile ownership had increased in Algeria due to Metropolitan marketing strategies. Commercial traffic had increased in great part due to expanding agricultural production achieved via extensive irrigation and other improvements.
related to its role in the development of links with other French possessions in Africa, especially French West Africa and the Sahara now made possible by the modern means of railways, automobiles and airways. The private sector had established the financial institutions and banks which provided increased investment funds. The colonial authorities deemed that a city commensurate with these financial, State and professional visions required certain interventions: an enlarged communications network which facilitated the distribution of goods through and beyond the city, an efficient port, elite zones of commerce and leisure. The government embarked upon a subsidized housing program of Habitations à Bon Marché in the late 1920s with some being built in Mustapha in 1925 and in Bab el Oued in 1927; very few were built for Moslem Algerians before 1935. The State also initiated a program of school, clinic and government building.

While these forces of modernization were not new to the twentieth-century the scale of intervention--permitted by available technology, financing, bureaucratic and cultural institutions and legislation--was greatly enlarged. Also part of this urbanization of the city were the conflicting responses to modernization. Although many among the wealthy of the Moslem Algerian population embraced Western culture, educating their sons and daughters in France, adopting western dress, participating in established French institutions and demanding the conveniences of modern technology and housing construction, they also wished to conserve their faith, culture and language. Through the 1930s their demands for segregated housing designed according to their cultural specifications would be pressed forward.

The modernization of cities also affected gender relations and conceptions of spatial relations. This was particularly complicated in Algiers where notions of cultural superiority and identity were intricately interwoven with issues of gender. The modern city in Western industrial societies is generally identified with the growth and increasing separation of
public and private spheres. It was an organization buttressed by an ideology of "separate spheres." 78 One of its consequences of this division was the idealization of the domestic home and suburb as the proper place for women. Business organizations, political and financial establishments, social and cultural institutions, which were invariably male, accentuated this division. The developments of suburbs, business institutions, financial and other establishments were significant factors in Algiers' growth at this time and the issues of both women's place in the city and of a rationally zoned, functionally segregated city were topical subjects in the Algiers press.

Although the "real" situation was more complex and varied according to social class, degree of industrialization and a myriad of other factors, this separation of function and gender is often seen as a characteristic of the modern industrial city. The issue of gendered spatial demarcations have been documented in the western architectural theories of Alberti in the fifteenth century, Germain Boffrand in the eighteenth and Le Corbusier in the twentieth. 79 More generally, through-out France in the early twentieth-century social reform programs, government initiatives and Church strictures sought to control the social antagonisms and altered gender roles brought about by modernization. However, in Algiers the representation of Western women as modern, rather than traditional or sequestered, was essential to maintaining the superiority of French over Moslem Algerian cultures.

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Spatial divisions based on gender also played complex roles in Moslem Algerian society, where class and traditions specific to Kabyle, Mozabite and Arab were determining factors. The colonization and modernization of Algeria had propelled many poor from rural areas into the coastal cities where traditional customs could not be followed. The modernization of the city which had broken apart existing communal entities, introduced strangers into the midst of once kin-related neighborhoods, or reorganized the ethnic-specific trades and locales into industrial workers and zones resulted in an ethnic mixing that also disturbed established customs of gender relations. With a few exceptions the kind of housing developed by modernization in the 1920s--high-rises mass produced according to French schedules of efficiency and economies in scale and space--needed adaptations for Moslem Algerian life where the privacy of the home and of women were priorities. The industrialization initiated in the city also produced demands for female labor which threatened notions of family honor, sharaf.  

For both European and Moslem Algeroise, the effects of modernization produced certain ambivalence and paradoxes while it often strained the limits of cultural identity. Education, industrialization, and administrative convenience admitted Moslem Algerians into the modern world of the French, just as military and then legal and entrepreneurial interests had propelled the French and European into that of the Moslem Algeria. The changes described for Algiers can be understood as products of a more universal modernization. However, what is overlooked in so doing is the cultural and national anxieties produced when modernization was forced to confront the cultural specificity of its representations. As

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80 For a description of Algiers and the distribution of populations in Algiers according to their origin and occupation in the late eighteenth century see Lespès, *Alger* 176.

well, the frailty of national identity was heightened by the colonial context which seemed
to blur or modify the characteristics by which the nation was to be defined and recognized.
Although the kinds of changes discussed for Algiers also occurred in non-colonized
countries, such as Turkey and Iran, the violence done to the established Moslem culture
was perhaps nowhere so destructive; much more than modernization was at stake. Therefore, while recognizing the place of the Obus plans for Algiers within a tradition of
modernism, it is also relevant to grasp the significance of that, other, additional concern.

The poetics of place

Colonial policy was complicated, challenged and even undermined by public opinion that
often reacted against not only the economic and political aims of the Metropolitan
government but often to "deeper psycho-cultural and historical structures, myths and
symbols and their dynamics." The expanses and cities of Algeria were places culturally
constructed by the competing French conventions of a romantic Orientalism and
documentary realism (the latter often referred to as naturalism) as much as by pragmatic
concerns of colonial economic exploitation. Algeria was, in the geographic imagination,
ambiguous, it was the "East," but also the "South"; Algeria was the "Orient" to compensate
for the loss of the Sudan and Napoleon's colonial possessions; it was the "South" as an
extension of France in the aftermath of Prussian defeat in 1870 and the relocating of Alsace
Lorrain citizens there. It was a Christian archeological site beneath an Islamic veneer
following France's loss of its role as protector of sacred Christian sites in Palestine; it was
therefore still Christian by right of these Early Christian foundations, and, remarkably, by
the presence of the Touaregs who purportedly originated with European members of the

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82 On modernization in Turkey and Iran and a discussion of modernization generally, see Mechkat, "The
Islamic City" 27.
83 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 3.
Eighth Crusade. Algeria was a place of refuge from the alienating modernism of the
Metropole and it was the extension of the nation. It was the ancient Mediterranean bread-
basket of Rome and it was *La Nouvelle France*.84

Algeria was also described and geographically "known," by the popular *croisières*, that is,
organized expeditions and auto races which effectively marked out a French possession of
the land by this Western cultural practice (Figure 26).85 Such desert races were used in
advertisements by French auto companies, such as Citroën, to enhance their product by an
admixture of exoticism to technical competence which simultaneously enhanced the image
of the participant by naturalizing their (French) presence in the Sahara. Le Corbusier was
one such participant of a *croisière*, a modern technologically-aided *voyage*, in 1931. While
popularly understood to be a trip into the unknown and mystical space of the desert,
*croisières* were also effective tools in the colonization and economic exploration of the
Sahara. They also forged links between French North and West Africa. Often prominently
featured on the front page of Algerian newspapers, the contestants or participants
positioned the activity within both a poetic construction of the crusader or explorer as well
as mapping out, in an efficacious manner, the extent of French power in the region and the
opportunities for safe investment. The Sahara was defined by a series of oppositional
images that contributed to the definition of Algiers and its diverse populations within a
contemporary world view. Whereas Algiers was imaged as a dense urban city, French and
modern; the Sahara was an infinite, spiritual space, distanced in time, its aristocratic and

84 Salinas, *Voyages et Voyageurs* 336.
85 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 11. Also the auto races were topical in Algerian newspapers
and brochures of the Touring Club of France were found in Le Corbusier's Archive. The Touring Club of
France was a large lobby group in France, their interests were for the maintenance of the Sahara as an exotic
retreat, leaving the coastal cities to offer modern amenities. Le Corbusier's friend and long time associate,
Ernst Mercier, had interests in oil development in the Sahara, which while not touristic were also not
detrimental to it. Ownership by virtue of the access and sense of possession signaled in the auto routes
helped legitimate the priority given to French as opposed to Algerian land uses. Le Corbusier, a well
known advocate of the automobile as a paradigm of modernity and rationale for his utopian city plans also,
as did other government officials, saw the automobile as a useful tool by which the colony could be unified
and connected to France.
tribal life recalling the feudal and chivalrous Middle Ages. In these ways ideas going back to Enlightenment hierarchical classificatory systems of cultures based upon the norms of European Christian society still circulated and were confirmed by the modern, seemingly personal, technologies of automobile transport.

The oppositions defining Algeria and Algiers also included issues of architecture and planning. The Orient was designated by the Casbah, the *Douar* (rural districts) and sinuous narrow alleys; the West was recognized by its cities, villages and orthogonal streets. One evoked the unordered, rural and foreign, the other *ordonnance*, the bourgeois and European.86 In this way architecture and planning took their place within the more general opposition of backward/civilized, tradition/modernity, immobility/progress, fanaticism/tolerance, irrational/rational, primitive/civilized, poetry/materialism, exoticism/modernization.87 The hierarchical and comparative thought evident in literature, travel narratives, cinema, and Chamber of Commerce accounts, is also present in architecture and urbanism. Throughout the 1920s, buildings and spaces designed for Moslem Algeria often retained their decorative features and archaic spatial configurations (Figure 27). Wooden window screens and ornamental ceramic work were employed as cultural signifiers while the narrow streets of new *cités indigènes* insured that primitive transport and services would be retained while their new ordering disallowed the privacy of the former labyrinthine passages. This contrasted with the European city. The interplay of a modern Algiers, port city, gateway to a lucrative hinterland and viable investment opportunity with that of an exotic Algiers distanced in time and place from the Metropole was useful to the colonizing enterprise. Modern Algiers could be evoked to legitimize French presence by the progress that had been achieved. Exotic Algiers could stand as a token of French sensitivity towards Moslem culture, while it served the tourist industry and

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86 Salinas, *Voyages et Voyageurs* 397.
87 Salinas, *Voyages et Voyageurs* 396.
defined the nature of the *mission civilisatrice*. By the 1930s however, those supporting industrial development in the colony felt that the efforts of modernization were hampered by a nostalgic exoticism which promised to keep all of Algeria backward and immobile by discouraging large-scale financial investments.\(^8^8\) It was therefore felt necessary by the Délégations financières of Algeria and the French government to modify or abandon the emphasis given to an exotic Algeria in the interest of the progress of colonization and profits; as colonization progressed exoticism tended to recede, this was especially so in urban areas.\(^8^9\)

As noted, Algeria was often given two spatial coordinates in an imaginary geography and rhetoric, either as part of the Orient, the East, or as an extension of France, the South.\(^9^0\) Its position was determined relative to the Metropole. North Africa was conflated with the Orient, based largely on its Islamic and Arab culture, and had thus offered to French poets a ready haven from a disenchanted West. Algeria had also served the interests of conquest, positing an enemy in terms of a crusade, the Cross against the Crescent and Turkish oppression. The notion of the "East" also positioned the people of "Algeria," a geographical and political creation of the French occupation, within another temporal space. As "Oriental," Moslem Algerians were cast as the nomadic and pastoral people of the bible, the chivalrous lords of a Medieval era. Although originating in the nineteenth-century, these images were still current in the 1930s and were recalled by the Orientalist Maréchal Lyautey and the authors of official publications for the Célébration Centenaire. It was just

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\(^8^8\)There are many indications of this. The official publication of the Algerian government and the Chamber of Commerce in Algiers abandoned its dual purpose of tourism and industrial growth in 1936, recognizing that the audience for them was split. Many newspaper articles and among them architectural critiques called for the abandoning of nostalgic reveries of an exotic or picturesque past which hampered modernization which they saw as the reality and future of Algiers.

\(^8^9\)See footnote 31.

\(^9^0\)This is despite the fact that North Africa, the Maghreb, understood itself in contradistinction to the orient, as west of Egypt, and as the North to the desert tribes.
such "feudal" people that Le Corbusier encountered and described in accounts of his own North African *croisière* in 1931.91

The imaginary and political representation of Algiers directly depended upon complex processes. General theories of the Orient from the nineteenth-century continued to filter and affect the experience of the land and its people in the twentieth. Orientalist representations developed between the 1830s and 1860s, those of *La Nouvelle France* in the 1870s and realist portrayals in the 1880s and 1890s continued their simultaneous and often conflicting existence in the early twentieth-century. In the early nineteenth-century Algeria was understood as an abstract world of refuge and the immutable, an ideal; an empty void to be filled by the Western imagination. However, when the Western mind imagined this "empty" land of spiritual and fabled wealth as the future site of civilization and colonization, Orientalism was less useful as this was in fact achieved. Algiers was a poignant example of this, where its resemblance to Marseilles by the late nineteenth-century disturbed those seeking the exotic. Thus for the 1930 Centennial publications, the mid-nineteenth-century descriptions of Eugène Fromentin (1820-1876) were illustrated with carefully chosen views of wooden boats and empty landscapes.92 The exotic could only be maintained by a careful editing of the representations of the contemporary city, by a sublimation of the real.93

Mosques, *koubbas*, palm groves, cruelty and the bizarre were common references used by writers in the nineteenth-century to situate Algeria in biblical antiquity as well as the Middle Ages. These images still coursed, if at a certain temporal displacement, through the

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91 *Corbusier Sketchbooks* 20-22 (entries 413-469).
93 It should be remembered that in 1936 the publication *Algeria* found it necessary to separate the tourist and exotic representation of the colony from those of a more economic investment nature.
frequent quoting of Fromentin in the 1930s. Evidence of this medieval past: jousts, parades, hunts and falconers, swirls of silk and sartorial opulence were called up in the theatrical spectacles of the centenary celebrations, and an aristocratic warrior class was constantly recalled by Lyautey.94 This Orientalism served to maintain difference, one which could fulfill the needs of the Metropole as well; just as Algeria would be "Oriental," and modernity out of place there, so too would an "Oriental" in Paris. Such images attempted to keep in place members of a growing multi-cultural reality.

The idea of La Nouvelle France, although propounded in 1870 to encourage the relocation of people from Alsace Lorraine to Algeria, was especially potent after 1914 when Algeria again became a site of emigration after the upset of war. It was accompanied by a realignment of politically conceived geography which now positioned Algeria south of France, sharing the same climate, Mediterranean racial stock and inland sea. The rewriting of the history of North Africa which emphasized Western occupation, Algeria's "deorientalization," lent support to this geographical reorientation. The prosperity of a distant Roman past, provided a model for the present. France as the representative of Western culture would regain prosperity from the "degeneracy" of the Turks and the inability of Eastern cultures to accomplish such success. La Nouvelle France was the Algeria transformed by colonists, that Algeria eulogized by the French Algerian historian Louis Bertrand and French novelist André Gide.95 La Nouvelle France conjured up a new start while it implied a critique of the old France.

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95 "La Nouvelle France" was proof of the energy of France after the defeats of 1815 and 1870. France was credited with having achieved the political unity of the Maghreb where the Romans and Turks had failed.
Such images were not uncontested. Naturalist accounts of the late 1880s framed a different vision of Algeria and Algiers. In the late 1880s authors such as Maupassant portrayed a dirty, uncultured, and un-hygienic world of poverty. Although this "naturalism" was intended as a critique of romanticism in the Metropole, it also established a precedent for an "objective" account of Algeria where Western health sciences and technologies would be privileged definers of the public good, physically and institutionally; these disciplines offered the knowledge by which slum clearance and urbanization would be legitimated. In the early twentieth-century Maréchal Lyautey would cast Algiers as a crass disorderly production of self-interest and the antithesis to his planned cities of Morocco.

These Western, French, images of the Oriental, Southern or Nouvelle land projected onto a seemingly unresisting North Africa were problematized in the inter-war era by changes within Moslem culture. Originally confined within the binary oppositions of desert mystic and lascivious patriarch, industrious Kabyle and lazy Arab, spiritualist and fatalist, North Africa by the 1920s had become the organized and energetic bearer of the banner of Islam. This image, colliding with that of La Nouvelle France, added urgency to the "de-orientalization" of Algeria. Some eradication of Islam was politically effected by the refusal to grant citizenship to Moslems without the surrender of their personal status, that is, without the rejection of the religious rather than state determination of laws of marriage, inheritance and property rights. Certain aspects of the Orient to be found in Algiers were to be Westernized through education and "sympathy." Algiers, as a center of an African Empire, would be un devoir national.

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98 Salinas, Voyages et Voyageurs 376.
99 Salinas, Voyages et Voyageurs
However, it was still felt necessary in 1930 by individuals such as Bordes, Governor General of Algeria, to inform the Algerian Financial Assembly: "Il faut créer de nous l'obsession de l'Algérie."100 Obviously, a dominant view was that existing political and cultural representations of Algeria had been ineffective. Adding to the problem was the growing impression that these antithetical images of the exotic and the New France, the "Other" and the "Same," still circulating in the Célébrations Centenaire publications in the 1930s, could no longer hold together. This crisis of representation is clearly indicated by the mid 1930s in two events. By 1936 the Chamber of Commerce journal, *Algeria*, which had promoted an Algeria that was both exotic and primitive as well as modern and commercially viable, felt it necessary to produce two distinct publications dedicated to these different concerns. Then, in the Paris Exposition Internationale of 1937, it was felt that Algeria required two separate pavilions (Figure 28 and Figure 29).101 One was to display the traditional exotic image of Algeria: Islamic architecture contextualized with indigenous crafts and costumed artisans and the second was to feature *La Nouvelle France*: declared in a modernized Hellenic pavilion in which Le Corbusier's maquette for Algiers found its position.

Algiers itself was a key component of the European "mythological" Algeria. It was the Gateway to Africa, the "white city" of the Levant, the Mediterranean Emporium and the Oriental city of the Casbah.102 As the gateway to Africa, Algiers was the outpost of France from which one departed for the adventure and wealth of the continent, it was at the crossroads of French dominion. This was a frequent refrain of the 1930s. Algiers was also the "white city" as seen from the sea, a stereotypical image of Mediterranean port cities,

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100 Salinas, *Voyages et Voyageurs* 394.
although by 1930 it was noted that it was a white city existing only in tourist brochures. When its quays and harbor were in view Algiers could be the "Mediterranean Emporium" recalling the tradition of French trade with the Levant, Carthage and Marseilles. It was this Emporium that is glimpsed in Le Corbusier's Plan Directeur of 1942 (Figure 11). In this guise it also signaled a Mediterranean space, peaceful and commercial, in contradistinction to the destruction and piracy of the Turks. Algiers was also its Casbah, as a preserved site within the colony it served as the symbolic, and contained, representational space of Islam.

Myths of gender also contributed to the spatial and temporal identification of Algiers. The private, sequestered space of the domestic realm was presented in literature, painting and postcards as either the prison of women or a secluded haven of existence separated from the hustle of public, and Western, life. Postcard images of the Casbah were faint echoes of the spatial division of Moslem life which was rigorously gendered in this way according to a Moslem code of family honor, although this code was little referenced in Western popular, or even scholarly, descriptions of the Islamic city of the period. ¹⁰³

Traces of these segregated spaces—the moucharabieh, non-aligned doors, obstructed streets, alleys and dead-end courts, the veiled women, their movement in groups through empty streets—were hinted at, and trespassed upon, in the postcards that Le Corbusier used as his guide to the city. Le Corbusier collected these views, studied the representations of and noted the architectural expression inherent in such spaces. Although he understood these spaces and their architectural expression as examples of universal proportions based on human measurement rather than the compliance with specifically Islamic laws which

¹⁰³ This is described in Pierre Bourdieu's chapter on "The sense of honor" in Algeria 1960 trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 95-132. I will return to this theme later in chapter four. In her historiography of the topic, Abu-Lughod mentions only two publications on the Islamic city that were published during Le Corbusier's activity in Algiers, one before his arrival in 1931 and the second just before he abandoned the project. Both were French but published in obscure journals. William Marçais, "L'Islamisme et la vie urbaine," L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes Rendus (Paris: January-March 1928) and Georges Marçais, "L'urbanisme musulman," 5ème Congrès de la Fédération des Sociétés Savantes de l'Afrique du Nord (Algiers 1940). Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City" 155-156.
they were. The markers of the gendered spatial arrangements of Islam were noted, but not their meaning or the social structure which determined them. In the Islamic city women were secluded in veiled or walled space, excluded from the public realm; courts and roofs were their domain. Men were free to inhabit the streets, while women did so in very restricted and monitored ways. Women, often used as symbols of the Moslem religion and social organization, played a major role in defining, according to Western precepts and political needs, the exotic and then primitive and private aspect of Moslem culture.

Troubled, and ambiguous, attempts to deal with the traditional roles assigned to women in Islamic society within the parameters of the "civilizing mission" were evident in Parliamentary debates, the programs for educational reform, artisan workshops and subsidized housing. The Islamic woman was a problematic entity in both the poetics of place and Orientalism, as well as in the pragmatics of power throughout the inter-war years. In addition, this sequestered and protected life of the traditional Islamic woman was often quite distanced from the reality of life as lived. A constricted, airless, often squalid and impoverished existence can also be glimpsed in the statistics, newspaper accounts and literature of the period. And it is largely this which municipal councils and Government emphasized in their efforts to bolster the presence of the "civilizing mission." What the postcard views and Municipal statistics served to accomplish was the divorce of Islamic views of gender and the social code which they represented from factors deemed worthy of consideration in the determining of urban form. Also caught within these two

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104 Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City" 167.
105 Bourdieu, Algeria 1960 95-132, esp. 121-132.
107 See the descriptions in Chantiers nord-africains and in Favre's Tout l'inconnu de la Casbah d'Alger.
108 Prochaska discusses the essentially commercial aspects of postcard production in "Fantasia of the Photothèque" 40.
representations of gender and women's spaces in Algiers is the traditional and modern city, and by extension, the traditional and modern nation.109

One geographical and spatial myth which seemed to hold East and South in the same locale was that of the Méditerranéen. It was within this part-historical, part-geographical, part-mythical entity that Le Corbusier wished his plans for Algiers to be located. In Le Corbusier's descriptions, Algiers was situated at the juncture of Occident and Orient, of Africa and Europe, a meeting to be marked out, facilitated and condensed in the spaces provided by his Obus plans. Algiers was conceived in a culturally constructed rather than "naturally" occurring space. Le Corbusier's "Mediterraneanism" has been attributed by many historians to a preoccupation with the landscape; it has also been likened to positions taken by left wing intellectuals.110 However, his visual and formal preoccupations with the "landscape" of Algiers, his composed views, the objects centered within them and those occluded, were not random. His photographic and seemingly objective overviews were derived from military surveillance records. The topographical model accurately portraying the landscape on which Le Corbusier would come to construct his idea of the meeting of East and West in Algiers, was seemingly stripped of its social and cultural contents. Surveillance photos and topographical maps were abstractions of land meant to facilitate their optimal functional and financial exploitation. Presented as apolitical and poetic, such representations were politicized by their omissions and absences. What both Mediterraneanism and Le Corbusier wished to evoke was a miracle of cooperation among East and West in which the "East" was largely absent, one where a united people would

109Abu-Lughod, "The Islamic City," notes the problem of extending what she understands to be the three basic determinants of the specifically Islamic city--distinction between members of the Umma (oulema) and outsiders; segregation of sexes; a neighborhood litigation of spatial use and servicing--into the modern world. The continuation of a spatial organization based on the segregation of the sexes she sees as brought into question by the world wide trend toward a greater equality between the sexes and integration, not segregation and exclusion.

110Mary McLeod, "Architecture and Utopia, Le Corbusier From Regional Syndicalism to Vichy," diss., Princeton University, 1985, 344. Tafuri, Architecture and Utopia, also attributes to a new interest in landscape the origin of the innovative formal vocabulary developed after 1929, as does Stanilaus von Moos, "Le Corbusier as Painter," and Giordani, "Le Corbusier and the Algiers Plans".
exist for whom "the physical life" took precedence over "reasoning and abstraction," in the most general ways.\textsuperscript{111} Mary McLeod has emphasized that the "cultural importance of Mediterraneanism was a consequence of the region's history and geography, a unique encounter of East and West was one of the dominant themes of the project, the cité d'affaires skyscraper, a symbol of union of two cultures, "an integration of two economic communities."\textsuperscript{112} And the Obus plans were to be understood as a "response to autochthonous forces."\textsuperscript{113}

However, what these forces, conceived of as a regional or topographical entity, served to replace was an incumbent social structure and they clearly worked to privilege one economic community over another. Theorist David Harvey has argued that the return to the myth of landscape, an escape into a nostalgic reverie for some essential nature, often entails a disillusionment with technology or the presence of some hindrance to the ideal of progress.\textsuperscript{114} What was stymied in the early 1930s was the legislative and political solution for an equitable and acceptable relationship between East and West and between France and other Mediterranean powers, Italy in particular. So too was technological development impeded by economic crisis. Significantly, the advocates of Mediterraneanism were European and they, including Le Corbusier, evoked it within a very specific temporal and spatial framework. To speak of the division of much of Europe into four Federations and to include North and West Africa within one them in the 1930s, as both Le Corbusier and Regional Syndicalists proposed in 1934, had certain strategic implications (Figure 30). In the Mediterranean Federation, Spain and Italy were pulled from their growing political and economic alliance with Germany; Algeria and North Africa were split from their nascent political and cultural affiliation with other Islamic countries to the East. \textit{Médiiterranéenisme}

\textsuperscript{111} McLeod, "Architecture and Utopia" 345.  
\textsuperscript{112} McLeod, "Le Corbusier and Algiers" 65.  
\textsuperscript{113} McLeod, "Architecture and Utopia" 345.  
was a reassuring reconfiguration of more than geography, it was also a political and
economic vision based purportedly on the most "natural" of facts: climate, landscape,
"shared" cultural history. It is this which was illustrated in Prélude, the publication of the
Regional Syndicalist group which Le Corbusier supported.115

Le Corbusier's ideas on the city's destiny were shared by many French Algerians, among
them Albert Camus, Ernst Mercier, and François de Pierrefeu. Mercier and Pierrefeu were
not only supporters of Le Corbusier's plans but also of the Prélude program which had
proposed Algiers as one of the new axes of power along with Barcelona, Paris and Rome
in a "Mediterranean," or "Latin," Federation.116 Jean Cotereau, writing his second of a
series of articles on the Obus plans for the Algerian Chantiers nord-africains in May of
1934 drew attention to this idea. Although questioning the potentially racist and futile
effect of replacing nations with power blocs, he did support the notion of a synthesis of
Algiers with Europe to create a "Mediterranean as in the Roman Empire."117 Confirming
that Algeria "integrates within it the diverse Latin faces of Western Europe," Cotereau then
quickly pointed out the error of assuming the indigènes of Algeria freely assimilated. What
Cotereau reveals in this remark is how problematic the notion of cultural assimilation was
and perhaps the expectation of the segregation of European and Moslem Algerians, a
segregation that would create a legible configuration of the city in terms of its cultural
differences. Moslem Algerians had, in fact, been omitted from the construction of the
"Mediterranean" Federation. Nevertheless, Le Corbusier's work was continually cited in
the 1930s as an example of this more inclusive entity called Mediterraneanism.

115 "Un plan d'organisation Européen,” Prélude 6 (June/July 1933): 1
117 Jean Cotereau, "Un nouveau bombardement d'Alger: Destin d'Alger l'heure d'urbanisme,” Le Journal
Albert Seiller, writing on "La Naissance d'une Architecture en Algérie," in May of 1936 used Le Corbusier's 1934 scheme for Nemours, a new port city on the border between Algeria and Morocco, as an example of a Mediterranean architecture (Figure 31). With this term he intended an architecture whose form was produced in relation to climate and sun, an architecture which was not a pastiche of Moorish architecture, and was neither conventional nor formulaic. For Seiller it was an original architecture using new materials and construction techniques with an Algerian program and expression, and it was this which made it not colonial but Mediterranean. "Cette architecture ne veut pas être Coloniale, mais qui indique la tendance et la volonté des jeunes architectes algériens d'apporter à la France leur obole dans le patrimoine intellectuel du Pays." Mediterranean architecture, according to Seiller, freed one from both the Metropole and neo-Moorish architecture. This discussion of architecture betrays an attempt to deny the colonial context in which architecture was produced in Algeria in the 1930s. It was also a defense of a new and technically proficient group standing in some opposition to received notions coming from France. A rejection of neo-Moorish architecture, by which Moslem interests were thought to be represented in the public realm and to which tourists responded, was a rejection of the policy of cultural association. Seiller also claimed that, "Ils se sont affranchis du pastiche pour chercher, sans sortir de l'unité donnée à l'architecture nouvelle par l'emploi de matériaux nouveaux, une architecture méditerranéene dans le programme et dans l'expression."  

The basis of the new style, was beyond any culturally located criteria which might distinguish plan and expression, it was to be understood as a purely technical matter. "L'Architecture méditerranéene--rend son sense exact en face de la liberté de composition et d'expression des plans et des façades de ces bâtiments. Son harmonie dans la distribution

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119 Seiller, "La Naissance" 27.
120 Seiller, "La Naissance" 25.
de la matière, dans la création des vides et des pleins est une harmonie régionale, mais dans une interprétation plus vaste, plus générale, avec l'origine, le soleil et l'histoire."\(^{121}\)

Mediterranean architecture was to be considered merely an optimum use of technology. However, technology was one of the tools by which Western dominance was established. Technological prowess was a very salient argument for French colonialism; Lyautey used images of such superior Western technology to persuade the elite *évolué* of the Maghreb to support French interests against more "primitive," tribal opposition.\(^{122}\) Such constructs of the Mediterranean and the objectifying of technology lent a rationality not only to Le Corbusier's segregation of housing in the Nemours plans but also to the placement of the *cité indigène* near industry as opposed to more salubrious locations he demanded for European housing.\(^{123}\)

Seiller was writing for *Algeria*, the periodical sponsored by commercial and business interests in the colony and subsidized by the Algerian government. The objective of the journal was "to instruct the metropolitan and foreign milieu of the touristic and economic resources of modern Algeria and to inform Algerians of the general situation in Algeria, its economic development and steps taken in the domain of production and commerce in order to ensure the development of the country."\(^{124}\) Mediterraneanism should be seen within this economic program which was concerned with the amelioration of industrial, commercial, agricultural and administrative efficiency and which would contribute to the development of European interests in Algeria. The colonial project is clearly evident in the reconfigured image of colonist aspirations found dispersed throughout the articles of *Algeria* in 1936.

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\(^{121}\) Seiller, "La Naisance" 26.


\(^{123}\) It could perhaps be argued that the placement of indigenous housing near industry implied their entry into the workforce, and as a proletarian element assisted them in their fight for at least economic equality and freedom. However, two things would advise against such an interpretation. First, Algeria did not enjoy the same social laws as France. This disadvantaged workers. Secondly, Le Corbusier himself did not believe in the class system nor in class revolution.

\(^{124}\) *Algeria 1932-36, La Revue Algeria,* *Algeria* (Dec. 1936): 33.
Whether it be the subtle revisualization of the Casbah as an "acropolis" promoted by the major historian of the city of Algiers, René Lespès, or the reference to Napoleon I's campaign which made the Mediterranean a "French lake" by General Deschamps in his history of Algiers, or the planner Prost's reference to Algiers as a "Mediterranean city,"--all supported a Eurocentric vision of Algeria, with varying degrees of sophistication, by reference to the Mediterranean myth.125

Architecture played a prominent role in these redefinitions of Algiers and Algeria as "non-colonial" entities. Maurice Lathuilière, writing on "L'Evolution de l'architecture en Algérie de 1830 à 1930," defined the new architecture of Algeria as one which was regional, more Mediterranean than Algerian, and one inspired by the climate rather than the exoticism that had informed the Moorish pastiches that characterized the early twentieth-century.126 What this meant was a style of architecture that looked to the wider and largely European examples developed along the coast of this inland sea: Italy, Greece, Southern France, Spain. It was not limited to the French or indigenous precedents that had been used to call up an "Algerian" style. Instead of the banal neoclassical architecture of the Metropole, "Mediterranean" architecture was considered new, born of the post-Centenary era. Promotional tracts encouraged readers to believe that Mediterranean architecture was untainted by immediate history and was instead a natural response to climate and site. Such architecture was to be understood as a truly "free" architecture, yet still serving French national identity. "Ellemarquelanaissanced'unmouvementméditerranéeneraisonnéetréfléchi qui permettra plus tard à l'Algérie d'enrichir la patronomie artistique français."127 François Bienvenu, a prominent architect in Algiers defined Mediterranean architecture as:

127Lathuilière, "L'Evolution de l'architecture en Algérie" 23.
Still, it is a Mediterranean architecture defined in the same Western terms that had endorsed colonialism in the past: reason, mathematics, classicism, proportion and measure.

The term *Méditerranéenne* referred to more than just geography and history. As Ann Ruel has argued, from its inception in the early nineteenth-century Mediterraneanism was equally a product of the imagination. By the early twentieth-century the *Méditerranéenne* was not merely an architectural and spatial identification, it also entailed a notion of an economic entity and a political idea, that of *la patrie*. A more directly colonialist complexion had been developed by Ernest Renan in the late nineteenth-century. While writing extensively about the Orient elsewhere, he excluded it from the inspirational fount of Mediterraneanism. In its development throughout the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries the term acquired certain connotations: a race of geniuses, produced of climate (Nietzsche, 1890s), a lost golden age of prosperity (common in the 1890s), a machine which produces civilization (Valéry, 1920s). It was also a term which had its own inner tensions. *La Méditerranéenne* defined an area both divided and unified by its inland sea; it referred to a barrier and an open realm. To the Marseille publishing house *Cahiers du Sud* in the 1920s it designated a particular region and a community of regions; it was "un lieu d'interférence et

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129 Ruel, "L’Invention de la Méditerranée" 12-14.
130 Ruel refers to Elisée Reclus, a geographer and pioneer of the concept writing in 1906-08. It was based on landscape and climate and thus saw France divided into North and South. "L’Invention de la Méditerranée" 9.
131 Interestingly, Renan is noted for his preoccupations with three subjects: the Orient, the Mediterranean and the Nation. Note the inclusion of Renan’s 1882 lecture, "What is a nation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990): 8-22.
de métissages culturels."\textsuperscript{132} For the city of Marseilles the concept of the Mediterranean helped to enhance its position as a major commercial link between Metropole and the French colonies of North Africa, and in 1935 its status within the conception of a Mediterranean humanism.\textsuperscript{133} Given the historical situation in which this was evoked a certain political significance can be given to the term. Mediterranean humanism could be rallied against both the barbarian and Celtic, that is, the Moslem and the Germanic. From this point it became confused with "latinity" and universality, as was the case with Louis Bertrand who proposed in 1935-36, and in the context of North Africa, a humanisme méditerranéen.\textsuperscript{134} Camus would follow in 1937 with a public lecture he gave in Algiers at the Maison de la Culture entitled "La Culture Indigène: La Nouvelle Culture Méditerranée."

At least one of Le Corbusier's collaborators in Algeria discerned a profound similarity between the architect's preoccupation with the culture of the (western) Mediterranean and that of Albert Camus, who was perhaps one of the better known proponents of the Mediterranean ideal.\textsuperscript{135} During the inter-war period Camus evoked a unity based on the unique experience of a coexisting East and West, one where he felt, in their manner of living, no difference existed between that of the Spanish, Italian, Arab or French. This coexistence was, he concluded, based on a shared Latin heritage. However, this Latin heritage was also a strategic and meaningful proposition within the context of colonial Algeria. Camus based his notion of a Mediterranean identity for Algeria on the linguistic unity of the Romance languages and their shared collectivism originating in the Middle Ages. What was excluded from the shared Latin basis, however, was the Arabic language and the culturally divisive confrontations between East and West in that far off time. In

\textsuperscript{132}Ruel, "L'Invention de la Méditerranée" 12.
\textsuperscript{133}In 1926 a Mediterranean Academy was founded in Nice whose aim was to resuscitate a Mediterranean spirit. See Ruel, "L'Invention de la Méditerranée," 12.
\textsuperscript{134}Ruel, "L'Invention de la Méditerranée" 13 The term is from Louis Bertrand, Cahiers de l'Académie méditerranéenne 2 (Winter 1936).
\textsuperscript{135}McLeod, "Le Corbusier and Algiers" 83 (n. 24, 25).
addition, the idea of a shared Latin heritage had certain ominous overtones from the point of view of a Moslem living in French North Africa. Whereas for European nations the Latin past may have brought the liberation of civilization, it was as a conqueror of Islamic society that this Latin past occupied North Africa. As Connor Cruise O’Brien has remarked with respect to Camus’ position in 1937, "Mediterranean culture served to legitimize France’s possession of Algeria. Camus affirmed the existence of a form of unity including the Arabs, one based on the Romance languages—an hallucination.”

Le Corbusier’s work in Algiers might be seen as sharing in such an "hallucination," charged with the mythic while serving the very practical concerns of French colonialism.

By 1930 there were several literary traditions that consciously sought to represent Algeria. From the Metropole there were the traditional genres of the exotic and more realistic documentary naturalism. The exotic or romanticized vision concealed the conflicts of colonization in a celebration of a distanced difference while the historical and documentary essay claimed empirical objectivity or polemical rigor. There were also the more recent literary representations originating with the European settlers of Algeria, the pied noir. All modeled French mental attitudes with respect to colonized peoples and colonizers. An indigenous Moslem Algerian literature with its own representations existed, however it was problematized by the use of vocabulary and metaphoric structures taken from the French language and its lack of presence within the various cultures of Algeria: French was the language of the educated elite; most Moslems were still largely illiterate in the 1930s.

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136 Conor Cruise O’Brien, *Camus* (London: Fontana/ Wm. Collins Sons & Co., 1970) 13. He also remarks on the difference which the Mediterranean was to evoke, in opposition to the "Latin west" with its pro-fascist aspects. (Mussolini had in 1935 dispatched Italian forces to capture Ethiopia.) It should also be remarked that Camus was only one among many left-wing intellectuals who unconsciously shared the assumptions of a colonialism that they consciously rejected; he quotes Memmi on this. See Albert Memmi, *The Coloniser and the Colonised*, 1957. Albert Camus, "La Culture Indigène: La Nouvelle Culture Méditerranéenne," lecture given February 1937 at the Maison de la Culture, Algiers. Reprinted in R. Quilliot ed. *Albert Camus, Essais* (Paris, 1965) 1321-7.

137 John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria, The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992) 126. Ruedy places the illiteracy level, on the eve of the revolution in 1954, as 86% for males and 95% for females.
The point to be made from this is that there were several representations of Algiers and varied approaches accessible to Le Corbusier in his study of the city during the inter-war period. He chose from a wide array of the available literature: from the exotic to the empirical and from specialist studies, both those originating in the Metropole and those from the pied noir. He seems to have been little attracted to the more critical representations then available.138

A polemical counter image of Algiers, one claiming documentary naturalism as opposed to the exotic with which it coexisted and to which it was opposed, was also present in representations of Algiers during the period of French occupation. Through nineteenth-century naturalism, depictions of distress, poverty and cruelty caused by conquest had given expression to anti-colonialist sentiments, as had images ennobling the Moslem Algerians.139 Images, Fromentin's for example, were still vital in the twentieth-century. They were imbued, however, with slightly altered functions and served to displace the mistreatment, poverty and detrimental aspects of colonization to the nineteenth-century, to distinguish a period of military exploitation from that of a later, civilian, administration, or to attain a description of Moslem Algerian life which was less impoverished and threatening than a more modern account would have been.140 Fromentin's descriptive passages and seeming sympathy for the indigenous peoples were chiefly quoted, any questioning of the colonial project was deleted.141

138 Le Corbusier utilized the more or less scientific, 'objective' historical study of René Lespès and the empirical engineering-biased work of Faure, the pied noir, algerienne romance of Lucienne Favre and her illustrator Brouty, he read the Tales of Barbarousse and One Thousand and one Arabian Nights. He also read from the Algerian periodicals and newspapers sent to him by his collaborators in the colony. AFLC, Paris.
139 Loufti, Littérature et Colonialisme 5.
141 Realism, or as it was then termed, naturalism, had often been a disguise for racial prejudices as well. For example 19th century novelist Daudet's derisive and unflattering views of Arabs had been used to demystify the dream of the orient and to ridicule the romantic notion of the natural dignity of the oriental; it was the effect on the Metropole of colonialism not cultural sympathy explicitly which informed this anti-colonialist stance. Loufti explains the anti-colonial position in the late 19th and early 20th century, and the relationship between literature and public opinion. In Algiers the conflict was polarized between a military administration of conquest and a civil administration of assimilation. Racial stereotypes and caricature were
In the inter-war years new themes were introduced, augmenting the earlier exoticism found in writers such as André Gide and Pierre Loti. Louis Bertrand wrote about the civilizing mission of the Latin race and its interruption by the intrusion of Islam. Psichari, grandson of Ernest Renan, repeated the comparison between the colonial conquest and the medieval crusades. Pierre Mille portrayed the French as the harbingers of order and enlightenment. Such constructions affirmed the superiority of the French and justified the French occupation as a continuation of the revolutionary and Napoleonic tradition of the liberation of foreign peoples from their self-inflicted oppression.142

Colonial literature stressed the idea of Empire as a source of regeneration, both for the individual French citizen who emigrated there but also for the French nation as a whole. Algeria was frequently cited as an exemplar for this projected idealism. Roland Lebel, writing in 1931, asserted that "L'esprit colonial est une affirmation de l'énergie morale. La littérature coloniale, fille de cette résolution saine, s'affirme en réaction contre le décadentisme."143 In the colonies, distanced from the corrupt (parliamentary) government of France and the decadence and crassness of Metropolitan society, the possibility of a new culture of action and energy, or a new and vigorous French race could arise. Although used to oppose colonialist purported idealism. Opposition to colonial expansion fed on two fears, the scandals of incompetence and corruption in Algiers which seemed to illustrate French lack of aptitude for colonization and the perceived priority of the border with Germany along the Rhine. The military were understood as inhuman cruel conquerors, the colonizers as exploitative land robbers. Daudet's portrayal of Arabs as brutal traders, hypocrites of the Koran and law were in keeping with anti-militarist opinions of the period, such as those found in Le Figaro, and supported notions of the civilizing aspects of colonization and the colonists of the period. Maupassant, writing in the same years, although casting a harsh light on political and financial machinations of the colonial enterprise, in Tunisia, supported the idea of the civilizing aspects of colonization. Loufti concludes that anti-colonialism was based more on a suspicion of parliamentarians and the morality of parliament than on economic or political factors. Both Right and Left were critical of the role of private financial interests in the colonies. See, Loufti, *Littérature et Colonialisme* 1-17. This would also be Lyautey's complaint and would structure the opposition of Algeria to the protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia.

142 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 36.
143 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 37.
related to exotism, it was understood at the time as a modern and critical stance, although it was the Metropole and not colonialism which was being denounced.

The newer, alternative, *pied noir* literature continued many of the stereotypes of the Metropole tradition. Exemplifying this alternative literature are the *Cagayous* stories. Published between 1891 and 1930, they exploited racial stereotypes and a polyglot of French, Spanish, Italian and Arabic to poke fun at French high culture and the idea of racial mixing. Yet it was this serialization that was used in the Célébration Centenaire of 1930 to represent Algerian culture.144 *Pied noir* literature was also in some important instances in opposition to Metropolitan representations; it stridently denied the Kabyle-Berber myth of the colonial administration which had suggested the Western affinities of these Algerian Moslems and their ability to assimilate. *Pied noir* language, heavily laden with pejorative slang, was used to denigrate and disparage the Moslem population. The Casbah was stereotyped as dirty and squalid as were the populations residing there. As this now largely residential area was where most Moslem women were thought to be sequestered, it was also associated, via the misconception of the harem, with prostitution, "*Maison mauresque*" being a euphemism for *maison de tolérance*, or brothel.145 Pornographic postcards which circulated freely reinforced such attributions.146 In addition, *Pied noir* literature records the tensions and anxiety produced by the influx of indigenous peoples and the fear of a breakdown in the hierarchy of the colonial system; by 1936 a parity between European and Moslem populations appeared imminent in Algiers.147 The stories of the *Cagayous* series constantly objectified and alienated the Arab while it ridiculed any evident assimilation, associating the Arab to the outback, and to crude, "baser," instincts. Fears of the advancement of Moslems, through education, the army, or competitive employment were 

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145 Sivan, "Colonialism and Popular Culture" 35.
147 Sivan, "Colonialism and Popular Culture" 41.
often transposed to sexual aggression, which expressed a more fundamental fear of the fusion of the races via assimilation. For example, the eagerness of the évolués for advancement, the rights of citizenship and equal opportunity in employment, were "explained" as a lasciviousness and coveting of European women. Algerians in the army were portrayed as insurgents-in-training, while the highly educated Moslem was ridiculed from fear of the loss of status which French Algerians might suffer as propagators of the mission civilisatrice. 148

_Pied noir_ literature is important to the discussion of Le Corbusier's Obus plans for at least three reasons. First, Le Corbusier's most ardent supporter in Algiers was Edmond Brua a pied noir writer of the Caygagous school and Le Corbusier possessed at least one of his books. Secondly, the themes and subject matter in Caygagous literature reveal the real anxieties which French Algerians had about the meeting of cultures on equal ground such as Le Corbusier proposed. The setting of these stories was almost invariably the city and the encounters related there reveal something of the way in which colonists used urban space and their expectations of it. Third, the devising of new vocabulary and the knowing misuse of French grammar and vocabulary, as well as pronunciation, betrays a certain irreverence for French literary canons. Le Corbusier's supporters would have a similar disinterest in the French Beaux Arts architectural canon. Also, the pied noir formed a significant sector of the public which Le Corbusier needed to appease with his designs.

The Pragmatics of Power

Clearly such presentations of Algiers performed complex roles. On the one hand, they had to maintain the cultural differences that justified French presence and its associated legislation, and on the other, sustain the unity of Algeria with France. While the distancing

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148 Sivan, "Colonialism and Popular Culture" 42-44.
inherent to exoticism helped maintain cultural difference, throughout the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century modernization reaffirmed the Western character of the city as progressive and ordered. Certain of the aesthetic and cultural representations of Algiers, most notably obelisks (1800s), the modern Government Building (1930) and the City Hall (1934) reinforced French and European interests there. While the Casbah not only attracted tourists and bolstered an often flagging leisure industry, it also promoted Moslem Algerian culture as one of the past, traditional and static, yet decaying. Such contradictory images served to justify the civilizing vigilance of France. On the other hand, images of progress, modern dams, irrigation systems and road networks showed initiative and support for the lucrative exploitation of the land and thus won support for entrepreneurial groups. The efficacy of these representations was limited by their context and audience in which and for whom colonialism itself was a contentious issue.

Postcards, writings, exhibitions and films, were largely intended for a French and international public. The working and reworking of the stereotypes, well-rehearsed poses and standard plots used to define both Algiers and its denizens indicate a close regard for managing the contradictions and containing the anxieties felt within the Metropole and the colony about the citizen and the nation. The fears of a debilitated people caused by intermarriage (L'Occident), or the intermingling of races (Pépé le Moko); of cultural laxness (postcards of the Casbah); the obsession with identifying "Others" (Kabyles, Maures); the anxieties caused by modernization (the tractor in Le Bled, the modern city in Les hommes nouveaux); or the European's fear of being overwhelmed by the superior numbers of Moslem Algerians or a democratic process that might recognize majority rule—all are stirrings from deep-seated fears about national identity in a colony attempting to eke out its privilege and presence in an inhospitable land and an often censorious Metropole. Even the overworked centennial celebration, which attempted to relive past "glory" in mock
military reenactments of the "defeat" and humiliation of Moslem Algerians, begs the question of what motivated this straining to reassert French presence?

Obviously, it was felt necessary to stake out the ground again, to recall the French to their task and Moslem Algerians to their place. The reasons for this are varied. Alternative and contesting histories of Algiers had begun to appear in the 1930s. The incumbent, authoritative positions held by apologists of the colonial enterprise, produced by the Ecole d'Alger, were being threatened and displaced by an alternative Western historiography which was humanist, liberal and more sympathetic to indigenous demands.\textsuperscript{149} This decade also witnessed the first histories written by Moslem Algerians; they called into question both the fictive structures and objective truths claimed by previous Eurocentric poetics and histories. A lingering economic crisis in the aftermath of World War I had turned France into a debtor nation with a growing trade deficit, a sharply decreased population, an agricultural and industrial capacity in ruin, a rapidly declining franc and an urgent need of reconstruction.\textsuperscript{150} The effect on Algiers had also been significant. While the period of 1920 to 1930 had been one of general economic buoyancy related to both Metropolitan and world prosperity as a whole, it had produced wealth only for the Europeans of Algeria. It was also a prosperity largely resulting from viticulture which, from the mid-1930s, competed with French production and markets causing production-limiting legislation and tension between Metropole and colony. At the same time the conversion of grain cultivation to viticulture had displaced and impoverished Moslem Algerians.\textsuperscript{151} The distorted economic growth which disadvantaged the indigenous population of the colony

\textsuperscript{149} Prochaska, \textit{Making of Algeria French} 1-2. Exemplars of the Ecole d'Alger were E.F. Gautier, George Marçais and other social scientists. They were prominent among the authors of the Centenary Celebrations publications. Emerit, A.-A Julien and C.-R. Ageron exemplify the alternative Western tradition appearing in the 1930s. Lacheraf and Kaddache are representative of the Moslem Algerian tradition, their work however belongs to the post World War II period.

\textsuperscript{150} C.M. Andrew and A.S. Kanya-Forstner, \textit{France Overseas: The Great War and the Climax of French Imperial Expansion} (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1981) 244.

\textsuperscript{151} Ruedy, \textit{Modern Algeria} 115-117.
had been noted in the Metropole, and colon intransigence over reforms prompted some evolués to petition the French Government in Paris directly. The Inter-war years formed a potent context for both the redirected interest in and support for Empire as well as the persuasively articulated disillusionment with, and moral critique of, the West in general and the colonial enterprise in particular. Clearly, assessment of these developments had repercussions on how colonialism would be addressed and modernism phrased and assessed.

Such conditions affected the public perception and attitude towards the issue of colonization. Arguments for colonialism traditionally had centered on national prestige, the idea of a civilizing mission, the need for military recruitment, raw materials, improved export and balance of trade payments. Practical French interests in Algeria, despite the colony's special status as a "province" of France, were executed within colonial terms of reference and an imperial framework. Although a political entity composed of three French departments and within the jurisdiction of the Minister of the Interior and not the Minister of Colonies, the official histories, atlases and parliamentary debates positioned Algeria within colonial development projects. Social programs were geared to this exploitation in which healthcare and housing were envisioned as essential, "in order for the autochthonous population to one day produce and consume within a French imperial economy...."

Urbanism was considered a persuasive device for reconstruction in France and in the colonies. It had not only a literal meaning of physical reconstruction but also a metaphoric one of national and moral repair. This was the lesson to be learned from both Pépé le Moko and Les hommes nouveaux. The Société Français des Urbanistes (SFU) had been founded in 1913 with exactly these two objectives in mind. Urbanism would redress the social and economic decadence which, the Society counseled, had led to the military and industrial defeat by Germany in 1870. Social order was linked with built form. This program was

152By 1907 colonial medicine had become a medical specialization. August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 30.
delayed, but also refined, by the First World War. In the 1930s the role of planning in assuring the health of the nation was extended to include the development and retention of the colonies and a subsidiary organization devoted to colonial urban issues was founded by the SFU.153

Arguments opposing colonization and Empire focused on the lack of investment funds, the cost of administration and defense, the difficulty of dealing with colonists and a growing nationalism observable in colonial possessions.154 There were several critiques of colonialism and the Western values that sustained it. The Rif war in Morocco provoked anti-war and anti-colonial action and publicity in 1925. André Gide reported French atrocities and abuses of colonial subjects, especially in the construction of railways, in La Revue de paris and Le Populaire in 1927.155 Reports of the savagery of forced labour in the building of French railways in Africa circulated in L'Humanité in May of 1931.156 The Surrealist tract, "Ne visitez pas l'Expo Coloniale," of 1931 unsettled any avant-garde involvement in the colonial endeavor. Nègritude was another instance of the disaffection with French dominance by the celebration of the alternative to Western culture.157

A serious alternative literature of protest was ignited in 1921 by Paul Maran's Batauala, which, written from the perspective of a black, reversed the signification of Western civilization, finding cruelty and greed to be the reality of the French presence in Africa.158

In addition, the past, folklore and history were being re-appropriated by indigenous

154See Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, France Overseas 212.
156The article "Un negre par traverse," was published on the twenty-first of May, it referred to the earlier exposé by Albert Londres in the late 1920s. Hodeir and Pierre, L'Exposition Coloniale 120.
158Betts, France and Decolonisation 36-37.
peoples for their own self-definition. A powerful Islamic revivalist movement emerged in Algeria and Morocco during the inter-war years that made the mosque, the veil, Arabic, and traditional ways points of resistance to Western authority.  

French domination was undermined in other, political, ways as well. The French government, beleaguered by British and American maneuvering and by a public weary over French problems in the Middle East, saw North Africa by comparison as a less troublesome field of endeavor. Syria and Lebanon had been all but lost to British influence and indigenous nationalism; the French sphere of influence was reduced to and focused on the Sharifian Empire which consequently took on a new importance. This precipitated Maréchal Lyautey's call for a radical change in "native" policy. As Lyautey remarked "the time had come to make a radical change of course in native policy and Moslem participation in public affairs." He advocated looking to the world situation in general and to the Moslem world in particular. He also added that "concepts of the rights of peoples to self-government and revolutionary change have spread across the earth. For this a price will have to be paid." It was not a price to be easily extracted from Algerian colon.  

While the Mediterranean had long attracted businessmen, North Africa was increasingly seen as a possible focus for their investments. The Sarraut proposal of 1923 was essentially one for the industrialization of the colonies. It called for the development of Empire according to a clear and precise plan by which the colonies could be transformed from "museums" into production centers. In Sarraut's equation "[t]he progressive execution of a large and creative program of action, carefully and conscientiously  

159 Beus, France and Decolonisation 35.  
160 Andrew and Kanya-Forster, France Overseas 242-243.  
161 Andrew and Kanya-Forster, France Overseas 242-243.  
162 For a good summary of colon intransigence see Ruedy, Modern Algeria 85-92, 114-15.
elaborated will ensure, through the increased strength and prosperity of France d'Outre-
mer, the future strength and prosperity of the Mère-Patrie."163

This new vision of the colonies presented challenges to their exotic representation. The
emphasis on regional difference was a thinly disguised reference to colonial development,
market potential and management for a flagging French economy and distressed balance of
payments. Algeria would be reconfigured and distinguished by this updated notion of
association and *mise en valeur*.164 Association entailed a recognition of two separate
cultural and economic spheres, one European, the other indigenous, while a policy of *mise
en valeur*, or optimal economic exploitation, implied industrialization. The economic
depression experienced in France throughout the 1930s prompted a reevaluation of
economic policies and proposals for a reciprocal trading arrangement between the
Metropole and its Empire. Prior to this trade between colonies and Metropole had not been
rigorously organized and trade between colonies and other nations frequent. Now, like
Britain, France sought to regulate production and distribution according to its own needs.
By this time it had become evident that exotic discourses on the colonies, because of their
generalization and mythification, might be detrimental to the creation of a second French
Empire based upon economic reorganization and colonial production designated for
Metropolitan needs. The advertisement of this program necessitated images of railways and
institutional buildings, dams and modern irrigation systems, images of an industrial
infrastructure that were at odds with older and popular representations of Algeria. Yet such
popular images were increasingly used to depict Algeria in the 1930s. Exoticism would be
re-styled to serve the needs of cultural differentiation and particularized geography such that
the idea of association and respect for other cultures could be maintained as a positive

164 Interestingly, this coincided with growing nationalist movements within the colonies, movements
which often felt some sense of solidarity in confronting a common enemy of French imperialism and its
theoretical constructs which identified the colonized as a single group. Most relevant to a discussion of
Algeria is the growing identification of a shared interest among Islamic colonies and especially with those
of the Maghreb. See also August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 2.
attribute of the economic assimilation and exploitation of the revised *mise en valeur* plan. This mixed representation was passed on from the Governments of the early 1930s to the Popular Front to Vichy with their composition varying accordingly. Modern and industrial infrastructure were more prominent during the Popular Front although references to folklore moderated them in the Exposition Internationale of 1937. Vichy would emphasize representations of folklore and established traditions for the colonies; modernism would be less prevalent than it was in the Popular Front.

Indeed, *la région* assumed a dual meaning in the 1930s and early 1940s, referring both to geographical and economic positions in relation to the Metropole. Thus to counteract any harmful implications of Orientalist attitudes, colonialists gave priority to a new image of the French Empire, that of an assemblage of differentiated societies, each one specific in its pragmatic and economic importance.\(^{165}\) The "scientific" knowledge which supported this altered colonialism came from various academic disciplines such as sociology, where the work of Emile Durkheim was influential, and anthropology, as exemplified in the writing of *Le Bon* or Desmoulins.\(^{166}\) Instead of general Enlightenment theories of civilization, a practical policy of association was proposed which insisted on continued and essential difference between France and its subjects. Associationism was manifested in the plans and policies where racial segregation was maintained and French technical superiority evidenced in port construction and European-style city layouts. Military figures such as Gallieni and Lyautey, as well as practitioners associated with the SFU were model adherents of associationism. Association was encouraged by an elite informed of the resources, geographic configuration and the respective customs and culture of the colonies by the institutes and schools established in the twentieth-century. A more popular support

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165August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 23.
166August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 23. Also supportive of this new approach were the Union coloniale française and the Comité de l'Afrique française. They, with *Le Bon* and Durkheim, attacked the notion of universality. See also David Underwood, "Alfred Agache, French Sociology, and Modern Urbanism in France and Brazil," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* L.2 (June 1991): 130-166.
for association was sought among a less specialized mass audience via exhibitions, literature and to some extent via revised school curricula.\textsuperscript{167}

Increasingly, and with ever more urgency, new representations of the colonies were sought, realized and circulated, to contain the constantly altering field of colonial politics and the uncertainties of economic development such that its necessary infrastructure would not be jeopardized by anachronistic notions of the exotic. The "Other," primitive cultures with no need of sophisticated French products, became less appealing. The incongruity between the exotic spectacle, attractive to popular opinion in the Metropole, and the didactic description, serving to legitimate economic development, remained a largely unresolved problem in the representation of the colonies for those propagating their pragmatic functions. Initially both popular entertainment and didactic considerations could co-exist, retaining their separate spheres, as they did in the colonial exhibitions of 1906, 1922 and 1931. The 1906 Exposition Coloniale, held in Marseilles, the first national colonial exhibition, established the practice of detailed and comprehensive inventories of the colonies which would be repeated in 1922, 1931 and 1937. The 1906 Exposition combined the spectacle and the business report, the exotic and the pragmatic. There were picturesque pavilions whose "curious manifestations of indigenous life entertained the fantasies and illusions of the public."\textsuperscript{168} Yet at the same time, as Thomsa August has observed, "however exotic and mythical the outward appearance, every pavilion documented completely the economy of the respective colony."\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{167}The first diploma in colonial studies was offered by Bordeaux in c. 1902. These institutionalized curricula on colonial subjects existed prior to the redirection from assimilation to association; their contents and objectives were merely reoriented. More significant was the increasing role given to the study of the colonies within Schools of Higher learning in Commerce where the colonies were integrated within courses on the national economy.

\textsuperscript{168}August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 34.

\textsuperscript{169}August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 34-35.
In the later exhibitions, however, the aim of expanding the *idée colonial* seemed for advocates of Empire to be curtailed by its outward exotic appearance. Sylvie Leprun has noted that with the 1937 Exposition des Arts et Techniques dans la vie moderne, "orientalism was dead on the banks of ethnography while the expo forgot to be mysterious, indeed amorous, of its colonies." This disenchantment coincided with the Algerian nationalists' declaration of the Parti du peuple algérien and the growing presence of colonialists advocating economic development of the colonies. Expositions were a favored vehicle for the presentation of arguments for *mise en valeur*. Here the need to attract, address and win public opinion for the more elite public of entrepreneurs, manufacturers and businessmen for whom such fairs were a venue for indoctrination led to the intermingling of both exotic and pragmatic forms of knowledge. The inclusion of exotic and modernized production served to highlight by their juxtaposition the progress realized by the French presence. Simultaneously, public approval would extend political legitimacy as well as public funds to the industrial projects displayed.

Confronting metropolitan public opinion, nourished by exotic images and touristic fantasies, colonial lobbyists launched propaganda campaigns for a program of *mise en valeur*. Graphs, statistics, charts, colonial products and resources were pitted against picturesque landscapes, mythologized peoples, exotic milieu, mysterious women, violence and untended nature. These numerical notations and more sober images were intended to buttress the rational development of Empire. Such depictions and the disciplines from which they drew sought to win approval and naturalize demands for land concessions, public works, public loans, financial aid and tariff reforms, all essential to the policy of

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171 Another name given to this political party founded by Messali in 1937 is the parti populaire algérien. See chapter three, footnote 23.
172 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 87. The plan for this development was first made topical by Albert Sarraut just after W.W.I.
By the end of World War I the effectiveness of the small colonial lobby group had diminished and the support and involvement of a public educated to the value of the colonies was felt essential to the realization of the "realities of wealth, of peace and greatness." By 1930 the policy of mise en valeur entailed a pragmatic attitude to space based on a program of economic exploitation and production. The colony would export to France what the Metropole needed and import what the Metropole had to offer. The colony would both produce and consume; France would achieve a more favorable balance of payments and economic independence from Europe. However, this economic exchange demanded the equipement of the colonies: roads, port facilities, railways, irrigation, aviation, machinery. Representations of Algeria therefore had to make clear its investment possibilities, while its government had to insure that its infrastructure was made favorable to economic exploitation, and its appeal to capitalists and financiers thus assured.

This new image of the colonies, as part of an economically based, industrialized, modernized and collaborative colonial Empire, was proposed with increasing insistence in the late 1920s and 1930s. Against the established doctrine expressed in the style vainqueur of Beaux Arts modernism, mise en valeur proposed an associationist policy whose real motives were expressed in the statistics, graphs and profit curves by which it was first portrayed. Associationist propaganda spoke in the language of the colon agriculturist, the industrialist and the Chamber of Commerce of the concerns of industrialization: skilled and unskilled labor as a useful consumer group, of machinery, efficiency and rationality. It promised careers for the doctor, agriculturist and engineer rather than the artist or explorer. In turn, a useful reserve of workers and military recruits were the rationale for new Government health programs. (For example Governor General Carde emphasized the need

173 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 88. A tariff reform bill was passed in 1928 and price quotas instituted in the early 1930s.
174 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 90.
for trained auxiliary Algerian assistants to maintain a cheap and abundant supply of Algerian labor and for recruits in the army.)

Following the 1918 Armistice many Government agencies were infiltrated by pro-colonial bureaucrats and new agencies were established to disseminate with ever greater effectiveness the policy of *mise en valeur*. The Conseil supérieur des colonies, founded by Sarraut in 1920, emphasized financial and legislative means for the ends of economic development of the colonies and the advantage of the Metropole. Both specialized economic activity, largely agricultural in Algeria, and tourism, revamped as a modern commercial activity, were considered regional phenomena, an important concept developed in the 1930s to identify and represent both the Nation and its foreign, colonial, parts. From May of 1931 an official publication of the Colonial Ministry, *Le Temps*, ran a weekly column on the colonies. Newspapers were utilized and often subsidized to support the image of material and moral progress wrought by French colonization. In 1936 Algeria launched its own "showcase" and publication to promote its products in the Metropolitan market. During the same period the Popular Front founded the Commissariat général pour la propagande coloniale et les expositions and the Service intercoloniale d'information et de documentation. Their propaganda was disseminated primarily via radio and press where various pro-colonial publications and Societies were also subsidized. The Ministries of Public Instruction and Fine Arts, the Colonies, and Education were all recruited to a program designed to establish a specialized colonial administrative force as well as a general population better educated about the colonies and their role in the economic development of the Metropole. History and geography school books for all primary and

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175 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 95, 97
176 In 1928 the Commission d'Organisation de section retrospective was formed as an adjunct to the Commission d'organisation de section de synthèse, founded by the Ministry of the Colonies. In 1929 the Cité d'information was established. In 1932 the Maison de la France d'Outre-mer was proposed by Lyautey. Blocked by Senate it was re-proposed in 1935 and finally established in 1937 with financing by the colonies: its aim was to increase the consumption of colonial products. See August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 118-19.
177 August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 124.
secondary levels of education were updated. In 1920 the standard history manual had one of twenty chapters on the colonies, and only Algeria was given detailed commentary.\textsuperscript{178} Throughout the 1920s textbooks were altered and embellished with additional chapters on the Empire. Human geography taught about race, language, religion, civilization, political organization, and legal descriptions—of colony, protectorate, mandate and sphere of influence—were specified. These new representations of the inter-war years disguised political aims by specialized and institutional languages of law, statistics, medicine and photographic document. At the same time technical schools stressed employment possibilities to be found in the colonies. Ports, highways, railways and school construction were emphasized, the violence of the early conquest unremarked. The word "imperialist" was excised and colonial expansion was, rather significantly, couched in terms of a continuation of Roman civilization brought to less enlightened forms of humanity.\textsuperscript{179}

Algeria was the center of "Latin" colonization, according to economic development propaganda of the period.\textsuperscript{180} This flattering view no doubt sought to attract settlers to the colony and thus secure the holding of this strategic site; colonization was felt to be the most sufficient way of holding land won by the military.\textsuperscript{181}

Through such projects, the colonizing "genius" of France was to be demonstrated and disseminated in attempts to manage both the image of the French nation and also its floundering economic situation. Criticism from within France by the French Communist Party necessitated that this French colonizing brilliance be disseminated nationally. And not incidentally did such images of material and spiritual wealth, collaboratively produced under the purportedly just and sane tutelage of France, circulate in the international arena where criticism of alleged French colonial policies and abuses was publicized by Germany.

\textsuperscript{178}August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 136.
\textsuperscript{179}August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 135.
\textsuperscript{180}August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 189.
and Italy. In 1930-1931 such adverse foreign propaganda was perceived as a serious issue. By 1934 it was particularly urgent as the Germans had launched a systematic and virulent campaign to discredit the French with accusations of administrative inefficiency, economic neglect and corruption of the Aryan race.\footnote{August, "Colonial Policy and Propaganda" 102.} In addition, Italy's imperialist ambitions required a counteractive response, while growing nationalist movements in many colonies, including Algeria, demanded rebuttal.\footnote{For a general description of anti-colonial critique by the subjects of empire generally see Betts, France and Decolonisation .}

The new set of representational tropes originating in economic and professionalized practices and the pragmatic program of colonial exploitation did not go unheeded by the popular cinema. Notice of them is evidenced in the airplane views over Algeria, projected in \textit{La Duel} which, as Megherbi has noted, portray an empty land "for sale" and ready for occupation, or in \textit{Pépé le Moko} where the comparison of squalid Casbah and neat European city served to emphasize the benefits of Western technological resources. Such advantages were most blatant in \textit{Les hommes nouveaux} which amply showcased the benefits of modernization and technology. This film gave visual form to Lyautey's claim that colonialism brought to "all" peoples the methods and practices which had assured the well being and success of all "civilized" peoples. The tractor highlighted in \textit{Le Bled} confirmed who those civilized people were; it not only worked to master the land, it also emphasized the power and program of the agricultural oligarchy which dominated the Délégations financières and hence Algeria.

These portrayals reiterated the official image of progress that had been conveyed by the Palais de le Ministère des colonies (1922). Here the display of information related the colonies to the Metropole according to a progression that began with a technologically modern military juxtaposed to industrially primitive indigenous peoples and concluded with
a civil service working in collaboration with the "evolving" subjects under its care. The building was sited within yet another spatial description of colonial-Metropole relations; the colonial pavilions were distributed around the central Palais de Marseille, like the satellites which the colonies were to the central sun which was the Metropole in the revamped associationist discourse of the period.

Throughout the period 1930-1942, the requirements of power in the Metropole shifted in response to internal, European and Algerian pressures. Within the Metropole different partisan positions with respect to the colonies existed. Radicals, and the Senate which they dominated, favored the status quo, that is French supreme authority in Algeria. Socialists supported the notion of colonialism as the point of departure for self-determination. Only the French Communist Party advocated independence for Algeria and all other colonies. None were actually unconditionally anti-colonial. As well, the old theories of assimilation and association could no longer contain the compromised positions taken with Nationalist concerns of territorial expansion or the civilizing mission and Republican notions of equality and liberty.

The central role of the Socialists in the balance of power in the inter-war years rendered their position on colonialism important. Generally a Socialist, or left oriented, discourse replaced military expansion with French cultural and technical extension, such as large-scale public works, railroads and mines, all to be "peacefully" achieved. Although Socialists spoke of eventual independence for the colonies its advent was left undetermined. It was a position justified and maintained by a view of the indigène as reactionary and feudal. Generally, an assimilationist stance was retained with respect to social legislation and economics in keeping with the long-term Socialist goal of worker

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liberation, although the policy after World War I was modified in keeping with a more comprehensive Imperial economic structure.\textsuperscript{186} The colonial system was to be made more humane, not jettisoned, according to Socialists. This would be done by the introduction of model villages, schools, dispensaries, increased democratic rights and a less arbitrary judicial power. Socialists espoused sympathy for the program of economic assimilation into France, not independence but "equality." Imperial extension was opposed, but the maintenance of the French Empire accepted. While opposition came from the Communist party, this lasted only between 1924 and 1936. After 1936, as part of the Popular Front, a more compromised position was espoused and independence dropped as a polemic. The politics of the Popular Front focused all allied parties on the retention of Empire, albeit a reformed one.

During the Popular Front the question of Algeria was frequently brought before the public. Although subordinated to the growing apprehensions caused by the threat of war in Europe, colonial policy would be shaped by anti-fascist rhetoric and campaigns. Socialist rhetoric, altered in response to the threat of Fascism in the mid 1930s, prophesied that independence would only leave colonial people prey to fascist imperialism. Ultimately, self-government was not the objective of Blum's government or of any Ministers concerned with colonial policy.\textsuperscript{187} This position was supported by the reference to conventional notions of the benefits of French civilization and of the immorality of the sudden withdrawal of France leaving the local populations prey to the enemy. It was a position that served the immediate needs of France: markets, military recruits, international prestige. Political reform which had been formulated by the Blum-Viollette Bill with its proposed extension of the franchise to about 20,000 Moslem Algerians was opposed by the

\textsuperscript{186}Cohen, The Colonial Policy of the Popular Front gives a discussion of the simultaneous use of assimilation and association rhetoric during the inter-war period; it greatly depended on the needs of France and the oppositional stance taken by the elite in Algeria.

\textsuperscript{187}Jackson, The Popular Front 155.
French in Algeria and colonialist supporters and Radicals in France; it was easily defeated in the Senate. Consequently, social and economic improvements replaced any vaunted political reform. Public works were one measure adopted to revive the economy within a general policy of state planning. Images of social cooperation, schools built and artisan programs maintained, became stock items of Popular Front representations of Algeria.

With the failure of the Popular Front and the resultant disillusionment of the Moslem moderates, the more radical calls for independence of the Parti du peuple algérien and Messali Hadj in 1937 became intensified and successful in attracting supporters. Western power within Algeria and Algiers became more extreme, defensive and obstructionist to any social or economic reform emanating from the Metropole. Repression linked to the "preservation of the Empire" became more excessive. Militants were imprisoned, the Moslem press censored, education and preaching in mosques controlled, rights to congregating denied. Law and order replaced "liberty" and "the Republic" as rallying cries. By 1937 any dissent from the policies of the government was deemed fascist or the workings of fanaticism; Moslem Algerians were caricatured accordingly. This especially was the case after Daladier's victory over the Popular Front in April of 1938 and the upsurge of conservative and right-wing forces. The rise of Fascism and its attack on liberty had provoked a defense of the constitutional status quo.

Le Corbusier's essays and syndicalist proposals in *Prélude* between 1931 and 1935 must be placed against this maelstrom of divided interests and opposing positions on the colonies and the treatment of its subjects. *Prélude* presented Algiers as the capital of North Africa and a center, along with Paris, Barcelona and Rome, of a new economic entity comprised of a federation of "Latin" countries bordering the Mediterranean. This configuration was based on economic potentials, production possibilities, consumer needs, technological

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expansion and distribution possibilities. Their principles and arguments resembled the master plan of Sarraut where the economic needs determined by the plan took precedence over real local requirements or desires. As economic decisions were made by French citizens in Algeria, French interests would continue to dominate over Moslem Algerian needs. Various competing ideas and structures of power existed that shaped the relationships between colony and Metropole, citizen and subject, French economic interests and those of European Algerians. Culture was to be associational, with separate spheres to maintain their differences, while economic development was to be assimilationist. The exotic images of the former attempted to veil the harsher reality of the latter.

Conclusion

The diverse representations of Algeria and of Algiers extant through the inter-war years coincided with and were often composed of conflicting references produced by the competing interests of Metropole, colon and increasingly, le population indigène. Administrative bodies and functionaries gave shape to Metropolitan policies. A system of classification originating in the Metropole and supported by academic discourse differentiated Berber, Kabyle, Mozabite, Arab, and woman, veiled or unveiled, fine gradations that served the purposes of colonization. Colons had begun to identify themselves as a constituency via a pied noir culture, distinct but not separate from that of the Metropole. The fabrication of this distinct pied noir entity as "a new race" provided an alternative view of colonization. Represented as a people of the climate and landscape, rather than history or ethnic tradition, they laid claims to the region, to the space and time of Algeria. Le population indigène however was another "constituency" forming in Algeria at this time which also began to assert its rights to the city and its landscape; these indigenous people based their claim more on history than geography. Within this "fourth city of
France" the well-worn nationalism of France began to encounter that of a nascent Moslem Algeria.

The poetics and pragmatics, style and technology, of architecture and urban structure were important components of power relations in Algiers. By the late 1920s two architectural traditions were important in Algiers. The first was introduced by Jonnart, as Governor General of Algeria at the turn of the century, and accepted as the official style of the colony until the 1930s. It was reworked and maintained in the production of the SFU who had prominent members active in Algiers. One of its key spokespersons, Henri Prost, was responsible for the Algiers plan that Le Corbusier would ultimately oppose. Another member, Alfred-Donnat Agache, was the first urban planner invited to speak in Algiers by the Amis d'Alger, the same group who would the following year invite Le Corbusier. A second and more recent tradition was that of the Groupe Algerien which sought a rationalized approach to climate and materials as an extension of the work of metropolitan Modernists such as August Perret and Franz Jourdain. Both traditions were concerned with issues of political power; both traditions were in crisis by the 1930s. Mediterraneanism was one proposed resolution to this crisis of representation.

Architecture and urbanism were in the forefront of colonial administration preoccupation.189 The minarets, screened windows, crenellations and white stucco walls so standard for government buildings in the first decades of the twentieth-century, were not merely forms and detail redolent of the exotic and evocative of peaceful cohabitation. They were also part of the urban politics of North Africa, a highly conscious and official

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189 François Béguin, with Gildas Baudez, Denis Kesage, Lucien Godin, Arabisances, décor architectural et tracé urbain en Afrique du Nord 1830-1950 (Paris: Dunod, 1986) 34. Interestingly, one of the ideological supports for the image of a protective France was found in the movement by French administrators to protect Arab monuments; again their tourist value was also a consideration. Lyautey was particularly adamant about this. "Nos protégés ont mieux compris le génie de notre race en nous voyant nous attacher à la restauration de leurs monuments, à la sauvegarde de leurs trésors que l'incurie et l'anarchie avaient laissés ruiner et gaspiller." Letter of General Lyautey, 5 July 1917 cited in "le Maroc Artistique," L'Art et les artistes, 1916-17. Rpt. in Béguin, Arabisances 16.
program for the assertion of French power. The idea of *arabisance*, had been seized upon immediately after the First World War by Governor General Jonnart as a key strategy for the identification of French occupation with a benign guardianship (Figure 27).\(^{190}\)

It served tourists' interests as well as the more narrowly defined political role in replacing the neoclassical style that had previously marked out French cultural and military victory over the Moslems and Turks respectively. It also distinguished a morally-motivated administration in contras distinction to profit-driven speculative practices. In its new form it could better serve European leisure needs as well as representational requirements.

Ideologically such *arabisance* was intended to convey the protective stance of France, respectful of local traditions and differences. The French public was clearly educated to such a reading of these North African *arabisances*; the *Blue Guide to Tunis* for example remarked on the new image of France:

> devant le collège Sadiki et surtout en présence du palais de l'Agriculture, nous éprouvons l'impression que le protectorat français vient enfin de trouver son équilibre. Ces beaux monuments sont les symboles de la politique d'association. Il fallait que l'esprit de conciliation et de tolérance fut une chose acquise par les services de la Régence, pour qu'un artiste eut la liberté d'exprimer cette pensée d'une façon durable et magnifique.\(^{191}\)

Legitimations for this neo-Moorish style were present in the "Indigenous House" of 1930 built in Algiers as part of the centenary celebrations of the French occupation of Algeria (Figure 32) and in the 1931 Exposition Coloniale held at Parc Vincennes in Paris (Figure 33). The "Indigenous House," while ostensibly an example of French conservation efforts, was also a token action for it coincided with the demolition of great tracts of Moslem

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\(^{190}\) Béguin, *Arabisances* 33. *Arabisance* is described by Béguin on pages 16 and 20 as having originated first in expositions and luxurious tourist brochures.

housing in the interests of slum clearance while also marking a type of dwelling available only to the very wealthy and to the past. As well, this "Indigenous House" was a response to a crisis in Moslem family housing in Algiers. Despite its exotic attributions, interest in such traditional housing was provoked by the need to provide models for government subsidized apartment complexes which would function as social stabilization; it was also a response to the bidonvilles threatening to disrupt the city and to rend its social fabric. Le Corbusier would draw upon this indigenous house very discerningly.

Arabisance had served to bring the architectural and urban landscape of Algeria to national consciousness in the Metropole, and to consolidate this same social landscape by selectively reworking the representational spaces, specific symbols and formal vocabulary with which Moslem society could identify.192 They were however increasingly and intentionally muted symbols, their signification emptied and their efficacy in everyday life diminished by French practices which disconnected them from their spatial and social supports.

Prost had been introduced to and involved in the practice and ideology of arabisance while working with Lyautey in Morocco just prior to his planning role in Algiers. In Morocco, Prost had facilitated the translation of Lyautey's associationist policies into legislation, urban planning and architecture. Through the 1920s the artistic practices of arabisance were directly related to the political agency of Lyautey; and, according to François Béguin, "more precisely to a permanent circulation of ideas and categories between administrator, architect and novelist," that is, between Lyautey, Prost, and the contemporary stories of the Tharabaud brothers, J. Gallotti, and L. Vaillat.193

192Béguin, Arabisances 30.
193Béguin, Arabisances 67. Fromentin's Une année dans le Sahel is also mentioned here in connection with Vaillat's descriptions, characterized as formulaic consisting of nude surfaces, terraces, intimate labyrinthine streets where: "La nudité des surfaces semble dédiée à la gloire du soleil, les murs et les terrasses dressés et étendus sans ordre, s'ombrageant les uns les autres, sont pour le jeu des rayons et des ombres, un magique instrument, un grand orgue à lumière...Enfin, il y a l'échelle .... le don des humbles
However, increasingly, the poetic descriptions and minutely analyzed references to the Arab house and garden published by Galloti and Laprade in the 1920s served to privilege an abstract and largely aesthetic comprehension of the Arab house. Stripped of its specifically Moslem connotations and the relevance of the life once lived within its forms, the "Arab house" could be used for the design of European villas or as a new norm for Arab life. Alternatively, un-modernized, the "Arab house" could serve as a mark of difference and lack of evolution, a distinction and deficiency that had political ramifications in the 1930s. With descriptions of the secluded and contemplative aspects of Arab interiors, the inactive life of the Arabs was also called up by both French administrators such as Lyautey but also, as was earlier remarked, by Le Corbusier. Architectural concerns with regionalism and functionalism, while implied in the studies of the early twentieth-century, had never been so pronounced as they became by the late 1920s and early 1930s.194 Ironically, just as Lyautey's policies of using indigenous art in the decoration of public edifices "au décor qui ravit et rassure l'âme indigène," were adopted by the Congrès internationale de l'Urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux, this approach was found unworkable by architects and their patrons and the "aesthetic" approach adopted. Interestingly, this new aesthetic approach intimated the removal of much of the decorative aspects by which arabisance had been identified and thus, coincidentally, also robbed Moslem Algerian artisans of even this last vestige of their, albeit compromised, contribution to the built environment.

This abstraction was in part a reaction to the criticism which arabisance received from modernist architectural discourse. By 1930 arabisance had come under attack for its eclecticism, the inappropriateness of Arab domestic architecture to European lifestyles and proportions et de l'étroitesse de l'espace....l'intimité de la rue...Tout y est disposé pour nous en masquer les limites; chaque détour y cache l'inconnu; ce sont des labyrinthes immenses qui contiendraient une de nos places." J. Galloti, "La Beauté des villes marocaines," l'Art vivant, 1930.

194 Béguin, Arabisances 72.
the insensitive and inappropriate use of Arab motifs. The Paris journal, *L'art vivant*, recounted this recent turn against *arabisance*. During the decade that followed support for neo-Moorish *arabisance* would be replaced by a shifted allegiance to first an Algerian, then a "Mediterranean" style and CIAM principles which had modified the emphasis of its tenets to embrace more regionalist concerns. Jean Cotereau, a critic with the Algiers journal *Chantiers nord-africains*, severely criticized the *Maison Mauresque*:

Mais du seul fait que cet accord existe, du seul fait que la maison mauresque convient à l'existence orientale, il résulte a priori que, dans son intégralité, elle ne peut pas convenir à l'existence occidentale. A une existence ouverte, tournée vers l'extérieur, vers la vie sociale, vers la réalisation économique. Alors qu'elle est fermé, tourné vers l'intérieur, individualiste, construite pour la rêverie et l'inaction... Une race active n'a pas de temps à perdre.

Cotereau's postion on architectural style and appropriateness was informed by his education as an engineer in France and his French citizenship. His critique was a disavowal of the whole colonial ideology that had found its expression in *arabisance*. The basis of his judgement was a belief that Europeans as an active money-making culture required a specific domestic environment. The underlying basis for his assertion that houses for Europeans should be different was not based on engineering principles but on race. And, although race was not explicit in his evaluation of the appropriateness of the Mediterranean style he most ardently argued for in the pages of *Chantiers nord-africains*

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195 Béguin, *Arabisances* 83-86.
197 Compare the tenets of the Declaration of La Sarraz of 1928 with the principles elaborated in the Charter of Athens in 1933. See introduction, footnote 9.
199 Cotereau is described in *Chantiers nord-africains* (Dec. 1929) 679, as "Ancien élève de l'Ecole Polytechnique, Lauréat de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts."
from 1929 into the early thirties, it was implied in references to greco-roman predecessors as the most appropriate to Algiers. It is also evident in his exhortation "Soyons des aryans" and his confession that he is more capable of realizing things conforming to the genius of the aryan race than that of the semite. He would also be the champion of Le Corbusier's Algiers plans.

The Mediterranean style as advocated by Camus and Le Corbusier, and its pairing with functionalism on the pages of *Chantiers nord-africains*, *l'art vivant*, and *Prélude*, served to legitimate Western European conquest and settlement in different ways. The renunciation of *arabisation* and the emphasis on a functional and regional understanding of architecture and politics, played important roles in the rhetoric surrounding this new approach. This is evident in *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* where it was noted in 1936 that: "L'amélioration du logement indigène, sa conception organisée, mariant les exigences de l'hygiène avec les coutumes et mœurs des habitants, apparaît comme l'un des moyens d'actions principaux capables d'opérer la sélection et l'accroissement du facteur humain." Housing, schools, clinics were to be the new institutions and means of control. They would express the nature of the colonial presence and the relation between Metropole and colony, between citizen and subject. The power that *arabisance* signs and symbols had held over the imagination had weakened and become discredited, instead the biological body would be addressed by a new estimation of political and economic urgencies. The normative action of social services and the dwelling took over from the seductive action of images, the body

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200 J. Cotereau, "Vers une architecture méditerranéenne, no. IV Les architectures méditerranéene du passé" *Chantiers nord-africains* (Mar. 1930) 221. Cotereau goes on to say: "Je ne puis cependant pas me défendre d'un certain nationalisme aryen. Je veux dire par là que je me crois plus capable de réalisations conformes au génie de la race aryenne que de réalisations inspirée de l'esprit sémit. C'est donc à une architecture aryenne que je pense, s'il me faut designer un modèle-greco-roman.

201 Béguin, *Arabisances* 86.

would be integrated with the mechanism of production. This was directly related to the construction of Algerian dwellings by two Algerian architects, Seiller and Lathuilière:

Ce serait une erreur de pousser le respect de leurs coutumes jusqu'à chercher à rappeler, par la forme et la disposition, les anciennes constructions qui tiennent surtout leur caractère du mode de bâtir et des matériaux employés. Les réalisations nouvelles devront être produites pour satisfaire aux vieilles coutumes et diriger certaines habitudes de manière à préparer la voie à une assimilation progressive aux moeurs européennes.203

Seiller would be one of the architects conscripted by the Amis d'Alger into their Corbusian cause. Yet other concerns would be introduced by CIAM: biology, a universalist notion of standardized functions—of hygiene, leisure, open green space, work and others—all conceived a priori, then adapted to sociological statistics, functional concerns, topography and sociological norms. The result, for example Le Corbusier's Nemours plan, was isolated, nuclear housing elements, aligned along hygienically spaced streets which shattered the subtle and fragile Islamic social production of space (Figure 31). Gone were the narrow and elusive spaces of family and neighborhood that had kept Islamic notions of honor secure. It was these principles and their ultimate social results that the Amis d'Alger embraced when they became CIAM members.204

The effects of colonization on Moslem cultural production in the 1930s were such that it is difficult to find, or ascribe, a Moslem point of view from which to assess the accuracy or completeness of the image of Algiers portrayed in the poetic or legislative representations of Algeria and its capital city. The Moslem speakers participating in the much publicized events planned for centenary celebrations were a group recruited from among the Moslem

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204 Le Corbusier had lobbied for the inclusion of the Amis d’Alger among the CIAM membership and for Algiers to be one of the locations for their international meeting.
bourgeoisie who advocated assimilation. So they were profoundly affected by the French language in which they spoke, with its rhetorical mechanisms and representational filters, and were influenced and tempted by images of European society. Throughout the 1930s this educated indigenous elite contrasted the French Enlightenment with the obscurity, backwardness, ignorance and barbarous aspects of Moslem life; the aim of Moslem Algerians was still understood as the acquisition of a Western mentality.

Novels written by Moslem Algerians had as their thesis an assimilationist identification with France; criticism was reserved for colons, whom these Moslem Algerians felt did not represent the "True France." Although the idea of nationalism began to appear in some Algerian writing, most sought to entertain French readers and to demonstrate their progress toward Western attitudes and expertise in the French language. There was, however, a sense of frustration, of a limitation imposed on this becoming "French." Some writers began to see movement between East and West as irreconcilable, and it was experienced by Moslem Algerian writers such as Zenati as a "no man's land." Throughout the 1930s, and especially after 1935, writers called upon citizenship as the only vehicle through which a union of French education and Moslem Algeria could be affected. The novels of this period sublimated the tension and drama of the *evoluté*. Apart from a very few authors, among them Jean Amrouche, Moslem Algerian writers offered to the French the writing which fulfilled French desires. It was steeped in the lessons learned in French classrooms and the folkloristic images which these writers alone could best legitimate. In turn, such writing was received by the Metropole as proof of the expansion of the French language and that "une pareille littérature est ... le gage de la permanence française."206

Some sense of the impatience and restrictions felt among Arab authors, writing largely for a French readership, can be found in works dating from about 1935, however it is not until 1940, three years after demands for national independence were first made in Algeria by the Parti du peuple algérien that writers began to give expression to this debilitating situation. Lacking a relationship with the nascent Algerian nation, accepting of colonization and maintaining a subjectivity constructed in the image of the French while remaining Moslem, they described only the fringes, some partial and superficial aspects, of a profoundly suffering land.207 What this literature reveals is the difficulty of assessing any position of Moslem Algerians with respect to their cultural representations. It also suggests that this educated elite, so re-formed by French colonial ideology, was unrepresentative of the more disenfranchised, less educated and less indoctrinated, and the more precociously nationalist populace of the 1930s; it also suggests how a French avant-garde reformer, like Le Corbusier, might, by his choice of informants, be less aware of the complexity and the denunciations of the situation in which he worked than one would expect. In other words, the architect from the Metropole was also touched by colonization, blinded by its ideological apparatuses, with his image as a result an interiorization of the State's viewpoint. Le Corbusier's statements, poetic and pragmatic, were, at least in this way, part of a discursive system by which power was imposed and sustained in the colonial context of Algiers.208

207 Déjeux, littérature Maghrebine  30.
208 By discursive system is intended that regular dispersal of statements about Algiers which recur in Le Corbusier's writing and other descriptive recordings as well as his engagement with the city. That is, as Foucault so concisely formulated, it is not: "any one particular object, nor style, nor a play of permanent concepts, nor ... the persistence of a thematic." Michael Foucault, "Questions on Geography," interview with editors of journal Héodote, published in Power/Knowledge, Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mephem, Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972)  63.

Mais il apparut nettement que l'Algérie obligée de courir au plus pressé, ne pouvait pas songer à tout, et que ce vaste chantier en construction qu'est la terre africaine, à côté des ports, des chemins de fer, des routes des adduction d'eau, et la colonisation, de la mise en valeur matérielle il y avait place pour les créations de nature moins directement utilitaire et que l'oeuvre pouvait être parachevée et embellie par des créations d'assistance et d'humanité dont fussent appelées à bénéficier le population franco-indigène. (Gustave Mercier) 1

Introduction

In the quotation above Gustave Mercier, General Commissioner of the Célébration du Centenaire de l'Algérie Française, described North Africa as "ce vaste chantier" in which colonizers and "le population franco-indigène" were clearly identified as actors. As well, a third participant is implied, the recipient of the lavish and limited edition of the official report of the centenary from which this delineation is taken. The quotation also reveals something of the interaction of these three performers. It is, moreover, a portrayal which upholds conventional distinctions deemed proper between colonists and their proprietary actions, their railways and dams, and the beneficiaries of their "humanitarian" and assistance programs, "le population franco-indigène." 2

2By "public sphere" I am referring to Jürgen Habermas' analysis of the development and transformation of this phenomenon in Western nations through the period of Absolutism into the twentieth century; it is understood as a development of the technologies and strategies by which the bourgeoisie legitimated their public power and position. Nancy Fraser's amendments to Habermas, especially his overlooking of gender
sphere the *franco-indigènes* are manifestly dependent on the colonists; they are "embellishments," not structurally integral players in *ce vaste chantier,* in either its literal or metaphorical meaning. What the *franco-indigènes* may have thought of their assigned position in such a *chantier* remains only in the muted traces of guarded remarks, veiled requests and later consequences.

In Algiers, exhibitions, such as those associated with the centenary celebration, or those of architecture and urbanism in which Le Corbusier participated, were important venues through which issues were legitimated and appropriate actions defined. Who could formulate those issues and who would be qualified to speak about them was based on notions of the "greater good" of the nation as a whole. As Jürgen Habermas has pointed out, the "greater good" is determined by those able to establish their interests as those of the whole society via their manipulation of the pubic sphere. Through notions of education and economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to separate public from private interest or need, a nascent bourgeoisie declared itself competent to formulate disinterested, objective arguments. This bourgeoisie was able to assert its point of view over the working class, for example, because of the latter's lack of knowledge about democratic process or their inability to be "disinterested" when preoccupied with make a living. This dynamic is evident in Mercier's statement. The indigenous did not speak for themselves, their opinions both in subject and content were spoken for them by Mercier and his statements were validated by the position which he was assigned by the colonial government. The ability of Moslem Algerians to make objective judgments was alleged curtailed by their dependence on the French for their livelihood. The *Célébration du Centenaire* and its commemorative book were strategies by which the French bourgeoisie authorized their power and position. Habermas has also proposed that it was in this public sphere where all

as a factor in the development of the bourgeois public sphere has been a thoughtful guide in the use of Habermas' model. In addition the colonial context and race are not factored into Habermas' account although the general lines of his argument seem to be descriptive of events as they unfolded in Algiers in the 1930s.
were called together to exercise their reason in decisions for the greater good that all were treated "as if" they were equal. This bracketing of difference is hardly evident in the Algeria portrayed by the Commissioner of the Centenary. Therefore, Habermas' analysis needs some reworking to fit the colonial situation of the 1930s; most importantly, his theory fails to consider race and gender. Both race and gender figured prominently in determining one's position in the hierarchy of power and decision-making which existed in Algeria through the 1930s.

To a public constructed in this manner, that is of French male decision-makers and Moslem Algerians who were subjects of those decisions, Le Corbusier brought his abstract and universalistic Obus "A" (Figure 1). However, Le Corbusier seems to have been familiar with some assumptions made about the structure of colonial society as he addressed his Algiers audience with the rhetoric of the day: economic development was made a priority with the business center and areas of elite housing while le population franco-indigène was the recipient of the beneficent gesture of a preserved Casbah. However, as avant-garde projects one would expect from the plans a subversive rupturing of received, French, notions of social hierarchy and aesthetics, a de-authentication of established imagery and familiar categories of the social in the quest for a new, more equitable and unrestricted life.3

This chapter seeks to define the different political and ethnic groups signaled by the strained rhetoric and discomfiting juxtaposition of images and monuments, the ruptures and conflicting aspects evident in the various representations of Algeria and Algiers proffered by the centenary celebration and other exhibitionary venues employed in the 1930s. The centenary celebration addressed various spectators: the Metropole in whose parliament the funds necessary for public works were voted; the Moslem Algerians who participated as

"evolved" subjects but who had also begun to form pressure groups questioning French intentions and treatment; the Délégations financières repeatedly straining at the limitations imposed by the Metropole on its executive and budgetary freedoms; European Algerians who often opposed the economic and Moslem policies of the Metropole; an architectural and planning community divided on the appropriate architectural language and planning strategy for Algiers. The question of what Algiers was, a social utopia of "two races," a commercial conduit and Capital of North Africa, or something else was clearly unresolved.\(^4\) Related to this is the extent to which the colonialism which shaped the public sphere also shaped these visions of Algiers. The question of who constituted the interested groups and the decision-makers for the architectural and urban projects for Algiers in the 1930s, is important with respect to issues of cultural domination and political policy. Ultimately it was in the public sphere that debates on architecture and urbanism occurred. There were several arenas in which this debate took place and where public opinion was courted in the early 1930s: the Célébration du Centenaire of 1930; in the following year, the Exposition Coloniale in Paris and Le Corbusier's lectures in Algiers; the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture of 1933 in Algiers; the press campaign accompanying these events; budgetary debates in the Senate. It was in these forums that the merits and faults of Le Corbusier's plans, Obus "A" and "B," were argued and their outcome decided.

**Le Corbusier:** "La Revolution architecturale, La Ville Radieuse et Plan Obus A"

In March of 1931 Le Corbusier first addressed *ce vaste chantier* and its citizens, subject beneficiaries and Metropolitan onlookers with two proposals presented via his lectures

\(^4\)Mercier, *Le Centenaire*, vol. 1, 91, 92, 185; vol. 2, 117, 271, 286. The idea of "two races" was in reality a part of imperial ideology. The work of France was to be understood as tending towards a rapprochement of two races, and towards a slow evolution of the Moslems towards French culture via the working of French institutions. The uniting of Latin races and "indigenous" was to make them equally French (92). The happy coexistence of two races was due to pacification and a generous solidarity permitting two civilizations to harmonize with the aim of social progress and national grandeur (185).
given at the invitation of the Amis d'Alger, "La Révolution architecturale accomplie par les techniques" and "La Ville Radieuse." As his correspondence of the period reveals, Le Corbusier spoke to those in the highest echelons of the colonial administration, Mayor Brunel, Governor General Peyrouton and to the CIAM affiliates within the Amis d'Alger; no Moslem Algerians appear to have been sought out. The lectures, published in summary form in Chantiers nord-africains, reported his Modernist notions of a de-politicized, technologically optimized and socially reorganized city.5 Le Corbusier's assessment of the problems of modernity were evoked in the article by quotes and extrapolations from the lectures. The architect had proclaimed: "Aujourd'hui sonne une heure pressante, tragique, sur tous les peuples, sous toutes leurs formes de groupement, sous toutes leurs formes de hiérarchie justifiée ou arbitraire."6 "La liberté individuelle, telle est la pierre angulaire de l'édifice sociale moderne."7 The task was, "équilibrer la société, en bascule sur une époque à l'agonie et sur une époque neuve pleine de certitudes."8 Le Corbusier announced the advent of a modern consciousness where,

Le but de l'activité humaine, c'est la création, dans le libre arbitre. Ainsi l'individu pourra-t-il s'arracher, sans compromettre l'ordre, aux contraintes du contrat social. 'Je pense, donc je suis libre'... Rien de ce qui est n'est conforme. Car tout est nouveau, car nous sommes dans une situation tragiquement fausse. ... Aujourd'hui, innover c'est se rendre suspect ou d'idéologie creuse, ou d'intentions subversives. Dès que le mot de 'bolchevik' a été inventé par les croupissants, je fus accusé de bolchevisme.9

5The lectures were reported by Paul Romain in "Une révolution architecturale, Le Corbusier à Alger," Chantiers nord-africains (Apr. 1931): 363-378 and "La Ville Radieuse, Le Corbusier à Alger," Chantiers nord-africains (Apr. 1931): 473-482. Romain emphasized three things in his introduction of Le Corbusier and his ideas—that the proposals were apolitical, of interest to the general public not just intellectuals, and they addressed the problem of disequilibrium in society caused by industrialization.
6Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 474-75.
7Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 473.
8Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 475.
9Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 474.
He concluded "C'est par la technique que nous trouverons la solution."\textsuperscript{10} Le Corbusier did not wish to be subversive in the political sense, but desired to be innovative technically and aesthetically. Here in the technical and aesthetic realms, apparently outside the socially suspect domains of government, partisan politics and special interest groups, lay the agency of social advancement.

Le Corbusier described his architecture within the logic of technique, dissociating it from existing institutions and tradition--"là, la paralysie, l'étoffement s'opposent à toute initiative; les Instituts, les Ecoles officielles, les Gouvernements s'y appuient au nom de la tradition sacrée et oppriment tout force constructrice."\textsuperscript{11} Set against and divorced from this social world, Le Corbusier sought to make his architecture something more than utilitarian, something which would communicate and instill the vision of a new future, one where "L'Urbanisme devient la Vie: vie de la société contemporaine de vous, de moi, de nous. L'Urbanisme devient l'outillage de la matière humaine: chair, coeur, esprit. L'Architecture devient l'expression de l'esprit d'une époque."\textsuperscript{12} Illustrating the Chantiers nord-africains articles were a few sketches, the first visualization of what Algiers might look like if developed according to Le Corbusier's program of urbanism: anonymous grids, skyscrapers raised on piloti which clung to the precipitous topography of the city or stretched across ravines in long horizontal "habitable cubes" and an office building which prominently marked the harbor (Figure 34).\textsuperscript{13}

Le Corbusier's remarks on "an architectural revolution" and "La Ville Radieuse" addressed not only the public situated in Algiers but also that formed around CIAM. His affirmation of a non-utilitarian-based architecture was a retort to both German Neue Sachlichkeit and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[10]Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 482.
\item[11]Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "Une révolution architecturale" 365.
\item[12]Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 474.
\item[13]The sketches are reproduced in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 481, 482.
\end{footnotes}
Russian Constructivists such as Lissitzky with whom Le Corbusier had been in virulent and extended debate through 1928-1929. La Ville Radieuse was formulated as a response to and critique of the proposed plans for Moscow in 1930. This dispute in many ways formed a preface to Le Corbusier’s lectures in Algiers the following year. The criticisms of Le Corbusier at this time serve to clarify his convictions, his location within a spectrum of avant-gardes and his position within the sociopolitical map of the period.

In 1928 the left wing Czechoslovakian Modernist architect, Karel Tiege, criticized Le Corbusier’s idea that architecture of the machine age remained an art. Le Corbusier’s *a priori* aesthetic formulas were considered "composition" which, severed from a political project, remained simply "the expression of an ideological and metaphysical imagination." In the same year, Ginzburg, a radical Soviet Constructivist, found Le Corbusier’s ideas to be without any connection to their social context, stating that "his ideas on the virtues of the plan, and on the necessary transformation of life-styles, find no echo in his own social milieu. In fact, such ideas are mere fantasies. Armed with a sort of aesthetic Puritanism, Le Corbusier finds himself banging his head against the wall of the new aestheticism." A year later, El Lissitsky attacked Le Corbusier for being an individualist, as an artist in isolation he was considered essentially anti-social; having "affinities neither with the proletariat, nor with industrial capital." His town planning was deemed productive of a "city of nowhere, 'a city that is 'neither capitalist, nor proletarian, nor socialist... a city on paper, extraneous to living nature.'" It is evident that by the late 1920s many found Le Corbusier to have limited his field of effectiveness to aesthetics.

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The debate between Le Corbusier and his critics articulates the predicament of Modern architecture if it be considered an apolitical, purely aesthetics-oriented, task which could avoid the social while making claims to serve in the best interests of "l'esprit d'une époque" via a disinterested intervention of technology and individual will. The problem might be restated in the following manner. Within a bourgeois context of cultural production, one avant-garde position might be that of an apolitical stance, one which sought to retain its autonomy from the social and ideological context in which it must be worked out and realized. However, if, according to Le Corbusier's critics, it remained autonomous and non-negotiable, it also remained marginalized; if it bargained with this social context it became co-opted or irrelevant, losing its oppositional and critical position. Le Corbusier had based his Modernist stance on a concern with social necessity, such as mass housing facilitated by technology, the transgressive and revolutionary aspects of which were important considerations in the discussion of an avant-garde position in the 1930s and 1940s. Technology was largely understood as a beneficent but politically neutral force, although there was concern and debate on its optimal use and management, which ranged from Le Corbusier's Regional Syndicates to French State administration and from Soviet five year plans to Fascist State centralization. It was not until the outbreak of World War II and its aftermath that first Walter Benjamin and then Martin Heidegger would offer radical reappraisals of its theoretical, social and cultural implications. The directing of technology to the services of the world revolution of communism and proletarian advantage was one position of the 1930s. Its exploitation in places like Algeria in the interests of imperialism, with all of the inherent inequality of benefits, was another.

19 This dilemma was realized at the time and was raised as an issue with CIAM. See Martin Steinmann, "Political Standpoints in CIAM 1928-1933," architectural association quarterly, trans. Stevan Brown 4.4 (Autumn 1972): 49-55. This will be discussed further in chapter four.

20 See the Introduction to this thesis for a discussion of avant-garde debates. Also technology, as industrialization and modernization, had been criticized in the twentieth-century by conservatives, as will be discussed in chapter four. Benjamin and Heidegger formulated a criticism which was different from these conservative precursors in that it problematized their reactionary often class-based and nationalist positions and placed the critique of technology within the spheres of the avant-garde and philosophy respectively.
Just as attitudes toward technology seemed to define the limits of Modernism and the avant-garde in the 1930s so too did attitudes toward the "Other." The "Other," the Eastern, the exotic, and the feminine had also been explored from within the avant-garde, by André Breton and the Surrealists, and by Bruno Taut and the Glass Chain Group, as a position of difference from which to criticize Western values. However, these positions were more concerned with challenging European and Western values than with attempts to empower the "Other." By the 1930s, as colonial subjects began to speak on their own behalf and to make their own demands, the Eurocentrism of this critical position became more evident. Borrowing from other cultures became more complex and confused as the appropriate relationship toward Moslem Algerians became more heatedly debated and Moslem Algerian riposte made more apparent the relationship between intellectual discourse and political practice. The debates about association or assimilation as much as they were economic and political controversies were also expressions of a lingering cultural unease about the moral position to be taken with respect to the French presence in alien lands. As contemporary theorists have noted, the appropriation of subject cultures as a possible solution to problems within European high culture is problematized when the language and forms which define such "Otherness" have been used tactically, "with the goal of robbing the dominated groups, sexes, nations, classes of the language necessary for interpreting their own situation."22

What I will want to argue here, then, is that initially Le Corbusier's utopia--comprised of "La Ville Radieuse" and "technology," the "Other" and "universal truths"--was radically called into question by the context in which it was to be realized. How could the apolitical, autonomous work of the spirit be realized within the context of colonialism, a highly

21Bruno Taut, for example, was influenced by Angor Wat as an albeit romantic notion of community life in his design for der Stadtkrone.
politicized milieu where technology had clearly dispossessed the "Other" while giving possession of land and wealth to a usurping nation? And, how could a city plan remain autonomous when the discursive field by which Algiers was known was so permeable to colonial ideologies?

Le Corbusier proposed a cathartic and recuperative effect from his new architectural language which stood in contradistinction to tradition, both Western with its anachronistic conventions of basements, walls with openings cut into them, attics and peaked roofs, and Eastern with "ses parties malsaines" of the Casbah.23 His objective was to "touch the soul," to create social accord by psychic or emotional harmony. Le Corbusier castigated the traditional street bounded by motley buildings and its occasional social encounters, transient amusements and dreary Sunday emptiness. "Rien de cela n'exalte en nous la joie qui est l'effet de l'architecture; ni la fierté qui est l'effet de l'ordre; ni l'esprit d'entreprise qui s'anime dans les grands espaces...".24 However, what was intended to "touch the soul" was the effect of discipline. Paul Romain, commenting on Le Corbusier's lectures, noted that:

"L'ouvrier moderne a le temps de penser, puisque son travail l'absorbe moins, se réduit à une manière de contrôle, et de plus, il a des 'loisirs.' Mais ce terme de 'loisirs' cher à M. Albert Thomas, est condamné par Le Corbusier. Sa conception mécaniste de l'organisation sociale ne lui laisse voir que des nécessités: nécessité de récupération physique, nécessité de divertissement."25

Le Corbusier seemed preoccupied with the problem of "unproductive" freedom, fearing it in fact. Romain remarked:

23 Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 482.
24 Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 476.
25 Le Corbusier, quoted in Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 473.
"Mais revenant au problème des 'loisirs ouvriers,' indiqué au début de sa conférence, Le Corbusier développe sa conception de la ville actuelle, ville de l'époque machiniste, où l'homme doit, pendant 24 heures de la journée, vivre, c'est-à-dire, selon une conception qui semble friser le paradoxe, travailler, non seulement quand il produit, mais encore quand il récupère ses forces, quand il se repose, quand il se diverte, quand il médite."26

Such pronouncements, in the contiguous milieu of labor unrest and the industrialization dreams and projects of some Algerian colons raise misgivings about Le Corbusier's Obus plans. So too does their theoretical context in the debates with both the Left, as represented by the avant-gardes of the USSR and of the German Neue Sachlichkeit, and the Right, as exemplified by the conservative, institutionally entrenched Société Française des Urbanistes or the Académie de l'Architecture call into question the nature of the freedom promised by his plans and their social function. As has been noted in contemporary discussion of the avant-garde, "autonomous art has satisfied residual human needs of the bourgeois world by offering the "beautiful" appearance/semblance of a better world, but it has also functioned in society by creating hope through its very existence for the realization of social ideals in the future."27 The question is, what residual needs or hope could the Obus plans offer in their promise of cultural harmony and technological modernization in ce vaste chantier?

Defining the Public Sphere:

Official Positions

The centenary celebration of 1930, its documentation and press coverage, provides a convenient summary of the interrelationship of public opinion in the Metropole and in Algeria just as Le Corbusier departed Paris for the colonial capital city. The several Cahiers

26 Romain, "La Ville Radieuse" 481.
27 Schultz-Sasse, "Foreword" xxxviii.
published in conjunction with the event afford some insight into the structuring of cultural and social relations between Moslem and European Algerians. They also demonstrate the working of the rhetorical and visual structures by which Algiers was understood and represented by the European Algerians who wrote them. Finally the Centenary Cahiers reveal something of the manner in which progress and the uneven development that it occasioned were explained and managed.

The public attention given to architecture and urbanism in Algeria during the 1930s was initiated and fueled by the centenary celebration of 1930. The rhetoric of the Centenary highlighted the issue of European and Moslem cultural differentiation and it was the Centenary Caisse which funded the highly publicized institutional buildings of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The aim of the Centenary's Metropolitan supporters had been to heighten the prestige of France as a civilizing nation abroad, while that of the Délégations financières in Algeria was to attract French and foreign investment and to secure their autonomy from an "interfering" Metropole. The final result for the Moslem population of Algeria was a growing disillusionment and alienation; 1930 would also mark the beginning of the end of peaceful cohabitation and the French presence.

The Centenary was an extravagant effort to bolster the ideology of the civilizing mission of France in North Africa with symbolic acts and public works. It was riddled with paradoxical juxtapositions. A symbolic mock landing of the French at Boufarik, in full period regalia, was juxtaposed with elaborate plans for the modernizing of the Port which would economically and materially ensure French presence and economic power. The reconstructed Maison Indigène was posed in nostalgic contrast to its site, an old market slated for slum clearance (Figure 32), while les cités Indigènes attempted to adequately

\[\text{28}^\text{The Délégations financières was an elected body which represented Algeria and functioned as a semi-independent body in control of finances in the colony.}\]
\[\text{29}^\text{Mercier, Le Centenaire, vol. 1, 297.}\]
house, segregate and contain Moslem Algerians then flooding into the city (Figure 35).\textsuperscript{30} These sufficiently "primitivized" *Habitations à Bon Marché*, were intended to initiate Moslem Algerians into Western notions of housing and the institutions of its procurement.\textsuperscript{31} Large engineering works meant to demonstrate the superiority of French technical methods were juxtaposed with artisanal schools for Moslem Algerians designed as proof of France's concern for the traditions and culture of its subjects.\textsuperscript{32} The *Fête de l'Union des Populations Français et Indigènes*, held at Sidi-Ferruch, glorified the memory of expeditionary forces and the first acts that had made Algeria French, while the monument of Boufarik, decorated with a frieze reminiscent of Assyrian sculptural records of conquest and booty, was dedicated "au génie colonisateur de la France, aux héros pionniers de la civilisation" and "aux réalisateurs de la plus grande France." The only Moslem Algerian personality represented was one martyred for his "pro-French sentiments."\textsuperscript{33} Notwithstanding the prudent proclamations made by Moslem Algerian officials of their "unmoveable loyalty attaching them to the French patrie," prominently recorded in documents and photos of the Centenary activities, the *Fédération des Elus* had also petitioned the French Parliament with a series of cultural demands whose political implications called into question much of the rhetoric of the Centenary.\textsuperscript{34} While some

\textsuperscript{30} Mercier, *Le Centenaire*, vol. 1, 266-268. The idea had apparently been Mayor Brunel's who had been inspired by the precedent of the "Alsaciennne" at Strasbourg, that is a French practice of identifying regional independence. It was built by Claro, a Professor of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. It stood in marked contrast to the overcrowded, poorly serviced and crumbling "indigenous" houses of the present-day Casbah. The difference of the exhibition building and the Casbah served to justify accusations of Moslem degeneracy and ultimately the destruction of the existing native housing stock. Jean Cotereau will criticize this house on several points, seeing it as a development of the Roman house and although with some suggestions for present housing stock as not suitable as a model. Jean Cotereau, "La Maison Mauresque," *Chantiers nord-africains* (Dec. 1931): 533-604.

\textsuperscript{31} Mercier, *Le Centenaire*, vol. 1, 354.

\textsuperscript{32} Mercier, *Le Centenaire*, vol. 1, 363-66; vol. 2, 70-72.

\textsuperscript{33} Mercier, *Le Centenaire*, vol. 1, 278, 287. The *Fête de l'union des Populations Française et Indigènes* celebrated, according to Mercier, the economic conquest of the land and the moral conquest of the inhabitants.

\textsuperscript{34} *Le Centenaire*, vol. 1, 63 and vol. 2, 352-78. Moslem Algerian participation in the Centenary was prudent in that these same elected officials, supporters of the assimilation model of the relationship of the colony to the Metropole, still believed that their entry into full participation in French citizenship while retaining their private status was iniminent and could be won via the legal and parliamentary structures of France and the Republican virtues of justice and equality.
Moslem officials questioned the disparities in the distribution of Centenary funds, the most strident condemnation of the Centenary and its imperialist ideology came, not from these foreign shores but from within France itself, from the French Communist Party and the Paris-based Algerian Independent movement, Étoile nord-africaine.35

The Centenary embraced many objectives in commemorating the French occupation of Algeria. It sought to win Metropole support for State expenditures and to "prove" the good intentions of the French to the world at large and to French subjects in the colonies. It was also intended, by means of financial assistance, to aid the Algerian and Metropolitan economy. The Centenary was largely financed by the Metropolitan government which voted the loi du centenaire in 1928, which Viollette, the former Governor General of Algeria, claimed would "contribute to the exploitation of Algerian territories and the expansion of Algerian mise en valeur.36 Significantly, most of this 40,000,000 francs was for durable construction, that is the reconfiguration and infrastructure of the country and especially its major cities.37 The Centenary had been initiated by Viollette and the European elite within Algeria who had recognized its possible power as an economic tool as early as 1923. Those Europeans most poised to take advantage of such tools dominated the Centenary Commission. All Congresses held in conjunction with the Centenary were

35 The French Communist Party had been active since the mid 1920s in criticizing the cooperation of Moslem elites with the French parliamentary system. Charges of bourgeois, imperialist and self-interested concerns were laid against the Oulemas, elected officials and elite by the French Communist Party; they supported the idea of independence from France. See Mahfoud Kaddache, La Vie Politique à Alger de 1919 à 1939 (Alger: SNED) 143.
37 Mercier, Le Centenaire, vol. 1, 11, 83, 363-64. Of the 40,000,000 francs, France demanded that 5,000,000 be allocated to works of assistance to the Moslem Algerian population. It financed artisanal schools and HBM. In addition the Délégations Financières voted a one milliard franc exceptional budget for public works, social utility and works of economic expansion. Algerian commissioners were primarily concerned with the durable works that could be financed by Centenary funds. As a result, a significant feature of the Centenary Celebrations was the highly publicized Grand Travaux consisting of new roads, technical schools, housing complexes, such as the Cité Bel Air de Sétif, subsidized bungalows on the Champ de Manoeuvre, and institutional buildings wholly or partially funded by the Caisse du Centenaire, such as the Maison d'Agriculture by Guiuachain and the Museum of Fine Arts, by Régnier and Guion. Such institutional and infrastructural arrangements provided cultural securities which would make investment all the more attractive. Kaddache, La Vie Politique 132.
European in orientation and sought to attract European people, money and technology to Algeria.38

Economic exploitation and colonial goals were popularized in the cinema. Impressions d'Algérie, Rallye Saharien, Alger la Cité Blanche, Alger son port et son commerce, were all films bought by the Centenary Commission to present Algeria to the Metropole. Pathé Review was enlisted to run a documentary on Algeria with their feature films and Mayor Brunel endorsed the making of Le Bled.39 These films represented Algeria and Algiers as investment opportunities. Films portraying Sahara car rallies, private and commercial aviation and Cannes-to-Algiers Mediterranean crossings sought to attract the tourist dollar and commercial interests in France, and while doing so reinforced the idea of Algeria as an extension of France. The colonizing advantages and value of such tourist or sports events were never lost from view, as was evident in the claims made for the North African aero-clubs; "les ailes françaises sont à leur tour, assuré la conquête du ciel africain, complètement de la conquête territoriale et partie intégrante de la conquête morale."40 These very conventional colonial tropes, well known to the public, were marshaled for the centenary celebrations and the colonial project generally. The superior technological power illustrated in many of the films promised the optimal exploitation of the land, an investment which was legitimated as a contribution to the civilizing mission of France.

The campaign for popular approval and indoctrination in the objectives of colonization was also launched through official publications. The several Cahiers published in 1931 by the Algerian administration in conjunction with the Centenary were written by the leading French Algerian intellectuals from the disciplines of history, geography, political science

38 Mercier, Le Centenaire, vol. 1, 33; vol. 2. 94. There were twelve Europeans to five Moslems. See also vol. 2. 94.
39 Mercier, Le Centenaire, vol. 1, 62. The films were largely by the Paris Consortium Cinéma. The scenario of Le Bled was, according to Mercier, by Depuy-Mazuel. (162-66).
and art history. They proffered the well-rehearsed "facts" supporting the intervention of the French in Algeria. In *L'Evolution de l'Algérie de 1830 à 1930*, E. F. Gautier presented North Africa as a land that, throughout its entire 2000 year history, had been unable to pull itself out of disarray except when part of an external empire. Colonization was equated with a general modernizing and progressive force in the world which redistributed wealth and civilization: "Cette loi humaine du phénomène colonial aurait de l'analogie avec la loi physique des vases communicants."41 The Moslem populations were cast as an inchoate juxtaposition of archaic peoples in need of awakening to the modern world. Algeria would be the site of a new (European) race, and while the recent increase in the Moslem population was seen as proof of good colonial policies, the total opposition of Moslem and colon in terms of family, justice, State and religion was emphasized as justification for the slow and cautious pace of their assimilation.42 The task of Algeria was, according to Gautier, to "westernize a part of the orient," evidence of which would be the adoption of French institutions, procedures, and economic priorities. The French transformation of Algeria was to be understood as one productive of economic prosperity and moral probity. This metamorphosis was given the architectural image of the Casbah--"un pauvre cadavre fossilisé... dans une grand organisme vivant... un petit corps étranger central... C'est un spectacle tragique."43

While fears of assimilation and a debilitated French culture were assuaged by Gautier's historical portrayal of an inevitably extinct Moslem world, which was assuredly proven by the corpse-like remains of the Casbah, the unresolved issues of the Sahara were addressed in another *Cahier*, J.-M Bourget's *L'Algérie jusqu'à la Pénétration Saharienne* (1931).

42Interestingly, the notion of a "new race," so prominent in the early 1930s, was highly contradictory. If an inclusive reference, it would intend the mixing and inter-marrying of Moslem Algerians and Europeans, an obvious repercussion of assimilation but also what both "races" feared. This was however, a part of assimilation rhetoric. If, instead, what was intended by the mixing of races was more exclusive, meaning Europeans, then Moslem Algerians would also be omitted from the future Algeria.
43Gautier, "L'Evolution de l'Algérie" 90.
Bourget also denied Moslem Algerians any claims to nationhood based on what he termed their inherent and historical "racial" and tribal divisions prior to French occupation.

Bourget's *cahier* was a bid to conceal the expansionist interests of France in the Sahara. Reference to ancient Rome served to legitimize the similarly Imperial designs of France. At the same time, a differentiation of French presence from the Roman legionnaires who had preceded them was intended to validate French action among its international critics. France was presented as more concerned with peace and the good of all of Europe, a distinction not to be discounted in war-prone Europe; it also served to highlight that France was a good League of Nations player. Moslem Algerian problems were discounted as merely the result of Islamic fanaticism. In other words, the awkward problem of the slow pace of assimilation was expediently dismissed as a problem of religion, not politics, and as a question of Moslem Algerian adaptation to the new rhythm and necessities of life and not legislation introduced by the Metropole, or obstructionist practices by colons. While expansion theoretically involved both territorial and human assimilation, the author wrote to promote the former while side-stepping the latter.

In discussing *Le Gouvernement de l'Algérie* in 1931, Louis Millot plotted the various political relations that Algeria had assumed with the Metropole. Throughout the shifting government policies of French occupation one constant among them, he claimed, was the policy of assimilation. The problem, in Millot's view, was the intransigent resistance of the Moslem Algerians. In his view the administration of Algeria had been flexible, adapting to situations as they arose and evolving over time. Events in Algeria, he ascertained, were shaped by three concerns: the French ideal of assimilation, Moslem conservatism and the evolution of a neo-French milieu. Evolution in his mind meant the formation of the

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46 Millot, "Le Gouvernement de l'Algérie" 39.
Délégations financières, while dis-equilibrium was identified with an over-hasty granting of rights to Moslem Algerians. Millot characterized Algeria as a melting pot, where a new race, "like the Sabines" would keep the peace in Europe, repeating the veiled reference to the strategic role of Algeria within the Empire. A distinction between the "evolved" and the masses served to divide the Moslem population while supporting the conclusion that "independence was a mirage, only proposed by those evolved, and ungrateful, Moslems with a Western education and jealous of France." In this the author gave voice to the real fears growing at this time about pan-Arabism. The distinctions made by Millot also served to counter arguments for granting Moslems French citizenship; all were deemed unqualified because of their customs, religion, family traditions (polygamy and inheritance practices) and their lack of French notions of secular justice. Related to this was the portrayal of Moslem Algerians as closer to nature, nomadic, and without French values and morals. Millot further explained the relationship of Moslem Algerians to French values and morals through an analogy between the political organization of Algeria and architecture. This organization was:

une construction fruste, faite de pierre de taille française et de moëllon brut indigène, manquant d'originalité et d'élégance architecturales, mais robuste, d'une solidité qui a fait ses preuves; capable d'étayer et de fixer sur leur dune mouvante les deux protectorats tunisien et marocain et de servir de fondement à une vaste formation qui engloberait toutes notre possessions africaines.

Millot concluded that the French presence in Algeria was part of a natural progression of things, effectively displacing colonialism from the political to a realm "unfathomable" in its "cosmic" workings.

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47 Millot, "Le Gouvernement de l'Algérie" 43.
48 Millot, "Le Gouvernement de l'Algérie" 44.
49 Millot, "Le Gouvernement de l'Algérie" 48.
The *Cahier* on Moslem art likewise served to demote Moslem Algerians to an inferior position with respect to the French. Their artwork was portrayed as escapist and dream-like according to a French standard which favored the life-like portrayals and representational aspects of "realisme, la vie et naturalisme," found in French traditions.\(^{51}\)

The French academic writer of the *Cahier* proposed that because art reflected its social milieu, the brutal society of the Turks produced no fine art and, as a consequence, the mosques of Algiers were inferior as well as immoral constructions. While the Moslem house could be dismissed as having no relevance to the present day, the author could find a value in Moslem artisan work where the resurrection of Moslem culture and a source of income might be derived. Revitalization referred to the notion that it was only through a careful nurturing by State programs that Moslem culture could be saved from its own apathy. Such views of Moslem art also justified the isolation of Moslem culture within the past and its practitioners within a trade which would be non-competitive with French production of modern technology and industry. Not only would economic problems be solved by such divisions of labor but so too would symbolic problems, for this division assisted in the maintenance of the superiority of French civilization based on discourses of its modern technological capabilities.

Ostensibly writing about *La Vie et les Moeurs en Algérie*, Pierre Delonge justified French rule of Algeria in 1931 by quotes he brazenly misappropriated from Islam's sacred texts.\(^{52}\)

He misquotes from the Hadith: "Un gouvernement d'infidèles peut durer, s'il est juste; un gouvernement de vrai croyants, s'il est injuste, doit périr." His argument was further

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supported by an equally misapplied quote from the Koran: "Ceux qui sont les plus disposés à aimer les Musulmans sont les hommes qui se disent chrétiens." It is a devious recontextualization of the Hadith and a highly questionable misapplication of the Koran; both show the use to which scholarship was put in the interests of the colonial project. The author's stated aim was to spread respect and affection in the Metropole for Moslem Algerians. To this end the Moslems of North Africa were portrayed through French paintings, French literature and French travel accounts, all of which dated from the nineteenth-century. Here they were depicted as simple people, poetic and spiritual, offering the calm, silence and simplicity needed to balance the complexity and bustle of French life. This pastoral, and increasingly anachronistic, image of Moslem Algerians was supported by the equally distanced nineteenth-century portrayals and images. The "canonical" Moslem Algiers evoked in Delonge's text is that of Eugène Fromentin who provided a mid-nineteenth-century description of mysteriously impenetrable houses with sequestered harems and fragrant gardens offering something of paradise and eternity. Artisanal and chaotic Koranic schools, market fairs, music and dance were referenced by accounts gleaned from paintings such as Dinet's _Danse des Ouled Nail_ and Dehodencq's _Musciens_.

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53 Delonge, also noting the women held captive therein, states: "Mais cette vie recluse près d'une fenêtre ouverte, l'immobilité devant un si grand espace, ce luxe intérieur, cette mollesse du climat, le long écoullement des heures, l'oisiveté des habitudes devant soi, autour de soi, partout, un ciel unique, un pays radieux, la perspective infinie de la mer, tout cela devait développer des rêveries étranges déranger la force vitale en changer le cours, mêler je ne sais quoi d'ineffable au sentiment douloureux d'être captif." "La Vie et les Moeurs" 10. Fromentin's _Une année dans le sahel_ (1852-53), is quoted extensively and several of his paintings are used as illustration, _Fôret de palmiers_, for example. Fromentin was an art critic, painter, novelist, and travel writer. He was especially known for his travel accounts and paintings of North Africa which he had visited at least four times between 1846 and 1852. His _Une Été dans le Sahara_ was first published in the _Revue de Paris_ in 1854 and in book form in 1858, a third edition was published in 1887. Although Fromentin is usually labeled a realist, his subject exploration, use of representational techniques and aims distinguish him from the theoretical and polemical realism of Courbet and Manet. Fromentin's interest in realism was prompted by a desire to update the Orientalist tradition, that of Delacroix and Deschamps, in which he was steeped. In addition, his aesthetic was at odds with what is now considered realism by his quest for essentials which betray a continuing interest in classical idealism and a search for an essential nature of man. See: Emanuel J. Mickel, Jr., _Eugène Fromentin_ (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981) 27-30. Also quoted in the _Cahiers du Centenaire_ were Guy de Mauppasant (1881), J. and J. Tharaud, Louis Bertrand, Gautier and Isabelle Eberhardt. Paintings by Dinet, _Ecoliers arabes_, Descamps, _L'école turque_ were also used as illustration.
Contemporary Moslems were also portrayed by such customs as the hunt, illustrated by Fromentin's *Arabes attaqués par un lion* (1868), and fantasy, illustrated by Delacroix's *Fantasia arab*. Fromentin was used as the "authority" on Moslem justice taken to be illustrated with his painting *Les Voleurs de nuit*. European readers were reassured that the Moslem population would recognize the generosity of the French, it was only a matter of allowing the free practice of their religion. To ensure this a policy of association, like that in Morocco, was advocated rather than one of assimilation as practised in Algeria. As Delonge noted, "Cette doctrine est aujourd'hui fixée: elle vise non pas l'assimilation des indigènes à notre propre civilisation, mais le respect de leurs villes, de leurs coutumes, de leurs pensées, l'association de leurs avec les nôtres." Lyautey was evoked as an example of how Moslem traditions and customs should be conserved, respected, and encouraged and, one suspects. French generosity acknowledged. The Maréchal's new and safe roads, cities, and re-established indigenous crafts were to be emulated. Interestingly, in his advocacy of association, Delonge differs from Millot's assertion of assimilation and registers the uncertainty, anxiety and disillusionment gathering about the established policy of maintaining power relations in Algeria through assimilation policies.

In his own contribution to the *Cahiers* the director of Indigenous Affairs, Jean Mirante, contrasted pre-1830 with the period following French contact. According to this official, prior to French occupation Algeria was ruled by an oligarchy composed of a few jealous, fanatic, despotic Turkish dignitaries along with great Arab chiefs invested with command. Under them were the masses who were retained in a nomadic state, and whose life was

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54Dinet had, according to Delonge, taken up the life of a desert hermit so enamored was he of the desert and its people. Dinet's monk-like characterization recalls that of the missionary Charles de Foucauld rather than the degrading fraternizing with the "natives" suggested in films such as *Pépé le Moko*.

55Delonge, "La Vie et les Moeurs" 88.

56Delonge, "La Vie et les Moeurs" [conclusion] 98

pastoral but not idyllic. It was a period when tribes allegedly terrorized each other with agriculture suffering as a consequence. The situation of the Moslem was described as precarious under a Turkish government lacking laws protecting private property in an era characterized by extortion, abuses of power, and local wars. This depiction of Turkish government served to point out the profound transformation accomplished under the influence of French society, its reforms and laws. The dismantling of the existing social structure, represented as a kind of Moslem feudalism with taxing seigneurial servitudes, was thus justified by the progress and gallicization offered by the French in its stead.58

For the Minister, progress was also identified with the efforts to replace the tribe with the family as advocated in the decree of the Senatus Consulte in 1865, with a new sense of land value introduced by the presence of settlers and a better preparation for the contingencies of modern life provided by French instruction. What was left unstated was the real effect of these "improvements" on Moslem Algerians. The imposition of Western notions of family structure disrupted social and other forms of community assistance, and was fostered primarily to make the legal system of France more effective.59 The new sense of property value worked to dispossess rural Arab communities of their land held in common while what was meant by "the contingencies of modern life" was a French mode of living with its patterns of investment and land use. The comparison of Moslem and French institutions also served to promote a specific idea of the French State. In opposition to Islamic countries where the notion of the State was, according to French apologists, weak but rigid, limited to primitive powers, imprinted with a medieval mystique and

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58 Mirante, "Oeuvres indigènes" 8-9. Tribes were described by Mirante as a conservative force per excellence in society, detrimental to individuality, evolution, progress and innovation; they remained through the centuries comparable to the civilizations contemporary with the bible. (10) The result was the 1863 Séfatus-Consulte, legislation intended to "dislodge this collective opposition to our enterprise" and "d'abattre les pans vermauls de ce batiment séculaire d'y faire circuler à grands flots l'air vivifiant et libre." (11) Plus de lourd servages imposé par les traditions barbares et les préjugés arriérés du folklore. Mais une sorte d'indépendance, d'émancipation, de liberté individuelle. La cellule sociale qui était autrefois la tribus est, aujourd'hui, la famille." (11)

59 Mirante, "les Oeuvres indigènes" 14. The institution of the family was also intended to free women from polygamy, and to allow French family law to legislate against droit de djébr, repudiation of wife, and unfair inheritance practices.
lacking distinction between religion and government, the French State was described as a
great organizer, a bestower of public order, a regulator of economies, an instrument of
equilibrium between private and general interests and active in social assistance. The fact
that Algeria had a productive economy before the French arrived, in wheat for example
(confirmed by the fact that surpluses were achieved allowing export) and their own form of
social assistance in the habous, was left unremarked. Thus the official French history of
Algeria was highly selective and self-serving.

One of the key vehicles of socialization targeted by the French government, and identified
as such by Mirante, was housing.60 The Assemblées algériennes voted a budget of 5
million francs for indigenous villages throughout Algeria, and about one hundred and
sixty-five complexes or buildings were envisioned. The result was the first Arab village,
Bel-Air, at Sétif and another at Philippeville soon followed.61 The program and aesthetics
of these cités indigènes was decided by French politicians, planners and architects. As the
knowledgeable academics suggested in their Cahiers, Moslem Algerians were deemed to be
deficient in aesthetic sensibility and knowledge of the intricacies of property value and
development; their omission in decision-making was thus considered appropriate.

Described as having been concerned only with practical objects prior to the French arrival,
Moslem Algerians were felt to possess artisanal rather than innovationary talents;
correspondingly, they were understood to lack the spontaneity of intuition. As artisans they
represented a delayed stage of aesthetic development, and could be contrasted to the French
who were characterized as having the ability to abstract and synthesize, and to see beyond

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60 Mirante, "La Vie et les Moeurs" 35. "Le contact de notre civilisation a, peu à peu, amené les Arabes à
renoncer totalement ou partiellement à leurs habitudes ancestrales de nomades pour devenir sédentaires et
cette transformation à l'habitat indigène a tout récemment retenu, de façon spéciale, l'attention de M. Pierre
Bordes Gouverneur général, qui a saisis les Assemblées financières de la colonie de la question, si
importante pour l'avenir social, économique et politique de l'Algérie." (35) There was an enquiry into rural
housing in 1921, written by A. Bernard.
61 Mirante, "La Vie et les Moeurs" 35-36.
local detail. Thus aesthetic theory gave support to the administrative action of the
Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. This view of Moslem Algerians also benefited the
economic interests of France and the Europeans of Algeria. Because the life of the indigène
was apparently simpler, and viewed as limited in requirements and tastes, the need for a
French salary or the amenities of a modern home were deemed unnecessary. The role of
the rural cités indigènes and the educational institutions within them was to fix their
intended inhabitants on marginalized lands. Urban cités indigènes selectively placed others
in the city according to its labor and social needs. The moral use of such housing
complexes was to forge what Durkheim had termed "a social contract," that is, to impress
upon Moslems that their future was linked with that of France and that they had a function
within the resultant collective prosperity. This "social contract" was also impressed upon
such subjects by the schools which were so prominently portrayed in Centenary
propaganda where they formed the "conquête des indigènes par l'école." These 1931 Cahiers addressed the Metropole with justifications for French presence in
Algeria. All of them, from the varied perspectives of their different disciplines, highlighted
the civilizing duty which France had assumed. Without exception they repeated the reasons
why Moslem Algerians, although loyal subjects appreciative of the benefits of French rule,
should not as yet be granted French citizenship. The European population, military, colon
and particularly the French, were represented as the providers of well-being. Equally
important to the authors of these tracts was the portrayal of a land and city which was stable
and open to investment. Reading between the lines of these official reports, all written by
European if not French intellectuals from within French Algerian institutions, one finds

62 Mirante draws upon the aesthetic theory of Bergson in the first instance and Taine in the second, see "La Vie et les Moeurs" 37, 64.
63 Mirante, "La Vie et les Moeurs" 65.
64 Mirante, "La Vie et les Moeurs" 66-67. Educational demands are noted as increasing since 1922. In 1929 there were 541 boys schools with 53,932 pupils and 23 girls schools with 6712 pupils.
65 Mirante, "La Vie et les Moeurs" 90.
certain obsessions and apprehensions: a preoccupation with legitimizing France's presence on both moral and economic terms, the fear of pan-Arabism and an insurgent "indigenous" population. In turn, as the preoccupations with the cité indigène, Maison Indigène, Grands Travaux and land demonstrate, these anxieties and fixations had architectural and urban planning ramifications.

Underlying all the arguments put forth in the various Cahiers of the Célébration du Centenaire, and compelling them in fact, was an obsession with the nation, a concern with recognizing and keeping its legitimate citizens within its bounds and any impostors without. Not only were Moslem Algerians defined by these Cahiers but so too were proper French citizens. The latter was to be recognized in such characteristics as order, innovation, reason, and genius. Haunting the authors of these Cahiers was a concern with national identity, it was registered in the preoccupations with the unresolved conflicts of modernization (education, health and employment programs, expansion afforded by new technology such as irrigation dams and super highways) and the definition and differentiation of who should benefit from it. For example, territorial expansion into the Sahara meant not only more exploitable land but also a greater potential for dissidents within these extended and troublesome borders. And while the expansion of French education theoretically produced compliant subjects of Moslem Algerians, it also created dissatisfied and articulate ones with claims to French jobs and status.

An endeavor to calm any apprehensions about an expansion of national borders and the management of the indigenous populations who would now be captured within them was the subtext of the speech given by the President of the French Republic when in Algiers as part of the centenary celebration. He proclaimed:

derrière la façade d'Alger, il n'y a plus la misère, ni la terreur, ni la violence, ni la paresse qu'on trouvait avant nous: Alger 4 ème ville de
France est habitée par une population de races sans doute mélangées mais pleine d'intelligence et d'âme bien française. Alger est vraiment l'entrée resplendissante qui convient à cet empire africain de la Méditerranée au Congo, de la côte de l'Atlantique à la frontière du Soudan anglo-égyptien, que la France a su créer par son génie persévérant, par le courage et l'intelligence des ses enfants. 

It was just these facts, a population of mixed races, in a city which was a permeable border between la patrie and the not yet France--the frontier--which would influence the reconfiguration of the city. 

Encompassed within the white walls of the city and repudiating the President's representation of Algiers were beggars, abandoned children, collapsing buildings, excruciating poverty, slums, bidonvilles and dissenting voices. This built environment and these voices were evidence of unemployment, the lack of schools, housing and justice for Moslem Algerians. As well, a growing and more emboldened Arab language press and an increasingly mobilized and oppositional Moslem population gaining effect on the political scene now lived within the "fourth city of France." While various factors of the Moslem Algerian population saw the 1930 Centenary as an opportunity to point out the discrepancies between claims made for the civilizing process and its realities, most Europeans saw the Centenary as an opportunity to glorify the work accomplished by the colony in medicine, education, agriculture and other fields. By 1930 it had become clear that the prudent voice of Moslem Municipal councilors who asked for improvements to

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66Kaddache, "La Vie Politique" 196. He is quoting from the Bulletin mensuel du comité de l'Afrique française, (1930) 299. Boumémedie replied to the President that the Moslems were attached to the motherland, took joy in commemorating French work in Algeria and the better life, progress and civilization which it brought. (197).

67The presence of bidonvilles was decried by the architectural and popular press as well as Municipal councilors and historians such as Lespès.

68Kaddache, La Vie Politique 214.
their living standards and built environment rather than political independence would only be ignored, and less moderate means appeared their only alternative.

Dissent from within

Few considered the humiliating aspects which many of the events of La Célébration du Centenaire may have had for the Moslem Algerians: the mock landing battle which emphasized the taking of a once Moslem landscape, or the historicized spectacle of whirling dervishes and anachronistically costumed Moslems, or the exclusively French language spoken, or the monuments lording French prowess over a defeated population. Those who did question such events did so warily. To condemn the Centenary was to condemn conquest and colonization, progress and the distribution of the benefits of modern science, be it medicine, transport or art. Some Moslem Algerians, for example the prominent Moslem reformer of Algiers, Ben Larbey, had been opposed to the mock landing battle but for the reason that "the Algerians did not oppose the French but welcomed their awakening from lethargy."69 His confrere, Hadj Hammon had praised the arrival of the French in his religious services in the main Mosque of Algiers.70 There was no public opposition on the part of Moslem Municipal Councilors. The only protest came from militants, organized parties and some trade unions. The Centenary was made the opportunity for questioning the real situation of Moslem Algerians after one hundred years of occupation. In June 1929 the Federal Congress of socialists published demands for improved conditions and programs of reform in their newspaper, Demain. The Bulletin mensuel du comité de l'Algérie français, recalled the objectives of real colonization, while the Communist Party published a pamphlet denouncing the Centenary and calling for independence.71

69Kaddache, La Vie Politique 192.
70Kaddache, La Vie Politique 192.
71Kaddache, La Vie Politique 191-193.
Moslem oppositional positions

On the eve of the Centenary, Kerrad Khelifa listed the growing number of Moslem Algerian demands: instruction in Arabic as well as in French, equal military service, free access to civil and military employment, unconstrained travel in France and foreign lands, public assistance and social laws of France applied in Algeria and for Moslems, suppression of internment, less restrictive forest laws, greater representation and involvement of Moslem Algerians in the election of the President of the Délégations financières. These demands, which were felt to have been legitimated by the fact of the 1865 annexation of Algeria to France that in effect had made Moslem Algerians French, tested the limits of the assimilationist model, both in terms of its rhetoric and practice. However, any radical Moslem opposition was forced to speak from exile; Messali Hadj had been one of the first to call not for reform and appeasement but independence. He did so from Brussels in 1926 and again from France in 1929. He was barred from doing so in Algeria until granted amnesty by the Popular Front in 1936.

A contesting voice to both the colons and then the Metropole was forming within the Moslem community in Algeria, one increasingly fragmented, not according to French divisions of "Arab" or "Berber," but with respect to political aims and opinions about the appropriate relationship with France. This Moslem community also became increasingly divided according to such factors as literacy, French or Arabic education, economic standing, class, and the existence of an elite empowered by the French or a ruling class supported by Islamic teachings. Although the elected elite among the Moslem population would be found among those endorsing the festivities of the Centenary and among the eulogists of French occupation, other positions were also developing. This elite, as elected representatives on Municipal Councils, holders of adjunct positions, French academic

72Kaddache, La Vie Politique 144.
degrees and experience in French parliamentary institutions, and increasingly cognizant of their strategic, military and economic importance to France, were, by 1930, in a position to make some demands on funds spent, projects ratified and subsidies given by the various levels of government. They would demand housing, services, schools and cemeteries. These would be granted, meagerly, by the French as symbols of their good intentions; the political rights would not.

As the Centenary was being planned in the early 1920s a less spectacularized but no less significant development was occurring, the Nahda or Moslem "renaissance." Nahda was not concerned with conservatism so much as with the preservation of Islam against assimilation and fusion. By 1930 the Moslem festival of the Nahda had become a political event, symbolizing the unity of Arab nations and politicizing many Moslems. The Cercle du Progrès, established in 1929 as a forum for cultural, religious, and increasingly political, discussion, began to formulate Moslem demands. In the same year, during the Municipal election campaigns, it made these claims known in the press. They reiterated those of K errad Khelifa: representation of Moslem Algerians in Parliament, equality of military service and salary, the end to the restrictions on travel, the revocation of the code d'indigent, instruction and professional education for Moslems, and the application of the social laws of France in Algeria. There was no discussion among the Cercle du Progrès at this point of an independent Moslem nation.

The municipal elections of this year were particularly turbulent, with impassioned presentations from both French and Moslem candidates. In the same year the Fédération

73 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 243, 325.
74 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 153.
75 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 153-54.
76 The Moslem candidate favored by the administration was pitted against that proposed by the Jeunes Algériens, a group patterned after the Young Turks. The Young Turks were concerned with the complete assimilation of Moslems into French France, full French citizenship and the rights as well as duties that that status conferred.
des Elus petitioned the Chamber of Deputies in Paris directly, and for the first time Moslem Municipal councilors refused to pay homage to representatives of the French government.\textsuperscript{77} The Fédération des Elus also formed the first free medersa or Islamic school in Algiers. Divided from the majority of Moslem Algerians in economic and social standing and often in religious matters, this elite sought to modernize Arabic and rid their religion of its superstitions, particularly as these were found in the worship of marabouts, local holy persons. Marabouts supportive of the regime had been appointed and then used by the French to gain access to the largely uneducated Moslem Algerian masses. Such action was often a point of contention between the Administration and the Oulemas who objected to French interference in religious matters, especially the censoring and vetting of those who could preach in the Mosques. The elite, which formed the Fédération des Elus and the Cercle du Progrès, was one participant of \textit{ce vaste chantier} of the Célébration Centenaire and its subsequent \textit{Grands Travaux}. They would require some consideration in the decisions regarding built form.

Another segment of the population, playing a slightly different role through the 1930s was that of the Moslem low wage earner and unemployed. Uneducated in French or Western ways of life and not always instructed formally in Islam, this group was often illiterate. Its members would be courted by the Workers syndicates and the French Communist party which had already introduced the issue of independence, opposing the "will of Algerians," meaning Moslem Algerians, to imperialism. No other party or election platform in Algiers confronted this issue at this early date.\textsuperscript{78} Although the 1929 municipal elections would be more heated, and Moslem candidates more bold in their demands, the results achieved were improvements in built form not political structure: lighting of the Casbah, planning of a

\textsuperscript{77} Kaddache, \textit{La Vie Politique} 151.
\textsuperscript{78} Kaddache, \textit{La Vie Politique} 155.
new cemetery El Kettar, the opening of charity workshops for women in the rue Marengo and the promise of more schools, road improvement and running water in the Casbah.79

While elected officials began to use their offices for first cultural and then political demands, workers used general strikes as a means to voice their concerns about wages and working conditions and also about discrimination in the work force and in government hiring practices. Algiers experienced a growing number of strikes in the 1920s, with sixteen occurring in Algiers in 1929; Moslems had led two of them and participated in others.80 An Arabic press brought Moslem demands and an articulated argument for better living conditions to their co-religionists. The Communist Party, in the early 1930s, attempting to rally Moslem Algerians to the anti-imperialist cause, advocated independence in the name of the proletarian revolution. The effect was probably greater on a watchful Metropolitan and expatriate Moslem Algerian population than on those in Algeria at this date.81

Three things are important about these events. One is the greater visibility given to Moslem Algerian demands and with this the growing awareness of the discrepancies between the rhetoric of assimilation and reality. The second is that the Moslem Algerian population was fractured first along lines of assimilation and culture, and then along more politically defined alignments. The third is that Moslem Algerians increasingly demanded access to the public sphere where decisions were made and to technologies of public persuasion and consensus-building: Arabic language press, schools, representation in Parliament.

79 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 156. Their demands had been: suppression of laws of exception, softening of the law forestier, freedom of movement, openness of all employment to Moslems, equality of military service, instruction in Arabic, augmentation of Moslems in Municipal councils and, especially, representation in parliament.
80 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 135, 136.
81 The French Communist Party did not win many Moslem Algerian converts in the early 1930s. Their atheist stance disturbed many, while the lack of interest among unions in Algiers in the plight of Moslem Algerians dissuaded Moslem Algerians of the merits of communism. See Kaddache, La Vie Politique 292.
Many events in the period immediately leading up to the Centenary and coinciding with its conception and planning, disproved the "harmony of two races" and the progressive assimilation of Moslem subjects into full French citizenship promoted by the French government. The Fédération des Elus had petitioned the French Parliament with several demands, one of which was equal access to Habitations à Loyer Modéré (HLM). The HLM Office had constructed 1500 dwellings for Europeans; the 64 built for Moslems had been funded by the Caisse Centenaire. The Délégations financières had refused credit from the French government for Moslem Algerian housing, charging its designation for this purpose infringed on their autonomy in financial matters. Many, including Mayor Brunel, advocated cités indigènes as more appropriate for the life style of most Moslem Algerians.\(^82\) However, the economic and urban changes resulting in Algeria between 1926 and 1931 coincided with a lack of similar development in responding to Moslem Algerian demands.\(^83\) During this period the Moslem population of Algiers had increased to 39%, most of it having gone to the Casbah or the bidonvilles just then appearing on the periphery of the city. In the same period European immigration fell.\(^84\) The campaign to purge the Casbah and the Marine District dates from the establishing of these demographics. By 1926 the Municipal Council had become alarmed about housing shortages and by 1930 had begun to consider solutions.\(^85\) At the same time, these were also years of a marked, if relative, prosperity for European Algerians, largely derived from the enormous profits amassed after the founding of the Bank of Algeria. After 1930, the Moslem press became more open in its attack on the inequities of the French occupation, calling into question,

\(^{82}\)Kaddache, La Vie Politique 148.

\(^{83}\)Kaddache, La Vie Politique 126.

\(^{84}\)Kaddache, La Vie Politique 127.

\(^{85}\)Kaddache, La Vie Politique 129. It was estimated in 1930 that one third of the incoming population would need HBM, subsidized housing. Between 1914 and 1930 the city had only built 1500, leaving a deficit of 6000. In July of 1930 the Municipal Council voted 300,000 Francs for housing, 3000 to 4000 dwellings: as a consequence the old projects of transformation were rescinded, for example the 1926 plan. In 1929 the collapse of a building on the rue des Consuls seemed to call for and justify the redevelopment of the Marine District. Owners however protested and wanted a delay until 1939. The Municipal Council did delay until 1931 when it resumed its campaign for the clearance of the Marine District.
even ridiculing, the mythic foundations and stereotypes by which the French had maintained their superiority. As one writer in the Left-wing *La Voix du Peuple* in 1933 noted:

> Pour soutenir leurs mensongères déclarations, pour influencer l'opinion métropolitaine disposée par humanité à nous aider à nous tirer des griffes de ces rapaces chrétiens, ils clament à tous les échos que si dans la pensée de certains de nos frères algériens musulmans, ou dans l'esprit métropolitain (qu'il qualifie de léger et d'anti-français) des doutes se forment sur leur 'désintéressement' et leur 'attachement' à notre cause, ils se proposent eux de nous trouver certains avis contraires--convaincants--émis par nos indigènes frères beni-oui-oui modernes qui comprennent et estiment à leur juste valeur--trébuchante et sonnante)--les efforts 'inlassablement' dépensés pour l'oeuvre de leur 'civilisation.' Quelle sale et 'dégueulasse' civilisation!"^86

Obviously, conflicts had begun to surface within Moslem Algerian society itself over modernization. There were those, primarily the élus and évolué, who still believed that modernization would lead to full assimilation and French citizenship. However, there were a growing number, the Oulema especially, who began to equate modernization with westernization and a betrayal of Islam.

**The Metropole: Managing dissent and the 1931 Exposition Coloniale**

The Exposition Coloniale of 1931 offers another vantage point from which to view the way in which architecture and urbanism were used to manage the conflicting notions of Empire, nation and colony. Held in the Parc de Vincennes on the eastern periphery of Paris, it

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affords some insight into the Metropole's vision of Algeria. The Exhibition, as Maréchal Lyautey remarked in the *L'Illustration. L'Exposition coloniale Album*, was intended to prove that, "Coloniser, ce n'est pas uniquement, en effet, construire des quais, des usines ou des voies ferrées; c'est aussi gagner à la douceur humaine les coeurs farouches de la savane ou du désert." Such "hearts" were also to be won perhaps by the architectural representations given to the different colonies such that the colonized could recognize themselves in the pavilions provided as signs of their culture. The aim of the exhibition was the symbolic celebration of the civilizing mission of the Metropole and the exotic charms of the colonial territories. As significantly, the Maréchal realized that once territory was won its occupants had to be secured.

Here, among the stylistically differentiated colonial pavilions, Algeria was represented by both a Moorish-style pavilion and an array of artifacts within the Musée des colonies (Figure 33). The pavilion stood in stark contrast to the Beaux Arts Musée which attempted to synthesize the various colonial cultures within the orthogonal order of Western classicism by means of its stripped-down classical vocabulary. The Musée also unified them within the modernity conveyed by its concrete frame and sculptural narratives of prosperity and progress (Figure 36). Built to give expression to the colonial policy of association advocated by Lyautey, the Musée des colonies sought integration of "Metropolitan monumentality with a non-specific 'colonial character'" as a solution to the architectural problem of synthesizing "the Metropole and the colonies without effacing their differences and subsuming colonial culture to French culture." The external sculptural frieze illustrated the contribution made by the overseas territories to France. On the interior

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these contributions were neatly re-classified and ordered according to Western concepts and epistemological needs. Algeria was identified by headdresses, costumes and jewelry labeled according to tribal affiliations. The exotic "Other" was here made familiar to Western eyes, both manifestly present but also safely distanced within the frames of ethnographic knowledge.90

The Exhibition focused attention on an attempted reformulation of arabisance to meet the polemical needs of colonial politics. The Musée des colonies was to be more than an ethnographic museum, it was also to be a permanent monument to the achievements of French colonialism and proof of the efficacy of the policy of association between Metropole and colonies.91 Association sought the difficult synthesis of modern technology and industrial infrastructure with "respect" for local language, culture and government, although this respect was bounded by political exigencies; the use of Arabic was monitored and often censored, while the maintenance of caids allowed the most exploitative kind of local government to be practiced in Algeria. As a result the architect of the Musée, Alfred Laprade, was compelled to forge a more benign image of association that would recall French achievements without the connotations of cultural domination adhering to Beaux Arts design and which would convey cultural sensitivity without the exotic pastiche of arabisance. Clearly there was a need in the Metropole for such an architectural re-working. Architectural politics in North Africa were not so easily supervised, administrative visions and directives were often countered by the allegiances of free-market speculators to the Beaux Arts classicism recalling France, or the Italy from which their construction crews

90One of the little remarked aspects of this Musée des colonies is the degree to which the colonies were feminized. The exhibits are largely of women's jewelry and costume and they are constant points of reference in the murals and paintings celebrating the contribution made to France by the colonies. Warrior traditions were reduced to tribal dress and disembodied of their physical and psychological intimidation, except when it was necessary to sublimate cultural fears with mock French victories over Moslem insurgents.

A problem for Lyautey in Casablanca, speculative building was more pervasive and dominant in Algiers; in both instances it was understood as a stand against State interference.

The question is: how did the above general pattern of loyalties and visions for Algiers determine "publics" for specific kinds of architecture and planning? How did such rhetoric define the Moslem Algerians such that they, for example, could be "legitimately" given substandard housing, specific kinds of schools and segregated complexes? Who were the advocates of a Casbah bereft of running water or street lighting, or alternatively, cleared, cleansed and emptied; who desired Mosques treated as historic relics rather than as socially viable institutions, or the streets and markets named after French Generals and administrators in neighborhoods where few French ventured? How did the cités indigènes function in the negotiation of colonial politics? Who were the supporters of the very modern Palais du Gouvernement or Palais d'Agriculture, or Maurice Rotival's designs for the Port (Figure 37)? Did high Modernist plans negotiate the colonial situation according to strategies different from those of the arabisance of Jonnart or the neo-classical styles of the Beaux Arts, what the contemporary theorist Paul Rabinow has called "middling Modern"? What differentiated the supporters of Prost or Agache from those of Le Corbusier? That is, did the difference in aesthetics mean anything with respect to colonialism and imperialist relations of power? Such questions will be explored via the projects and their subsequent representations worked out in the general and architectural press as publics were sought and favor curried.

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92 Both Lyautey and Le Corbusier railed against the Piedmontese and Italian builders of these speculative constructions.
The Plans

Exhibitions, architectural or colonial, can be understood against the background of contesting groups within the Metropole and Algerian administrative and architectural communities. In the Metropole were those beckoned, at least in part, by the architecture and city forms that were a part of the Exposition's allure. Architecture and urbanism were key markers of Empire, they registered spatial and temporal relations as they gave assurances of French supremacy and mapped out investment or adventure opportunities. They also attempted, via labels and familiar categories, and through simulacra and symbolic layout, resolutions to the apprehensions then felt about the nation and its fragile frontiers.

Obus "A"

Le Corbusier's first plan for Algiers, Obus "A," materialized in the aftermath of the Célébration du Centenaire and in the context of the Exposition Coloniale of 1931, between his Algiers lectures of March, 1931 and those of Spring, 1932. They drew upon varied sources: his guided tour of the Casbah, his trip through the Maghreb, local Algerian histories and press, military surveys and, from the Metropole, the Exposition Coloniale and the Musée de l'Homme. From his own professional experience he drew upon his 1929 proposals for Rio, reformulations of his ideas from the contemporaneous debate and design work in Moscow, his Radiant City and Regional Syndicalist commitments.

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93 These are discussed in chapter one. Apparently Le Corbusier was given guided tours of the Casbah by both J.-P. Faure and Jean de Maisonseul in the early 1930s. His trip through the Maghreb, documented in his sketchbooks, was undertaken with Léger, Pierre and Albert Jeanneret in August 1931. He is known to have read René Lespès' history of Algiers, and received newspaper clippings and information from his supporters in Algiers, primarily from Emery, Brua, Breuillot and J.-P. Faure. A topographical model, constructed from military surveillance photographs was made by Emery and sent from Algiers in December 1931. For a discussion of Le Corbusier's Regional Syndicalist ideology see McLeod, "Architecture and Utopia."
The architect's earliest conceptions for Obus "A" incorporated a panoramic view from the sea toward the harbor, distanced and filtered by poetic tropes of the city. Captured within his gaze were the new Government building, seafront boulevard, the Casbah and the obelisk of the Fort de l'Empereur (Figure 13). Working with the topographical model and real-estate estimates sent by his colleagues in Algiers at Christmas 1931, Le Corbusier sought to give a semblance of reality to his montaged "projet manifest." The business center was contained in two long horizontal skyscrapers running parallel to the coast line and which were connected by a passerelle to elite housing for 220,000 in redents on the heights of Fort de l'Empereur. A viaduct containing a coast highway with 180,000 units for the working class suspended from it stretched 13,000 meters along the coast. Office space and circulation were the priorities of the plan, housing was a bonus depended from them. The passerelle facilitated the exploitation of a vacant and otherwise unassailable hilltop and allowed access to the exclusive residences planned for the site. The Casbah, and the cultural and political problem which it presented was, seemingly, avoided by this overpass. Le Corbusier's retention of the Casbah was in keeping with municipal policy as was the rhetoric of his reasoning. Le Corbusier claimed that:

Il faut sauver la Casbah, ville de corsaires... ville historique, aujourd'hui éteouffée sous une population déclassée, le gouvernement algérien se doit de maintenir cette ancre accrochée à l'histoire de la nation musulmane. Il suffit d'aménager la Casbah, on ne hait pas son conquérant.... En 1831, Alger capitale de la piraterie, est conquerise. En 1931, c'est la capitale d'Algérie, un pays francisésemble-t-il avec le sourire; il semble bien que là-bas, dans les campagnes, les montagnes de Kabylie, les coteaux des vignobles, les oasis du desert, le sourire doit naturellement sur le visage de chacun... le Musulman d'Algérie a ses cultures, ses montagnes, ses oasis, son costume, sa dignité. C'est un grand capital, et pourra-t-on a sauvegardé la dignité tout
en colonisant l'Algérie! Il semble bien qu'on a sauvegardé la dignité musulmane et qu'il y a nulle haine mais de l'amitie.94

Again, as in the Cahiers du Centenaire, there are the recurrent worries of assimilation (un pays francisé, une population déclassée), modernization (aménager), tradition (sauvegardé) and the disloyalty and hatred of Moslem Algerian subjects (haine). Le Corbusier does not mention tourism explicitly but much of his description derives from his own touristic pleasures. However, to achieve this prospectus on Algiers the architect must leave unacknowledged the contemporary population déclassée by a return to a romantic history of corsairs and oases.

A different history, and future, were evoked for the Marine District. Its history was that of change and activity. The new business center, accommodated by a technologically innovative skyscraper, was proposed as a "social lever," a microcosm of the new society to be fabricated and hence improved by technology. The business center was also intended to articulate the future relationship between the two cultures of West and East. First placed at the boundary between the Arab and European sectors of the city, it could function as a symbol of one specific set of relations between the two districts and their cultures. Le Corbusier was preoccupied with refining the most effective position of the skyscraper. Moved slightly towards Bastion 23 to the north, it reconstituted the "historical axis" of Algiers on the very places marked by European presence from the sixteenth- century to the nineteenth-century and its remnants, the obelisk and the neo-Moorish Bastion 23. The business center was adjusted to the topography and existing street system and as a consequence was reoriented to run northwest-southeast and aligned with Boulevard Amiral Pierre. As a result the passerelle was moved to the right of the citadel of the Casbah and, so as to avoid two military obstacles, a barracks and a munitions factory, the passerelle

now encroached upon and laid siege to the old Turkish city. In adjusting the plan to the reality of the site, the ideals of technology and autonomy, which were the intended resonance of the skyscraper, became compromised by the history which it acknowledged, and Le Corbusier thus "affirmed social conditions" he saw "no reason to protest against." Obus "A" gave expression to a mythic notion of Algiers as head of the French African Empire, as it symbolically sought "to establish between the Moslem civilization and the European the hierarchical relation which is that of the époque." The passerelle overstepped the Casbah, traversed the redent housing on the Fort de l'Empereur, continued as a highway towards El Biar and on to the Southern Territories of an expanding Empire.

Modifications were made to Obus "A" as Le Corbusier continued to receive information from Algiers through 1931-32, photographs of the port, technical and Municipal development plans and newspaper articles. The skyscraper was repositioned once again so as to intrude less into the Casbah, the housing on the Fort de l'Empereur was reduced to five curving redents and two slab buildings perpendicular to the passerelle, the housing now increased from nine to ten stories. The viaduct was related more realistically to the terrain of the city, while its height was adjusted to the double height volumes envisioned for its suspended housing. Finally, Obus "A" was given a more finely detailed skyscraper with restaurants and cafes added to its roof terrace. Its siting had been shifted so as to allow an esplanade along the seafront and a monumental allé into the building. An immense park along with public buildings constituting a civic center were included to the south. The area to the east of Rue Bab el Oued, the lower Casbah, was cleared for a promenade linking north and south perimeters of the District of the Marine. Some buildings were preserved in this area, but many dating from the nineteenth-century that had stretched along the

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95 Giordani, "Les Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 144, 149.
96 Schulte-Sasse, "Forward" xxxv.
97 Le Corbusier, quoted in Giordani, "Les Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 140.
98 Giordani, "Les Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 151-203.
waterfront were removed in the interests of traffic circulation. Of the Arab buildings of this seafront area Le Corbusier preserved only two mosques, cleared of what he termed their "debris," and the Arab palace on Bastion 23, while the Casbah was cleared of sixty percent of its buildings. As details were worked out and intentions clarified the differentiation between elite housing in the redents of the Fort de l'Empereur and the viaduct housing became more pronounced, the former having twenty meters square per person and the latter merely ten. Only the largest of the viaduct units were afforded any semblance of a patio while the occupants of redent housing could more fully indulge in Moorish detailing and patios. Although the viaduct housing, intended for the working class, was theoretically given the possibility of Arab detailing what would be the use of these Moorish ornaments? The inability of such ornament to convey convincingly notions of French sensitivity towards Moslem culture had already been proven by the collapse of arabisance. It is questionable if such ornament, mass produced and defined by the abstract, decontextualizing frame in which it must sit, could function as a part of an expressive repertoire of forms through which this dominated group might have spoken with its own cultural voice. Such Moorish detailing suggests instead the appropriation of the desires and languages of Moslem Algerians in an attempt to disempower and quantify them. The exchangeability of Oriental with Renaissance motifs and the "living cells" standardized in the interests of quantity confirms this reading. Through the alterations of Obus "A" Le Corbusier eliminated more and more of his Orientalist decorative enthusiasms while he drew more heavily from the filtered and mediated knowledge which was sent to him from the colonial city. This information was contradictory. From René Lespès' history of Algiers he would have received what has been termed a "humanist colonialist," viewpoint of the city, while he would have imbibed what has been characterized as the "imperialist colonialism" of Jean Cotereau, an influential architectural critic in Algiers much favored by Le Corbusier by 1934.99

99 Deluz characterizes Lespès as having an honest position on the relationship between colonization and
Le Corbusier's plan developed significant concerns which differentiated it from previous projects in its placement of the city center on a historically poignant site, realigned on an axis with Paris, Barcelona and Rome, rather than confirming the city's movement toward the European sector to the south as existing plans did. While the Marine District remained a predominately small scaled commercial and residential area, barely distinguishable from the fabric of the European city, Le Corbusier differentiated it from both European and Moslem Algerian sectors. The formal and ideological contents of these differences would be understood and debated against a backcloth of municipal and national changes for the next decade.

Other plans

*Ce vaste chantier* had prompted plans for which consensus was elusive. Several plans, no doubt prompted by the *grand travaux* to be funded by the Centenary, were developed in the late 1920s through the 1930s. There would be port renovations and Marine District proposals by Croci, extensive plans by René Danger and fantastic new harbor images by Rotival. Interventions in the city had been proposed by local engineers and Metropolitan officials. In these plans modernization was largely limited to and focused on port installations and transit systems. In Algeria a very specific industry rather than industrialization in general was served by these improvements. Irrigation projects, highways and port extensions served an industrialized agricultural *colon* community, which had long ago established the oligarchy controlling the Délégations financières.

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Rotival had presented Algiers with a plan for immediate implementation in a lecture given in December of 1930 as part of the Amis d'Alger's lecture series. His vision of urbanism focused on the port and the infrastructure that would ensure that Algiers attracted business, remained competitive among North African cities such as Oran and Casablanca, and functioned like "a machine" oiled with capital investment and maintained by municipal government courage. He justified his intervention in the city by a call to "reality" and "objectivity." Unlike the President of the Republic or Le Corbusier who, viewing the Marine District from a distance believed these old quarters to be mysterious and glimmering white, Rotival complained that these old districts were in reality nothing "but decayed and vile when experienced up close." They were therefore to be replaced by tall skyscrapers and highways (Figure 37). The skyscraper was the symbolic center of his project. It would be, according to Rotival, the "beacon and mark of a new civilization." This beacon would rise before the newly designed Casbah, its streets preserved for their picturesque qualities, its buildings spared according to their artistic merit, its gardens redeployed as parks and museum settings. The Casbah was captured in Western institutional structures and aesthetic predilections. Rotival's skyscrapers, promontories raised on piloti and a march of buildings across the horizon, declared the city to be something more than a mere accessory to agricultural colonization (Figure 37). He was quite articulate about the way in which architecture and planning could contribute to the upward valuation of land prices and productivity, and about the coordination of lucrative populations with prime land. Rotival perhaps spoke for new colon interests in commerce and industry related to

101 Rotival, "Veu-on faire d'Alger une capitale? Maurice Rotival was a French Engineer trained at the Ecole Centrale where he was much influenced by Eugène Hénard and Henri Prost. He was also a member of the Société Française des Urbanistes and an influence of Durkheim might be attributed to his work as has been found with that of Agache. Until his work in the United States in 1940 he favored French Beaux Arts notions of centrality, monumentality and modernity. See Carola Hein, "Maurice Rotival's Plans for Caracas," paper given at the Forty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 27- May 1, 1994.
102 Rotival, "Veu-on faire d'Alger une capitale" 30.
103 Rotival, "Veu-on faire d'Alger une capitale" 27.
104 Rotival, "Veu-on faire d'Alger une capitale" 34.
the agriculture that had been the basis of power in the colony. Many of his urban planning and architectural ideas were similar to Le Corbusier's, although they were first applied to Algiers by Rotival: the idealization of the skyscraper form and business program, the use of *piloti*, abstract architectural and quasi-functionalist vocabulary and his concern with symbolic centers, surrounding leisure sites and green space. Although Rotival was a member of the SFU his degree was in engineering and his education at the Ecole Polytechnique, not the Ecole des Beaux Arts. This perhaps predisposed him to Le Corbusier's technologically informed designs which Rotival deemed appropriate ones for the city.

**Henri Prost**

Henri Prost was a prominent Paris urbanist well known for his work of almost two decades in North Africa. It was Prost's appointment by the Municipal Council that had apparently motivated certain members of the Amis d'Alger to seek Le Corbusier's alternative opinions on city planning. Correspondence between Le Corbusier and his supporters in Algiers attest to both Le Corbusier's knowledge of Prost and the intentions of this faction to obstruct Prost's planning objectives. The resulting plan and Beaux Arts design which gave these objectives form would become the focus of Le Corbusier's criticism.

Le Corbusier and Prost were opposed on many fronts and they operated within different and competing institutional frameworks. Prost was educated in the Ecole des Beaux Arts, worked for the State in Morocco under Maréchal Lyautey, belonged to the Musée Social

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105 The Délégation financières was dominated by the agricultural oligarchy and had determined development policy and negotiated it with the Metropole.

106 The Amis d'Alger was not a homogenous group sharing a single view of architecture and urbanism. In the correspondence passing between Algiers and Le Corbusier some members where indicated as sympathetic: Bienvenu, Guiuachain, Claro, Breuillon, Pasquier-Bronde (also adjunct mayor of Algiers), others such as Le Bâtonnier Rey were considered uncommitted or even hostile.
and the SFU and was admitted into the Academy of Fine Arts in 1932. In contrast, Le Corbusier practiced within the framework of an architectural avant-garde, fought tirelessly against academic architecture, denied political but not politically active affiliations, although not entirely (many of his early endeavors at La Chaux de Fonds were State subsidized, and the Weissenhoff Siedlungen would not have materialized without the Werkbund and State subsidies), and was a founding member of CIAM, an institution with international rather than national aspirations. However, as opposed as the two were in doctrine, there were certain notions and experiences which they shared.

Generally, both presented themselves and legitimated their actions as humanist, disinterested, and concerned with the social and moral aspects of the built environment; both were involved with modernization and spoke of efficiency, organization, and attention to traffic circulation, railway stations, highways and green spaces; both planned for future growth and economic development. Both expressed a respect for Moslem culture. In their youth they had explored the Orient, Prost carrying out an exhaustive study of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul as part of his academic studies between 1905 and 1907 and Le Corbusier visiting there during his travels in the East in 1911. Both profited from this experience and the presence of the French Empire which had made it possible. Prost was graduated from the Ecole for his study of Hagia Sophia; Le Corbusier was remunerated financially for the published accounts of his *Voyage de l'Orient*. Similarly, both professed respect for the ideas and work of Lyautey and were in turn acknowledged by the Maréchal. The influential State official and technocrat Raoul Dautry likewise recognized the contributions to urbanism offered by each. However, despite their shared cultural

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109 Prost's relationship with Dautry is referred to in L’*Œuvre de Henri Prost*, 152, 155. Le Corbusier's connection with Dautry is mentioned in Rémi Baudouï, *Raoul Dautry, 1880-1951: Le Technocrate de la*
experience of French colonialism which influenced their perceptions of the Orient and their presence in Algiers, Prost and Le Corbusier have been opposed historically as conservative and avant-garde respectively. What is left undefined is the possible political or colonial parameters of such distinctions and whether Le Corbusier's criticism of Prost's Beaux Arts design and planning also entailed a criticism of their colonizing objectives.

The site of public confrontation: the Quartier de la Marine

The circumstances surrounding Prost's involvement in Algiers are unclear, but it appears that he first acted as a consultant in the development of a comprehensive plan for the city. Work had been initiated by René Danger in the late 1920s and Prost would continue it with Rotival through 1930-1933. This study, perhaps in identifying the areas in need of urgent action, propelled Prost into the highly controversial and long debated redevelopment of the Marine District. This quartier contained the remnants of the Old Turkish city hemmed in by Casbah to the West, sea to the East, the European city to the south and new suburbs to the north. Its demolition, ostensibly galvanized by the death of 57 people resulting from the collapse of a building in 1929, was also prompted by


110 Paul Rabinow categorizes Prost as a Modern Neo-Conservative, who "assumed the necessity of Power at the inception of the plan. However, the object attended to was not the Sovereign but with the welfare of the population." Rabinow describes Prost's aims as generally to facilitate a twentieth century ordering of society, with the means being technology, representational and political problems were subordinate. Prost understood urbanism to be both an aesthetic and technical endeavor. The goal of art was to ameliorate the miseries of life, while historical and technical management were two of the gravest preoccupations of government. These preoccupations included concerns for housing, circulation, work, hygiene, and aesthetics. The ultimate consideration for the urbanist was the protection of western civilization." Paul Rabinow, French Modern 235.

111 Jean Alazard, "L'Urbanisme et L'Architecture à Alger de 1918 à 1936, Architecture 50. 1 (Jan. 1937): 29. René Danger had already begun work on a comprehensive plan for Algiers and this would form the basis for the work by Prost and Rotival. The resulting 1931 plan was signed Danger-Prost-Rotival. All three were Paris planners. Deluz, L'Urbanisme et L'Architecture d'Alger 16.
Centenary funding possibilities and the enlarged vision of a city-wide plan. Subsequent to Prost's consultation, a plan was accepted by the Municipal Council in March of 1931, just prior to Le Corbusier's first Algiers lectures.\textsuperscript{112} Demolition was decreed in April of 1931 and by May Mayor Brunel was able to present a detailed report on the needed redevelopment of the Marine District. The radical transformation of this area was confided to a public corporation, the Régie foncière de la Ville d'Alger;\textsuperscript{113} it would oversee both plans and architecture.\textsuperscript{114} Although not a comprehensive plan for the whole city, the intention to include the re-housing of the expropriated population as an integral part of redevelopment would entail a view of the project enlarged to encompass the whole city (Figure 6).\textsuperscript{115} In addition, as this envisioned the segregation of Europeans and Moslems, it would lead to a significant cultural reconfiguration. It was an urban strategy with which Prost was well versed. He had been deft in managing colonial social relations via housing segregation, cités indigènes and arabisance ornament applied to Western institutional structures in the past.\textsuperscript{116}

The site was obviously important for its position along the waterfront and as a link between the north and south developments of the city. It was also significant as a beacon of French civilizing prowess. According to the journalistic rhetoric of the day: "En ce quartier jadis

\textsuperscript{112} Although the decision was made March 3rd 1931 it was not publicly announced until June 1931. However, as Le Corbusier's supporter, Breuillot, was on the city council, Le Corbusier may have known of this in March.

\textsuperscript{113} Alazard, "L'Urbanisme et l'Architecture" 25. The corporation was established the 27th of May 1931.

\textsuperscript{114} It was the Régie foncière who oversaw both plans and architecture, although it was under the city's permanent control, functioned with its guaranty and was mandated to act for its benefit. The resulting plan is usually designated the Prost & Rotival Plan or the Plan of the Municipal Services. Alazard, (25). The plan is referred to as the Prost & Rotival plan by Le Corbusier and he clearly sees them as the agents of the Municipal plan. See the letters between Le Corbusier and Brua, 30 Sep. 1932 and 11 Oct. 1932 and Le Corbusier's letters to Rotival 4 July 1931 and to Prost 12 Mar. 1934, AFLC. The plan becomes the Prost & Socard plan in 1935-36, according to Giordani, although Emery continues to refer to the Prost & Rotival plan in his letters to Le Corbusier until at least 1937.

\textsuperscript{115} See Croci, "Etude d'aménagement" 137-144 and Deluz, L'Urbanisme et l'Architecture d'Alger 9-20.

\textsuperscript{116} Rabinow depicts Prost rather favorably as having a real respect and interest in indigenous cultures, certainly as someone with a less manipulative and imperialist viewpoint than Lyautey. If this were the case it would make Le Corbusier's choice of the latter as a role model, rather than the Prost, indicative of his affiliations.
sordide, ressuscité lumineux, Alger se présentera sous un aspect de ville neuve, comme en offrent à l'envi nos capitales marocaines." Most revealingly, as a cultural object, the plan was to recall the earliest objectives of French colonization, an idea given rhetorical emphasis by an author in Chantiers nord-africains by quoting General Soult, Minister of War in 1843, speaking, appropriately, to his architect:

> Il est nécessaire (que tout le monde se pénètre de l'importance d'une telle mesure) dont l'objet n'est pas seulement d'embellir la Ville d'Alger, mais aussi d'ajouter à la valeur des immeubles, d'encourager et de faciliter les constructions nouvelles...d'assainir les quartiers sans issues, de mettre en circulation des capitaux et de procurer du travail à de nombreux ouvriers.

This is what the Prost & Rotival plan resolved to do, penetrating the neighborhood with new roads, it increased the value and rents of buildings, and facilitated the circulation of capital, albeit on a modest scale and within the city. This was intended as one aspect of its public appeal.

The site, in the direct path of an expanding commercial district to the south and its developing suburbs to the north was also at the foot of the Casbah and adjacent to the Place du Gouvernement. Therefore, in addition to the economic rationality which demanded better inner city communication, the area was also understood to have cultural significance, as was made evident in its reception in Algiers. The Marine District was a site charged with the resonance of colonialism and social power relations; its decrepit state an indictment of the past. It was described in 1932 as having been constructed from the beginning "suivant des instincts antithétiques aux nôtres," its unreasonable parceling of land described as "orientale," unhealthy, the breeding ground of syphilis, typhoid, cholera, and of uprisings, a site ruined first by the fatalism of the Moslems, and the decadence of the Turks and finally, by French speculators, as opposed to colonization in general. French

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117 J.C., "L'agonie d'un quartier" 394.
118 J.C., "L'agonie d'un quartier" 394.
119 J.C., "L'agonie d'un quartier" 381, 385, 393.
speculative building was often the scapegoat for a city gone awry; a chaotic city fabric blamed for a disorderly social milieu. The maligning of speculators with their private interest and profit motivation also served to validate calls for a more disinterested urban intervention. Both Le Corbusier and Prost shared in this chastisement of land speculation, in the interests of rational urban administration and direct professional control respectively. In addition, the Marine District's tourist value was deceptive, it was no longer an exotic vision but was increasingly described as a rabbit warren of impassable, dark and infested streets which belied the white facades seen from the sea. What the analyses proffered in the popular press reveal, such as that cited above, is a belief that public sympathy for urban renewal could be won by appealing not only to economic rationality but also to fears of physical and cultural contamination—syphilis but also "des instincts antithétique aux nôtres."

Movement in and out of the area was posed as a threat to the health of the whole city—"nus-pieds déguenillés en exportent la vermine que le déploiement des burnous essaimera dans les tramways...." Obviously it was not just physical health but also cultural well-being that was felt threatened. The Marine District represented all that was frightful in colonization, an "illicit" mingling of French culture within an "inappropriate" milieu. The disparagement of the nineteenth-century adaptation of the aged Turkish quarter registered many non-architectural concerns. Poor architectural adaptations of old Turkish buildings and a French classicism devalued by greedy speculative developers were understood as signs of a French population disrespectful of their cultural roots and responsibilities. Thus the redesign of the Marine District became part of a more comprehensive reorganization of the city and its cultural representation took on added importance. The almost complete demolition and reconfiguration of such an area included a balancing of this modernization with tactics to maintain the exotic heritage of the city, the raison-d'être for French presence.

120J.C., "L'agonie d'un quartier" 381-394. The quote is from page 392.
according to colonial discourse. The Arab presence in the city would be contained in the Casbah where the concern was not with maintaining the social life once found there or Moslem institutions which might still adhere to its forms but in the interest of tourism. As Lespès commented in 1935, the Casbah, "ne représente-elle-pas pour l'étranger et le visiteur métropolitain, à la recherche tous les deux de l'exotisme, une des principales curiosités d'Alger, sinon la première."  All construction here would be supervised by a Commission du Quartier de la Casbah, bereft of Moslem Algerian involvement.

Throughout March 1934, in response to public opposition, La Dépêche algérienne ran a series of articles on the "transformation of the Marine and Old Prefecture district." Merchants were primarily concerned about three factors: the fair dispensing of indemnities; housing priorities within the new construction; and a diminished commercial base resulting from the population density reduction foreseen. They did not oppose the design or aesthetics of the Municipal project. The major objections were concerned with the cost and scale of modernization, and the demotion of the area into a mere circulation link. Instead, merchants felt it should remain a district of artisans, merchants and workers, as it had "always" been. This opposition's arguments of livelihoods undermined by the wholesale reconfiguration of the area, financial mismanagement and statism were ineffective against the "general interest" upheld by Mayor Brunel who emphasized the importance of such work in making Algiers "a city worthy of its name." It was in the "general interest" that the

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122 René Bouchet, "La transformation du quartier de la Marine et de l'Ancienne Préfecture" La Dépêche algérienne 6 Mar 1934: 6. An Association du commerçants et industriels d'Alger Nord, had been formed with a membership of 300 to protest what they thought were threats to their expropriation indemnities as a result of the Régie foncière designating the whole area "insalubrious" and to their perceived loss of clientele with the reduction of the population from 18000 to 4000. They were not in opposition to the modernization of the area otherwise; and their protest came three years after the Municipal Council's decision to redevelop the area. Other articles, based on 2 interviews with the inhabitants, one with the Mayor and another with the Régie foncière, followed. See Paul Rimbault, "Faut-il démolir le quartier de la Marine," La Dépêche algérienne 12 Mar. 1934: 2, "La Démolition du quartier de la Marine," 13 Mar. 1934: 2, 14 Mar. 1934: 4, 15 Mar. 1934: 5 and "Que coûtera aux contributables algériens la transformation du quartier de la Marine?" 22 Mar 1934: 2.
mixing of "races"--Spanish, Italian, Maltese, Arab--which was characteristic of the neighborhood--would be eradicated. In addition, the dispersal and isolation of Moslem Algerians in housing complexes bereft of souk, medersa and mosque suggests relocation was not really in the interests of preserving the cultural identities of Moslem Algerians. While the Prost & Rotival plan gave expression to a "respect for differences," it also accommodated the policy of association.123

Although association had been the cornerstone of Prost's colonial planning, a long-respected policy central to Lyautey's Moroccan endeavors and one given a wider and more universal signification in the Exposition Coloniale of 1931, it had different ramifications in Algeria. Here the "respect for differences" had been finely tuned to enhance colon advantage and to the expropriation of public funds for their benefit.124 Association had been interpreted by colons in Algeria as autonomy from the censure and censor of Republican parliaments or "pro-Moslem" arabophiles, and from inopportune taxes and interference of legal decisions in financial matters. It meant the firm control of the tools of colonization would be held by colons, largely wielded by their representatives in the Délégations financières and protected by their representatives in the Senate.125

124 By uneven development, I am referring to the dynamics of property degradation and redevelopment in the interest of higher returns and the use of such concepts as "slum," "improvement" and "justifiable profit" to legitimate it. See Rosalind Deutsche, "Uneven Development, Public Art in New York City," October (47): 3-52.
125 Basically, colons were assimilationist when they wished to win for themselves the common law of France in contradistinction to military law which had dictated policy in Algeria in the early years of colonization and in areas not settled by Europeans into the twentieth century. Association had been advocated as a means of controlling development of the colony and to block interference on the humaneness of policies toward the indigenous peoples. Two decrees, in 1898 and 1900 had granted colons budgetary autonomy via the new Délégations financières. It also disabled many of the checks and balances with which the French parliament might force compliance; Association was therefore a different policy in practice in Algeria than it was in protectorate contexts such as Morocco. See John Ruedy, Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) 86-87.
Although the Prost & Rotival plan facilitated the segregation of different social and racial groups, with its emphasis on Municipal housing it did little to re-deploy the land for large-scale capital investment. The plan angered entrepreneurs and private interests in the housing market and its inadequacies provoked some within the Amis d'Alger and the city to champion Le Corbusier's plan for Algiers and the representation which it could give to the relationship between the French and Moslem Algerian cultures and for the kind of progress which it promised. Cotereau criticized the Prost & Rotival plan for its meagre and mediocre six storey buildings and wasteful coverage of sixty-five percent of the terrain. This plan failed, in Cotereau's estimation, to envision the grandiose future of Africa:

Au lieu du puzzle invraisemblable que représente le plan actuel on voit s'établir un schéma aéré, relativement régulier, qui charme à première vue. Mais le problème se pose.... Ne faut-il pas faire le mieux possible? Ne faut-il pas envisager l'avenir grandiose d'Alger et se conformer aux possibilités de cet avenir.

As an alternative to such conventional buildings and culturally divisive planning accepted by the administration, Cotereau and others praised Le Corbusier's proposal of private enterprise, skyscrapers, highways, and large open spaces as the site of mediation between cultures. Thus public opinion was divided on the appropriate use of the Marine District. Not only was its role in the economic restructuring of the city an issue but so too was its cultural and social reconfiguration.

The Prost & Rotival team were charged with determining the broad outlines of the redevelopment of the Marine district only, the architecture being the work of several

126 Faure and Emery mention the criticism that the Prost & Rotival plan led to competition in the housing market. See Faure, letter to Le Corbusier, 13 Feb. 1934, AFLC.
different architects. François Bienvenu built many of the housing complexes for the evicted Moslem populations, in other, more distant, areas of the city. The Western highrise which formed their basic technical and economic structure, was adapted to the customs of the Moslem Algerians to be housed there. Windows were given moucharabiehs allowing views out while preventing visibility to the inside. Each apartment was provided with an interior loggia, also protected by screens. The loggia was intended to replace the conventional terrasse but preserved its historic function of sequestering women. Also retained was the traditional stove, the hearth, and hence the domestic practices and symbolic functions of these women.129 Such buildings were understood as signs of French respect for difference and understanding of Moslem culture. The apartment complexes also attempted via decorative details and reduced spatial references (loggia) to include a semblance of the societal gender relations espoused by the Islamic faith. In the complex political milieu which then existed, this harking back to the past was made emphatic by the visual juxtaposition of Bienvenu's modernized Moslem worker's housing with the reconstruction of the Maison Indigène at the Place d'Estrées. It also justified the refusal of citizenship to the Moslems due to the property, inheritance and other laws which, in the eyes of the French government, disadvantaged women and failed to make the distinction between State and religious law.

It is apparent in the initial discussion of these early plans by Prost & Rotival and in the press coverage given to the Marine District that the issues which affected public opinion most were those of economic development and appropriate cultural definition. It is also clear that this public opinion was divided and different priorities existed, among residents of the Marine District and the members of the Délégations financières for example or between the Paris planner of Moroccan fame and the architect and planning elite formed around the Amis d'Alger.

Debates

Architecture and urbanism had become highly politicized issues and economically influential in the inter-war years. One could say that they always had been. In the mid-nineteenth-century military engineers, in the interest of hygiene and security, had cut broad boulevards through the old Turkish city and the Casbah, laying out plazas to the measure of military battalions while bourgeois civilians inhabited orientalized villas. In the period from 1900 to 1920 Governor General Jonnart had adopted the arabaisance style as a sign of French cultural "sensitivity." The 1920s saw importance given to a modernized infrastructure—the port, transport systems, and institutions such as hospitals and school—while the establishment of an office of Habitations à Loyer Moyenne (HLM) made housing a public issue. In 1925 preliminary discussion of a celebration to mark the centenary emphasized the use of funds for durable construction which would enhance the economic development of the colony. In addition, these Grand Travaux were understood as a means to social stabilization via the employment opportunities which they offered and, no doubt, via the institutions which they endowed with significant form. The resultant modern buildings stood in contrast to the artisanal work encouraged from the Moslem populations and their traditionally dressed participation in the centenary celebration pageantry; buildings, craft and costumed bodies functioned as markers of time past and distant while concrete and glass marked progress and the future.

There were various interest groups for architecture and urbanism in the early 1930s: those who had invested in tourism and the exotic image of Algiers; those speculating on the

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131 Béguin, Arabisances 20.
133 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 135-136.
economic exploitation of the hinterland via a modernized infrastructure; those wishing to visibly declare their cultural connection with France; others wishing to exalt their regional, Algerian difference; administrators sensitive to the racial and religious tensions within the city and politicians blind to them. Architecture and urbanism were seen as important venues for representatives of all levels of government in Algeria as Governors General, mayors and municipal councilors found it useful to attend exhibitions, the openings of housing complexes and public buildings.

The architectural community was divided on questions of architecture and urbanism. The Amis d'Alger had been formed as a secession from the dominant architectural culture of the late 1920s. A movement for a regional school of architecture had been formed which would in turn be superseded by a less regional and more inclusive "Mediterranean" movement in the mid-1930s. There was also present within the discussion and exhibitions of architecture and urbanism in Algiers a wider architectural community, one which was also divided with respect to the issues of colonial urbanism. The SFU based its assessment of architecture and urbanism in the colonies on a sense of political mission and sociological notions taken from Durkheim and Tarde.134 The CIAM based its approach to modern architecture and the city on principles of technique and scientific method applied to the defining and solving of urban problems. The SFU was concerned with the control of populations and their behavior and the management of a community composed of different cultural and ethnic groups. The CIAM was more interested in rationalized and economized spatial use; social relations and hierarchies would result from this.135

Architecture and urban planning in Algiers were intimately related to these events. The demand for housing which had reached crisis proportions by 1927 and which was aggravated by the influx of Moslem Algerians dispossessed of their lands elsewhere raised the question of access to publicly funded accommodation and the role that housing was to play in the civilizing process. The overcrowding of the Casbah which absorbed eighty-eight percent of Moslem arrivals also focused attention on not only the housing needs of this new and largely rural Moslem population but also on the future of the Casbah itself.\footnote{Kaddache, La Vie Politique 127. Its campaign against the new arrivals was launched in the daily press, for example in 1931 L’Echo d’Alger reported, “The city is literally invaded by Moslems of the interior, the streets are encumbered with beggars and abandoned children.” (translation by author)}

As a consequence of these housing demands funds originally intended for \textit{Grands Travaux} were channeled into housing, both HBM and HLM, and borrowing for other \textit{Grands Travaux} was projected.\footnote{Kaddache, La Vie Politique 137. The City of Algiers projected borrowing 50 million francs to accomplish the projected \textit{Grand Travaux}, especially the scheme for the Marine District. In addition, such work and the Centenary projects associated with the overall plans for reorganizing the city required large capital accumulation and access, to this end banks, societies, financial institutions were established in the mid 1920s. These were largely open only to Europeans and thus contributed to the greater economic disparity between Moslem and European and heightened the tension over issues of equal opportunity for both races within the city. They also more deeply entrenched European institutions and structures in Algeria; access to housing, urban planning and other activities greatly affecting every day life for Moslems was therefore determined by structures beyond their direct control or participation. The only voice which Moslem Algerians had was as Municipal Councilor, a position carefully supervised by the City and Administration. Key Moslem councilors, Chikken, Bentami, Ben Larbey, Hadjemmar, Cayron tended to be moderate in their demands through the late 1920s and early 1930s; they did not pose the national question. See Kaddache, “La vie politique indigène, la periode des notables”, in \textit{La Vie Politique} 143-155.} It could be argued that for the French the Casbah had never been understood as merely a housing precinct for Moslem Algerians. It was also a tourist pleasure, a colonial marker of the contained "Other." This is clearly articulated and entrenched in the municipal council’s legislation concerning the Casbah’s special status in 1935:

\texttt{Le programme des servitudes du 13 juin 1931 a donc été complété par un arrêté qui crée une ‘zone E dite quartier de la Casbah d’Alger’... Ce règlement spécial a pour but, ‘de conserver à ce quartier son caractère et son esthétique en imposant aux habitants l’obligation de ne restaurer leurs maisons ou de n’en édifier de nouvelles que dans les conditions qui}
From the beginning of the French occupation of Algiers, architectural debate in the city had been structured by ideological interpretations given to architectural and urban projects. Both architecture and urban planning, or *aménagement*, functioned as forms of mediation between European and Moslem cultures, and they altered with the concerns of the colonial administration and those of the colonial elite. Architecture and planning continued to be conceived in this way in the early 1930s, as witnessed in the Congrès Internationale des Urbanistes Coloniaux held in 1931. However, by 1930, the *arabisance* of the Jonnart style could no longer manage the relation between the two cultures as effortlessly as it had and its continuation as a style was found as problematic as the policy of "cultural protector" was found to be by legislators such as Viollette or journalists in Moslem newspapers such as *La Voix du Peuple*. Moreover, the Jonnart style of architecture and urbanism was increasingly considered formally restrictive, socially unworkable, and politically questionable. In addition, it was deemed to be in violation of the first principles of modern architecture: it disregarded structure as a determinant of spatial volume, form and program. The colonial administration began to abandon the use of *arabisance*, its images and

138 Lespès and Messerchmitt, "La Ville" 184.
139 Jean-François Guilhaume in *Les mythes fondateurs de l'Algérie* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1992) understands colonial ideology and its mediating mechanisms to have been structured on an opposition of Christian to Moslem, Western to Eastern, technological to archaic, and the need on the part of the colonialists to be validated by the Metropole. Hence, colonial ideology was activated by the latter, and the need to justify and preserve the presence and unequal distribution of wealth and the disparity between those benefiting from France's benevolence (Europeans) and those who were not (Moslems). Important to this was the role of technology and notions of progress. The contradiction of colonial ideology was the justification of European presence by their technological and productive superiority and hence source of liberty and improved living standards, this was only ideologically or mythically verifiable. One the ideological crises therefore at the time of Le Corbusier's involvement in Algiers was the increasingly perceivable hollowness of the myth of civilizing benevolence, peace and prosperity brought to the Moslems.
141 See, for example, the articles by Ali Ben Ahmed in *La Voix du Peuple* 20 Oct. 1933 and 17 Jan. 1935.
symbols, in addressing the ideological fields of Algeria and the Metropole and had begun to look for other modes of intervention. *Arabisance* had been within colonial ideology the style of the protective state and association or, in Algeria, a very gradual assimilation, paradoxically, its progressive abandonment and discrediting coincided with the clearest envisioning of that eventuality, in the assimilation promised by the Viollette plan for incremental Moslem enfranchisement formulated between 1925 and 1936 and its ultimate defeat in 1937. Thus, the established practices of architecture and urbanism in Algiers were questioned by many factions of the Algiers public sphere. Seeking options for urban form were those from the Metropole who advocated association over assimilation; an entrepreneurial and private sector which found threatening any State intervention in its affairs; an architectural community who wished to be associated with Modernism independent from any established colonial practices that had been disguised as progress; and a Moslem Algerian community who desired a modern representation of their cultural identity.

The search for alternative representational models was also articulated in political circles.\textsuperscript{142} Basic social assistance institutions such as clinics, schools and subsidized housing now worked to diffuse the image of a benevolent France through the services each provided while also serving the more recent developments of the colonial economy. The 1930s has been identified as a decisive turning point in Algiers, a period when the ideological operation of symbolic and decorative detail and neo-Moorish architecture gave way to normative forms and institutional programs.\textsuperscript{143} These normed forms of bureaucratic administration sought to assimilate Moslem Algerians into the economic machinery of the Metropole. This coincided with a growing Algerian and then Mediterranean perspective

\textsuperscript{142}Béguin, *Arabisances* 86-90.  
\textsuperscript{143}Béguin, *Arabisances* 87,90.
which evoked a collective consciousness among Europeans by which the Metropole and its proposal for assimilated Moslem Algerians might be countered.\textsuperscript{144}

However, while those in Algiers may have been questioning the appropriateness of arabisance, a style that had been handed down from a metropolitan official, and while Lyautey may have been tentatively groping toward a new style of association, the Congrès Internationale d'Urbanisme Coloniale of 1931 still maintained the effectiveness of arabisance design. Prost continued to advocate the use of Moslem artisans for the decoration of public buildings and those intended for Moslem users. A clear distinction between European and Moslem typologies was to be maintained in the interests of cultural association.\textsuperscript{145} Le Corbusier also proposed segregation and differentiation in the city. In his initial lectures describing modern technology and the "Ville Radieuse," he naturalized class hierarchies and land use patterns by reference to inequalities in capabilities and merit, while he placed Algiers within an economic region that was tied to European consumer interests and productive capacities. In his "Louanges à Alger," published in \textit{Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments} in June of 1931, Le Corbusier spoke of the objective of the site, the meeting of Arab and Western nations, and then contrasted the audaciously modern Office of the Gouvernement Général with the historically important buildings of the Casbah, refering to Moslem culture as one "accepting of destiny."\textsuperscript{146} In portraying the Western building and the institution it housed as audacious and modern, he called up colonialist discourse which described the West as innovative and progressive while his "accepting Arabs" are the inert and inactive culture of the same discourse. Le Corbusier not only recognized and condoned the colonial situation in identifying Algiers as "the Head of

\textsuperscript{144}Guilhaume, \textit{Les mythes fondateurs} 223-235.

\textsuperscript{145}The use of Moslem Algerian artisans was intended to maintain their traditions and provide a controlled employment; the addition of Islamic details to buildings would not be seen as competition within the construction industry and it would maintain Moslem craftsmen in a subservient role as decorators not constructors of buildings.

\textsuperscript{146}Le Corbusier, \textit{Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments} (6 June 1931), cited in Giordani, "les Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 95.
the colonies of Africa," but he also positioned the city in the privileged position which colonists sought; in praising the dynamic and pioneering spirit of the colonists, he chose to overlook their rapacious exploitation of the Moslem population.\footnote{Le Corbusier, "Louanges à Algerie," Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments (25-27 June 1931): 1.} Le Corbusier would draw upon the work of the Algerianist Lucienne Favre to illustrate his views on the Casbah and it would be suggested later that Le Corbusier and Camus collaborate for an article for the Mediterranean review \textit{Rivages}.\footnote{On Lucienne Favre and the Algerian literature movement and its replacement by a Mediterranean outlook see Pierre Mannoui, \textit{Les Français d'Algérie: vie, moeurs, mentalités} (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993) 193-195. On Le Corbusier's relationship to Rivages and Camus, see Mary McLeod," Le Corbusier and Algiers," \textit{Oppositions}, 19/20 (Summer 1980): 83.} In this way, Le Corbusier's work in Algiers does respond to the general colonial debates then in progress in the city of Algiers, while it also (as is clearly shown in his participation in the debates carried out in the architectural press in Algiers) responded to specifically architectural discussions.

**Architectural Journals and the Debates on urban planning**

Le Corbusier sought advocates from among the readers of \textit{Chantiers nord-africains} and \textit{Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments}. On the pages of such Algerian journals the "detrriorialized," or "universal," aspirations of avant-garde Modernism were juxtaposed with those specific to colonial practice. Colonial discourse thoroughly permeated this architectural press throughout the 1930s.\footnote{Jean Cotereau comments on the eclectic editorial policy of \textit{Chantiers nord-africains}, intended for professionals and an interested, European, elite. A criticism of the inclusion of romantically inspired designs of indigenous housing which was in opposition to Cotereau's support for more logical, culturally appropriate 'Mediterranean' forms is implied in "la Maison Mauresque" 533-602.} Within these journals both architects and critics acknowledged the colonial situation in which they worked and wrote, be it housing and port design or restoration and expositions where colonial ideology was brought to bear. Such discussions were often couched in terms drawn from contemporary polemics about the colony and reveal the tensions within both colonial discourse and architectural practice. For example, discussions on housing were often framed by assumptions and...
attitudes toward cultural difference. The Modernist Bienvenu, writing on indigenous housing for Chantiers nord-africains, noted the "rudimentary" stage of civilization at which Moslems had become "stuck" (this attributed to Islam) arguing that they could now develop beyond due to the beneficial contact with French civilization. The architect was knowledgeable of certain problems in colonialism and how they might be managed by architecture. He was well aware of the fact that housing had to balance the increased rents resulting from the provision of amenities—that would attract the laboring indigenous populations to stay in Algiers—with the maintenance of cheap rents, so as not to inflate wage demands. He also understood that the degree to which an architect built for such a rudimentary existence or for the future and inevitable adaptation of all Moslems to a European way of life, was determined by the requirements of maintaining power within the colonial structure. Bienvenu responded to these colonial and representational practices with large housing complexes of irregular massing, simplified volumes, vestiges of arabisance and rudimentary conveniences (Figure 38). As a member of Amis d'Alger and considered an ally in the Modernist cause, Bienvenu's ideas were not considered exceptional, by either local or Metropolitan architects and urbanists.

Likewise, the many articles written by Jean Cotereau for Chantiers nord-africains during the early 1930s, whether about indigenous architecture, urbanism, or the work of Le Corbusier, were saturated with colonialist ideology. In praising the Maison du Peuple, built in Algiers in 1930, Cotereau fastidiously noted its descent from the Hôtel de Ville, agora, Forum, Church and château while also drawing attention to its inspiration from modernity and the Mediterranean. Comparable Islamic institutions are not mentioned; they do not figure in this "mold for a homogenous and harmonious society." In 1931, Cotereau's description of the indigenous house built for the Centenary served to contrast what was in

151 No one commented on Bienvenu's statements as exceptional.
his view a "romantic, decadent architecture of a Barbarous era" with a "fully vigorous"
French architecture. Arab architecture was depicted as borrowed and degraded, built for
entrepreneurs by slaves, and consequently totally lacking in beauty. Clearly calling upon
the myth of "brutish Turks" and "enslaved Christian labor," morality was confounded with
aesthetics. Deemed the product of an "inactive race" and presumed to exhibit no
constructive sense and no evolution in planning, Arab architecture was judged inadequate
to the aspirations of an "active Latin" race.\(^{152}\) In subsequent articles, Cotereau continued to
reinforce his architectural and urban judgments with "truths" extracted from colonialist
discourse. The twelve part series on Mediterranean architecture published between
December 1929 and 1931 and his 1934 discussion of Le Corbusier's "Bombardment of
Algiers" through several issues of *Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments* attest
to the slippage of colonial ideology into both general architectural criticism and more
specifically into assessments of Le Corbusier's urban and architectural plans for the city. It
was an appraisal which Le Corbusier found apt. Very appreciative of Cotereau's talent as a
critic, he kept copies of his articles and for some time hoped to make him a spokesperson
for Modern architecture.\(^{153}\) Revealingly, Cotereau remarked on an oversight in Le
Corbusier's proposal of a Paris, Barcelona, Algiers, Rome axis. The architect had
neglected the presence, and problem, of the indigenous in Algiers; he had assumed them to
be assimilated. Cotereau knew the situation to be more complex.\(^{154}\)

Discussions about appropriate style were also about the correct representation to be given to
European and Moslem cultures; this discussion was structured on the opposition of
European technical advancement and Moslem traditional, and "arrested," life-styles. The

\(^{152}\) Cotereau, "La Maison Mauresque" 533-602, esp. 541.
\(^{153}\) Le Corbusier's appreciation of Cotereau is expressed in his letters to the critic, 14 Mar. 1934, 28 May
1934, 29 June 1934. He also mentions enlisting Cotereau for his campaign in Algiers in his letters to
Brua, 1 May 1935 and 23 May 1935, AFLC
\(^{154}\) Jean Cotereau, "Un nouveau bombardement d'Alger: Destin d'Alger, l'heure d'urbanism," *Le Journal
debate is evident in articles published in *Chantiers nord-africains* during the period, for example where one anonymous author noted that:

(s)ans vouloir arrêter le mouvement civilisateur, qu'apporte le confort et modifie heureusement les conditions de la vie, les Pouvoirs publics ont pensé avec juste raison, qu'il était possible, en certains endroits particulièrement séduisants, de conserver l'aspect extérieur des lieux en obligeant les propriétaires, autorisés à construire, à rester en harmonie avec la note générale des environs de leur immeuble....L'architect, Valensi, a su concilier les exigences de la vie occidentale à la grâce de l'art orientale.155

Alternatively Jean Cotereau, also writing in 1930, expressed the view that:

Mais du seul fait que cet accord existe, du seul fait que la maison mauresque convient à l'existence orientale, il résulte a priori que, dans son intégralité, elle ne peut pas convenir à l'existence occidentale, a une existence ouverte, tournée vers l'extérieur, vers la vie sociale, vers la réalisation économique. Alors qu'elle est fermée, tournée vers l'intérieur, individualiste, construite pour la rêverie et l'inaction... Une race active n'a pas de temps à perdre.156

Architects and critics of this period either implicitly or explicitly referred repeatedly to the connection between architecture and its colonial context. While Ponsich wrote of the city as a human artifact constructed for the benefit of the human organism, rather than for the benefit of cultural expression, implying apolitical solutions to urban problems were possible, he was also avoiding the political demands made by the Moslem Algerians.157 Others such as Bienvenu were more explicit about the city as a political and cultural

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156 Cotereau, "la Maison mauresque" 601. As will be explored later in chapter four, a more nuanced notion of a regionalist response to climate and available technology were advocated by Tony Socard, a future member of the Committee of the Regional plan for Algiers. Tony Socard, "le climat algérois et son influence en urbanisme, "Chantiers nord-africains (Sep. 1933): 916-926.
157 Ponsich, "Urbanisme" 499.
creation. He recognized the relationship of indigenous housing to colonial policy where architecture was the:

affirmation de la nécessité toujours plus grande de loger les populations musulmanes. Nécessité non seulement politique, mais sociale, d'un intérêt humain général, ... [exemplifying] les heureux efforts de conciliation entre deux civilisations séculairement différentes, conseillé dans d'autres domaines, réalisé par un architecte dans le domaine architectural.\(^{158}\)

Le Corbusier entered into this debate through his association with both the architectural and general press, articles by and about him appearing in Chantiers nord-africains, Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiment and la Dépêche algérienne. The annotations in his travel notebooks for 1931 indicate as well that he was cognizant of the relationship between architecture and colonial policy. He corresponded with Cotereau and others writing for these journals, while architects such as Ponsich were considered colleagues. By this date, the architectural audience of Algiers was clearly sensitive to issues of urban form in relation to their specific cultural and geopolitical situation. So too was Le Corbusier.

Colonial discourse unmistakably infiltrated Le Corbusier's earliest conception of the city, its program, components and their deployment. It is the context of the French enterprise in North Africa that provided Le Corbusier with the material for his poem Louanges à Alger, where he praised the work of colonists as pioneers and civilizers. Algiers was clearly envisioned as a colonial city, and he understood his work to exist within the traditions of colonial city building. For Le Corbusier Moslem culture was called up by the Casbah, the sea and gardens, the natural, the primitive, the pre-industrial, the resigned. he remarked:

"On est saisi par le Musulman. Je m'attendris quand je touche au musulman car ce calme

devant le destin est un exemple..." Arab housing was described in similarly "naturalistic" terms, attributed with the most simple of measuring devices: man, foot, leg, shoulder, although proportional systems and more sophisticated notational systems were known to have been used in Moslem architecture. As to the Casbah, he repeatedly called for its preservation, and "purification." France the protector, so audible during the centenary celebration, is echoed by Le Corbusier. The moral influence of French presence in Algiers is reinforced by his description of Algiers in 1831 as a refuge for pirates which had become by 1931, due to French occupation, the capital city of a peaceful and gallicized land. His observations that the dignity of the Moslem Algerian could be protected while colonization continued repeated the often cited myth of the French administration. The fact was that Moslem populations had been, and were still, forced off their land, expropriated in the interests of European notions of efficient land use and prosperity, their reality that of an overcrowded Casbah and the bidonvilles then alarming city officials by their numbers and size. In addition, Le Corbusier was attracted to the colonial pattern of the city which he defined as the beauty of the site and what he mistakenly saw as the presence of two cultures existing on friendly terms. Part of the beauty of that site for Le Corbusier was a product of its historical accoutrements including Moslem Algerians. It was not a modern Moslem population with aspirations to employment with equitable salaries, education and access to travel, administrative posts and the benefits of modern society which Le Corbusier found alluring but an anachronistic Moslem population of vernacular buildings, folklorist

159 Le Corbusier, "Louanges à Alger.
161 Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 229.
162 Giordani, "les Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 98.
productions, and village life. Clearly, Le Corbusier sought his audience among those who subscribed to and won over by such representations.

As part of the publicity for his alterations to Algiers, Le Corbusier republished in the December 1931 issue of Chantiers nord-africains his views on the "death of the street." Originally written for the Salon de l'Auto of 1930, this patriotic eulogy for the "glory of French industries," had other connotations once transported to the colony. The automobile had become one of the major technologies of colonization as it facilitated European movement into the Sahara, either physically in Cross-Sahara rallies or imaginatively in advertisements for them widely distributed in the Metropole. The street, the demise of which Le Corbusier had pronounced, was the corridor street, especially the narrow, winding and dark streets fronting traditional housing types. In Algiers such supposedly anachronistic streets existed in the old Turkish city and the Casbah which Le Corbusier proposed to aerate with wide streets and park-like settings for the forty percent of the building stock deemed worthy of preservation for reasons of history, Western taxonomy and study, or notions of aesthetics. However, it was these streets which in Islamic culture constituted the domain of the Arab male, in contradistinction to the terrace and patio allocated to women. Such streets created defensible neighborhoods and ensured domestic visual and physical privacy. The street's demise could therefore mean the extinction of one space of Moslem social reproduction. Le Corbusier's importation of "la ville radieuse"

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163 These were the demands made by the Jeunes Algériens, Kahlid, and the Oulemas up to 1931. By this time as well Messali Hadj had made demands for complete independence of Algeria, and the Oulemas became increasingly political. See Guilhaume, Les mythes fondateurs de l'Algérie, 130-157.
165 That Le Corbusier was aware of the colonizing aspect of the highway, at least generally, is evident in his remarks made while traveling through Spain, Morocco and Algeria in August of 1931. See, Le Corbusier Sketchbooks, preface by André Wogenscky; intro. by Maurice Besset; notes by Françoise de Francieu, vol. 1, 1914-1948 (New York: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982) 20 (entry 426).
166 Abu-Lughod, The Islamic City, 170, 160.
and "vers une architecture" into Algiers therefore did have important consequences for the representation and actualization of power in the colony.

Just as interpretations of arabisation were varied, so too were those of Modernism. Modernism was represented in the pages of Chantiers nord-africains and the Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments, by the work of August Perret, Franz Jourdain, Alfred-Donat Agache and Le Corbusier. In 1930 there does not appear to have been much discrimination between these figures. Henri Ponsich, who in 1929 wrote perhaps one of the first articles on Le Corbusier to appear in Algiers, saw no inconsistency in finding the solutions to the problems of urbanism posed by Le Corbusier in the work of Agache.167 Likewise the Amis d'Alger brought both Agache and Le Corbusier to the same series of lectures on urbanism in 1931.

Ponsich identified both planners with the sentiment expressed in Le Corbusier’s universal statement for the Salon d’Automne exhibition of 1922: "La ville, c'est la main-mise de l'homme sur la nature, un organisme humain de protection et de travail. C'est un création."168 Ponsich then transposed this sentiment onto the colonial scene where housing was identified as a means to social equilibrium and security.

**Plan Obus "B"**

A revamped version of Obus "A," altered compositionally, temporally and spatially, was prepared for the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture which opened in Algiers in February 1933. The result, Obus "B," was a reduced vision, at once a compliant response to the Municipal Council which had found Obus "A" to be too futuristic and financially unrealistic, and a defiant retort to the Prost & Rotival Plan.169 The skyscraper was now

168Ponsich, "Urbanisme" 449.
169Brunel, letter to Le Corbusier, 27 Dec. 1932, AFLC.
smaller and less costly, more flexible in terms of spatial division, more economical in material and spectacularly innovative as a result of its cantilevered tensistructure.\textsuperscript{170} Obus "B" was also a preliminary gesture, its appendages postponed for some future date. Only a trace of the earlier \textit{viaduct} remained in the skyscraper's empty "Window on the Sea," with its view toward the Metropole, awaiting the \textit{viaduct}'s inclusion. Spatial relationships were also changed. The skyscraper was more fully integrated into the existing street system and thus into colonial patterns of spatial use. This in turn necessitated a realignment of the future \textit{passerelle} with the \textit{redents} on the Fort de l'Empereur. As a result the substructure for the \textit{passerelle} became much more substantial, making an impermeable presence in the old Turkish city; it had become enlarged, massive, physically and psychologically more intrusive on the Casbah and its inhabitants. Its prominent cast shadows are clearly etched over the diminutive urban fabric of the Arab quarters in the architect's montages of the future Algiers.\textsuperscript{171} Le Corbusier now advocated the incremental realization of his project: first the skyscraper Business Center in the Marine District, the \textit{passerelle} and the substructure of the \textit{redents}; then the \textit{viaduct} road and housing; finally, the continual addition of housing.

There is a certain paradox evident in the maneuvers made by Le Corbusier as he moved from Obus "A" to Obus "B." In sacrificing the \textit{viaduct} (and then the \textit{passerelle}) he would give up strategies by which the spatial and temporal separation of Moslem and European spheres, of their separate histories, could be maintained. As the plan became more "realistic" it also became less able to retain a respectful co-habitation of indigenous culture.

\textsuperscript{170}The tensistructure was taken from Fiorini whose technical marvel was published in the Algiers' papers and which Le Corbusier praised and borrowed from.
\textsuperscript{171}See Project Obus "B," 1933 as illustrated in \textit{The Radiant City} 250. In Obus "A" the supports are slightly less ominous, see Project "A," 1931-1932 as illustrated in \textit{The Radiant City} 236. Other more schematic sketches completely eliminated the Arab city so as to highlight the purity of his ideas. For example see the sketches in \textit{The Radiant City} 240 where Le Corbusier discusses the "Valorization of the Ground." It should also be noted that Le Corbusier included within his "manifesto project" a sports and beach resort at Hussein Dey at the conclusion of his southward extending Coastal highway; also in conformance with his \textit{Radiant City} principles, the city was planned so that each zone could be orderly expand as needed.
and European modernization; as the plan's completion was pushed into the future the relationship of the two cultures became more difficult to represent, and to realize perhaps. In Obus "A" the viaduct and passerelle, in stepping over and bypassing the Arab city, seemingly avoided a confrontation between cultures or with cultural policies and practices. The passerelle and viaduct had accommodated the European vision of an "Other" that was artisanal, village-based, medieval-like, primitive, and somehow untouched by the European presence, with assimilation neither denied nor enforced. These elevated apparatuses also permitted the kind of comparison of cultures, one "backward" and another "progressive," through which colonialism was sustained. However, the Municipal Council and other members of the Algiers public did not seem to comprehend or to find appropriate Le Corbusier's solution of avoidance. The passerelle and viaduct had been the means by which Le Corbusier could maintain his avant-garde and apolitical stance. At the same time, their postponement was also a displacement to the distant future of the non-confrontation which they embodied. Instead, in contextualizing his scheme with the existing urban fabric a more foreboding darkness enveloped the Casbah, and the old Turkish city was more firmly divided by the greatly enlarged passerelle. The extraordinary technology of the tensistructure, and the future, would therefore become the venues through which Le Corbusier could embody his ideas of the cathartic, "radiant city."

With Obus "B" Le Corbusier sought to annex the reality of the city more fully to the profit of his plans and theoretical preoccupations: skyscraper technology and topographical metaphors; a spiritualized primitivism and the second machine age; Orientalist perspectives and symbols of Empire. However, the emendations to the plans were implicit responses to the colonial basis of the city. Even as Le Corbusier's conception of urbanism and architecture sought to privilege the technicity and aesthetics of plan over political process it was forced to accommodate past political decisions which had been inscribed in built form, the boulevards and military installations for example. In so doing he continued the tradition
of these earlier decisions that had left the disenfranchised unconsidered and misrepresented. The alterations to the plans were seemingly prompted by the attempt to fit the utopian notion of the "radiant city" into the reality of Algiers. However, such alterations to the plan might also prompt a more precise determination of the extent to which colonialism was the necessary impetus to its reworking.

Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture, 1933

Obus "B" was a much publicized exhibit of the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture, a nine day extravaganza in Algiers. The Exposition was hailed as the first such display in Algeria and unprecedented in France. Perhaps what gave the appearance of novelty to this specialized exhibition was the absence of military parades, costumed natives and historical reenactments, the familiar rituals and rhetoric of imperial cultural diplomacy. There was little explicit reference to the harmony between cultures that had formed such a significant feature of the centenary celebration three years earlier. No dervishes or caïds, in fact no Moslem Algerians are identifiable in the photographic documentation of the Exhibition at all. Instead there were discrete offerings of neo-Moorish housing, a plan for a Moslem cemetery, while the press coverage tended to emphasize cultural differences.

Also novel perhaps was the heterogeneous array of schemes: the stripped-down modernism of Guiauchain's public buildings, the CIAM-complying houses by Breuillot and Emery, the neo-Moorish cités indigènes of Bienvenu, Agache's SFU-inspired plan for Rio and Le Corbusier's avant-garde plans for Oued Ouchai and Algiers, all housed within the new Palais d'Agriculture, by Guiauchain. The organizers were private not public institutions: the Amis d'Alger, the Société des Architectes modernes de Paris, Le Groupe Algérien and the Chambre Syndicale d'Algérie des Architectes Diplômé par le gouvernement et architectes admis.

The ostensible purpose of the exhibition was to foster an acceptance of modernization. The question of what forms might best facilitate or ameliorate the required alterations to the colonial infrastructure would be tested against public response to the models presented. This was clearly the intent of the organizers who declared in their opening remarks that the shaping of public opinion was "a necessary condition for the accomplishment of the transformation of Algiers." The Amis d'Algers was resolved to teach what they called the "crowd" about the problems of urbanism: an enlarged scale of operations, the movement of goods and people. More importantly perhaps, the organization wished to convince the Algiers public that the accomplished and envisioned modernization--new government buildings, transportation systems and port--merited the expenditure. The message of modernization with its intention of bringing to public attention the progress and potential of the city within the Empire was well posed from the Modernist agriculture building in which the Exposition was installed. Those in Algiers sought economic development, and the security accruing from it, as well as the style most capable of negotiating that prosperity in the ideological field of colonial discourse. Those in the Metropole looked to see reflected its civilizing correctness and humanist stance. The aim of Ponsich, Emery and Le Corbusier however was clearly to make the exhibition the rallying point for a conception of architecture which they felt was both opposed to that which existed in Algiers and to that offered by the Société des architectes modernes. They would propose a new conception of Algiers.

The Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture was clearly seen as an important venue for the critique of existing paradigms of the city, as well as winning public opinion for new

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174 Ponsich, letter to Le Corbusier, 8 Nov. 1932 and 26 Nov. 1932, AFLC.
models. Referring to the exhibition, Ponsich wrote to Le Corbusier, "Ce sera une bombe merveilleuse dans le miasme algéroise," and "une manifestation d'une amplitude extraordinaire." Ponsich associated the exhibition with CIRPAC (The International Committee for the Recognition of Contemporary Problems of Architecture, a group within CIAM), emphasizing their shared aim to promote the "New Architecture" and the realization of Le Corbusier's Algiers Plan. Through Le Corbusier certain members of the Amis d'Alger wished to ally their notions of the city with general, international, disinterested principles of modern urbanism and to that end their ideas were also circulated in Metropolitan architectural journals, Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, L'Art Vivant and CIAM literature. Prost and Rotival figured less frequently in these publications, although they were not entirely unrepresented. Prost was more prominent and circulated his ideas more freely within institutional frameworks, for example the Congrès Internationale des Urbanistes Coloniaux, of which he was President in 1932, and Paris Planning offices.

Although seemingly an objective presentation of technical and aesthetic issues, the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture possessed similarities with the Imperialist Célébration centenaire which it purported to counter and the Exposition Coloniale of 1931 which it sought to amend. In its intentions, audience structure, rhetoric and patronage the 1933 exposition had certain affinities with the earlier colonial practices of representation. As was the case in the Célébration Centinaire and the Exposition Coloniale, government authorities and industrial interests were actively involved as patrons of architecture and urbanism. The 1933 exhibition was first approved and generously subsidized by the Municipal Government, with Mayor Brunel and adjunct mayor Pasquier-Bronde being

175 It is suggested in a letter from Breuillot to Le Corbusier that Ponsich first proposed an Architecture and Urbanism Exhibition to the Amis d'Alger, of which he was a member, in early February, late January 1932. A film, by Pierre Chenel, was suggested at the same time although doubt is expressed that Rey would agree. Breuillot, letter to Le Corbusier, 27 May 1931, AFLC.
176 Ponsich, letter to Le Corbusier, 8 Nov. 1932, AFLC.
177 Ponsich, letter to Le Corbusier, 4 Nov. 1932, AFLC.
178 Ponsich, letter to Le Corbusier, 28 Nov. 1932, AFLC.
especially supportive. Financially assisted by the Chamber of Commerce and endorsed by the Algerian Office (l'O.F.A.L.A.C), the exhibition was opened by Governor General Carde of Algeria, with several dignitaries of Algiers in attendance: the Director of the Interior, the President of the High Commission of Railways, the Director of the PTT, the President of the Syndicale commerciale, Municipal councilors, and Presidents of cultural associations, such as Doulce France. The Palais d'Agriculture was also less neutral than its name might first appear, it was popularly known as the "Maison des colons," indicating the intended beneficiaries of the services provided within and perhaps the projects enframed by it in February 1933. As with the prior Célébration Centenaire the exhibition aimed at consensus around notions of progress, prosperity and a filial relationship with France. In his speech marking the inauguration of the exhibition, Le Bâtonnier Rey declared Algiers to be an integral part of France because both had once been linked by a continuous plain, a notion derived from a geography which was a well-used support for French claims and colonial occupation. And as had been the case of the Exposition Coloniale of 1931, the newly fashioned modernist buildings which were civilized in proportion and evocative of classical Western traditions, such as the Palais d'Agriculture, formed institutional nuclei around which the marginalized, the neo-Moorish cités indigènes and preserved mosques, were positioned. Although the panoply of buildings proposed for Algiers lacked the narrative unity and focus of the centenary celebration and the clear hierarchy and program of the 1931 Exposition Coloniale, the array of buildings did utilize many of the assumptions on which the earlier ventures had displayed the relationship between the two cultures: a civilizing mission, progress, centers and peripheries. The main difference was perhaps that Algiers wished its representation to be not that of a colony but of a Metropole, not the Orientalized pavilion as tourist and imperial marker but the modern and abstractly Western city.

180 L.T., "L'Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture" 5.
The display of institutional buildings, schools and housing for both Moslem Algerians and Europeans, within the context of technical and propagandizing commentary served to distance the work shown from the colonizing practices of military might and repressive legislation. It focused attention on the seemingly more benign aspect of colonization and advertised the success of *la mission civilatrice*. One reason compelling such attention was the pressure felt in the Metropole by international criticism and in Algiers by the reputation which it suffered as a regime of exploitative *colons* and rapacious speculators. Although the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture claimed independence from recognizable colonizing practices, the work displayed was intended to fulfill the exigencies raised by those practices.181

The *colon* organizers themselves realized their dependency on the colonial system and the deference to the Metropole that it required. The Metropole was a key consideration in the consensus-making project for all concerned and numerous dignitaries from the Metropole were invited to the exhibition.182 Ponsich suggested that Le Corbusier advertise his plans and the exhibition in *Plans, l'Art Vivant* and other Paris journals as he and Emery believed that it was in Paris that the result would be determined.183 While Le Bâtonnier Rey maintained that the interest taken by French architects was a sign of the importance of Algiers to the Metropole.184 It was to Paris that The Groupe Algérien de la Société des Architectes Modernes took their own exhibition later in 1933.185 Once there the Groupe

181 The Agricultural building in which the Exhibition was held had been paid for by the Caisse Centenaire.
183 Ponsich, letter to Le Corbusier, 8 Nov. 1932, and Emery, letter to Le Corbusier, 13 May 1932, AFLC.
184 L.T. quoting Le Bâtonnier Rey, "Banquet" 4.
185 A.S., "Exposition du 'Groupe Algérien de la Société des Architectes Modernes,'" *Chantiers nord-africains* (Sep. 1933): 912-914. The Exhibition at the Galerie d'Architecture de l'Odéon was inaugurated in July by Frantz Jourdain and was supported by *La Construction Moderne* which introduced it as a continuation of the Exposition d'urbanisme et d'architecture moderne d'Alger. The Expo was intended for the instruction of those in Paris, a display of the manner in which modern genius was taking shape in Africa, how much its inspirations were original and how they remained similar to those of Paris. A more precise
Algérien argued that such an intimate union of architecture and urbanism as they represented was suitable to "the assistance of progress, on African land, of our civilization." Support of this Group was considered a contribution to the development of modern genius. Prominently displayed with the architectural projects, and repeatedly referred to in its discussion, was a photo of the Monument of Boufarik, itself a commemoration of French colonizing prowess. These various references suggest the ever-present interlocutor, the Metropole, for whose benefit the references to an accommodated Moslem culture were made. Governor General Carde considered that the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture was a timely manifestation, "at this moment when Algiers, this older sister, is submitted to certain critiques to show that it continues to develop and to follow the path of progress." What Carde meant by "certain critiques" is not made explicit, but implied is the disapproval of colon treatment of Moslem Algerians and the economic controversy with the Metropole over wine productions and preferential markets.

Carde's remarks were clearly addressed to Metropolitan audiences. As was the case with the Célébration Centenaire and the Exposition Coloniale in Paris, the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture was at least in part intended to mend any tears in the ideological fabric which wrapped the colonial project.

The Exposition d' Urbanisme et d'Architecture also occurred within an expanded field of public address and opinion formation. In exhibition and press formats it was clear that opinions were varied with the plans for the city still to be decided and the issues of

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186 L.T., "Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture" 5.
architecture and planning controversial. Discussion of the exhibition in the local newspaper, *L'Écho d'Alger*, and professional press, *Chantiers nord-africains* and *Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments*, placed this polemic as well as the exhibition within larger and ongoing discussions of existing projects, urban renewal, architectural and urban theory, government patronage and the historical development of the city. In both exhibition and press the objective aspirations of Modernism were inadvertently and unselfconsciously juxtaposed with those specific to colonial practice.

While the professional press devoted whole issues to urbanism, newspaper articles in the popular press prepared readers and exhibition visitors with simplified definitions of urbanism and its goals. In anticipation of the exhibition *L'Écho d'Alger* defined urbanism for its readers, as the "art of adapting cities to the exigencies of present day life which transforms itself daily." It sought to win its readers over to the power of new conceptions of beauty and utility, and of infinite possibilities. Urbanism here meant the progress made in the application of scientific and technical innovations for the good of the "general" public. Readers were led to believe that the well-being of the general public was merely a question of large and aerated streets, spacious sun-filled houses, parks, safe streets and embellishments, all of which compensated for disruptions caused by modernization and the rigors of business. While the recent zeal for urbanism in Algiers was noted, its timid development was chastised as the press attempted to calm fears of change by indicating how both a respect for sites and monuments and a less timid approach to urban development could coexist. This general discussion and the exhibition projects were positioned within the specific context of real urban issues in Algiers: the Quartier de la Marine redevelopment, the Casbah, the proposed Metro, Port improvements and the Prost & Rotival Plan.

188 L.T., "L'Exposition d'urbanisme et d'Architecture" 5.
In conjunction with the exhibition a number of architects, urbanists and critics responded to the question of the "destiny of Algiers" posed by *Chantiers nord-africains*. The viewpoints presented ranged in their degree of tolerance for the notion of a city of two cultures. Jean Coterea responded with the most strident anti-assimilationist ideas and an accompanying denigration of Moslem culture. His assessment of the "destiny of the site," or "the lessons to be learned from the exhibition," are underpinned by values originating in discourses of colonialism and the assumptions of socio-ethnic hierarchy which they contained. "Le Destin d'un site," originally published in *Le Monde coloniale illustré*, contrasted Algiers' future prosperity and role as capital with its degeneration and deprivation while in "Bébérie," meaning a state of barbarism, which he portrayed as a land of contradiction, invasion and anarchy. He maintained the belief that under Islam the Maghreb had become a desert city ignored by Europe, whereas its "natural" role was to dominate the Mediterranean, asserting its alignment with Europe, with which it had more in common, rather than looking inward to the Desert. French aptitude for scientific study, rationalization of the country with roads and trade facilities and genius for unification was opposed to the chaos, neglect of commerce and isolation resulting from Islam. French geographical publications and scholarship which justified the Western occupation of the site and liberal economics providing a rationale for land use patterns were cited in colonial discourses. They were marshaled to the urbanist's cause. Referring directly to the exhibition in "Les Leçons d'une exposition," Coterea placed the exhibits, and Le Corbusier's specifically, within a modern and still colonial structure. This modern framework consisted of new trade relations which were also the result of Imperial transactions, a revamped international order in which all Turkish influences would be superseded by French ones; Algiers was to be positioned in relation to the Suez and

189 See the February issue. The authors included François Bienvenu, Le Bâtonnier Rey, Jean Coterea, René Lespès, and Le Corbusier.
190 Jean Coterea, "La Destin d'un site," *Chantiers nord-africains* (Feb. 1933): 147-152.
France, in accordance with the Imperial plans of the latter and not the cultural affinities of the former. Cotereau again emphasized the geographic link, the axis between France and North Africa. He was concerned to show that Algiers should abandon its image as an old "oriental" city, now a worn cliché and through architecture and urbanism retain its priority and prerogative as a capital city, that is, as a colonial stronghold. "Now is the time," he declared in both articles, for Algiers "to restore in sane architecture, following Aryan traditions, what had only been built as an illusion by the oriental spirit, to disown El-Djezâir, to rediscover Icosium." Oriental visions and pastiche were to be replaced with greco-latin harmony and modern logic. Here is the difference between the centenary celebration and the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture; the orientalized veil, so beloved by the Metropole, still seen by the President of the Republic on his visit in 1930 and by Le Corbusier in 1931 was to be pulled from the modernizing visage of the colon's city.

A less belligerent view was provided by the historian Lespès who reminded readers that the 76,000 Moslems in the city in 1933 could not be omitted from the history or conceptualization of Algiers. He understood the city to be a diverse accumulation of peoples and suggested a study of the distribution of people within the urban space as a way of reading the aspirations, needs, taste and psychology of those living within it. He argued for a conception of the city as a "surimposition," a term derived from geography and which would take into account the sediments of past goals and layers of resistance, such as the old city of the Turks. Lespès clearly portrayed the form of the city and its cultural geography as the product of ethnic distinctions as well as dispersed and varied technologies and economics; he also conscious of loci of resistance. He perceived the destiny of Algiers

192 Cotereau, "La Destin d'un site" 152.
193 Cotereau, "Les Leçons d'une exposition" 302.
195 Lespès, "Destin d'Alger" 123.
in this cultural geography. It was not a re-discovered Iscocium but urban redevelopment, housing and green space which he saw as the destiny of Algiers. Lespès seemed imbued with the albeit hazy utopian vision of an equitable society based on modernization and technology. He was however only slowly won over to Le Corbusier's vision of Algiers.

Le Corbusier's views on the future of Algiers were clearly stated in his urban proposals for the city which focused on Algiers as the head of the French colonies in Africa. Like Lespès, he referred to cultural geography in describing the city as the meeting place of two cultures. But also, like Cotereau, he posed those two cultures in terms of opposition: a modern French culture of technical, organizational and financial powers and another less sophisticated possessing an appreciation of basic needs such as comfort and the natural elements of sun, air and view, and seemingly inspired by J.-J. Rousseau. Le Corbusier had in common with Cotereau a vision of the old Turkish city and the Casbah as historic documents not the contemporary social entities which Lespès recognized. Fresh in Le Corbusier's mind was his memory of the psychological effect of a stable order that arabisance had seemingly created in Morocco. A recollection of his tour of the M'zab in August of 1931, it also betrays an experience and perception deeply touched by the consciousness of Empire.

Le Corbusier presented his ideas of Algiers as the capital of North Africa within the seemingly benign, if not bizarre, Barcelona/Algiers/Rome/Paris axis. Certain assumptions, shared by colonial discourse surface here as well. This Mediterranean federation assumes French control and ownership of North Africa. The apparently disinterested economic rationale was clearly workable within the mise en valeur policy being evoked by colonialists in Paris while it neatly swept from sight Moroccan or other Islamic states of

197 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 20-21.
the Maghreb who had opposing aspirations. In portraying this Mediterranean federation as a tradition of millennia Le Corbusier repeated the frequent refrain that justified colonialism in Algeria by evoking such presence as able to restore the prosperity of Roman times. Concurring with Mayor Brunel in 1933, he claimed that Algiers, as a capital of such a federation "would become the place (and no longer the destroyer) of a civilization."\(^{198}\) Within this colonial context the destroyer referred to the Turks and more generally Islam; the civilization assumed was a Mediterranean, and European, one.

It is difficult to assess how the Moslem populations of Algiers might have responded to the question of the "destiny of Algiers," had they been asked. Only very general observations might be made about their urban and architectural concerns.\(^{199}\) In the opinion of the Moslem newspaper, *La Voix du Peuple*, the major problem in 1933 was the "terrorism of the administration," which in the eyes of the Moslem publication had a two-point program of exploitation and conversion.\(^{200}\) Thus the construction of mosques and Moslem institutions would be important counter forces to the feared assimilation. For the most part however Moslem newspapers of the period focused their attention on political issues. Among the Moslem Algerians it is only the elite few, the *évolués*, who served as municipal council members that have left records of their concerns for the city. They asked for equal access to Habitations à Bon Marché, and their adaptation to their needs, as well as for new mosques and cemeteries.\(^{201}\) Few of these demands were featured in the ideal city plans for

\(^{198}\) Le Corbusier, letter to Brunel, 27 July 1933, AFLC.
\(^{199}\) Just what the Moslems of Algeria were concerned with at this time, especially as regards architecture and urbanism, is difficult to ascertain. Newspapers were published erratically, suffered constant censorship and those published clandestinely or in Arabic are largely unavailable; archival collections are incomplete. However, contemporary issues of *La Voix du Peuple* give some idea of what some of the issues were thought to be. A summary of the Moslem Algerian press for the period in 1936 identifies the following preoccupations: naturalization with or without the retention of personal status, political rights, a Moslem party, Arab language, institutions, culture and an end to the process of exception and of assimilation. C. J., "La presse indigène en Algérie," *Questions nord-africaines: Révue des problèmes sociaux de l'Algérie, de la Tunisie et du Maroc.* Paris (15 Apr. 1936): 94-112.
\(^{201}\) Kaddache, *La Vie Politique* 325.
Algiers proposed in 1933, although housing was clearly understood as a necessary investment in the interests in a stable workforce and isolated gestures of a cemetery and schools were presented. With their newspapers highly censored, their access to technologies of public consensus-forging minimal, and restricted by employment laws and education policies, the ability of the Moslem Algerians to conceive and disseminate their ideas of the city was greatly circumscribed.

In Algiers, as has been indicated, colonial discourse was interwoven with the rhetoric of urbanism. General references to French genius, progress, civilizing forces, and specific ones to the "natural" destiny of the city, the restoration of historical prosperity, its position as capital of North Africa, all participated in a colonialist interpretation of Algiers. Discussions of the 1933 exhibition also contained the apprehensions and contradictions which could be discovered in colonial discourse. Algeria was a colonial department which was forced to reconcile its colonialist ambitions of prosperity, infrastructural modernization, and social order with republican ideals of equality, fraternity, liberty and universal well-being, and, in the exhibition at least, these colon ambitions were given a precedence unaccorded them in the Metropole.

What the exhibition and the attendant discussion of architecture and urbanism disclose is a profound unease about modernization and change, of lost traditions, especially European ones which had maintained colon status. Tensions over the need to reinforce the status quo, desires for greater autonomy from Paris, security against a more belligerent Moslem Algerian society, confusion about Moslem Algerian disavowal and rejection of assimilation are all present beneath the opinions expressed, guiding the images and language in which they are evoked but rarely stated. The Marine District especially brought out fears about racial mixing: concerns about a population déclassée clearly drove Cotereau's obsession with Aryan purity, depraved Bérbérie and assimilation problems.
Conclusion

Obus "B" was validated by subsequent research into its financial and technical feasibility supplied by the Algiers engineering firm of J.-P. Faure and Flon. The plan was rendered comprehensible to its Algiers and Metropolitan audience by references to "conquest," the taking of unoccupied land, and to retro-fitting the unprofitable aspects of the urban landscape. Such justifications for Obus "B" echo the familiar rationales of French colonization in Algeria. Although Le Corbusier's initial impression of Algiers had been that of a city of two civilizations and two cultures, the way in which his plans responded to changing attitudes to the co-existence of these two civilizations and cultures is less clearly articulated. His modification of the "radiant city" for the specific site of Algiers in Obus "A" consisted of a redeployment of the basic components of business center, housing, industry and circulation, according to the geopolitical residues of the site. The Marine District harbored the remains of the old Turkish city, a trophy of past military conquest, and was valued, beyond its picturesque presence from the sea, as such. One element of the theoretical "radiant city" is positioned here, the business center. The Fort de l'Empereur was prized not only for its favorable micro-climate but also for its obelisk marking French occupation; here Le Corbusier sited the elite redent housing which would colonize this once military installation. The seafront, stretching south along the coast, traced the first expansion and large scale industrialization of Algiers. Here Le Corbusier installed the workers housing in viaduct dwellings. Holding this whole "progressive," "modern" city together was a system of elevated and ramped highways which stealthily stepped over, swerved and reconfigured the other civilization which Le Corbusier had

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recognized as also comprising the site. He then sublimated or appropriated this culture by seemingly leaving it intact, encased within a relic, and by judiciously and diplomatically bypassing the Casbah with a passerelle, while simultaneously clearing it of "diseased" areas. By 1933 he would adopt colonial practices and reposition this culture elsewhere, in cités indigènes and in less poetically evocative places, as witnessed in his Hussein Dey plans for 1933.203

Le Corbusier's aim had been twofold in the early 1930s. First, he wished to supplant the official project and solicit public support for his own. Secondly, he aimed to distinguish his concept of architecture and urbanism from those privileging colonial politics as well as function over art. Thus the topographical model, military aerial photographs, postcards, drawings of views and salient features of the site--the old business center seen from the harbor; the obelisk at Fort de l'Empereur; bastions; Casbah; the nineteenth-century seafront boulevard, the Arcade des Anglais--were supposedly divested of their historical social functions and meaning as heavily invested colonial mementos to be reinvested as a-historical objets à réaction poetique. However, underpinning these objects and clearly embedded within their written explanations was the city's colonial order.

Initially, Le Corbusier's rationale had consisted of a respect for the site, where the site was understood as a topography yet to be assigned a social use according to functional zoning, nature and aesthetics, "la topographie de la ville permet un classement rationnel des populations, selon les fonctions ou les goûts, en trois zones nettement distinctes: les grands espaces plats du littoral; les falaises; les coteaux du Sahel."204 The topography was also, in reality, transgressed, disregarded and technologically mastered, with boulevards-cum-highways elevated so as to span the deep valleys and bridge the cliffs of the natural peaks.
and troughs of the city. By 1933, in responding to existing built form which had worked
to secure the colonial presence, the plan became less neutral as it entrenched existing
patterns of occupation.

The Algerian public reportedly considered Le Corbusier's ideas to be revolutionary,
utopian, futuristic, provocative, or at the very least, interesting. His earliest plan, Obus
"A," was criticized in 1931 for being unrealistic in its use of technology and program,
dictatorial in its proposed means of implementation, and ill-considered in proposing such a
necessarily collective enterprise in the context of individual land ownership, the bastion of
colon land appropriation tactics. Le Corbusier's response to these critiques was to present
technical and financial data in support of his plans; letters to powerful administrators such as
Peyrouton, Governor General of Tunisia, Maréchal Lyautey in Paris and Governor General
Carde in Algiers; a scheme for collective financing borrowed from Lyautey and Prost's
work in Morocco and a much reduced scheme. And, while his immediate supporters
believed his plan to be realizable and fought for that end, others, such as Cotereau believed
it should be adapted to needs particular to Algiers, which, one surmises from his writings,
meant the cultural needs of the colony and the development preoccupations of colon.
These were very different objections to Le Corbusier's planning than those voiced by
Tiege, Lissitsky and Ginzburg between 1928 and 1932 and Le Corbusier's responses
ricocheted between the theoretical critique offered by the Constructivists, Soviet-aligned
Left and members of Neue Sachleitkei who posited his work as groundless, without
theoretical basis and socially reactionary and the specific reservations voiced by Modernist
colon who understood his work to be revolutionary, aesthetically and, gratefully,
apolitical. In response to the former he subtly included dis-urbanist infrastructure while
maintaining urban form, and to the latter he fabricated a universally Western but not visibly
or recognizably French apparatus of a managed capitalism and ordered colonialism.
Le Corbusier neither assimilated nor associated the two cultures in any of the conventional ways in his Obus plans. The Casbah was left not entirely absorbed, being instead bridged by the passerelle, that efficient connector of active, productive algeroise, which left in its shadow a respectfully kept object of Western contemplation, a "primitivized" civilization. It was assimilated along other, but still traditional, colonial lines and appropriated into Western economic priorities at the expense of Moslem Algerians; just as the indigène had been moved off their lands under the pretext of their insurrection, agricultural "ineptitude" or in the interests of the "rationalization" of land ownership, so too would they now be relocated under the pretext of hygiene and efficient land use to Bienvenu's segregated housing complexes of assimilation promises in Arabic decor and meager amenities and later in Le Corbusier's cité indigène for the Plan Directeur. In his first text amplifying his intentions in the Obus plan, Le Corbusier promised Algiers, Capital of North Africa, a plan more forward looking than that of Prost & Rotival. From the exploitation of modern techniques-- predominant among them a very expensive "respiration exacte" which would allow a greater removal from the inconveniences of weather or neighbors-- the architect intended "de reconstituer non pas le style arabe des anciennes résidences des coteaux de Mustapha, mais le confort arabe, c'est-a-dire la fraîcheur et l'abri, le soleil et la vue à volonté, et les contrastes si prodigieusement architecturaux des volumes vastes et petits, des hauteurs de 2m 20 et de 4m 50." This description had little in common with the houses then existing in the Casbah but it does resemble the Orientalist descriptions of Lyautey and the abstracting procedures of many practitioners of arabisance in the 1920s and early 1930s. Le Corbusier's retention of the Casbah, as a document of history--once re-planned and purified--conveniently cleansed the area of the more unseemly aspects of

205 Although hygiene was a concern of Moslem Algerians as well, the manner in which it was distributed was determined by the administration's needs to manage social relations. For example, the Casbah needed running water and sanitation. However it was not here that it was provided but rather in new complexes which served to alienate Moslem Algerians from their history and social practices. It was colonial policy not hygiene per se that determined its availability.

colonial policy, the abandoned children, the absence of sanitation, water, schools, light and air. However, the civilizing mission had been for Moslem Algerians just this unrecognized history of "orphaned, vagabond children, land expropriation, taxes, ill-treatment, forced conversion, mosques closed, language suspended, women forced into prostitution by poverty, the elderly made homeless, a race exterminated by alcohol and prostitution."207

By 1930 the essential cynicism of respectful collaboration between two cultures insured by a policy of cultural association and the promise of equality and justice through legal, economic and political assimilation had been recognized for what they were. What Le Corbusier seemed to offer was an alternative more distanced future, a displacement of political and cultural problems onto the fields of technological capabilities and poetic imagination.

In 1931 Le Corbusier had traveled through Spain, Morocco and Algeria. While he valued the highway which enabled him to drive his Voisin automobile into these areas, he lamented the effects of industrialization and modern transport on the simple civilizations he had sought in the Maghreb.208 He contrasted the unadorned natural life of the Arab with the "artificial consumerism" of Europe. Clearly, Le Corbusier transposed a European problem of industrialization and a romantic idea of the "noble savage" onto the context of Algeria. While lamenting the presence of French consumer goods in Arab desert cities, he was thankful they were available for his enjoyment.209 His sketchbooks from this trip are revealing. In Spain he praised the road which "colonizes an immense desert," and vernacular building which he found superior to academic architecture.210 "France is in Morocco," he noted. The France found in Morocco was that of: "clear vision, lucid and

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208Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 9.
209Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 20.
210Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 20 (426)
loyal objectives, friendship and command." It was also, as he himself identified, the Morocco of Maréchal Lyautey and his policies. Like Lyautey, Le Corbusier preferred to keep the native populations in a pre-industrialized, non-competitive and politically passive state.

Le Corbusier unselconsciously spoke of France's conquering of Algeria, and failed to mention the desecration and mayhem which it produced, attributing French presence to the "bugle and drum" rather than the rifle and a scorched-earth policy. It would be, he stated, a mistake to forget the positive sides of the military: "drums, bugles, color, and the hierarchical arrangement of columns of men... a machine for action." Le Corbusier observed that such military tactics would be useful in realizing his plans "it would be necessary from time to time to have a flourish of flags, drums and human bugles, when a section of the city is being blown up: a parade." He also found justified his design by reference to Arab architecture and urban design: the medina was "efficient" and "functional," the Oasis of Ghardaia "a device of order and discipline," the streets dimensioned according to his favored measures, "enclosed by walls 1.80 m. high, the houses completely closed off toward the alley. But inside it is a complete and perfect tool, efficient and eminently functional, in human scale. It is all here, family, coolness, [intimacy], fruits, greenery, arabesques, architecture. The oasis is an immense collective undertaking masterfully conceived and laid out. Once realized over a period of time, it is maintained." Thus Moslem Algerian life is once again, as in the founding myths of

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211 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 21 (436). He goes on to portray Maréchal Lyautey's presence in Morocco as one won by charm and righteousness, thus overlooking the reality of the French presence in Morocco, that is, to exploit the Moslem Algerians for military service, to facilitate French colonizing and economic plans for North Africa.
212 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 21 (entry 444).
213 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 21 (entry 446).
214 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 21 (entries 446-447).
215 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 22 (entries 453,454).
colonization, portrayed as changeless, simple and domestic rather than public. The architect and planner failed to question the unemployed Arab, or the lack of purchasing power among Moslem Algerians, rationalizing it as evidence of a simple life, untainted by the love of money or unnecessary consumer products. Le Corbusier's descriptions overlooked the *bidonvilles*, the overcrowded *cités* and the lack of amenities which were the reality of most Moslem Algerian existence. In noting the difference between the oasis of the Mozabites, "a paradise," and the cities of the Arabs, a "letdown," he neither attributed it to the colonialist denigration of the latter, nor to the fact that Arabs had been displaced from their land a long time ago, and their economy ruined by French realignment of trade; he was also repeating the distinction between Moslem groups fabricated by French colonial policy. The champagne whose presence he lamented and the Nancy beer he was thankful for at Ghardaia indicated what lay in the future as the French penetrated the Sahara; it also indicates how Le Corbusier might continue the colonial tradition of the inequitable distribution of goods and services.

Le Corbusier's abstraction of Arab architecture might be, perhaps, the basis of a new style able to dominate the situation in Algiers, to maintain colonial discourse by sidestepping its most obvious images of collaboration and assimilation. Assimilation had been an operative myth manipulated by colonial administrators to soothe the liberal conscience in the Metropole and to dampen political activism in the few Moslem *evolusés* outraged by its

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216 Le Corbusier's description of Arab housing and Sultan's palaces are very similar to Lyautey's, compare his sketchbook notes 22 (entries 53 and 454) with Lyautey's "You are familiar with the narrow streets, the facades without openings behind which lies the whole of life, the terraces upon which the life of the family spreads out and which must therefore remain sheltered from indiscreet looks." quoted in Janet Abu-Lughod, "Moroccan Cities: Apartheid and the Serendipity of Conservation, African Themes, ed. Janet Abu-Lughod (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1975) 143. Guilhaume speaks of these notions of the Arab as refusing change, immobile, indifferent to scientific and human progress which were maintained by the collective memory of colonists in Algeria see Guilhaume, *Les mythes fondateurs de l'Algérie française* 68,81.

217 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 20 (entry 449).

218 Le Corbusier Sketchbooks 22 (entry 460).
hollowness.\textsuperscript{219} When Le Corbusier came to propose his plan for Algiers he arrived with views already affected by French representations. His plan was filtered through the earlier analysis and assessment of planning needs just as his \textit{Femmes d'Alger} series was filtered through Delacroix and tourist postcards.\textsuperscript{220} However, Le Corbusier's professed appreciation of Arab culture, its calm interiors, roof terraces and silent opaque walls have a questionable aspect to them in the context of colonial history. His appreciation can be compared to that of Lyautey where he also emotionally described Arab towns: "You are familiar with the narrow streets, the facades without openings behind which lies the whole of life, the terraces upon which the life of the family spreads out and which must therefore remain sheltered from indiscreet looks."\textsuperscript{221} Nevertheless, Lyautey's appreciation of Arab life did not prevent the expropriation of land, increase in poverty and disempowering of Moslem cultural institutions; his system of caïds was perceived by Moslem critics of the French regime as one of the policies most detrimental to Moslem life. The feudal system in which the Maréchal attempted to preserve the Moslems under his care served to keep them illiterate, impoverished and subjects rather than citizens. The less than scrupulous aspects of the expressed appreciation of Arab life and customs is aptly revealed in Lyautey's use of Isabelle Eberhardt, who, disguised in her Arab costume, penetrated into the Moroccan desert to gather information for the military and the subduing of Moroccan tribesmen.\textsuperscript{222} Le Corbusier could be understood as something of an Eberhardt figure, using his disguise as a disinterested avant-garde architect to penetrate and maintain French economic objectives in Algeria. Yet his transgression, recently interpreted as the height of egotism


\textsuperscript{220}Le Corbusier also studied the plan created in the 1920s by René Danger. See Giordani, "les plans pour la ville d'Alger" 57.

\textsuperscript{221}Quoted in Celik, \textit{Displaying the Orient}, 190-91.

\textsuperscript{222}Clancy-Smith, "A European Woman in \textit{L'Algérie française}," 70-72.
and arrogance, is also something more than this. To displace the problem onto personal ego in this manner is to displace responsibility onto the architect rather than the colonial structure which made both Le Corbusier's conception possible and his utopia impossible. The developments of the period reveal that it was something more complex than either Lyautey's militaristic paternalism or simple egotism. As the events of 1931-33 in Algiers were played out Le Corbusier was forced to negotiate his utopian and personal ideas with the history and politics of the site.

Le Corbusier modified Obus "A" in response to opposition and opportunities in the Metropole. The result was Obus "B" which accords in its modification with the colonial posturing of his colleagues in Algiers. These were not the most mean spirited of colonists. Emery and Breuillot designed modern schools for cités indigènes and would later write to Le Corbusier about a self-help housing scheme for rural Moslem farmers, although Le Corbusier seems to have been little interested in personally pursuing such technical and cultural collaborations. Was colonialism necessary to Le Corbusier, to the kinds of spatial and formal arrangements which he made and to the ideology espoused in their defense?

The class distinction which Obus "A" reintroduced into the egalitarian Radiant City functionalized the racial as well as class inequities and divisions of the city. The historicized ornament of the working class redent housing and then the cités indigènes could only occur in Le Corbusier's work in the early 1930s in this colonial context; they only found their raison d'être there. Without the rhetoric of colonialism the siting of the skyscraper became inconsequential, without the plan to colonize the hinterland, the highway to El Biar and its redents were deprived of their rationale, and without a Casbah and the symbolic currency invested in it the passerelle was dysfunctional. Without a redevelopment incentive for the Marine District the boulevards and open space planned for it with its accruing property

enhancement had little value. And without an established French Academic tradition and a conservative development consortium there was no enemy for the avant-garde architect to fight, no camouflage for his perhaps different, but still colonizing, project.

Attention! Je connais fort peu les conditions locale d'Alger, la cuisine locale. Je sais que les Algériens sont des fanatiques de politique. Moi, je ne connais qu'une chose: ce sont des plans techniques.... Un plan technique est en dehors de la politique... ne pas faire de politique sur mon projet, mais simplement de l'information de la lutte civique. (Le Corbusier)

Foucault did not read the "Panopticon" as a Weberian ideal type, i.e., as the sociologist's generalized abstraction of the various currents of empirical activity of an age, rather he emphasized an alternative use of such plans as strategic exemplars. To wit, Foucault suggested finding real schemas and following out their strategic uses-- the transformations, as well as the resistances they provoked--as a means of illuminating not a whole age but rather its particular nuclei of knowledge and power. (Paul Rabinow)  

Introduction

Writing from Paris to Edmond Brua, his unflagging collaborator in Algiers, Le Corbusier admonished the young journalist "ne pas faire de politique sur mon projet, mais simplement de l'information et de la lutte civique." However, this chapter will, in many respects, do just that; it will seek the political dimensions of Le Corbusier's involvement with the colonial city. The objective is to identify the politicized milieu in which architecture and urbanism were

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2 Le Corbusier, letter to Edmond Brua, 14 May 1934 AFLC. Le Corbusier appears to be still smarting from the criticisms which he received in Moscow and which he believed to have been the result of partisan politics. See Jean-Louis Cohen, "Le Corbusier and Soviet Avant-Garde Theory," in Le Corbusier and the Mystique of the USSR: Theories and Projects for Moscow, 1928-36 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) 106-125.
comprehended, assessed and realized in Algiers, a city whose denizens were "des fanatiques de politique." What is to be ascertained is the relevance of Le Corbusier's Obus "C" within the political structure of Algiers during the period 1934-1937 when it was deployed against the plan of Prost & Rotival which had been officially adopted in June of 1931 and its subsequent revision by Prost & Socard in 1936. The rivalry transformed the rhetoric and constituents of both plans. The reactions and resistances provoked by each differed, as did the representation of cultural dominance each wished to convey. Le Corbusier's plans became something more than a counter to academism.

Although the need to capture public opinion, in both Algiers and the Metropole, continued to be a key concern expressed in the correspondence between Le Corbusier and his supporters in Algiers, more topical were issues pertaining to municipal policy and politics. By October of 1934, Le Corbusier was willing to admit that he "preferred politics to nothing at all," meaning a stalemate of his plans, although he also preferred that the political action was done by others on his behalf. While Le Corbusier denied or attempted to avoid the political dimension of his work, Henri Prost, ostensibly his major competitor in the realm of urban planning in Algiers, did not. Prost reaffirmed the political considerations attributed to urbanism by Lyautey, noting: "Les cités qu'il a créées, il les a voulues sur des dispositions établies en fonction directe de son programme d'organisation politique." By 1934 at least, Le Corbusier's "disinterested" posturing and "avant-garde" modernism had also to bargain with the visions of the colonial political realm. Obus "C" was the means by which this was to be done.

3 Le Corbusier, letter to Edmond Brua, 14 May 1934, AFLC.
4 See especially the letters between Le Corbusier and Jean Cotereau where the importance of Chantiers nord-africains and its editor, Lopez, to the arousing of favorable public opinion is discussed. Le Corbusier, letter to Cotereau, 14 Mar. 1934, AFLC. See also Le Corbusier, letter to Brua, 13 Mar. 1934, AFLC. The politicization of Obus "C" is discussed in: Lafon, letter to Le Corbusier, 31 Mar 1934; Le Corbusier, letter to Flon, 24 Mar. 1934; Le Corbusier, letter to Lopez, 11 Oct. 1934; Lafon, letter to Le Corbusier, 31 Mar. 1934; Le Corbusier, letter to Brua, 1 May 1934; Le Corbusier, letter to Brunel, 11 May 1934; Le Corbusier, letter to Cotereau, 28 May 1934; Le Corbusier, letter to J.-P. Faure, 2 July 1934, AFLC.
5 Le Corbusier, letter to Lopez, 11 Oct. 1934, AFLC.
What Le Corbusier feared was the compromise of his conception of architecture and planning as products that drew upon the knowledge and insight of artistic vision, technical expertise, and business acumen with that practiced as ancillary to administrative and political policy. In Algiers his utopia of pure technique would be tested, transformed and ultimately resisted. Although Le Corbusier may have recognized the necessity for some political lobbying after his plans were completed, the question remains whether his conception of Obus "C" was autonomous from the specific colonial circumstances in which it evolved. To be ascertained is the extent to which the plans were the product of the political realm.7 Was there in either Le Corbusier's design methodology, the concerns of his collaborators, or the content of their diverse interests, anything that might suggest a political agenda or vision? There are several dimensions to the political and demonstrating that architecture operates within any one of these, that it has the ability to directly effect power relations, is difficult to establish. Architecture may serve political aims explicitly, as when the State is patron, or its aesthetic intentions may intersect with political strategies. The alliance of architecture and politics may embody conflicting ideologies, making architecture a "visual palimpsest" which registers seemingly inconsistent political and psychological messages.8 In addition, there are, as Millon and Nochlin have pointed out, current assumptions about the relationship of architecture and politics which have significantly influenced the assessment of their association. One assumption is that architecture designed for the purposes of political propaganda is incommensurate with good architecture. Another is the "tendency to associate public and collective, hence, political, experience with the aesthetically shoddy, banal and shopworn... and private and personal experience with the highest achievement in art"--or architecture.9

7Herman Lebovics, True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) xv. Lebovics characterizes two opposing positions taken in the formulations of explanations in cultural history. The first is that characterized by Rabinow as having "attributed a significant degree of autonomy to culture (and character) from the social and economic circumstances in which they arose." Lebovics is quoting from Paul Rabinow."Beyond Ethnography: Anthropology as Nominalism," Cultural Anthropology 3 (1988) 537. The second position is exemplified by Pierre Bourdieu who sees the interdependence of political and cultural productions.


9Millon, Art and Architecture x.
Linda Nochlin has addressed the problems and issues attendant upon attempts to establish a relationship between an artist's production and his or her politics, or in delineating an indebtedness to cultural innovation or alterations emanating from the political sphere. She has proposed that the relationship of aesthetic production to politics need not be formulated in terms of specifically political subject matter, nor thought of as a consciously political intention. Instead this relationship can be conceived of in a more complex system of relationships. The concepts of representation and aesthetics will therefore be useful in tracing this process. Writing expressly on the subject of architecture and politics, Mary McLeod has concluded that although a connection between them exists it is ambiguous, with two key considerations articulating that connection. First, architecture through its production is necessarily affected by political and economic structures, and, secondly, as a cultural form it possesses what McLeod has termed "political resonances." In addition, the impact and reception of architecture can not be extricated from its specific social context nor its historical moment. Therefore, this chapter will relate the Obus "C" plan to the political visions and economic structures of Algiers and its formal reception to the political climate of the period. Obus "C" was developed between late 1933 and early 1934, in Paris, and its "political vision" would be determined by this and the information made available to him from Algiers. This was the first phase of Obus "C." The second phase, 1934-37, sets the plan within a second "political vision," where it was made to address directly and indirectly the political and economic structure of Algiers and it is in this context that its formal reception would be determined and Le Corbusier's utopia challenged.

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13 McLeod, "Architecture and Politics" 25. McLeod continues: "these two political dimensions of architecture, production processes and formal reception, are, of course, not unrelated—building techniques can convey meaning—but their political roles can operate independently, each exerting influence at different moments and on different groups."
Le Corbusier's involvement with Algiers and his specific schemes were not based on a single beckoning or even supportive regime; there was no continuous government during his eleven year involvement in Algiers. Nor did he win the backing of a single political figure. His greater openness to political action in 1934 did not coincide with a change in government in Algiers, Algeria or the Metropole. A succession of Governors General had already altered both the political and architectural scene before his arrival in the colonial city. The program of Modernist governmental and institutional buildings had been initiated by Governor Steeg in 1927, Governor Carde continued this program as did his successors Meynier and Le Beau. Le Corbusier's connection with the Popular Front would be tenuous and, as will be discussed later, the victory of the Popular Front was greeted differently in the colony where its proposed extension of the franchise among Moslems was an issue scrutinized more apprehensively perhaps than in the Metropole. He found no effective patrons among either Governors General of Algeria or mayors of Algiers, although he courted both. As mayor between 1929 and 1935 Charles Brunel was instrumental in engineering the Grands Travaux which made Le Corbusier's involvement at all possible, and initially showed much interest in the architect's ideas; but he was not a supporter of the Obus Plans. Only in the late 1930s did a Governor General express interest in a fragment of his plan, the skyscraper, but any action was precluded by the outbreak of war. Not until Vichy would metropolitan officials reassess and express support for Le Corbusier's plans. Instead, Le Corbusier's Obus plans were endorsed and publicized by a group of colonists (largely engineers and architects who were often educated in France and supportive of CIAM, and a few Algiers journalists of which some were left-wing, like J.-P. Faure and others more right-wing, such as J. Cotereau) who were concerned to establish a Modernist city different from that proposed by Prost, the colonial government and municipal administration. The importance of this can be understood against the background of anti-colonial rhetoric, countering revamped notions of colonization and economic strategies in the inter-war years.
Political action in Algiers was circumscribed by conceptions of colonialism and methods of colonization about which consensus was only temporarily broached in the mid 1930s, as an exceptional tactic against the economic crisis, as will be developed later. Economic policies, so important to if not necessarily determining of colonial policy, were not consistently aligned with specific political parties and agendas. Colonization, as a heterogeneous and often contentious grouping of practices geared to territorial and cultural expansion, had several competing definitions and unresolved problems in the 1930s. It will therefore be necessary to position Obus "C" within these realignments, to map the articulation or misarticulation which Obus "C" achieved with the competing definitions worked out for colonization and the various forms given to l'idée coloniale then frantically attempting to salvage the advantages and power vouchsafed by colonial ideologies.

Political actions and positions in Algeria, especially as the effects of the depression began to destabilize relations between Metropole, colony and Empire, became increasingly circumscribed by economic considerations. In politics, economics and colonial policy the 1930s was an indecisive period. However, something of their general and urgent interdependence is confirmed by Marcel Peyrouton, Governor General of Tunisia, in his defense of the free entry of Tunisian wine into France in November of 1933; he could have been as aptly speaking of Algeria who was then in conflict with the Metropole over the same issue:

Ce n'est pas un problème économique, ce n'est pas un problème de concurrence viticole, c'est un problème politique. Il s'agit de savoir si, au moment où des

14 Jacques Marseille, Empire coloniale et capitalisme français: Histoire d'un divorce (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1984) 207-217. Marseille describes how different industries supported different policies with respect to protectionism and free market and with respect to modernization and industrialization. The different branches of French capitalism which confronted each other over colonial markets are identified. The colonies were the focus of struggle between those who did not wish to cede to those producing standardized objects and those believing it was necessary to remodel the industrial structure fundamentally. For the first the colony was the means to counter the hostile world, for the second it was the opportunity to force change and industrialization. See "La stratégie autarchique": monopole et générosité" 187-206; "La stratégie libérale" 218-239.

courants mystérieux agitent notre empire de l'Afrique du Nord, il convient de
laisser susciter des prétextes d'agitation... Ce n'est pas une question de viticulture,
c'est une question de sécurité dans l'Afrique du Nord française.\textsuperscript{16}

It is in this reciprocal action between economics and political policy that the plans for Algiers can
be productively discussed, as they were in the 1930s. To understand this interplay and the
reactions and resistances to Le Corbusier's Obus "C" it will be necessary to trace the political
potency and cultural validity of the plans through a variety of debates and public forums--
exhibitions, architectural periodicals, popular press--and to relate these to political objectives and
issues of the period--industrialization, modernization, and social stabilization. In addition, as
political objectives were greatly confined by theories and practices of economics during the 1930s
these too must be considered. In these arenas, Le Corbusier's emphasis on innovative technique
finds its "political resonance."

The 1930s was for the Metropole a period of surprising political alliances and shifting positions, a
time when policies were often ambiguous, and inconsistent. Political actions--decrees, laws,
parliamentary debates--were preoccupied with maintaining security within the Empire. However,
this security was undermined by unemployment and shrinking markets in the Metropole which
alerted public opinion to competition from the lower wages and product costs existing in the
colonies. Political discourse circled around issues of economic equilibrium and the status of
women in Moslem societies; seemingly disparate but, as will be shown, intricately related topics.
The concern to balance economic needs with those of social stability made industrialization,
commerce and policies toward indigenous labor highly politicized issues. The economic crisis
forced a re-evaluation of \textit{mise en valeur} and as a consequence competing economic models existed
in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{17} Liberal economic strategies, which had dominated in previous decades, proposed a

\textsuperscript{16}Marcel Peyrouton, Commission de l'Algérie, des Colonies et des Protectorats, 11 November 1935,
quoted in Marseille, \textit{Empire coloniale} 308-309.

\textsuperscript{17} Marseille identifies three predominant economic models: liberal, autarchy and industrial. These have
been useful in identifying the various positions indicated in the discussions of the plans. The liberal model
was undermined by the economic crisis in that there were no longer the world markets for the resultant
dual economy, industrialized Metropole and more slowly developing colonies which would remain sources of raw materials, cheap labor and military recruits; it traded pacifism for an international division of labor. The ultimate aim of such competitive capitalism within a world economy was rendered unfeasible, at least temporarily, after 1929. Another economic strategy, redéploiement, proposed an industrialization and modernization extended to the colonies which would, in developing production, also create new consumers while maintaining France's competitive position in world markets. It too included ideas about indigenous populations; industrialization was proposed as the chief means of feeding and employing their vast numbers, eventually raising their standard of living and keeping them loyal to France. Considered as new centers from which to capture foreign markets, industrialized colonies remained a goal in the service of French power. Although this model was a constant reference in the 1930s it was not until late in the decade that it was seriously considered by government.

For most political, business and commercial interests industrialization was a discomforting option in the 1930s, one which was discredited by the economic chaos following in the aftermath of the 1929 market collapse. Instead, an alternative, compromise, policy was evolved that drew together a diversity of approaches to capitalism in an uncharacteristic alliance. First formulated by Albert Sarraut in 1921 as a response to the upset of World War I, autarchique became by 1934, the dominant economic policy around which both conservative industries aiming to retain their trade monopolies, such as cotton, and innovative industries reeling from a loss of foreign markets, such as automobile manufactures, rallied.\textsuperscript{18} Algeria was a major importer of both and the "motorization of Algeria" was seen as a symbol of colonial potential.\textsuperscript{19} Autarchy also established relations between economic strategy and political necessity. It was feared that the economic crisis could lead to "une véritable régression de la civilisation des populations indigènes et que sa prolongation ne

\textsuperscript{18}Marseille, Empire coloniale 194,198.
\textsuperscript{19}Marseille, Empire coloniale 199.
peut qu'engendrer de graves difficultés politiques."20 Viewed from the perspective of North African Moslems this "motorization" was clearly understood to have a political objective, as one Moslem Algerian newspaper pointed out, "Malgré de vaines et plus ou moins sincères protestations des démagogues métropolitains, l'impérialisme français imposa sa domination à ceux qui n'avaient pas su tracer assez de routes ni assez user d'automobiles."21 These observations also demonstrate the interrelationship of economic objectives, political policy and colonization. But, as a corollary to the market potential of the colonies, a standard of living still had to be assured such that the colonies could be the needed consumers of expensive Metropolitan manufactured goods. The colonies were to be the providers of cheap raw materials and labor, as had been the case with liberal laissez-faire economics, but now they were to have the prices of those raw materials raised, artificially, so wages and consumption could also rise as colony and Metropole became locked into a protected trade zone. Autarchique was a means of employment creation and re-stabilization by eking out new markets in a growing arena of international protectionism. However, there was opposition to this in Algeria where those in the viticulture industry, for example, objected to increasing either wages or the price of their products. Autarchy would be as unsuccessful politically as it was economically, as Moslem Algerians noted:

A travers toute l'Algérie des dizaines de milliers d'Algériens musulmans exprimèrent leur mécontentement et leur indignation contre la politique anti-libérale de la France en Algérie...L'année qui s'ouvre (1935) paraît très sombre, et l'avenir des Musulmans Nord-Africains, très menacé. Puissent ces expériences et ces souffrances des heures douloureuses, forger, dans les coeurs des Musulmans Nord-Africains, L'UNION: Ce sentiment nous est nécessaire surtout en ce moment où le colonialisme, notre ennemi mortel, se multiplie pour nous diviser et nous dresser les uns contre les autres dans des luttes fratricides.22

20 Albert Sarraut is being quoted, in Marseille, Empire coloniale. 188.
22 Ben Ahmed, "Les croisades modernes au Maghreb" 1, 2.
Clearly, other forces, and different ideas about social stability and national unity, not French but Moslem Algerian, were also present which made the revamping of the "colonial idea" imperative. The Association des oulema réformistes d'Algérie had been founded by Abdelhamid Ben Badis in 1931 and it had by 1934 established itself as a factor in municipal elections, as had other Moslem groups such as the Fédération Elus Musulmans and publications such as La Voix Indigène.

Although all were still advocates of assimilation and equality they were now cautiously so; only the Étoile nord-africaine and its leader Messali Hadj, the one censored the other exiled, had called for independence. Created in 1926 and disbanded in 1929, Étoile nord-africaine was reconstituted in 1933 as the Glorieuse Étoile nord-africaine and in 1937 became the Parti du peuple algérien. By 1935 La Voix du Peuple, "organe mensuel de défense morale et matérielle des Musulmans d'Algérie," questioned the peaceful and humanitarian actions of French civilizing agents, and called for "notre NATION ethnique commune Le Maghreb," making an Islamic nation of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Political action was forced to maneuver between the threat of insurrection in North Africa, war in Europe, unemployment in the Metropole, and the need for employed colonial consumers. This made industrialization, artisanal production, the standard of living enjoyed by indigenous labor and all that signaled those endeavors highly politicized topics.

Architecture and urbanism were affected by this political and economic milieu. What was built, by whom and for whom, where and with what priorities, according to what rhetoric of legitimation and vision were determined by the position taken with respect to this social environment. Architecture and urbanism also had a role to play in determining the relations between dominant and marginalized cultures by their spatial deployment, formal language and, significantly in this context, the degree to which they supported industrialization and modernization within the colony.

23Charles-Robert Ageron recounts this history in Histoire de l'Algérie Contemporaine vol. 2 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979) 350-355. Ageron calls the 1937 organization the Parti populaire algérien (355) while later historians, such as Ruedy in Modern Algeria use the name Parti du peuple algérien (143). Both authors identify their respective parties as being founded by Messali in March of 1937, and both parties are given the abbreviation PPA.

The irresolution and inconsistency observable in political and economic discourses reappear in Le Corbusier's plans and discussions of them by both himself and his supporters. One salient feature of those discussions among French Algerians was the technical rationality, economic usefulness and consideration given to Moslem Algerians in Obus "C." That is, a similar relationship between economic development, indigenous employment and national security was made in reference to Obus "C" as could also be found in contemporary economic and political discourses, as the following discussion will show.

The period in which the Obus "C" plans were first evolved, late 1933 to early 1934, was one of strident Moslem Algerian demonstrations, followed by repressive reaction, both often explained by the pressures of economic decline.25 This period would form the background to the campaign for Obus "C" in Algiers. Anti-Semitism and race riots occurred in Oran and Constantine in 1934, highlighting the inability of the Metropole to control or disguise these disturbing aspects of the colony. As a consequence, a hardened political line with respect to Moslem demands was formalized in the election of a right-wing and anti-Semitic politician, Augustin Rozis, as mayor of Algiers, a politician whom Camus declared had "learned his lessons in orthodoxy from Maurras, the leader of Action Française."26 Repression and retaliation were the aim of the Régnier Decree, passed in March 1935, which declared any criticism of French Moslem policy in Algeria, (on the part of Moslem Algerians) to be anti-French and treasonable. Any such public demonstrations were a serious threat to the notion of a "harmony between races" which had been part of the new ideology of colonial reform nascent in the early 1930s. Clearly, this tension over Moslem demands for cultural independence and recognition made the policy of the association of differentiated cultural entities problematic because it might suggest not merely differentiated but also independent

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Moslem Algerians. This would be unacceptable and alarming to many colons in Algeria. At the same time, assimilation, which was the general strategy adopted by the Metropolitan government to counter Moslem demands for independence, became jeopardized by a lack of political action, economic crisis in France and fears of a degraded and disempowered European culture, les populations déclassées and les races mélangées, in Algeria.

Le Corbusier

Le Corbusier's political affiliations at this time are difficult to plot. Writing to J.-P. Faure in 1934 Le Corbusier attempted to clarify what he meant by the "political" and its relationship to architecture. "Précisions bien ces choses: ce que j'appelle de la politique c'est lorsqu'on attaque des personnalités au pouvoir.... Mais défendre un projet technique n'importe où ne me paraît pas devoir être de la politique, sinon de la bonne politique."27 Another instance where Le Corbusier attempted to articulate what he understood to be the relationship between architecture and politics was the drafting of the 1928 La Sarraz Declaration of CIAM. Here Le Corbusier and other CIAM signatories were quite explicit in their recognition of the interdependence of Modern architecture and politics. The basis of their articulation, or overlap, was technique and the general economy; it was the adoption of new building technologies, standardization, mass production procedures, and rationalized worker's housing which necessitated an engagement with the State as patron, or as the means by which to alter building regulations and diminish the power of the Academy.28 The 1928 La Sarraz Declaration addressed "Architecture and its relations with the State" directly, admitting that political power was necessary to the realization of CIAM architectural goals. As Le Corbusier then declared, "Il faut atteindre les états."29 However, there were within CIAM differences of opinion as to how one was to "reach the State." In 1929 the question was raised as to whether or

27Le Corbusier, letter to J.-P. Faure, 2 July 1934, AFLC.
29Steinmann, "Political Standpoints" 50. Steinmann also demonstrates that Le Corbusier was largely responsible for the Congress preparatory declaration. According to Steinmann the brochure prepared by Le Corbusier for the 1928 Congress "reflected with insight, the realization that an up-to-date architecture was largely a question of political power, a question of politics."
not CIAM should become an association of socialist architects or continue as a politically independent, non-partisan organization. While political neutrality was seen by some as a limitation on the possibilities of the New Architecture, it was preferred by the majority within CIAM who opted to work within the technical and cultural actualities of developed capitalism, despite its shortcomings.\(^\text{30}\) Le Corbusier favored the political "neutrality" of the abstract and not entirely consistent notions of Henri de Saint Simon and the Saint Simonists as they existed in the 1930s Regional Syndicalism of the Prélude group.\(^\text{31}\) Although a political agenda has been attributed, rather tenuously, to "purism" as part of the aesthetically conservative and reactionary nationalism of the 1920s "call to order,"\(^\text{32}\) a more secure relationship of Le Corbusier with Regional Syndicalism in the 1930s has been established.

Kenneth Frampton asserts that, "despite the title page disclaimer the plans are not politics, the Ville Radieuse envisioned a system of technical and social organization, with specific political implications.\(^\text{33}\) Two such implications are important to the discussion of a colonial "radiant city"--participation and spatial deployment. At no time did Le Corbusier include Moslem Algerians as participants among the decision-making committees he envisioned for Algiers as units of his hierarchical structure of power.\(^\text{34}\) At the same time, the marginalized but integrated spaces allocated for Moslem Algerians would be a preoccupation of the Obus plans. These ideas were derived from Regional Syndicalism, which Mary McLeod identifies in Le Corbusier's planning with the new emphasis given to organic forms as opposed to static and Cartesian compositions: a biological

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\(^{30}\) Steinmann, "Political Standpoints" 54.

\(^{31}\) There was a revival of interest among the French in Saint Simonism after World War I. Its revival in the 1930s was understood at the time as a possible inspiration for the re-structuring of liberalism. See E.S. Mason, "Saint Simonism and the Rationalization of Industry," The Quarterly Journal of Economics XLV (Aug. 1931): 640-83. Mason's thesis was that neither Henri de Saint Simon nor his followers were socialists and that their thought actually had much more in common with liberalism. He also points out the inconsistencies of Saint Simonism.


\(^{33}\) Kenneth Frampton, "The City of Dialectic," Architectural Design 39.10 (Oct. 1969): 542. Frampton points out the equation made by Le Corbusier between spatial use and political equality in the architect's discussion of the Van Nelle factory. Frampton also points out that this notion of a "dialectic of socio-political participation was integral to the creation of the Ville Radieuse." (543).

\(^{34}\) When Le Corbusier discussed with Emery the possible members of a new Regional Plan committee he eliminated from his list the two Moslem Algerians on the existing forty-five member team.
rather than machine analogy; a concern with the total symbiosis of "man, architecture, landscape;" and concerns with climate, topography, and resources. This suggests an ideology rather than partisan politics. Yet, such a retreat to landscape and preoccupation with topography and resources are not without their "political resonances." This is especially so in the context of a colony embracing, however undeniably, a policy of economic development for a Metropole in desperate need of markets and consumers.

The Regionalist Syndicalist movement was a peripheral and perhaps anachronistic political force, having reached its apogee in the 1880s. Still, it did seek to challenge the basis of power in France and the colonies by proposing a de-centered government of producer-management groups. The pages of its journal, Prélude, were filled with political commentary. The February 1933 issue contained Le Corbusier's article, "Esprit Greco-Esprit Latin- Esprit Gréco-Latin," counterpoised with "Fascisme et Racisme" by François de Pierrefeu, both flanking "Directives, Droite...Gauche... Capitalisme...Marxisme... Visions neuves" by le Comité central (Figure 39). "Mussolini-Hitler-Macdonald, D'autres prennent des initiatives" was a front page item in March.

The anonymous, "Un plan d'Organisation Européen," had the subtitle "La France ne peut pas rester isolée," and articulated a concern for national security that clearly politicized the plan proposed. It was in the context of such organizational plans that "le quadrilatère: Paris, Rome, Barcelone, Alger" was provided as graphic illustration (Figure 30). Herein the location of Algiers was not as neutral as the mathematical notation, quadrilatère, might suggest. In the accompanying commentary the city's political situation was highlighted:

36For a discussion of the various definitions and interpretations given to regionalism by different disciplines--geography, economics, sociology etc.--see Pierre Bourdieu "L'identité et conscience régionale en France Eléments pour une réflexion critique sur l'idée de région," Actes de la Recherche en sciences sociales 35 (Nov. 1980): 63-72. Bourdieu states, "Le régionalisme (ou le nationalisme) n'est qu'un cas particulier des luttes proprement symboliques dans lesquelles les agents sont engagés soit individuellement et à l'état dispersé, soit collectivement et à l'état organisé, et qui ont pour enjeu la conservation ou la transformation des rapports de forces symboliques et des profits corrélatifs, tant économiques que symboliques... (69)
38Prélude 3 (15 Mar. 1933): 1
En Afrique du Nord, il y a un très petit nombre de Français, 500,000, qui sont environnés d'une masse de 12,000,000 de Musulmans. Il y a là un danger certain. Les Algériens ont été lentement mais très profondément modifiés par l'occupation française. Les règles doctrinales et religieuses de ce pays ont été peu à peu abolies. On a appelé les indigènes à participer à une vie de production, de consommation, de plaisirs, pour laquelle ils n'étaient point faits, sauf en Kabylie, il ne semble donc pas qu'actuellement ce pays soit en mesure de se ressaisir contre nous.40

It would seem that the Prélude group understood the delicate relations between economic development, political contingency and national security. Algeria was contrasted with Tunisia and Morocco where "conservative" forces were considered active and where "la moindre flammèche peut ranimer la guerre sacrée, la guerre sainte." As a consequence, the journal argued, "Il y a donc là UN TRES GRAVE DANGER de coupure, à un certain moment, de la France avec ses Colonies. Et il faudrait des dizaines et des centaines de mille combattants et des dépenses formidables pour réduire une nouvelle insurrection du Rif."41 Consequently, the French government was implored to establish an entente with Italy and Spain such that North Africa might be populated by Europeans. In 1934 the journal featured titles such as "Non, le fascisme n'est pas le Sauveur!"42 and in 1936 articles on "Vers le Début de Temps Nouveaux," with commentary on "conservateurs? Fascistes? Front Populaire? Socialistes? Communisme? Syndicalisme?" and importantly, the "Avenir de l'Occident."43

If Obus "C" was the blueprint for the Capital of North Africa within a Mediterranean Federation, then Le Corbusier's early thinking on the relationship between cultures necessary for Algiers can be found in these 1933 Prélude texts defining this Federation. Here was put forth the observation that Moslem Algerians were "not made," for "participation in a life of production, consumption,

40Prélude 6 (June/July 1933): 1.
41"Un Plan d'Organisation Européen" 2, (capitalization is in the original).
42Pierre Besnard, "Non, le fascisme n'est pas le Sauveur!" Prélude 12 (July/Aug. 1934): 1.
and pleasures," and yet their inclusion and appeasement within Algeria was deemed necessary. In addition, Algeria and Algiers, the one geographically the other politically, were to be considered a beach-head against Tunisian and Moslem uprisings which might threaten France's economic exploitation of North Africa.\(^{44}\)

The politics of Prélude's vision of the colonial world coincided with many of the concerns then being expressed in the revisionist colonial discourse of the 1930s. This reformism was preoccupied with a perceived threat to France's status in Europe, a feared loss of control in North Africa, and anxiety over the future of the West. The solutions proposed also had an affinity with this revisionary world: a non-hierarchical relationship of colony, Metropole and western Mediterranean nations, assimilation through economics, equilibrium via production, a non-centralized administered state. Le quadrilatère was an accomplice in the project of maintaining, protecting and extending the civilization of the West with France as its prime representative and beneficiary.

Intermixed in Le Corbusier's articles on architecture and planning at this time were comments about strategies for dealing with the economic crisis then threatening to further weaken France. He called for a reorganization of the economy around new centers of management which were "natural" rather than those established arbitrarily by the State. He envisioned a world market-place in keeping with the technical possibilities of transport which, if not immediately realizable, could be initiated by large federations such as his Mediterranean proposal. He maintained: "Il faut donc s'efforcer de créer des groupes nouveaux représentant des unités de grandeur nouvelles. Les groupes constituant des économies fermées se suffisant à elles-mêmes, nous arracheront à l'économie anarchique mondiale."\(^{45}\) Wealth would accrue from the plan and industry not from

\(^{44}\)See, "Un Plan d'Organisation Européen" 1-4.

\(^{45}\)Le Corbusier, Prélude 9/10 (1934): 7. The italics exist in the original. What is significant about this statement is the similarity between the proposal of "closed economies," with the protected, "closed," trade reciprocity between the Metropole and the colony proposed in colonial discourse. There are differences, but both propose that what one country lacks another will provide. In Le Corbusier's model a natural distribution of goods is assumed, rather than the capitalist, and perhaps culturally determined, aspect of
palliative public works. By 1937 Algiers as part of a Paris, Barcelona, Rome federation would be repositioned within a Paris/Algiers/Gao (West Africa) axis. Both of these alignments figured in significant economic and political debates: the first being more extensive and international in its formulation, the second more insular, if also more Imperial, in its manifestation.

Obus "C" was neither a generalized abstraction nor merely the result of empirical research, financial considerations and technical ingenuity, but fashioned and justified by the architect's appreciation of the particularities of the Algiers socio-political landscape. It was an esteem for regional units of production cultivated by his Regional Syndicalist connections, and, as discussed in chapter one, general cultural attitudes to the colony and the "East." The provision of Moslem institutions, the notion of "welding" together the Moslem and European cultures of Algiers, the unprecedented scale of technical intervention, and the gendering of the landscape would be particularly pertinent in the context of contemporary debates then occurring in the Senate and elsewhere, in both France and Algiers.46

Obus "C"

Into this political and economic debate Le Corbusier entered his plan, Obus "C," with its ultra modern high tech construction as an emblem of industrialization and modernization and its provision of modern buildings for Moslem institutions as well as ethnically mixed worker's and elite housing (Figure 8). These can be, and were, correlated with the political and economic discussions of the day; such debates are clearly in the background and formed the supportive "footnotes" to urban redevelopment.

Le Corbusier had proposed Obus "A" and "B" as technical facts and poetic expressions, cultural products that could be assessed as autonomous from specific political machinations and the established social, economic and colonial circumstances in which they were evolved. Now, in the mid 1930s, he seemed ready to concede to the political realm in which support for Obus "C" must be found. Although several of Le Corbusier's actions in 1932 and 1933 might constitute a venturing into political enclaves--letters to political figures in December 1932, the juxtaposition of his urbanism with political discourse in Prélude through 1933, the publication of his "lettre à un maire" in Architecture d'Aujourd'hui in late 1933--it was not until 1934 that specifically local politics was openly acknowledged and, as the journalist Jean Cotereau termed it, "Un nouveau bombardement d'Alger" was launched. In 1934 Le Corbusier wrote to George Huisman, director of Fine Arts, Peyrouton, Resident-General in Tunisia, and Meynier, Governor General of Algeria, soliciting their intervention and exertion of political power against the municipal council, claiming (without foundation) that public opinion supported his plan. In writing to Lyautey, Peyrouton and Meynier, he clearly felt that these representatives of colonialism would find some affinity with his proposals.

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47 Le Corbusier's notions of the social were vague in their generalization but as stated in the La Sarraz CIAM manifesto in 1928 they were patterned on the opposition of a tradition-bound class and an innovative one. Economic and social concerns were the features of the new architecture differentiating it from Academism. However, these economic and social spheres were viewed in terms of their relationship to industrialization, rationalization and standardization. This was understood as the social life to which people must adjust. Technical progress was to determine legislation and hence economic, social and state institutions. States were distinguished according to their support or condemnation of Academic traditions. Ideas about the economic sphere were shaped by the desire to industrialize building and especially housing construction. These were views on society, economics and politics highly determined by the architect's goals (and utopia) of industrialized production as point 7 of the discussion of architecture and the state reveals: "Architecture's new attitude, according to which it aims of its own volition to re-situate itself within economic reality, renders all claim to official patronage superfluous." See, "1928 CIAM: La Sarraz Declaration" in Ulrich Conrads ed., trans. Michael Bullock, Programs and manifestoes on 20th-century architecture (Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 1970) 109-113. The quote is from page 112.

48 This was the title of a series of articles written by Jean Cotereau through May to July 1934 for Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments. Le Corbusier wrote to Maréchal Lyautey, Governors General Carde and Peyrouton and Mayor Brunel in December 1932. The letters are reproduced in The Radiant City 248-249.

49 Peyrouton, letter to Le Corbusier, 4 May 1934 and Le Corbusier, letter to Général Meynier, 3 May 1934, AFLC, and McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 356.
Obus "C" significantly transformed Obus plans "A" and "B." The alterations introduced responded to the severe criticisms which the earlier plans had received from city administrators and to the failure of the plans to gain public support. The new plan was accompanied by an active campaign which arrayed technical expertise, powerful political figures and selected strains of colonial discourse in a strategic play for approval. Obus "C," realized between the summer or fall of 1933 and the winter of 1934, also took shape during the turbulent disillusionment with the Third Republic and growing concerns with indigenous nationalist actions in the Empire.50 As well, Le Corbusier discovered a politically altered city on his return to Algiers in July of 1934. Anti-fascist demonstrations had been countered by right-wing factions, the number of supporters for the Croix de Feu had grown to become second only to Paris, *latinity* had been adopted as an argument in favor of French sovereignty in North Africa,51 and Obus "C" had been rejected in March by both the mayor and Régie foncière. When Le Corbusier returned in April of 1936, to attend the Exposition de la Cité Moderne, his plans were again vigorously promoted.52 Publicity for the exhibition prominently featured Obus "C" as an abstract and emblematic form dramatically counterpoised with a classical column (Figure 40). The plan obviously possessed some strategic meaning, a certain symbolic power which resonated from the imaging of the *cité moderne* by a "futuristic" *redent* housing scheme set against a traditional Doric column within a milieu of Mediterranean mythology and political tensions.

Obus "C" was manifestly more realizable than earlier versions, not least because it was more limited in extent, aligned with both the Municipal program and financial mechanisms for a specific neighborhood, the Marine District, and the large-scale projects envisioned for the port.53 To this

50JORF (Sénat). (21/3/35): 345.
52The poster formed the cover of the May issue of *Chantiers nord-africains*, 1936.
53See Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 258. It should be noted that it is difficult to accurately date drawings and images. The copyright notation in *The Radiant City* gives the publication date for *Ville Radieuse* as 1933, although it contains information from 1934 and was not in fact published until 1935; although he seems to largely confine the more Orientalist-inspired observation to the earlier plans. Articles from *Plans* and *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* from 1933 were republished in *Ville Radieuse*. 
end it differed from Obus "A" and "B" in several key features. It abandoned, if provisionally, the *viaduct habitation* and the *redent* housing foreseen for the Fort de l'Empereur, along with its *passerelle*. They remained as poignant suggestions for the future. The skyscraper business center was reduced in scale, altered in shape, given a "commercial forum" and re-sited further north, toward Bastion 23. It would be built first, in two stages if necessary. European institutions consisting of buildings for the Délégations financières, Trade Tribunal, Halls of Justice, Peoples Hall and a North-African Commercial Office with Exposition hall were to be placed to the south and east, between the new business center and the existing Government building. They would be balanced by corresponding, but unspecified, Moslem institutions to the southwest. These European and Moslem buildings were freely disposed within the superimposed highway system retained from the earlier, theoretical, Obus "A." As Le Corbusier described it, the seafront highway created a "captivating" coastline--"Algiers' first ornament"-- while it linked the port with new industrial development to the north, and the westward highway to El Biar that would one day emanate from the skyscraper.54

The business center still generated all other components of the revised plan, it necessitated the seafront esplanade to connect it to the new multi-purpose terminal, and its minimized land use allowed for and positioned the public buildings of the civic center to its south. As corollaries to these three elements of the plan--skyscraper, esplanade, civic center--were the development of the border area between the Casbah and the existing streets of Bab-Azoun and Bab-el-Oued, the connections between the existing Aristide-Briand Square and the harbor and the continuation of a future highway from the Harbor to the business center and northward to Oran (Figure 41). Generally, the colonial dream of exotic coastlines and exploitable lands established the *parti* of this Le Corbusier plan.

54 Le Corbusier *The Radiant City* 257.
For the first time in Le Corbusier's Algiers plans—and preceding the Régie foncière plans by a year—specific attention was paid not only to the future of Europeans but also to that of existing Moslem populations. Arab institutions were placed at the very margins of the site. Here, Le Corbusier suggested, could be placed stores, offices and meeting halls—modern functions. At this time Moslem municipal councilors were calling for housing and schools while the Oulemas demanded Koranic schools, medersa and mosques. Such requests had been acknowledged earlier in Rotival's 1930 lecture given for the Amis d'Alger where he indicated the inclusion of foundations and schools within his sanitized Parc de la Casbah. Instead, Le Corbusier suggested that his allocated park spaces might be used for Arab cafés sheltered by arcades or peristyles; they would be picturesque, commercial and a point of cultural intermingling where mosques and Koranic schools could not. Le Corbusier's "last improvement" to the Arab city consisted of clearing a space around the two Mosques near the harbor. This clearance improved views, although not necessarily access, to the mosques from the highway which now cut between them in its trajectory from the Place du Gouvernement to the proposed business skyscraper. The Arab cafés were aligned along the route connecting the Cathedral and the Place du Gouvernement, while Arab institutions were housed in European style redent buildings and sited to form a buffer between the Marine District and the Casbah. This configuration of the Marine District and its immediate surroundings, so the architect believed, would "constitute a general civic center effecting a properly nuanced liaison between the European city and the Arab city." In terms of the preceding discussion of the political and economic preoccupations of the time several things stand

55 As Le Corbusier stated, "The existing rue de Chartres would be widened on its seaward side. The difference of level here could be used to advantage for the erection of a redent of big buildings to overlook the landscaped area which is part of the overall plan for la Marine and the space cleared away from it. These big, indented (en redents) buildings could be used by the Arab population for stores, offices, meeting halls, etc. In the gardens located on the level of the place du Gouvernement, Arab cafés could be set up, sheltered by arcades or peristyles. This would also link the cathedral directly with the place du Gouvernement by a garden-lined route that would leave the bishopric as it is." Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 257.

56 Maurice Rotival, "Veut-on faire d'Alger une capitale?" It is an extract from the lecture which he gave for the Amis d'Alger 12 Dec. 1930. Chantiers nord-africains (Jan. 1931): 33, 35. McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 337. McLeod suggests Le Corbusier may have been influenced by Rotival in the placement of the business center at the Marine.

57 Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 257.

58 Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 257.
out. The first is the fact that Moslem Algerians have been envisioned as participants in a modern future. The second is that a highly industrialized vocabulary and scale were envisioned, one which left behind the existing pattern of social relations and proposed a new scale for their reconceptualization. The third is that business, commerce and the economic sphere, not the State directly, were understood as the sources of equilibrium.

Nevertheless, in Algeria and especially its capital city Algiers, commercial and industrial activity during the early 1930s was centered on the viticulture industry and its subsidiary enterprises. It necessitated transit systems, storage facilities, and especially port improvements in Algiers; wine was an export industry and the most lucrative endeavor in Algeria at this time. In addition, viticulture was not just an economic enterprise. Members of the viticulture industry dominated the Délégations financières through which it decided, and politicized, economic decisions influencing not only production but also relations with the Metropole and with Moslem Algerians. Delegates opposed the Metropole over wine quotas and calls for increased wages for Moslem Algerians. The presence of the Offices for the Délégations financières in Obus "C" is therefore telling and its placement between Moslem Algerian souks and Place du Gouvernement poignant.

Le Corbusier's aesthetic concerns and professional resources participated in the current colonial debates in several ways. He proposed technology, commerce and industry of unprecedented scale, one which was not confined within the static grid of the 1932 Prost & Rotival plan but aligned to dynamic orthogonals bent to the terrain and particularized by it. The future viaducts and passerelles promised kinetic visions from the elevated highways, or spectacular and unconventional ones from the transparent glazed volumes of the housing hovering above the ground. Algiers was no longer caught within the undifferentiated grid of streets with their perspectival trajectories bounded by Beaux Arts buildings and punctuated by monuments and

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squares. Instead, Le Corbusier offered a redeployment, a stretching out, of the front line of colonial attack, transferring the theater of operations from entrenched policy and primitive local economies to that of large scale industrial method and extended economic unities, Paris but also Rome and Barcelona, or alternatively, Gao and West Africa.

The Quartier de la Marine

The political debate alluded to by Le Corbusier in his letters to Edmond Brua centered on the Quartier de la Marine. It was for this "lutte civique" that Le Corbusier’s Obus "C" was opportunely enlisted. Ostensibly the focus of local partisan politics, as was discussed in chapter two, the area can also be understood as the epicenter of an escalated colonial development since the Marine District was considered the first stage of a larger infrastructural change envisioned for the whole of Algeria. The controversy surrounding the improvement of this area bounded by sea, Casbah and Government buildings, would bring down Brunel’s Municipal government, pit Le Corbusier against locally entrenched urbanists, magnify differences in colonial policy and sensitize the public to issues of modernization; it would also initiate a new scale of colonial intervention and extension of metropolitan paradigms in North Africa—dispersed economic and administrative centers and regional planning.

The redevelopment of the Marine District had been since the 1880s the focus of urbanization schemes. However, it is also obvious that by 1930 it was "urgent" for other, less local and not entirely civic, reasons as well. The 1930s saw the growth of cities, industrialization and a shift in the sites of contestation by the colonized from the hinterland to the cities. It was less the case of an Abd el Kadar leading an uprising among rural tribes, as it had been in the nineteenth-century, than it was of mass urban demonstrations led by a European educated elite. The "enemy" was no longer in a distant countryside but in the very heart of European settlement. The relatively sudden but

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60 In the 1920s it was studied by the Services municipaux de l'Urbanisme et des Travaux communaux in collaboration with the Paris urbanist Danger. The resulting plan was, with amendments in 1932 and 1934, incorporated into the general plan of Algiers first proposed in 1930. Lespès, "La Ville" 184.
conclusive withdrawal of the military from central Algiers and its replacement by institutional buildings and industrial infrastructure were responses to a transformed context in which new forms of colonial surveillance and control were required. The Régie foncière plans and Obus "C," although in different ways, were responses to this. As the Moslem population of Algiers doubled between 1926 and 1931 urbanization and modernization attempted to alter the configuration of Algiers so as to accommodate and control it. In addition, modernization had caused a restructuring of investment in Algeria which demanded rapid communications between the city, its port and the hinterlands. The Marine District hindered this investment flow by blocking access to the city center from the new suburbs, tourist areas and investment sites developing to the north and west of Algiers. It would become more cumbersome with the completion of the port expansion and improvement. The short, narrow and mis-aligned streets bounded by mixed-use buildings allowing the low rents and population density which made viable artisan and small businesses, largely Spanish, Italian and Moslem Algerian, were no longer compatible with the notion of Algiers as a Capital city or with the levels of investment imagined. Nor, as was revealed in chapter two, was the denigration of French civilization some discerned in its mixing of "races" acceptable to all.

Two aspects of this redevelopment were related to specific colonial objectives of the 1930s. The first was that the reconfiguration of the Marine District as a place of passage, a connector route to the newly developing suburbs such as Bab-el-Oued via the Western National Highway, to the hinterland was in keeping with the objectives of the mise en valeur economic policy and, by the addition of civic buildings, its reformulation by Sarraut as Grandeur et servitude coloniale. The second, the relocation of the majority--and also poorest--of residents facilitated the segregation policy that was part of the larger Regional plan that included segregated cités indigènes. As one advocate of redevelopment noted:

Il était inévitable que le tracé déjà ancien du réseau routier ne répondît plus aujourd'hui aux données et aux besoins nouveaux de la circulation, et ceci parce que

61 Lespès, "La Ville" 188.
d'abord, dans un pays neuf les changements sont plus précipités et souvent plus inattendus que dans les autres, et en outre parce qu'une vaste colonie telle que l'Algérie, où il faut compter avec la distance ... Il faut par suite moderniser...

The rhetoric of prosperity and modernity as concomitant with French occupation, and of colonialism generally, was also used as justification: "Comment alors mettre en doute l'intérêt qu'il y a, indépendamment des raisons majeures de sécurité et de salubrité, à rendre cette partie de l'ancienne ville—et dans de bien meilleures conditions—le caractère et la prospérité qu'elle a connus dans les premiers temps de notre occupation." The main concern and rationale for this redevelopment was economic prosperity based on the management of people, rather than security or hygiene. For many within the Amis d'Alger, not only did the 1932 Prost & Rotival plan fail to realize the economic development they believed necessary, but it also failed to express their ideas on colonial order. Moreover its style and aesthetics was incommensurate with the politics of their vision.

Prost & Socard: the Régie foncière plan, 1936

The 1932 plan had included a web of streets and squares which created nodes and a fairly even distribution of traffic through the area in both north-south and east-west directions (Figure 6).

The existing pattern of streets, building typology and function had been regularized but not

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62 Lespès, "La Ville" 188.
63 Lespès, "La Ville" 185.
64 The earlier 1932 plan is illustrated in The Radiant City 244 and an article by Paul Rimbault, "La Démolition du quartier de la Marine," La Dépêche algérienne 14 Mar. 1934: 4. The later 1936 plan accompanies Alazard's January 1936 article "L'Urbanisme et l'Architecture d'Alger, de 1918 à 1936" L'Architecture (Jan. 1937): 30, 31. Authorship of the Marine District plans is somewhat complex to determine. Socard designed a park system for Algiers which was exhibited in the Architecture and Urbanism Exhibition in 1933. A plan for a park system for Algiers by Socard was published in Chantiers nord-africains March 1933: 280. Giordani, who did research in the Algiers City Archives attributes the plans for the Marine District of 1931-33 to Prost and Rotival, those of 1936 to Prost, Rotival and Socard or to Prost and Socard only. The 1937 plan is attributed to Prost and Socard by Giordani and to Socard alone by Deluz. Part of the confusion no doubt arises from the dual roles which Prost and Rotival shared as planners for the Marine District and also for the Preliminary Regional Plan, a position to which they were appointed by Brunel in 1933-35. Extant letters from Emery to Le Corbusier refer to the Prost & Rotival plans for the Marine district until May 1937. In late 1937 a Permanent Committee of the Regional Plan was established to which Le Corbusier was appointed in February of 1938. Principal members were Renaud, Coquerel and Socard.
fundamentally altered. The plan simply embodied the assumptions of a French cultural tradition, building blocks conforming to the scale and axis of the street and a simplified Beaux Arts style typical of Algiers, and more closely resembling the *style vainqueur* than the *style protecteur*. The latter was reserved for an adjacent project for the lower Casbah. This plan was revised in late 1935 or early 1936. It was during this period that the architect, landscape designer, and advocate of an Algerian style, Tony Socard, became involved (Figure 42).

In the revised plan by Prost & Socard, several streets were widened (notably rue Bab Azoun, rue de la Lyre, the latter leading into the area from the south, and rue Volland forming the district's northern border) and straightened (rue de Lyon), a central boulevard 450 meters long and 35 meters wide was cut through the district from north to south (Figure 42 and Figure 43). New axes were now terminated by monuments and enlarged squares. Generally, a "grid" of north south boulevards ranging from 35 meters to 16 meters in width and east west streets of 20 to 16 meters was laid out creating large land blocks with central courts. This established a single dominating "imperial way," connecting production to the north with its distribution to the south. It also divided the neighborhood into two functionally distinguished zones. To the west would be the traditional mixing in one building of small scale commercial space with dwellings above. Here would be housed a diminished European population, the majority having been re-housed in segregated housing scattered throughout the city.65 To the east, public buildings were envisioned: a Chamber of Commerce, a Law Court, a National Library, a School of Fine Arts. Hastily included Moslem institutions were vaguely specified. The street system also emphasized north south movement, that is, transactions between European sectors, while it was less accommodating of west east communication between the "oriental" Casbah and European sector. Two Moslem mosques were conserved within newly created park land. Of other Moorish constructions only two

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65 The Régie foncière retained control of only one fifth of the land remaining after the new street system was established. A subsidiary, Société d'aménagement urbain would be responsible for three fifths; the remaining one fifth was left for public auction. René Lespèe and Paul Messerschmitt, "La Ville, le Port, Le Tourisme" *Chantiers nord-africains* (March 1935): 184. Lespèe wrote the sections on La Ville and Le Port from which the quote is taken.
or three patios, some columns and other details which could be transferred elsewhere were retained and the ancient Palace of Mustapha, the last vestige of Turkish Algiers, would conserve the exotic image of the city as viewed from the sea.

The new scheme would accommodate within its boundaries only 4,500 to 5,000 personnes of the 18,350 deemed "personnes de conditione modeste." Therefore, many, because of their impoverishment, would not be rehoused in the Marine District.

On saisit le grand intérêt de l'opération: construire au coeur de la ville, à côté de la place du Gouvernement, tout un quartier, et répartir son ancienne population en d'autres points de la ville européenne. Rarement une municipalité a conçu un projet aussi hardi et aussi grandiose.

In other words, this was a scheme for the increase of rental value and the zoning of the city according to economic class, and consequently in terms of race, although the latter was not explicit. Indeed in the 1920s and 1930s those living in the Marine district were primarily Italian and Spanish but with a recent and rapid increase in the number of Moslem Algerians. Those of French origin accounted for only one fifth of the population. The plan also sorted out those races mélangées of which the President of the Republic had spoken in 1930.

The housing provided by the revised plan was attributed with the use of the most modern principles: construction covering only one third of the land, large interior courts determined by the light and ventilation requirements of the buildings grouped around them, and the logically resulting stepped back, serpentine massing of the buildings. The scale of the planned buildings and street network was moderate, conservative with respect to a

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67 Alazard, "L'Urbanisme et l'Architecture d' Alger" 25. Alazard was a professor in the Faculty of Letters, Algiers.
projection of future needs. The streets would only in exceptional instances be more than 16 meters in width, and housing would be of a conventional six stories in height and their interior courts of 400 to 800 meters were only slightly larger than those already found to be inadequate. Although two Mosques were retained they were isolated within a refashioned park where they were displaced onto the historical and leisure realm as if they had no contemporary agency. The modernity of the plan was signaled in its clarity and airiness, its provision of hygienic living and easy transit, and its perspectival focal points which guided movement and thought toward symbols and trophies of French power and occupancy. The public buildings, although only schematically indicated as Beaux Arts, were a digression from the modernist development seen in the public buildings of the late 1920s and early 1930s, such as Guiauchain's General Government quarters for the Gouvernement Général or Guion's Fine Arts building, both highly praised in the Metropolitan Architectural press. Like the Prost & Rotival Plan, the Prost & Socard plan was Algerian associationist policy in practice.

The redevelopment of the Marine district was by 1935 part of a larger transformation which included the lower Casbah. Unlike the Municipal plan for the Marine District, initiated in 1931 and where cultural preservation seems to have played a very insignificant part, the redevelopment of the Casbah was controlled by the Commission of Historic Monuments. This Commission was instructed by the Governor General to redesign the area not with boulevards but with building and street types common in Turkish areas of the city. The Governor General condescendingly believed that "one could with adroit restorations, without touching its tortuous streets, make this quarter look pre-1830 and install some souks and embellish the houses restored and worthy of being

70 Alazard, "Urbanisme et l'Architecture" 26-27.
71 See J.C. "L'agonie d'un quartier," especially the comparative plans pages 390 and 391 and their discussion on page 392.
The operative words are "redesign," "tourists" and the "look of pre-1830." In this location the Casbah would be retained, for the authenticity and aesthetic value which it could bestow on the city as a whole, a Moorish palace, picturesque vaulted passages, and a collection of Moorish buildings: the Archbishop's Palace now serving as a Museum, and others functioning as a "Winter Palace," an Office of Indigenous Affairs, a National Library, and an Official residence. The preservation of the Casbah was not purely for the tourist pleasures of the Metropole and Europeans. It was also intended to propagate the idea that the French presence had left preserved the indigenous culture found in 1830. Yet the buildings themselves housed chiefly European institutions and the religious edifices retained were done so as monuments and urban design elements; their use was strictly monitored, "the pre-1830 look" purely for the eye. In contradistinction to the Casbah, the Marine District was assigned a different, if less clearly defined, role. Grand boulevards, regular building blocks and the sense of a firmly rooted, French, traditions were assumed and served to promote the notion of French culture as untouched by the indigenous presence as the indigenous seemingly were by the French occupation.

The Régie foncière tended to downplay the effects of changes introduced by their plan. They emphasized its more modest intentions as compared with even those proposed in the late 1880s. Balanced, measured decisions had been made with respect to altering the dimensions of streets; rue Bab-el-Oued was made only two and a half times wider, while the Place du Gouvernement was simply regularized to form a Square. The importance given to the conservative aspects of the plan by the Regie foncière was no doubt intended to minimize mounting criticism of extravagant expenditures and the cost of the operation. One inquiry into the transformation of the Marine District and the ensuing disruption was given the headline: "Que coûtera aux contribuables algérois la transformation du quartier de la Marine." The article concluded: "il semble que nous soyons

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73Lespès, "La Ville" p. 187. Lespès is quoting Governor General Carde.
The Régie foncière plan was guarded in more than its architectural and urban intentions. Its institutional buildings of modern colonial administration and management, elimination of cultural mixing with the removal and isolation of Moslem Algerian housing elsewhere, reassurances of modest, slow incremental change, Beaux Arts style and appeal to segregated, uncontaminated cultures maintained the colonialist idea of association where cultural differences and independent economies were to be recognized, and administered, as Lyautey had stipulated, according "to a program of political organization." However, with the subsequent inclusion of Moslem cultural institutions in the 1935-1936 plan a shift in this vacillating policy is registered. Housing and albeit vaguely defined institutional buildings for Moslem Algerians sought to balance the boulevard-conduit of products and goods which monopolized the area with the current colonialist idea of "generosity."

This plan and Obus "C" do have some points in common. Both included a highway which would serve north-south traffic and thus link the port and commerce with the hinterland and other colonial cities; with this highway the two plans foresaw Algiers as a distribution hub within an enlarged economic entity. By 1935-36 each plan envisaged cultural institutions and included parks and open spaces. However, Obus "C" differed in at least four important ways from the revised Régie foncière plan: the presence of the skyscraper, an integration of and specificity about Moslem presence in the area, the absence of housing in the Marine District proper and, in its style and scale. These differences can be partly attributed to the functional focus each deemed appropriate for the site. Obus "C" emphasized business via its prominent skyscraper whereas the Régie foncière plan promoted conventional housing and functions that had previously existed. The Régie foncière

74Paul Rimbault, "Que coûtera aux contributables algérois la transformation du quartier de la Marine?" La Dépêche algérienne, 22 Mar. 1934: 2.
plan, under Prost's conceptual guidance, identified the chief problems of the city to be those of social management, and their solution to reside in segregated housing and an enlarged scope of administrative management and planning. By contrast, Le Corbusier sought to compensate for inefficient business areas, ineffective buildings and antiquated communications by concentrating commercial accommodation in a skyscraper served by a highway system. State policy redistributed and dissociated cultures in the Régie foncière plan, economic development and technical ingenuity realigned and assimilated cultures in Obus "C."

**Obus "C.": Publicity and Politicization:**

**The Radiant City**

In *The Radiant City*, largely compiled and partially published in 1933-1934 and published in its entirety in 1935, Le Corbusier marshaled several discourses to his Algerian cause. The discourses on progress based on technology, business and health were juxtaposed with those on the "Other," primarily Moslem women within romanticized images of narrow, dark, labyrinthine passages concealing sheltered interiors of calm and quiet. They are portrayed quite differently from the scantily clad and athletic Western women in the same text.\(^75\) Moslem women were recast as symbols of human scale, harmony with nature and an interiorized life, the private realm lived within a biologically-based architecture and a timeless folklore (Figure 22).\(^76\) At the same time, Le Corbusier also praised the earliest European plans for the city in which military engineers had dimensioned streets and places to their needs and ruined indigenous agriculture in the hinterland which undermined any harmony with nature.\(^77\) He also offered his professional skills in the interests of "conquering" the lands of Fort de l'Empereur in order to "open up a prodigious source of wealth, of profit." With such comments colonial economic concerns were woven into Le

\(^75\) Compare European women in swimsuits with Moslem Algerian women in traditional dress in Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 106, 230.

\(^76\) Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 230-233.

\(^77\) "Scorched earth policy" refers to the burning of villages and leaving destitute populations and the land unproductive, and for example was practiced, for example, by General Bugeaud in the 1840s and 1850s.
Corbusier's polemic about the superiority of his plan and shaped the perceptions on which it was built. Le Corbusier also felt it important, to a degree he had not in his earlier plans, to add his interests in Algerian folklore and gender difference to his arguments supporting his modernizing, "technically innovative" and "financially realistic" plans for Algiers. Seemingly contradictory in his praise for Western technology and his esteem for "oriental" urbanism, Le Corbusier's "radiant city" incorporated fragments of various current reformist discourses on colonialism.

Le Corbusier's discussion of Algiers in The Radiant City gave a heightened prominence to the traditional value of North African architecture, settlement patterns and objects of everyday use (Figure 24). Although some of the material used, primarily postcards and annotated illustrations, date from 1931 and his trip across North Africa, they were not related so effectively to the Algiers debate until 1933-34. Le Corbusier inverted the usual reading of barbarous Moslem civilization and civilized Western, demonstrating through schematic drawings that the "barbarous" Moslem lived in quiet well-being and what amounts to a "masterpiece of urbanism;" the ville arabe was the image of efficiency and formal arrangement: cell, street, terrace (Figure 24 and Figure 44). Although Le Corbusier emphasized the ville arabe as a material proof of his Syndicalist interest in a biological metaphor of cell structures, it also participated in the hierarchical world view of the Prélude program. This would necessarily include its colonial implications. In opposition to this ville arabe, the "civilized" Westerners lived "like rats in a pit," with "chaotic streets and sinister courts, in disastrous urbanistic stupidity." This served to distance the architect from earlier, nineteenth-century, colonial practices, but not colonialism in general. Although Le Corbusier praised the simple habitability and accoutrements of the North African house--standard goods, spare, ordinary and basic spaces--he did so to make a point about his own architectural design, to legitimate it by suggesting its universality. Such comments were also in keeping with Regional Syndicalism and revamped St. Simonist political philosophy. The North African houses were presented as simple solutions for individual needs, community life and climate, via a straightforward use of materials.

78Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 230. This could also be understood as a criticism of laissez-faire liberal economics and politics.
However, Le Corbusier does not refer to the gendered spatial divisions required of Moslem customs and beliefs in the explication of his plans (Figure 45 and Figure 46). Neither the patio and garden which he included offered the segregation of space or privacy ideally required, and communal apartments on the scale envisioned by Le Corbusier disallowed a spatial expression of the extended family and neighborhood. While Le Corbusier was able to point out that laws and structure did exist in Arab architecture, that it was neither "fantastic" nor confused but a logical outcome of cultural patterns, Moslem Algerian cultural processes were evacuated and only abstract formal "principles" extracted and retained for his future use.

Vernacular architecture as part of a folk-life production was a significant reference in Le Corbusier's discussion of the Algiers plans in The Radiant City. They are not so explicitly referenced in the local defense of Obus "C." Several interpretations have been given to the vernacular preoccupations which formed such an important part of the more general interest in folklore which developed in the inter-war period. Some have noted that references to folklore and the vernacular participated in the Orientalist interests of the period: the inquiry into the social, religious and sexual norms of Islamic society, interest in travel literature and the genre of exotic

79 The different Moslem Algerian groups seeking housing in Algiers had varied strategies for dealing with the cultural needs for gendered spatial divisions. The very wealthy could afford duplicate spaces. The middle classes, especially in urban areas, separated private family spaces from public, entertaining spaces where codes determined whether or not women could be present. Contemporary urban exigencies have modified housing plans. Modern apartments in Tehran group rooms around a central hall and have a separate space for mixed (family) entertaining. As Daphne Spain has recounted, "The hall becomes the anderum or family quarters of the more traditional dwelling, where television watching and meals take place. Placement of the formal entertainment area at the back of the apartment reflects weakened prohibitions against shared male and female space: the traditional courtyard allows women to see a visitor without the visitor seeing them, whereas the family living area of the hall means that women and men see each other regardless of mahram (kin) status. Further, friends as well as relatives now share the anderum space." Daphne Spain, Gendered Spaces (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992) 48, 50. Alternative plans include one courtyard with separate, male and female, entertaining spaces opening off it. (49) Wealthy families would have two courtyards. A more modest plan had been developed by the Kabyle, where separate entrances, simple divisions of a single space into male and female areas and codified patterns of use serves to maintain Moslem cultural customs and beliefs. The openness of Le Corbusier's plan suggests than modifications to it would be required to accommodate Moslem cultural spatial requirements.

80 Although the overcrowding of the Casbah precluded the required privacy within each dwelling, other forms of spatial management of privacy were instituted such as the veil or the neighborhood. This will be developed in more detail in chapter four. This overvrowding is described in Lucienne Favre, Tout l'Inconnu de la Casbah d'Alger (Algiers: Baconnier, 1933), and newspaper reports of the time and subsequently.
painting, the equation of architectural and urban form with religious belief.\(^{81}\) Others have understood their presence to be the expression of a concern to establish differences—the anthropological, the erotic, the eternal present, the authentic being, \textit{poeisis}, in opposition to the geometric, the rational, the constantly changing, the artificial, \textit{technē}.\(^{82}\) Folklore and vernacular traditions offered a reconciliation of myth and technology shaped out of the "Otherness" of the colony. However, both were also related to the economic and political exigencies of the 1930s.

While vernacular architecture as a source for modern design has a long history in architectural practice, and in Le Corbusier's œuvre, its use to legitimate design decisions can not, as Anatole Kopp, Herman Lebovics and François Béguin have noted, be dissociated from concerns of Empire in the inter-war period. Folklore was another manifestation of the anxieties of Empire and modernization felt in the 1930s, playing a complex but important role in defining France and its constituent parts, be they provinces or colonies. An interest in folklore was utilized by both conservatives with the objective of defining an exclusive "essential" France and by others interested in cultural pluralism and a more inclusive cosmopolitan perspective on the nation. The modernizing forces threatening regional and peasant life within France and the imperialist thrust complicating relations between nations and peoples were causes for both alarm among conservatives and optimism among others.\(^{83}\)

\(^{83}\) Lebovics, \textit{True France}. 7. Later Lebovics claims that, "In the inter-war years, folklore studies, the prime field of the pursuit of cultural identity, emerged and took disciplinary form. And from the Popular Front to the era of Vichy, in arguably the most crucial few years of French national debate about the national essence since the French Revolution, folklore was a major battleground of what Henry Rousso has termed the great 'Franco-French civil war' over what was the authentic France." (136) Folklore was used by conservatives to define the "true" France as that of the provinces, based on the land and family values, \textit{les petits pays}; thus disinherit ing urban immigrants. The Left, under the Popular Front, merely expanded "folklore" to include workers as well. Definitions of both folklore and gender relations sought to distinguish French institutions and lifestyle—the nation—from "others," be the latter an urban proletariat or Moslem Algerians upholding different marriage and inheritance customs. (159-160). Folklore products and objects were also
The issue of folklore took on important if conflicting roles in the French cultural and political arenas in the 1930s. Theories of folklore and colonial ideology were thus two key discourses in which an essentialist and exclusionary paradigm of France was debated and the "Other" thereby defined. In 1931, in the aftermath of the Célébration Centenaire and the Exposition Coloniale, Le Corbusier transposed his interests in folklore, the vernacular, the land as the custodian and source of spiritual values and the simple life, to the Moslem peoples of North Africa. Disregarding the reasons for their lack of material possessions, the archaism of their living standards or their own source of spiritualism, Islam, and form of collective life, the melk and the habous, Le Corbusier projected European problems and solutions onto the North African societies which he encountered. He demonstrated little interest in solving the housing problems specific to the Moslem Algerians crowded in the Casbah. Notions derived from the discourse on folklore were incorporated into Le Corbusier's contemporary ferme radieuse and are implicit in his designs of Arab institutions and European housing in his Obus plans of this period. In Prélude he espoused ideas of family and land that had much in common with conservatives, while a small museum was utilized by avant-garde artists and curators to define a modern aesthetic as well as a more cosmopolitan, multicultural and syncretic view of the products and lives of diverse peoples.

84 Lebovics, True France xiii.
85 See Lebovics on Rivière in True France, especially the chapter, "Identity Conflicts: Folklore and the National Heritage" 135-161. Rivière was a friend of Aragon, Bataille, and Leiris. "[h]e became head of a new national Museum of Folklore in 1937, a major creation and legacy of the Popular Front. Such a museum was very much in keeping with the cultural agenda of the new left alliance." (156) The argument here is suggestive given the highly volatile debate on what constituted citizenship in Algeria, a department of France alternatively desperate in the early 1930s to highlight its essentially French nature and determined to assert its independence in the mid to late 1930s, especially over financial matters and the wine industry. Lebovics characterizes the debate in the 1920s and 1930s between the Right, who defended the peasants as the true custodians of patrimony, and the Left, who included peasants and workers, as one between those who believed the identity of France was fixed and those who understood it to be an ever-changing, and multi-cultural, entity. Lebovics contends that the founding problematique of folklore studies was the search for the essence of France, its approach rooted in conservative discourses of the Third Republic and that its importance made it an inescapable issue in discussions of what constituted France and the French, its citizens. It was such that "the forces of the Popular Front yielded to the temptation to fight to include the urban working class in this conservatively theorized metaphysic of national identity. The interest in French folklore traditions began in the late nineteenth-century and would be represented in the Museum of the Trocadero, founded 1878. The Société du Folklore Français was only founded in 1925. By 1929 Durkheimians and socialists were involved also in folklore studies. See True France 139-140 for a discussion of this development.
86 The habous and melk social definitions and uses of land had been dismantled, along with the society they supported, with European civilization. This was particularly the practice in Morocco where Prost "negotiated" habous land for indigenous housing complexes. It also occurred in Algeria.
envisioned for the *ferme radieuse* in emulation of Georges-Henri Rivière, avant-garde curator, folklorist and exhibition assistant at the Ethnography Museum of the Trocadero. Most significantly, Le Corbusier's description of Moslem life in North Africa in 1931 resonated with the same sense of nostalgia and a reflection upon, if not condemnation of, the inroads of Western civilization and modernity into the M'zab as, for example, that registered by Jerôme and Jean Tharaud's depictions of Algeria a decade earlier in *La Fête arabe*. These authors had also celebrated the poetry and peace existing between Arabs and the landscape and the destruction of this by Western modernity; they also questioned the designation of Arabs as barbarians. Their work belongs within a general criticism of the West and support for the notion of a plurality of cultures; it was not so much anti-colonial as it was one a strain of a renovated *idée coloniale*.

Le Corbusier revamped vernacular Moslem housing. Translating it into metric measurements, optimal simplicity and the abstract qualities of silence, light, air and view he gave new meaning to such dwellings. In the design of the *redent* apartment the concrete shell engulfed and subordinated without obliterating Moslem culture and its space (Figure 47). It was a strategic use of folklore traditions similar to that found in the 1931 Exposition Coloniale where colonial cultures were regulated within the Metropole's configuration. The sublimation of colonial possessions to Western and French cognitive and representational paradigms was not always subtle. At the 1931

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87 McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 302.
88 Raoul Girardet, *L'Idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972) 162-63. Girardet notes that the Tharaud brothers, "n'est pas sans comporter très explicitement un certain contenu de revindication politque, en l'occurrence une protestation en faveur des musulmans d'Algérie et une demande d'amélioration de leur statut juridique et de leur condition sociale." He concludes that they can be situated within the wake of a certain *barrésien* nationalism that will lead to Lyautey's construction sites.
89 Interestingly, Lebovics, in *True France*, goes on to see in this the idea of a naive unhierarchical and therefore unpolarized vision of an intertextuality between the colonial rulers and the ruled. He draws upon Fredric Jameson *Politics of Post Modernity: or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C., 1991) 101-29. Also to be noted is the fact that the Exposition was first planned as an exposition *interalliée* for 1925, and thus was in its origins related to national security, *True France* 62.
90 Interestingly, Lebovics, in *True France*, goes on to see in this the idea of a naive unhierarchical and therefore unpolarized vision of an intertextuality between the colonial rulers and the ruled. He draws upon Fredric Jameson *Politics of Post Modernity: or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C., 1991) 101-29. Also to be noted is the fact that the Exposition was first planned as an exposition *interalliée* for 1925, and thus was in its origins related to national security, *True France* 56-62.
91 Lebovics, *True France* 57.
Exposition a railway linked all the exhibition buildings of the colonies, giving expression to the idea of *La Grande France* united by modern technology. Similarly in the Obus plans it was modern technology that would link North Africa to France.

Landscape, and the nature to which it referred, was a second theme threaded through *The Radiant City* and other writings by Le Corbusier about Algiers. The idea of conquest, so aggressively and militaristically conveyed with Obus "A" in 1931, was duplicated in Le Corbusier's surveying views and quasi-eroticized representations of the Casbah. They are references and depictions which participate, in their own way, in a doubly gendered geography. Algiers existed within Western traditions of representation which gendered the East customarily as passive and feminine, and spatiality as theoretically and assertively masculinist.92 The city also existed as the physical embodiment of Arab society's gender considerations in the construction of social space.93 Le Corbusier's fantasies about "the city of eros" were played out in his invasion of the Casbah, sketchbook in hand, and his victory spoils, the *Femmes d'Alger* drawings.94 Here his experience of the Arab city was filtered through orientalist themes and the postcards which he commandeered to recount his exploits. However, haunting many of Le Corbusier's source postcards, unarticulated but nevertheless registered in them, are the traces of Moslem practices of gender-specific spatial configuration: the narrow streets, grilled windows, and voluminously garbed or sequestered women, which so attracted Le Corbusier.

Included among his descriptions of Algiers are several sketches of its landscape and environs. The product of his site visits, they record both a probing, inquiring gaze and the seduction of the landscape's beauty (Figure 48). Le Corbusier's artistic vision, captured in these small sketches, is

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94 The idea that Le Corbusier may have considered Algiers "city of eros" is fundamental to the analyses of both von Moos "Le Corbusier as Painter," trans. Jane O, Newman and John H, Smith, *Oppositions* 19/20 (Winter/Summer 1980) and Tafuri, "Machine et mémoire." Both use the phrase.
configured by the conventions of the genre; they are perspectival, minute in scale and drawn with abbreviated graphic strokes. There are close-up, intimate views of interiors and narrow confined spaces in the Casbah, dense with shadow and detail, and there are distanced spacious panoramas from the Fort de l'Empereur toward the city and sea, and still others from the sea toward the stretch of coast bounded by the Casbah and the European city. These sketches represent Algiers as both a distinct, exotic and foreign place marked by the opaque incomprehensibility of the Moslem city and a familiar sight, recognized in the transparent, knowable, European space of its margins. Le Corbusier's views, and subsequent collage of landscape and building maquettes disclose a tension between an aesthetic engagement with the site and an objective distancing from it. A tension that is also noticeable in his oscillation between a poetic portrayal of his project with its cultural distinctiveness of place, and an objectified description of it in universalist terms of CIAM; between specificity and generality. These images were circulated in texts where they served to support Le Corbusier's position in Algiers and to illustrate ideas of regionalism (North Africa), society (Moslem Algerian, European) and modernism (real not 'artificial' consumption, optimized spatial use). Ascertaining what the implication of these images might have been in the 1930s will be the objective here.

95 Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, Oeuvre complète 1929-34 includes a distanced view from the Fort de l'Empereur with obelisk and several sketches: distanced "objective" views of the site before and after Le Corbusier's buildings would appear on the site. The Radiant City contains the greatest number of these landscape sketches including those from the trip across the Maghreb in 1931. These sharp pen and ink sketches retain the character of the architect and contain a tension between an initial attraction and an objective assessment of the built environment. A series of sketches of the Fort de l'Empereur rendered in soft pencil capture the architect's attraction to the site, its open vistas and tree-framed views and rolling contours. Oeuvre complète 1938-46 includes a distanced view of landscape with indigenous plants, a European street scene, and a panorama from the skyscraper in the European district to the Marine District, one with the skyscraper in the Marine District and various aerial views of this and two intimate views of the Casbah, an interior court and a narrow street.

96 Gillian Rose, Feminism and Geography. The Limits of Geographical Knowledge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), chapters 4 and 5. Her discussion of the development of modern scientific rationality as masculine is also applicable to architecture, especially as Alberti in the 15th century and Perraut in the 17th bound scientific method to architectural practice. Architecture and geography share in this development.
Important to the aesthetic appreciation of such sketches and their subject matter is Terry Eagleton's demonstration of the ideological, and political, valences of the aesthetic.\(^97\) And it has been proposed by Fredric Jameson that alienation, resulting from commodity reification, patriarchy and political domination and hinted at in the architect's quest for a unity with the "cosmic" attitudes he attributed to the Casbah's builders, is discoverable in the persistence of certain sign systems.\(^98\) Found in Le Corbusier's writings are anxieties about an economy gone awry, loss of order and France's diminished international vigor and in his sketches are obsessive references to the Casbah and its views, the obelisk, hills of the Fort de l'Empereur, and the feminine attributes of the city.

Alienation or "detachment" is identified by Tafuri in Le Corbusier's work as the result of the distancing effect of technology and the architect's attempts to overcome it via an openness to the landscape and Casbah. Tafuri has explained the presence of the Casbah as an "Otherness," "mark of an originatory existence," the "pre-rational," the "immobile," "un civilization autre," "le ventre maternel."\(^99\) The Casbah is also understood by Tafuri to embody for the architect "nature," "rootedness," and perfect "repose." It is the antithesis to the Obus plans which are a violent confrontation with nature, a bid to "appropriate the totality of nature in order to remodel and subjugate it."\(^100\) The conflation of the Moslem city, nature and the feminine which Tafuri presents in his hermeneutics of the Obus plans is telling. So too is his fusion of the plans with that which is aggressive, progressive, technological, subjugating and Western; where all is battle, confrontation, alienation. However, within the colonial city of Algiers, what Tafuri understands as an anticipation of Heidegger's opposition of *poiesis* and *techné* may also operate in other ways. These drawings,


\(^{100}\)Tafuri, "Machine et mémoire" 464.
and the psychological and philosophical drama which Tafuri suggests they convey, might also be related to quite specific issues of colonialism and the roles of landscape and geographical representations within it.

Although there is little documentary evidence specifying Le Corbusier's relationship with the discipline of geography, there are a few suggestions in his life and work from which some speculation can be ventured. The regional concerns of the Prélude program no doubt influenced the focus on the city's differences of topography and ethnic structure. Thus the landscape images participate in a geographical as well as artistic representation of place. Le Corbusier's participation in Regional Syndicalism also linked him to certain developments in geography. He is known to have studied the contemporary Sorbonne geographer, Jean Brunhes, from whom he may have taken ideas about the consideration of views and the possible inspiration of the site as a source for a formal language.  

The geographer's ideas on a modern regionalism that reconciled tradition with industrialization also seem to correspond to Le Corbusier's ideas about Algiers. Since the founding of modern Geographical societies in France in the 1820s, geography has played a role in the colonial project which it supplied with knowledge, sponsorship and exploration research. And this aspect of geographical studies, as well as those of military engineers so admired by Le Corbusier, must be factored into an account of Le Corbusier's "capturing" of the Algiers scene in landscape views, panoramas, and cityscapes.

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101 Giordani, "les projets pour la ville d'Alger" 424.
102 Jean Brunhes is mentioned briefly in Paul Rabinow, French Modern 200. Brunhes, with Charles Brun and Paul Vidal de la Blanche, were founding members of the Fédération Régionaliste Française in 1900. According to Rabinow, the 1901 manifesto of this group "remained the charter of French regionalism for the next fifty years." Raoul Girardet mentions Brunhes' importance as a popularizer of the idea of the colonies as a "prolongement de la France" in school textbooks in L'Idée coloniale en France 1871-1962 (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972): 125. Vidal de la Blanche's definition of the "true France" as that considered in terms of natural regions that are to be recognized in rail way configurations, the movement of people, cultural centers and other characteristics is highly suggestive of the viewpoints espoused in Le Corbusier's Sur les quatre routes (Paris: Gallimard, 1941). On Paul Vidal de la Blanche see Rabinow, French Modern 195-96.
103 Rabinow, French Modern 139-142.
As many have argued, landscape depictions are a form of "visual ideology," a way of looking, that is learned and which shows the relationship of the powerful to their environment. And, as is hinted at in Tafuri's reference to the Casbah as "le ventre maternel," or Le Corbusier's analogy between the topography of Algiers and female physical attributes, the city expresses the idea of a gendered landscape that is also a part of a European vision. Landscape is often, if not usually, "Mother Earth, feminine, the beautiful and enticing." These ideas are illustrated by Le Corbusier's sketches (Figure 4).

Le Corbusier's description of Algiers as "a magnificent body, supple-hipped and full breasted" is phrased in terms of nature, aesthetics and place; but, as his description added, "covered with sickening scabs of a skin disease," it is a landscape which is both attractive and repulsive; something to be objectively diagnosed, acted upon, cured. Le Corbusier sought to convey in his landscapes a quest for, what he termed, "the relationship between natural and human geography." His forays into the Casbah, to the heights of the Fort de l'Empereur repeat those of the adventurer, a geographer of the regionalist school perhaps, and the military engineer. In this guise, as a seeker of knowledge and plotter of space, Le Corbusier allowed into his process of design a notion of scientific objectivity which, Gillian Rose has argued, both reflects and reaffirms Western and masculine notions of autonomy, and a general model of modern science's rationality which is masculine in theory, method and practice.

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105 Rose, *Feminism and Geography* 63.

106 Rose, *Feminism and Geography* 62-64. Although architecture has its own gendering practices which revolve around identifying public (male) space from private (female) spaces, and a general or deep seated interest in identifying the domestic, interior world with the feminine, there has been little study that I am aware of on the question of the notions of landscape assumed by architects and how that might be gendered. As a general reference to architecture and gender see *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (New York, N.Y.: The MIT Press, 1987)

107 Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 260.

108 Rose, *Feminism and Geography* 63.
plans indicate his desire to both dominate and to experience difference, to be the objective scientist and the poet.

For Le Corbusier, Algiers would also be the winged goddess and muse to the architect's genius; she will rise "like a phoenix" from the ashes of the Third Republic, a muse of Vichy. Le Corbusier's use of the device of a female figure is not unusual. The representation of cities by allegorical or emblematic female figures is a common European practice, as is the feminine gendering of landscapes. It was a trope of frequent and wide appeal in contemporary portrayals of Algiers. It is found in popular depictions of the city, such as that by Raoul Stéphane's, "Alger et ses Femmes: La plus belle femme de l'Algérie c'est Alger," published in Algeria in 1936 and in "high" literature, such as Camus' L'Etranger of 1942 and La Femme Adultère of 1954. However, while the city and landscape could be coded as feminine, space and spatiality were associated with the masculine through the conflation of rationality with space. This is particularly suggestive in the instance of Le Corbusier's depiction of Algiers where the Casbah is

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109 Le Corbusier, Présie sur Alger (Paris: Falaise, 1950) 44. This small book recounts the history of Le Corbusier's endeavors in Algiers, in discussing his last efforts he states: "C'est entre vos mains: le sort des cinq cent mille habitants de la présent et future Alger; l'éclat de cette France d'Afrique dont la tête--la capitale--sera faite joyau par vos ordres; la reconnaissance de la mère-patrie parce que vous aurez agir au moment ou d'autres se seraient cru satisfait d'expédir les affaires courantes; l'étonnement du monde devant ce phénix de France qui, une fois encore, et en pleine grande pitié, renaît de ses cendres..." Although published in 1950, it was written in May 1942. See Mary McLeod, "Alger" in Le Corbusier: une encyclopédie (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1987) 32 (n. 24).


111 It is interesting to consider the Casbah, especially as it is "stepped over" by the passerelle and left as a margin or lacunae in the totalizing plan of Obus "A," as an example of something over which "the narrative has lost control" in light of Derek Gregory's discussion of the gendered aspects of master-narratives of geography and of Alice Jardine's remarks on this. See especially Derek Gregory, Geographical Imaginations (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1994) 129.


113 For a more extensive discussion of the complex relationships between gender, spatiality, colonization, and power, see Gregory, Geographical Imaginations 128-132.
associated with nature and landscape, and over which is superimposed the ordering structures and
disciplinary space of his plan.

Le Corbusier's panoramas, intimate views and aerial surveillance are not simple observations but
sophisticated strategies allowing systematic deletions. The destitution and poverty of the Casbah
were not recorded in his sketches which probed the attractive mystery and privacy of its narrow
streets and unrevealing walls. Instead, its misery was noted in the objective and general comments
on the Plan where the "purification" of the Casbah was legitimated. His sketches that capture the
furtive bodies of Moslem women leave unexplored the problematic position of Moslem women in a
city dominated by two patriarchal and non-aligned views of their position in society. Le Corbusier
demonstrates in his site studies and their use a specific way of looking, one which sought to make
sense of a particular, colonial, relationship between society and the land. The contradictions
implied in that multiple relationship of different cultures and landscapes were registered in the
drawings, fragments which captured the poetic and feminine, "adorable" Casbah, as he termed it,
with intense strokes of the pen and at other times pragmatic information recorded in annotated
measurements. These images of the landscape, and his architectural application of them, were
intended to record and hopefully control the complex social relations found there. Still to be
defined, however, is the way in which they may have been related to the political debates over
colonialism in the 1930s.

Although searching for cultural relevance in vernacular forms, the Casbah was represented in The
Radiant City through the stereotypes of Orientalist discourse. The photographs and drawings
used by Le Corbusier called up the eternal and unchanging East (sky, sea and mountains), the
feminine exotic (veiled women), and mystical piety: "Arabs, are there no peoples but you who
meditate daily in the splendid sunset hours?"114 The Casbah was, Le Corbusier would have us
believe, silent, passive, redolent with polygamy, private rather than public, as well as the site of

114 Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 230.
worthy traditions. In this respect he might be seen as recalling the pluralist interests of reformist colonial literature. In his description of the Casbah, Le Corbusier often relied upon this romantic attitude of Orientalism for his conceptualizing of Algiers and in so doing suppressed the reality of overcrowding, decay, poverty and cultural mixing that was its actuality. By the mid 1930s the whole city had become for this architect a feminized object "a magnificent body, supple-hipped and full-breasted." It was a body "which could be revealed in all its magnificence, through the judicious influence of form and the bold use of mathematics to harmonize natural and human geography."115

Such gendering of the landscape was part of a European pastoral tradition and a current of colonial literature.116 Le Corbusier's fantasy of a feminized landscape, the muse of Algiers with which he illustrated his Louanges à Alger, or his description of it as a female body, what Tafuri has termed the "maternal," suggests alternative but simultaneous meanings. On the one hand, it implies that somewhere in Le Corbusier's city and his views of it there was to be space for and retort to, but not a rejection of, the brutal, technical and masculinist urbanscape of the Metropole. On the other, the conflating of the feminine with nature also implies, in the context of his heroic, technologically sophisticated and spatially aggressive architectural forms, the domination of the feminine with the subjugation of nature, which in the rhetoric of the day also meant all Moslems of Algeria. Both women and landscape were relevant to Le Corbusier's experiences of the 1930s when public

115 Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 260. Interestingly, Camus would later, in "La Femme Adultère," 1957, represent Algeria through the metaphor of nature, a nature which the colon and pied noir had direct access and prior claim. In addition, in L'Etranger the narrative is propelled by a fight between a Moslem Algerian and a pied noir over the former's sister and the loss of family honor resulting from the latter's actions. As in L'Etranger Le Corbusier represented Moslem Algerian women with little sensitivity to the meaning those representations may have had to Moslem society and cultural values. And as in Camus' "La Femme Adultère," he portrayed the active possessor of the land as colon if not French. Both Le Corbusier and Camus, confute, landscape, nature and woman as something to be possessed. See Edward Said, "Narrative, Geography and Interpretation," New Left Review 180.

116 With respect to North America, see Annette Kolodny, The Lay of the Land, Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975) 3-9. Interestingly, Kolodny speaks about the inevitable paradox of colonization: the success of settlement depended upon the mastering of the land and its eventual urbanization, and despoliation of the land being an inevitable consequence of human habitation. The fantasy then became sublimated into art. See page 7. For its more general usage see Gregory, Geographical Imaginations 129-132.
anxiety about urban woman in Paris was high and Prélude's syndicalist concerns about women's roles in rural life were frequently raised. In The Radiant City, keeping women in the home was considered one solution to the unemployment problem while his lecture in Algiers, "La Femme et la Ville Radieuse," restricted their future to a better domestic environment.118

The identification of Moslem Algerians as essentially passive, spiritual and unchanging also placed them within the politicized economics of the period. It positioned them as regionally differentiated producers and consumers and as an integral part of the physical and cultural landscape of the Metropole. Le Corbusier's representations of Algiers gave expression to this ambiguous situation of Algiers. The intimate experiences of tight semi-private spaces, just registered in his small delineations, were simultaneous with the distancing and objectifying views of the military surveillance genre. The former marked the presence of an indigenous society who could only be fleetingly captured in sketches emptied of their presence and in city forms devoid of time and place while the latter, surveillance, established the proximity and bearings of the modern industrializing city. Juxtaposed, these representations of the city were divested of all disturbing traces of poverty, of discord or resistance, of reminders of political coercion. Metaphors and symbolism made available from colonial discourse--notions of the Casbah, the East, Islam--provided the opposition of a restorative sensual paradise to the West's fragmenting and alienating analytic obsessions. A Western utopian site of a possible reintegration of spirit and matter, a splendid victory over differences could be forged from this. Le Corbusier's notion that those inhabiting the spaces he depicted were "of simple habits," "powerless," "waiting" "patient" as, what Tafuri has called, "possessors of a cosmic attitude" derived from long established colonial discourse. Le Corbusier's representations of Moslem Algerian vernacular homes and traditionally

118 Lucienne Jean-Darrouy, "La Femme et la Ville Radieuse," L’Écho d’Alger 8 Mar. 1933: 4. The author comments on the lack of real attention that the architect gives to the subject. The benefits of apartment living are enumerated: communal laundries and childcare, a simplified kitchen, the obsolescence of domestic help. Mayor Brunel was apparently in the audience.
costumed women conveyed an unchanging society and served to position them as conserving forces in a Western consumer world gone awry. In gendering the landscape of the city, Le Corbusier exploited well-worn poetic and colonial symbolism in an attempt to maintain a particularized representation of place in the midst of universalizing technology. At the same time, given the context of Senate debates on the status of Moslem women in Algeria where women and their condition in traditional Moslem life were understood as markers along the route to assimilation and citizenship, Obus "C" participated, even if confusedly, in the gender differentiations which served to empower France and its civilizing process there. The feminine and the landscape were, however, integral subjects in the complex interplay between Metropole and colony, and were topics manipulated by the Metropole in a bid to control a political situation which found its subjects not passive and of cosmic attitudes but restive and of nationalist aspirations.

Journals, newspapers, exhibitions

"Obus C" was inserted into various debates, counter-critiques and political speculations through its numerous reproductions in the professional and popular press, local and Metropolitan exhibitions, and the popular fiction of Alger Capital. Even with this record of its evolution it is difficult to trace precisely the relationship between Le Corbusier's design decisions made in Paris and urban legislation or colonial political debates as they occurred in Algiers, or indeed with colonial discourse in the Metropole. What can be glimpsed in these public representations, especially between 1934 and 1937, is a subtly shifted rhetoric from that used by Le Corbusier in The Radiant City, with its Metropolitan and cosmopolitan audience, to that utilized in Algiers.

Un Nouveau Bombardement d'Alger

120Most of the plans are not dated. Le Corbusier's perceptions of events in Algiers were framed by information sent by his collaborators in Algiers and filtered by various media: press, photographs, unverifiable encounters with film and exhibition publicity. Any reaction to events in Algiers would be delayed by time and distance, altered by cultural and physical difference.
From May to July 1934 Jean Cotereau published a series of nine articles on Obus "C" in the Algerian Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments. The by-line given to these articles, "Un Nouveau Bombardement d'Alger," evoked conquest and domination while appended subtitles called up themes of destiny, the suturing of racial division, heroic action and financial equilibrium.\(^{121}\) The by-line had come from Le Corbusier where he had announced to the Mayor of Algiers: "Il veut bombarder Alger," to which Cotereau added "Évidemment pour prendre la ville, la moderniser, la convertir à la civilisation d'Occident."\(^{122}\) Le Corbusier may have meant an ironic contrast between former French military attacks and his own peaceful offering of modernization. However, such a statement clearly echoes prior French claims to a beneficent mission civilatrice, of progress and modernization. Also, although Cotereau made occasional references to Orientalist conceptions: picturesque Turkish Casbahs; pirates attacking Western civilization; Turkish buildings of merely archeological interest in contrast to European architecture of modern order and rapprochement, the two main concerns of the author were to prove the cultural necessity and financial feasibility of Le Corbusier's proposal. Cotereau's discussion of the plans also placed them within enlarged issues of Metropolitan economic interests and political policy.

Le Corbusier's plan was defended as un point de soudure and the skyscraper business center championed as "a lighthouse guiding civilization."\(^{123}\) Cotereau pointed out the importance of the architect's inclusion of Arab institutions: stores, offices, meeting rooms. Set within picturesque gardens, souks and Moorish cafes, these institutions were understood to extend the point of contact between the two "races." They formed a modern agora, where discussion and resolutions could occur and where a refined relationship of the two ethnic elements of North Africa could be

\(^{121}\) Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments, May through July, 1934.
assured. It provided a foyer for the coordination of West and East, a laboratory of human synthesis. But Cotereau's description as well indicated a certain ambivalence or hesitancy as to the degree of equality to be allowed in any resolution of the civilizing problems of the city.

Cotereau's defense of Obus "C" often called up colonial rhetoric. He spoke of "conquering the land by a superior force;" Algeria's "natural" connection to the West; its "Imperial destiny" and synthesis with Europe; the restoration of past (Roman) greatness; the protection of "less civilized" cultures; the greater appreciation of beauty among Western powers in contrast to its absence among Arab peoples and the consequent decay of their monuments. He differentiated the old Turkish city-run down, historic, chaotic and unhealthy--from the future European city which was restored, progressive, ordered and healthy. Obus "C" would, Cotereau promised, facilitate economic growth and resuscitate the posterity once enjoyed under the Romans. The modernism of the plan consisted of its technical innovations, its new scale commensurate with the landscape, its reconstitution of the agora and finally, its substitution of urbanism for colonialism.

According to Cotereau, the solution to the problems existing between the two cultures, European and Moslem, lay in an ever more rational organization of Algiers and Algeria. Such an intensification of control, ostensibly for facilitating economic development and urban density, also had political implications. Cotereau was clearly alarmed by the influence of Cairo with its "awakening of independence under the sign of political and religious contradiction." Supportive of Le Corbusier's quadrilatère--the Mediterranean Federation of Barcelona, Paris, Algiers, Rome--Cotereau also proposed to supplement it with a triangulation of Algiers, Le Cap, "uncolonizable capital of a Europe beyond the Equator," and Cairo, "disquieting hearth of the Islamic renaissance." The role of Obus "C" was to raise the consciousness of Algiers as a

125 Cotereau, "Un point de soudure" 2.
stabilizing and civilizing force through its architectural organization as a counter to Cairo in the East and the uncivilized hinterland to the south.\textsuperscript{127} It was to weld two cultures via rational planning and to articulate the relationship between races, one based on the commerce and administrative functions provided in the plan. In his mind, Obus "C" would counter the East making Algiers a beacon for French domination, beckoning and piloting colonization to the hinterlands with its economic potential as well as its safeguard against pan-Arabism.\textsuperscript{128} The Mediterranean Federation, proposed by Le Corbusier in \textit{Prelude} and endorsed by Cotereau at this point in his defense of Obus "C," was understood as a useful reserve of cultural and, if need be, military might against any coalition of Moslem forces within and to the East of Algeria. Perhaps for this reason Cotereau was quick to chastise Le Corbusier for assuming full assimilation of the Moslem Algerian population; this was a problematic and an as yet unrealized security.\textsuperscript{129}

Current politicized discourses concerning Moslem Algerian existence in Algiers surfaced at other points in Cotereau's discussion. Housing was described in terms of vernacular conventions which could be assimilated to Mediterranean and Western traditions: patios, terraces and views, while the Casbah was made less threatening by its cleansing and reduced density. Cotereau proposed that to save the Casbah and the Moslem Algerian way of life which it allowed and represented, it was necessary to first westernize it with open green spaces. He agreed with this "conservation" in the

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\textsuperscript{127} Cotereau, "Un point de soudure" 2.

\textsuperscript{128} Cotereau, referring to the Marine district as the "historic and geographic center," identified the object of its redesign as being both "to organize this center as the laboratory of the fusion of the races, a European nucleus with an indigenous facade" and as "a lighthouse of economic activity." "Un Nouveau Bombardement d'Alger: L'Équilibre financier et le destin du projet C," \textit{Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments} (3 July 1934): 1.6.

\textsuperscript{129} Something should be said about this reference to an "assumption" of assimilation attributed to Le Corbusier. Colonialists such as Cotereau saw in Le Corbusier's proposals assimilation not association with its attendant segregation policies. His criticism was not with assimilation but rather with thinking that it had been achieved. Cotereau praised the Obus plan for providing, "the laboratory for the fusion of races." He obviously was not an advocate of association. Assimilation, in the context of Algeria at this time, implied or assumed, the eventual victory of French civilization over that of the indigenous. Moslem Algerian elites still advocated assimilation, although it was judicial, political and economic not cultural assimilation they intended in 1934. Conceptually after 1931, association became the first step toward nationalism. The recognition of cultural difference and independence expressed in the motto of the reformist association of Oulemas, "l'arabe est ma langue, l'Algérie est mon pays, l'islam est ma religion," increasingly came to take on political overtones of independence only in the late 1930s. Benjamin Stora, \textit{Histoire de l'Algérie coloniale 1830-1954} (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 1991) 74-77.
interest of aesthetics, archeological study, tourist attraction and political order. The provision of 
souks and cafes created a familiar introduction to the modern Arab institutions and the agora of 
cross-cultural discussion. Such dialogue was also part of a colonial reform movement in the mid 
1930s; a special Commission des Réformes Indigènes was established by Governor General Carde 
in 1934 to facilitate Moslem input into decisions affecting them and the legislation for including 
more Moslem Algerians in adjunct positions was passed before his term of office ended in 
1935.130 However, in keeping with dominant political opinion, the early and mid-1930s was 
considered a preparatory period, a time of discussion only, a time of promises rather than action. 
That viewpoint permitted the obstructive tactics taken by officials in Algiers and put the 
incremental development of Le Corbusier's plan assuring the appropriate relations between cultures 
in a precarious situation.

Alger Capitale

Le Corbusier stated, rather vaguely, that his Obus "C" would allow for a "nuanced relationship" 
between cultures. Of what that nuanced relationship consisted is more clearly rendered by J.-P. 
Faure. The addition and actual siting of the Arab institutions may have been derived from ideas 
expressed by Faure who, in 1934, explained to the architect the urban and cultural dynamics of the 
city's real estate market and cultural structure.131 Through October of 1934 Faure wrote several 
letters to Le Corbusier informing him of the relationship between his plan and cultural relations in 
the city. Faure linked the maintenance of the existing local economy to the provision of indigenous

130 Administration Algérie. Principales Reformes réalisées et mesures adoptées par M. Jules Carde, 
131 J.-P. Faure, letter to Le Corbusier, 6 Oct. 1934. In his discussion of the Algiers plan Faure points out 
that Le Corbusier's plan presented a new exploitation of the land while causing the least disturbance to the 
Algerian economy. Faure's concern seems to be that of allaying fears about development. He points out that 
maintaining indigenous housing in this area was indispensable. Earlier Faure had criticized the construction 
of HBM in the area stating they would ruin profits. Instead he saw the possibility of Le Corbusier's plan 
having a certain positive effect, the merchants of the rue de Lyre would move into the new buildings and the 
indigenous could then occupy the vacated buildings along this street. J.-P. Faure, letter to Le Corbusier, 13 
Feb. 1934, AFLC
housing and civic institutions, both he felt were indispensable to the continued existence of Algeria. Although Le Corbusier's immediate plan for the Marine District did not contain housing, Faure proposed that Moslem Algerians could occupy the buildings evacuated as their wealthier former tenants moved to the newer premises provided by Le Corbusier. For these reasons Faure saw Le Corbusier's plan as an extension of the existing fabric of the area, one which would establish the necessary connection between les indigènes and Europeans. It was a relationship he did not find in the more reticent Prost & Rotival plan which represented "a call to the past" and "romantic" in its disorder, density of buildings and narrow streets. He assessed it to be an inappropriate and illogical prospect for the future. 132

Preoccupied with the "correct" relationship between cultures, Faure envisioned its realization in both the Place du Gouvernement and the business center. In his view les indigènes had "been in a state of under consumption since 1931."133 It was the French government's role to rectify this and lessen the poverty of les indigènes while increasing "Franco-Christian-Jewish" commerce, where it had traditionally taken place, the Place du Lyre (Just to the south of the Marine District.) There are two things which are relevant here. First, Faure identified 1931 as the point of rupture, as a time after which new models of colonial power were imperative. Secondly, he advocated modernity and the cooperation between cultures both of which Prost's model, in its policy of segregation, use of Beaux Arts classicism and reliance on the economic status-quo, failed to provide. Faure's architectural and urban criticism was intimately tied up with a political vision of colonial relations, one which understood the two opposing plans, Le Corbusier's and the Régie foncière's, to have very different implications.

Faure's ideas were widely disseminated. He, along with Edmond Brua, wrote a number of articles in defense of Le Corbusier's Obus "C" for Travaux nord-africains in late 1934. Here, Faure lifted

132 Faure could be referring to the Prost & Rotival plan. The book was published in 1936 and the Prost & Socard plan was not displayed until April 1936 and published in January 1937.
133 J.-P. Faure, letter to Le Corbusier, 17 Oct. 1934, AFLC.
Le Corbusier's Obus "C" from the realm of aesthetics and disinterested abstract theory and put it down firmly within the cultural, financial and economic world of Algiers. He attempted to translate Le Corbusier's philosophical, poetic, and architectonic musings on a "mathematical spirit" into hard numbers and to make more specific the architect's pronouncement that, "la domaine d'urbanisme est ce qui nous aura révélé les premières vérités des temps modernes."  

Faure sought through the rhetoric of "technical and economic truths" and their relationship to the "primordial" elements of urbanism, to win adherents to Le Corbusier's Obus "C". Therefore, he tied the realization of Obus "C" to funding mechanisms where profits accruing from the sale and improvement of land would cover the cost of construction and provision of amenities, such as parks or open spaces; the roads would subsidize housing, while business would do the same for civic and institutional buildings. The use of modern techniques, a tensist structure of steel and glass, would ensure the economic feasibility of the scheme as well as its aesthetic. According to Faure's analysis the Prost & Rotival design with its "archaic" technology and consequent waste of land in numerous plazas, odd spaces and courtyards profited these political and economic structures servicing the HBM and HLM offices, that is government institutions, while they threatened the private and local housing industry. This étatisme was one factor informing Faure's criticism of the Municipal project.

In a stand against such state intervention, Le Corbusier informed Lopez, editor of Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiments, that he thought industrialists and private enterprise would be the people interested in his conception of the modern city. Some of Le Corbusier's greatest supporters had interests in the industrial machine: urbanists and developers, Faure and Flon; business men: Ernst Mercier, the director of an Electrical and Petroleum Cartel, president of Redressement Français and influential with the Algiers's Bank financing the Quartier

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136 J.-P. Faure, letter to Le Corbusier, 13 Feb. 1934, AFLC.
137 Le Corbusier, letter to Lopez, 23 May 1934, AFLC.
de la Marine;\textsuperscript{138} administrators: Gustave Mercier, \textit{a délégué financière} of Algeria, General Commissioner of the Centenary, its chronicler and advocate of both the civilizing mission of France and the exploitation of the country,\textsuperscript{139} municipal councilors: Breuillot, an adjunct mayor and engineer in partnership with P.A. Emery, both of whom were concerned with irregular terrain made profitable by means of modern technology.\textsuperscript{140}

Still, the technical aspects of the plan were not its only merits. Obus "C" was also shown to have political justification; symbolically the plan for the Marine District should be "central, axial, vital," in keeping with the city's strategic value in the colony and Metropole; no such significance could be discerned in the Régie foncière plan, nor in its objectives. Faure condemned the plan on aesthetic and economic grounds. The density and massing of "pompous" buildings was expensive, the absence of extensive open spaces visually unappealing and the street system disadvantageous to circulation. In opposition to this Le Corbusier's plan was considered less disruptive to local business, superior in the amount of open land it conserved (and left for future development), and financially viable due to its development of a skyscraper of sufficient height to pay for the improvements to the neighborhood. Obus "C" signaled the importance of business in the colony, for only business Faure believed could afford to build a skyscraper of more than fourteen stories. This was intended to clarify the economic soundness of the plan. The siting of Obus "C" and the elements within it accommodated the cultural concerns of Faure; the preservation of the Casbah, views from the sea, and history. The new building would be related to this site defined by the Casbah above and two mosques and an equestrian statue within:

\begin{quote}
C'est la nécessité de la liaison franco-indigène. Elle ne se peut se faire que Place du Gouvernement, le creuset, le centre civique est donc à coté. Plus loin est la vaste esplanade. Plus loin encore, la cité. Cela repond aussi à de puissance raisons
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{138}Le Corbusier, letter to Ponsich, 24 Mar. 1932, AFLC.
\textsuperscript{140}The work of Emery and Breuillot is illustrated in Alazard, "L'Urbanisme et l'Architecture à Alger de 1918 à1936," \textit{Architecture} (15 Jan. 1937): 21, 23.
Clearly, economic and cultural considerations were linked. Economic concerns pointed out the necessity of commerce to the development of the country. Cultural interests related to the role which Moslem Algerians might play as prospective consumers. The Business influence given to the redevelopment of the Marine quarter and its billboard skyscraper, enticing trade from off shore, was to convince France of Algiers' proper role in the colony: "Si la France joue en ce pays le rôle qu'elle doit jouer, la misère indigène doit reculer." This, Faure believed, Le Corbusier understood: "Le Corbusier met la ville à même de remplir un devoir que seule elle peut remplir en prévoyant de larges organisation civiques et des logements indigènes indispensables à l'endroit même où ces réalisation sont souhaitables." The political role which the plans would play resided in the part they assigned to Moslem Algerians and the economic privilege which they bestowed on business to determine colonial relations. Urbanism achieved by modern technique would, according to Faure, offer "toute possibilité d'esprimier dans la structure et le fonctionnement de la Cité les nouveaux rapports nécessaires à notre équilibre, à notre bien-être et à l'harmonie de notre vie." Faure's interpretation of the Obus plans differs somewhat from that given by Le Corbusier. Prior to 1934 Le Corbusier had expressed some colonial sentiments--a conqueror's view of the landscape, an anthropologist's valuing of cultural difference and plurality in his praise of North African housing or a questioning of the barbaric attribution to Arabs and Islamic culture, and a contemporary sense of the malaise of the West in his lament of the incursion of Western materialism into the paradisial oases of the Sahara. Faure gave the plans a more specific position within an idée coloniale where notions such as modernity, cultural symbiosis and
a protected economic position could exist within La Grande France. Faure's concept of cultural relations under colonialism was neither conventional assimilation nor association.

Faure's ideas on the city of Algiers were summarized in his 1936 book, Alger Capitale. Here Faure interlaced his theoretical and "scientific" analysis of life and its relationship to modern urbanism with references to the colonial situation of the city. Three points stand out. One is the absence of any picturesque descriptions of Algiers. The second is his attempt to make history, site and commerce the basis for a rapprochement between French and Moslem, West and East, Europe and Africa. The third is his reading of Le Corbusier's Obus plans, and especially "C." as the closest approximation of this reciprocity.

Faure translated cultural difference into considerations of urban planning. He praised the Casbah as an example of a type of urbanism which prioritized architecture over streets in contradistinction to Western urbanism which emphasized the planning of regular street systems with architecture as simply an appendage of them. He proposed that both built volumes and circulation networks be developed according to their own logics, and be assembled into a new city form. However, this synthesis of West and East was extended beyond abstract models of urban planning. The Casbah, described as developing without a plan, was consigned to the position of a "natural" city. "La ville orientale si désordonnée en apparence, obéit cependant au principe des souks et possède par là un ordre organique que beaucoup de nos villes modernes pourraient lui envier."145 Faure's argument does not repeat the Orientalist view of the Casbah as incoherent or mysterious, instead describing it as "without a plan" yet "natural" and "organic." The Casbah was made synonymous with nature, topography and abstract concepts of geographical appropriateness; it was also dislocated from its Arab cultural reference. Hence it was harnessed to an abstract theory of built volumes which could solve problems in Western planning where architectural amenity and real estate profit were

145 Jean-Pierre Faure, Alger Capitale (Paris: Société Française d'Éditions Littéraires et Techniques, 1936) 87. La ville orientale se désordonnée en apparence, obéit cependant au principe des souks et possède par là un ordre organique que beaucoup de nos villes modernes pourraient lui envier.
demanded. In addition, he centered the cultural life of the city in the souk, in keeping with the privileged role which he assigned to commerce, rather than the mosque or medersa, so problematic for East-West dialogue according to Western precepts. His defense of architecture over Western urbanism may have also been an unarticulated stand of the colon against the Metropole; urban legislation being synecdoche for all legislation.

Urbanism and its role in the power relations between "the West and Islam" was given extensive discussion in "Alger par Le Corbusier". In this chapter of Alger Capital the Obus plans were described as exemplary for several reasons. They maintained the historic center of the city and took account of the opportunity for Algiers to become a new city with the coordinated redevelopment of the Marine District and the former, extensive, military site of the Fort de l'Empereur. The architect used a new enlarged scale that would generate the profit needed for the amenity of light, air, sun and green space. Also, built volumes were studied according to their functions and not the street system, from which they were now liberated. Faure conceived of Algiers as a multi-functional city: port, leisure and cultural center, seat of government, and nucleus of a vast land, he therefore placed the center of the city at the Marine and not the Agha (the port and seat of export) where most Europeans, including Prost, had positioned it. To his mind the singularity, and origin, of the city lay in its role as a meeting place of Europe and Africa. For this it must be une ville franco-musulmane. Le Corbusier's Obus plans, both "B" which was illustrated, and especially "C" which was extensively discussed, were understood to give the correct spatial and institutional relationships between the two cultures and thus, at least in terms of representation, of relations of power. The business center in the Marine District, displayed its technical virtuosity as it gave visual balance to the nearby Government Building and free space for the civic center bordering the Place du Gouvernement, the "crucible" for franco-Muslim relations. Nevertheless, it was not just that Faure found appealing the souks, cafes and offices provided in

146 Faure, Alger Capitale 74-75.
147 Faure, Alger Capitale 69.
Obus "C" but that this commercial population which "doit sous peine de mort pour le pays [underlined by Faure] se développer dans des proportions imprévisibles, mais de façon considérable." Only industrialization could ensure French dominance in Algeria and provide the jobs and income necessary for the increasing influx of Moslem Algerians into the cities, especially Algiers, and secure France's position.

Faure's final chapter, "La Ville Neuve et l'Homme," when read as an allegory of the colonial situation, interprets the way in which the Obus plans functioned in the colonial politics of the city. It portrays a new technology which is able to surmount divisive issues by overstepping problem areas--the Casbah or recalcitrant slum dwellers--build above them, and then finally attract these refractory urban inhabitants to the resultant new way of living:

Les techniques nouvelles permettent de rêver la gigantesque construction en superstructure d'une ville neuve au-dessus des quartiers condamnés et avant leur destruction. La vie continuera là, au milieu du bruit des pioches (pneumatiques) et des marteaux. La construction sera un phénomène vivant auquel tout le quartier sera mêlé, s'intéressera. Tout naturellement, à la fin, les participants de l'opération émigreront dans les nids d'aigles qu'ils auront conquis par leur patience et par leur force. Alors seulement interviendrait la destruction des baraques abandonnées, et on ne les détruirait qu'au fur et à mesure de leur abandon. Puis finirait en plantant les arbres. Ainsi, ce serait un mouvement vivant, un de ceux qui font craquer les cadres des habitudes, qui entraînerait, en dépit d'eux-mêmes, les habitants à reloger. Je ne puis voir qu'aussi le grand œuvre des temps nouveaux.

It is, Faure declares, the unprecedented scale of development, commerce and urbanism, which would create the new harmonious existence in Algeria, not State intervention and politics.

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148 Faure, Alger Capitale 71.
149 Faure, Alger Capitale 102-103.
Faure highlighted several aspects of the Obus plans. Form and technological invention scaled to profit was given extensive consideration and indicates something of the economic and political role envisioned for the plans. In linking prosperity, racial harmony and development to modernization and national security to advanced technology, industrialization and self-sufficient but enlarged economies, Faure presented Obus "C" as a vehicle for an industrialist's model of economics and politics. "Il faut se demander si le Monde Occidental n'est pas aujourd'hui devant une alternative: ou bien les villes continueraient à se développer, en utilisant pour ce faire la technique qui leur permettrait de le faire harmonieusement, ou bien tout développement s'arrêterait et elles commenceraient à décroître."\(^{150}\)

Yet, in 1936 it did not appear as if Faure's generation would assume this task. The limits of urbanism on the pragmatic level of everyday practice were clearly illustrated by the official annulment of much of Brunel's legislation which had attempted to regulate speculative development according to the same laws as those operative for the public sector.\(^{151}\) The Régie foncière had become very unpopular, municipal borrowing for large public works contested, the administration and development of the Marine District questioned. The relations between Moslem Algerians and colons had become increasingly confrontational, Moslem demands more political, the colons more reactionary. At the same time Le Corbusier began to envision the possibility of working with Prost while Prost & Socard appended civic buildings to their plan in an gesture of "generosity," and appeasement, in a period of more strident claims for Algeria's special trade relations with the Metropole.

The problem of the post-Centenary decade was to justify continued economic exploitation by European interests while maintaining the image of a progressive, civilizing mission, especially in

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\(^{150}\) Faure, *Alger Capitale* 27.

\(^{151}\)"Le Conseil d'État a annulé partiellement le programme des servitudes d'urbanisme de l'ex-municipalité Brunel," *Travaux nord-africains* (9 Feb. 1936): 1. The author points out that *Travaux nord-africains* had been vigilant in noting these inappropriate application of degrees, irregularities of procedure and the over stepping of power on the part of the mayor; this would suggest that they were against state intervention and pro-laissez-faire when it came to the rights of individual property owners.
the context of Moslem Algerian demands for the recognition of their cultural difference and place in
the modern world. Obus "C" suggested a way out of the dilemma. Faure presented the solution as
architecture with its regional distinctions and urbanization with its legitimizing discourses: health,
aesthetics, demographics, economic reorganization, statistics and social inclusiveness. Cotereau
proposed that Obus "C," built on a new "cosmic" order, soared above the dangerous earthly
debates then raging between Metropole, Algerian deputies in the French Senate, Municipal
administrators and Moslem Algerians. With its artificial terrain and suspended constructions, Obus
"C" would rise above the fray, to become a new organism. While being a "crucible for the
assimilation of two races" it would also make the Sahel a colonial park and its skyscraper a
gateway and preface to the penetration of a profitable and safe Africa beyond. The political struggle
over individual rights, equality of representation and the essential qualities of citizenship could be
largely displaced, sublimated into the efforts to subdue nature by modern technology, a courageous
spirit and "the force of machines constructed by humanity," the terms by which Cotereau had
described Le Corbusier's Obus "C."

Le Corbusier's scheme was viewed as extraordinary, unprecedented, facilitated by an enlarged
consideration of profit and as a synthesizer of "races." It differed from the Régie foncière plan
which was regarded as banal, dated, petit bourgeois and hampered by the profit motivation of the
company's share holders. Where the plans of Prost & Rotival and then Prost & Socard offered an
aerated, relatively regular residential and static zone conceived two dimensionally, Obus "C"
vented a permeable, expansive three dimensional space of commerce and multiple activities.
Where the Régie foncière plans provided segregated housing removing Moslem Algerians from the
Marine District, Le Corbusier proffered a new indigenous quarter of mixed use. Where Prost,
Rotival and then Socard differentiated European and Moslem populations with Beaux Arts and
neo-Moorish architecture, Le Corbusier was seen to provide a "natural" transition between the old Turkish style—cubic, planar, white—and the modern.152

Exposition de la Cité Moderne

In April 1936 Le Corbusier's Obus "C" was presented for public scrutiny in the Exposition de la Cité Moderne held in Algiers. This would be the test of the two year campaign waged by Faure, Brua and Cotereau on its behalf.153 The purpose of the exhibition was to define the modern city and the manner in which Algiers would become its exemplar. Judging from the poster for the event, which abstractly paired a Doric column with avant-garde, "futuristic," redent elements from Le Corbusier's Obus plans, the modern retained some relationship to what had past (Figure 40).154 The juxtaposition of classical column and modern mass housing clearly evoked the continuing tradition of Western occupation of the site and the contemporary ideas of a Mediterranean alignment. There was no visual reference to Moslem Algerian culture in the abbreviated representation given to the ideal modern city of 1936. The aesthetic and other divisions which the poster attempted to synthesize, classicism and modernity, Western civilization and an unknown but promised future, were clearly evident in the diversity of exhibits. A similar lack of resolution permeated the exhibition whose plans and projects can also be understood as competing blueprints for colonial relations.155 Le Corbusier's Obus "C" was placed among the newly revised Beaux Arts plan by Prost & Socard (Figure 42), a neo-Moorish town center for Philippeville by Montaland, the "Algerian" Modernism of Niermans City Hall and the stark functionalism of the multi-purpose station by Renaud and Caspan, a redent for 3000 inhabitants by

153 It was a sequel to the Architecture and Urbanism Exhibition of three years earlier, both were greatly indebted to the efforts of the Amis d'Alger.
154 The poster is prominent in photos of the Exhibition and was used for the cover of the May 1936 issue of Algeria.
155 Forty exhibitors presented their work in the spare, modern concrete forms of Leon Claro's Foyer Civique; it pertained to both the Metropole and Algeria, thus indirectly emphasizing Western, colonial, links and shared culture. See G.S. Mercier, "Une promenade à travers l'exposition d'architecture et d'urbanisme d'Alger," Algeria (May, 1936): 29-30.
Emery, Breuillot and Caillet, Prost's Regional plan for Paris, Danger and Cochard's extension for Oran, Le Corbusier's Nemours resort city done in collaboration with Emery (Figure 31) and the Télémy viaduct projects. Govenor General Le Beau noted that the exhibition marked an enormous material and moral progress in the three years since the Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture, thus indicating the political role which such exhibitions played in maintaining the semblance of progress and the continuing effectiveness of the French civilizing mission, as well as the indecisiveness on what form that civilizing mission should take.

In local newspapers, such as Chantiers nord-africains, architecture and urbanism were given varied but decidedly political roles. For some commentators the exhibition would increase the prestige of Algeria in France and abroad, and counter the exotic image of the colony with one of classical reserve aligned with the commercial, agricultural, intellectual and artistic wealth of the colony. Others emphasized more seemingly specific architectural objectives, such as the definition of a modern, non-academic and North African architecture. However, when academic was understood as Metropolitan, and North African as regional, a certain notion of independence was also being evoked. For yet another commentator, the exhibition was an opportunity to publicize the ideas of The Radiant City, "the dream of humanity," which, the author opined, was not the abstract work of finance legislators but of architecture, urbanism, and entrepreneurs, the product of new techniques and tools. This criticism of abstract legislation also, if obliquely, pitted entrepreneurs

156 Also exhibited were an ultra modern exhibition building which presented an unprecedented image of modern construction by Beaudoin and Lods, a HBM building by Guion and inspired by Le Corbusier, the Perret-inspired Government Building by Guiauchain. Mercier, "Une promenade à travers l'exposition" 30-31, and letters to and from Le Corbusier, Paris: AFLC.
158 Although in both instances it was overshadowed by the annual Agricultural Fair of Algiers. This agricultural fair clearly dominated the newspapers and Algeria, at least seven articles appearing on it in L'Echo d'Alger in April, 7 Apr. 1936: 1; 5 Apr. 1936: 7; 11 Apr. 1936: 8; 14 Apr. 1936: 4, 6; 15 Apr. 1936: 4; 18 Apr. 1936: 2. In addition, the Cité Moderne exhibition was not inaugurated by the Governor General although he attended later, also government officials were much less evident in the discussion and publicity of the Exposition than had been the case in 1933. "La Visite du Gouverneur Général de la Cité Moderne," Chantiers nord-africains (May 1936): 269-70.
and technique against étatism. P.A. Emery, Le Corbusier's Algerian partner, advocate and former student, discussed the exhibition as a sign of Algeria's wish to end its incoherence and wastefulness which had paralyzed growth; the "modern city" was therefore the symbol of economic and colonial expansion. For Emery, a Mediterranean style, based on climate and a synthesis of modern French architecture, was the answer. What he meant by this might be ascertained by his own buildings which were of Western technique and Corbusien formal language--there was no inclusion of Arab or Islamic details, no nod to this cultural heritage as it could still, just, be found in Algiers and as even Le Corbusier had referenced earlier in his 1931 redent (Figure 49 and Figure 47).

Several prominent citizens of Algiers wrote on the Exposition de la Cité Moderne for the May issue of Algeria. The "modern city" was understood to be consistent with the journal's mandate, which was to "instruct metropolitan and foreign milieux of the tourist and economic resources of modern Algeria and to inform Algerians on the general situation in Algeria, its economic development, and steps taken in the domain of production or commerce in order to ensure the development of this land." It understood this exhibition to be a similar effort of modernization and progress.

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161 Emery regretted the absence of exhibits from Morocco, Spain, Italy and Greece--which would have given greater legitimacy to the claim of a Mediterranean style. More interesting was his suggestion that even Syrian or Palestinian architects would have had something to add. One can only speculate as to why these two Islamic countries would be included, although not Egypt.


163 "L'Exposition d'Architecture d'Alger," Algeria (Apr. 1936): 51. The organizers are identified as: Le Bâtonnier Rey as president of the Comité de l'exposition, with Lespès head of urbanism, Alazard Beaux Arts and Pierre Marie architecture, Lathuillière was Commissioner Général and Emery Secrétaire Général. Lathuillière, General Commissioner of the exhibition, G.S. Mercier, former General Commissioner of the Centennial Exhibition, Ernst Mercier's brother and active on Le Corbusier's behalf, wrote extensive articles on the Exhibition. Others included references to the Exhibition in the context of more general but related topics. Lespès, a member of the urbanism organizing committee, included the Exhibition in a general history of planning in Algiers while Albert Seiller, a prominent Amis d'Alger member, included it in his discussion of the birth of an Algerian architecture. Prost remained aloof from such regional design interests and wrote on his more administrative concerns of the regional plan for Paris.
The Algeria articles focused debates on the potential of such a new style, neither restrictively French nor artificially Moorish, but independent of both. In so doing the Exposition de la Cité Moderne became a forum for the critique of the neo-Moorish style, the demise of its ornamented forms apparently having been announced by the centenary celebration. Rejection of neo-Moorish forms also entailed a rejection of architecture's alignment with its particular program of "generosity" toward Moslem Algerians. Thus, just as Moslem Algerians had discovered the hollowness of these conciliatory stylizations, the neo-Moorish style was to be replaced by something more expressive of a collective spirit, a "truly free" architecture, responsive to climate, rather than established cultural policy; here "generosity" would find other means of expression. Rejection of neo-Moorish Mediterranean architecture was seemingly unsullied by the abuses of a colonial past. "Conceived" with the 1933 Exposition d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture, it marked "la naissance d'un mouvement méditerranéen raisonné qui permettra plus tard à l'Algérie d'enrichir la patrimonie artistique française." Such was apparently confirmed in the 1936 Exposition de la Cité Moderne: "Désormais, l'Algérie, tout en suivant de très près les réalisations de la Metropole, est capable de donner à son architecture un caractère propre, français d'esprit, mais régional par son expression." Moslem representation had been sublimated to geographical alignment diffused by the "French spirit.".

What the articles on architecture in Algeria seemed to be pursuing most ardently was an identity for the colonial departments gathered under the political designation "Algeria." Characterizations of arabisance as "individualist" and mediterraneanism as "collective" were attempts to identify such a recognizable entity. They also sought to distinguish Algeria from the Metropole, while concepts of Mediterraneanism served to unify a disparate and European group of people in contradistinction to Moslem Algerians identified with the now rejected arabisance. Algeria was not only a

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165 Lathuillière, "L'Évolution de l'architecture en Algérie" 23.
166 Lathuillière, "L'Évolution de l'architecture en Algérie" 23.
Mediterranean cultural collectivity, it was also an alternative to the Metropole where invention and fantasy were purported stifled by formulas and classical modules: "Mais des générations essentiellement algériennes éduquent et créent un esprit nouveau, subtil et coloré, riche de goût, de joie et de lumière. Nous assistons au réveil d'une jeunesse, qui ne se contente pas de formules, en même temps qu'en France la réaction artistique se produit." Here Algeria was cast as the young land of sentiment and spirit and its parent, the Metropole, as rule, order and method. Algerian architecture would be of a new spirit, Mediterranean, modern but without the dryness of an international architecture unadapted to the site or climate:

L'Architecture méditerranéenne--rend son sens exact en face de la liberté de composition et d'expression des plans et des façades de ces bâtiments. Son harmonie dans la distribution de la matière, dans la création des vides et des pleins est une harmonie régionale, mais dans une interprétation plus vaste, plus générale, avec l'origine, le soleil et l'histoire. Moorish decoration had been relegated to archeology and Metropolitan architecture to a different geography as an alternative, Mediterranean, approach was proposed.

Architects were now to consider themselves freed from recent history and as designers for a renovated civilization. The plan had become "Algerian," responding to the landscape and the climate, its forms had become Mediterranean. It was declared that: "Cette architecture ne veut pas être Coloniale, mais qui indique la tendance et la volonté des jeunes architectes algériens d'apporter à la France leur obole dans le patrimone intellectuel du Pays...Ils ont donné à l'Algérie l'architecture qui leur convenant. Ils ont fait parler le Soleil." These arguments for an architecture based on spirit, and the sun, rather than rule were formulated just as the Metropole was attempting to counter the impassioned spitsits and often illegal obstructions of the Délegations financières to the rule of reason expressed in legislation for Moslem Algerian citizenship then being

168 Seiller, "La Naissance d'une Architecture en Algérie" 25.
170 Seiller, "La Naissance d'une Architecture en Algérie" 27.
debated in the French parliament. This "new" spirit was discerned in Le Corbusier's scheme for
Nemours (1934), which disposed within its composition of white forms, terraces and patios a cité
indigène (Figure 31). Nemours is one instance in which Le Corbusier's work and representations
of them as "poetic" clearly colluded with very specific colonial discourse and political position. It
should also be pointed out that this call for autonomy from France, this freedom of expression
granted to practitioners of Méditerannéisme, suited the times. By 1936 the vital viticulture industry
was being seriously undermined by Metropolitan wine import quotas, restrictions on new
vineyards and the nascent, competitive, development of the citrus industry. Autonomy from
France had been evoked often by the Délégations financières, largely representatives of the wine
industry, whenever their profits and power seemed undermined by a call to a national good which
was not in their best interests. Therefore, it appears that Mediterraneanism gathered under its
banner a disparate grouping of interests and motivations. Mediterraneanism, in jettisoning the
more obvious trappings of French culture evoked by Beaux Arts classicism, might offer a less
dogmatic reference to French ideals where, however abstractly, Moslem Algerians might find some
referent, or it might, in serving to identify an independent public authority with the colonialists,
legitimate these subjects' more ardent oppressors.

Prost's plans had none of such reverie, nor sense of meaningful difference from what had gone
before. The ideas on the modern city which he published in conjunction with the Architecture and
Urbanism exhibition stressed disciplined spaces and institutionalized norms: order, hygiene and
aesthetics based on demographics, traffic needs, and the role of Algiers as an administrative capital
city.171 Although Socard may have contributed a more "Algerian" cast to the revised plan of 1936,
it did not suit those demanding a commercial city whose forms and spaces were not (recognizably)
colonial, those who wished to break with cities created as Lyautey decreed, Prost practiced, and

the Metropole decided: "sur des dispositions établies en fonction directe de son programme
d'organisation politique." 172

Views from the Metropole

The Metropole provides another perspective on Le Corbusier's Obus "C," and its status as a model
for the French colonial city. Obus "C" was included in a special 1936 edition of Architecture
d'Aujourd'hui, "La France d'Outre-mer," and the 1937 Exposition des Arts et Techniques dans la
vie Moderne. In "La France d'Outre-mer" the special and urgent question of designing the maison
indigène was discussed. 173 The definition of indigenous housing as an imperative urban question
updated the findings of the 1931 Congrès Internationale des Urbanistes Coloniaux and Prost's
agenda. Seemingly supportive of a policy of association it also undermined the preservation of
Moslem culture as a separate, cohesive entity. As part of this interest in traditional architecture it
was advocated that vernacular models be simplified in the interest of reducing cultural differences
and discrepancies among colonies. It was suggested that cultural reciprocity could be evoked, not
via arabisance but through the provision of Western amenities. It was in this new form of
homogenizing, economizing and modernizing design that architecture assumed its political role. As
one author in the "France d'Outre-mer" issue noted: "L'amélioration du logement indigène, sa
conception organisée, mariat les exigences de l'hygiène avec les coutumes et moeurs des habitants,
apparaît comme l'un des moyens d'actions principaux capables d'opérer la sélection et
l'accroissement du facteur humain." 174 All the authors in this special issue concurred that the
modernization of la maison indigène was a significant mechanism by which Moslem Algerians
could be assimilated progressively to European customs. 175 This modernized indigenous housing

173 A. Persitz wrote on "L'habitation indigène dans les colonies françaises;" Pasquier-Borne, "L'Habitat
indigène en Algérie;" and Seiller and Lathuilière, "Le Problème de l'habitat indigène en Algérie,
174 A. Persitz, "L'habitation indigène dans les colonies françaises," l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui (1936), as
175 Seiller and Lathuilière, "Le Problème de l'habitat indigène en Algérie."
offers a representation of Moslem Algerians substantially different from that provided in the *Maison Indigène* produced for the centenary celebration six years earlier. Likewise, progressive assimilation is a revision if not total rejection of the policy of association advocated by Prost. Now Modern architecture clearly had a role to play in managing the relations of power which had become destabilized by both urbanization and the progressively educated and politicized Moslem Algerian population. As Béguin has more recently noted, the interest in *la maison indigène* was connected to an altered political regime which sought to control the pressing political-economic situation of the era via the normative action of infrastructure and housing.\(^{176}\) This homogenizing image also served the Metropole's growing concern with an Empire of coordinated markets, and a single controlled trade zone which was first studied in 1934 at the Conférence économique de la France métropolitaine et d'outre-mer.\(^{177}\)

A similar "politique altruiste" was maintained by the Arts et Techniques exhibition in the following year. Folkloric images and a display of contrasting levels of technical development were arranged in an attempt to gain consensus on the proper, financially sound and strategically pacifying, relationship between the Metropole and its Empire. The compromises made, for example in the representation of Algeria, indicate the fragility of the exhibition's aim. Two separate characterizations for Algeria were required in 1937. One continued the folkloristic and exotic which had so effectively defined and empowered the French presence in North Africa, albeit revamped for political and economic ends by the Metropole (Figure 28). The other gave a new, modern, meaning to the designation "regional" in its simplified Mediterranean forms (Figure 29).

For the exhibition, Algeria was positioned within a physical, and cognitive, structuring of space which placed the Metropole centrally, flanked by provinces and beyond them colonies at the very periphery of the exhibition site where they were segregated on the *Isle de Cygnes*. This symbolic

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\(^{176}\)Béguin, *Arabisances* 90.

\(^{177}\)Marseiile, *Empire coloniale* 265.
geography played upon Algeria's ambiguous relationship with France. The Seine served as a symbolic Mediterranean which both separated Algeria from the provinces of France but also culturally united the North African colony to them as a southern province bordering a shared "inland sea." This displacement and eccentric positioning was conventional and served to heighten the exotic or "Otherness" of the colony while containing it within a representational system of empire generally.

Algeria was defined by a palais barbaresque of the eighteenth-century, a cour caravansérail and a ruelle de ville arabe. This group of buildings held within them a souk, artisans and artifacts of Moslem life which served to create a tableau vivant. This "living picture" was made more convincing by the inclusion of reconstructed fragments of the Moslem past, the palace reconstituted the court of the Archbishop's palace while the caravansérail included a replica of the Gate of Bab-Azoun. The tableau vivant also gave expression to the economic and political agenda of the Metropole in which the indigenous artisan was to serve the project of the Imperial economy. It was hoped that artisanal work, as a sector between tradition and progress, could be a form of labor which would not erupt into a dangerous proletariat, but rather, would develop into a fledgling petit bourgeoisie desirous of French industrial goods. The Metropole anxiously emphasized the role which artisanal work could have in stimulating the economy of a nation plagued by overproduction. Such employment would not threaten the economy with cheap labor or low-priced

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180 The objective had been "la représentation vivante et spectaculaire de la vie indigène et de l'artisanat dans leur état originaire et modifié par la technique moderne." Discourse Prononcé par le Gouverneur Général de l'Algérie (29 Sep. 1936) AN.
182 Hodeir, "La France d'outre-mer" 288.
France's continuing role as a civilizing force was conveyed via the artisan with his, or perhaps more importantly her, traditions revived and reclaimed by French research and advanced by French technical assistance. It was felt that "the natural genius of races not yet refined by mechanized civilization gave full worth to arts applied to the necessities of life." Folkloristic images of Moslem Algerians worked to differentiate them from an industrial proletariat, and to confirm their slow evolution. Where the French government had hoped to coordinate an indigenous folklore within their larger economic and political picture, Le Corbusier had sought to somehow synthesize it into a single modern structure. His travels across North Africa and account of it in The Radiant City participated in this discourse which had been used so powerfully in the Metropole by critics of Western notions of superiority as well as those seeking to rally such traditions in the interest of economic, cultural and political dominance.

In opposition to the evocation of a picturesque and nostalgic past, or of one colony among many, the pavillon annexe on the Champ de Mars demonstrated a specific and modern

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183 Rapport Confidential de M. Marcel Pays Chef de la Section de Press et de Propagande Etrangères de l'Exposition de Paris. 1937. F/12/12145, Paris: AN. It was noted that unlike 1931 commercial publicity was not very useful given the inaccessibility to foreign markets then in effect. Thus the colonies did take on a greater significance with respect to markets which could not be realized within the nation itself.

184 "installation de la Commission de la France d'outre-mer et organisation de la section 28, F/12/387, Paris: AN. "Dans les arts appliqués aux nécessités de la vie le génie naturel des races non encore atteintes par la civilisation mécanique donne toute sa mesure. Chez les peuples de couleur, aujourd'hui comme jadis en Europe avant l'ère des grands progrès mécaniques, les potiers, les vaumiers, les forgerons, les tisserands sont non seulement des artisans mais des artistes--(au même titre que nos peintres, nos sculpteurs, nos décorateurs)--dont les traditions, les dons créateurs, les techniques expriment le coefficient culturel de leurs tribus, de leurs contrées, de leurs continents."

185 Disturbances had occurred at the Exhibition over the import of people from the colonies to work at the exhibition. French workers had to be assured that there would be no competition offered to Metropolitan labor. The presence of cheap, exploited, labor and the absorption from social insurance premiums in Algeria which made products produced there cheaper than those in the Metropole was another contentious image. It led many within France to assert that Algeria was not an extension of France and therefore should not be given preferential trade status.

186 Another pavilion, the pavillon Synthétique displayed statistics and factual documentation about the benefits and effects of the civilizing process in all the North African colonies. It featured "Les résultats des efforts accomplis par les français pour le developpement moral, sanitaire, économique, industriel et commercial de cette France d'outre-mer Méditerranée." Discours Prononcé par le Gouverneur Général (29 Sep. 1936).
Algeria. Most significantly, it was here that a special place was reserved for architecture and urbanism and much of the Exposition de la Cité Moderne was reconstituted as proof of Algeria's vitality and progress. With a modern architecture and urbanism adapted to the climate and site, Algeria sought to establish itself as another center of development like the Metropole but also as distinct from it as a reciprocating but differentiated partner in a complementary economy. To that end, wheat and wine—important export products of Algeria—were juxtaposed with the new architecture, dams and highways constructed of the cement and for the automobiles imported from France. The Pavillon annexe was concerned with the commercial and industrial potentials of the land and the appropriate cultural expression if these possibilities. The building itself was modeled after Roman edifices of North Africa, its facade a gateway adorned with Roman sculpture. Within were displays of Roman and Arab archeology adjacent to modern irrigation dams, while food and wine recalled the "bread basket of antiquity" and confirmed the prosperity returned by French occupation. The juxtaposition of antique and contemporary civilizations both in built form and exhibits authenticated the often repeated colonial refrains about the latinity of North Africa, prosperity as a singularly Western achievement and the efficacy of modernity. It also suggested the historical and contemporary presence of Moslem Algerians. As one commentator argued:

Rappel de l'Algérie romaine, présentation de l'Algérie arabe, berbère et kabyle, démonstrations de l'oeuvre de l'Algérie moderne, le programme que nous avons

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187 It was believed by the Commissarie Général of Algeria that contemporary painting and architecture could not be appropriately displayed in the palais barbaresque. "La Participation de l'Algérie à l'Exposition," L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui (Sep. 1937): 87.

188 "Un place spéciale y sera réservé à l'archéologie et l'urbanisme et à l'architecture et le succès de l'Exposition à Alger, de la Cité moderne, il y a quelques mois, aura sa réplique dans la section algérienne de l'Exposition de 1937." Discours Prononcé par le Gouverneur Général (29 Sep. 1936). The Cité Moderne section was organized by a Permanent committee of the Modern City. It included maquettes and photos of the most recent constructions: the dam at Chrib, the Orphanage of Beni-Messous by Seiller and Lathuilière, the General Government and Agricultural Buildings by Guiachain and the Foyer Civique by Claro. According to Senator Henry Berenger, President of the Commission of France Overseas: "On mettra en évidence l'influence de la technique européenne sur la vie et l'économie indigène." Also, as Falck elaborated, the pavilion on the île de Cygnes would show indigenous life, artisans and indigenous arts, while the annex would be "ce qui touche aux améliorations apportées aux populations par la technique moderne, notamment l'architecture et l'urbanisme et cela au moyen d'une vivante leçon de choses délivrant les visiteurs de la monotonie des catalogues et de la banalité des vitrines." Falck, "L'Algérie à l'Exposition" 7.

189 "La Participation de l'Algérie à l'Exposition" 87.
The exhibition conveyed the "synthesis" captured by the pairing of Le Corbusier's redent (modernity) with a classical column (latinity) on the poster for the Exposition de la Cité Moderne. Islamic culture was presumed subsumed into the modern. As one Moslem Algerian ironically noted, "Cette pacification (l'impérialisme français) terminée après tant d'autres, les jeunes Morocains attendaient du Protectorat les 'substantifiques bienfaits' de la civilisation européenne qui allaient sûrement faire du Maroc une nation moderne!" While the Metropole wished the ambiance of the imaginary, the representatives of Algeria, being primarily from the Délégations financières, wished to emphasize the colony's commercial prowess while less official representatives, such as the Amis d'Alger, wished to highlight its modern cultural enlightenment.

In 1937 Orientalist images of artisans and pre-industrial manufacture buttressed the Metropole's justification of an economic order of colonial consumption while it condoned European Algerian maintenance of an inferior social or economic condition for Moslem Algerians. The allusion to bejeweled dancers and the domestic handicraft of women served to remind French audiences of Islamic customs which followed religious rather than secular law in treating women unequally, deemed a major obstacle to their material and political progress in Algeria. But the Metropole's representation of Algeria as a repository of traditional work values could only in contradictory ways serve the colony's objectives of production, modernization and industrialization. As artisans, Moslem Algerians were deprived of the higher-paying industrial jobs developing in the urban centers and instead kept "naturally" in the agricultural jobs so necessary to the viticulture.

190 "Rappel de l'Algérie romaine, présentation de l'Algérie arabe, berbère et kabyle, démonstrations de l'oeuvre de l'Algérie moderne, le programme que nous avons élaboré et réalisé peut être effectivement considéré comme une synthèse de la province appelée justement 'le prolongement de la France'.” Falck, L'Algérie à l'Exposition” 8.
industry. On the other hand, the attraction of capital, development and, in the minds of European Algerians, the health if not the life of French presence in North Africa depended on a modern image to support the financial investments and State subsidies devoted to infrastructural development. The fracturing of the representation of Algeria into the picturesque, exotic, "Other" of the Pavillon d'Algérie on the *Ile de Cygnes*, the sober object of statistical data portrayed in the Pavillon de Synthese dedicated to North Africa, and the modernizing capital city of the Pavillon annexe, suggests a crisis in colonial discourse as competing interests opposed one another.

Uppermost in the minds of Metropolitan officials in 1937 was the relationship between Algeria and the Metropole. Expansion had fully saturated the notions of Imperialism and the argument and imagery of a people in need of civilizing remained a mainstay of enlightened government and justification for conquest. At the same time, the economic configuration of Empire had altered. The Metropole had also to recognize Algeria as necessary to the French economy and as the keystone of its African empire. Algeria's role in the Empire was as gateway to Black Africa, "des pays qui sont à la fois des réservoirs de richesses en hommes et en matière première." It

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192 The viticulture industry demanded a large labor force, however, employment was largely seasonal and low paying. See Bourdieu, *The Algerians* 137 and Reudy, *Modern Algeria* 116-117.
193 See Hannah Arendt, "Expansion and the Nation State," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1968) 124-134. Arendt distinguishes between the aims of national institutions and imperial concerns. She identifies the central concern of imperialism, with expansion as a permanent and supreme aim of politics; its origin lies in business speculation not political theory. Imperial expansion meant permanent broadening of industrial production and economic transactions. Limits to expansion were understood to be political (arbitrary) limits. There was therefore an inherent contradiction between the nation as something which can not be indefinitely expanded beyond its basis in a homogenous population's active consent to its government and infinitely expandable imperialism. Interestingly, Arendt draws upon Ernest Renan for this understanding of 'nation' and points to Algeria as a result of these competing conceptualizations. "Wherever the nation-state appeared as conqueror, it aroused national consciousness and desire for sovereignty among the conquered people, thereby defeating all genuine attempts at empire building. Thus the French incorporated Algeria as a province of the mother country, but could not bring themselves to impose their own laws on Arab people. They continued rather to respect Islamic law (sic) and granted their Arab citizens 'personal status,' producing the nonsensical hybrid of a nominally French territory, legally as much a part of France as the Département de la Seine, whose inhabitants are not French citizens." (127) And further "The governors general appointed by the government in Paris were either subject to powerful pressure form French colonials as in Algeria, or simply refused to carry out reforms in the treatment of natives, which were allegedly inspired by the weak democratic principles of (their) government. Everywhere imperialist administrators felt that the control of the nation was an unbearable burden and threat to domination." (134) Le Corbusier had similar notions of the arbitrary construction of nations and national borders, as he clearly laid out in *Pélerin*.
195 "Un discours du Gouverneur."
would form a new point in Le Corbusier's geopolitical mapping. In 1937 his quadrilatère Barcelona/Paris/Algiers/Rome would become reduced to the triangulaire Paris/Algiers/Gao, that is, Algiers as a conduit between the Metropole and French West Africa.

**Obus "C" and Political and economic structures of Algiers**

The general political tenor in the Metropole with respect to architecture and urbanism in Algeria in the 1930s and particularly to the period of 1934-1937 can only be given abbreviated discussion here. Unlike the New Deal in the United States or Mussolini's New Towns, explicit schemes with clearly attributable political programs are not so easily discernible in Algeria. Although, here too there were rural enhancement projects which sought to relocate and anchor fellahs (Moslem Algerian farmers) to agriculture and the land. And a few new cities were built, at Sétif and Philippeville; Le Corbusier's Nemours project could be included among these types of government intervention. There were also public works programs which sought to manage unemployment.

The metropolitan and colonial governments were involved in architectural and urban developments in the colony, and the municipal government was directly concerned with specific projects in the city. The central government funded large scale public works, provided and controlled administrative and other institutional buildings, subsidized Algerian business and housing. By the mid 1930s much Government attention was redirected towards programs for *les indigènes*. In 1934 projects for professional education, housing, social assistance, and "recherches de nouvelles

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197 "La séance d'ouverture des délégations financières," *La Dépêche algérienne* 6 May 1934: 5. Here Governor General Carde included promises or references to amelioration for Moslem Algerians under several categories in his address at the opening of the Délégations financières in May, 1934: hospitals, education and specifically on the topic of *l'habitat indigène*, "aide aux indigènes," Le fonds commun des Sociétés indigènes de prévoyance," "L'enseignement professionnel," "Recherches de nouvelles améliorations." Approximately one fifth of his speech was devoted to Moslem Algerians. *Colon* prompted considerations of "La colonisation," where he stated "Si les indigènes constituent la masse vous disais-je, tout à l'heure, les Européens forment l'armature de la population algérienne." He also spoke of "Caisse de prêts de consolidation," "Les habitations à bon marché," and "L'urbanisme" in conjunction with the *colons*. 
ameliorations" were presented to the, largely resistant, Délégations financières. These projects were maintained into the late 1930s. The Popular Front continued, although in an enhanced form, the political initiatives and policies of the previous government. In 1937 Governor General Le Beau enumerated projects for enhancing the indigène component of the military, deemed "a national interest," a program for building new schools for the indigène, elementary schools for boys, ("plus et plus imperieux," ) and for girls, where,

on s'efforcerà d'abord non point seulement de dresser les fillettes indigènes, mais
de les élever, c'est-a-dire de leur faire contracter des habitudes salutaires, d'éveiller
leur esprit en orientant leur préoccupations vers les choses du ménage, la tenue de la
maison, les soins à donner aux enfants. L'éducation domestique doit pénétrer
l'école tout entière.198

New Bureaux de Bienfaisance Musulmans with increased subsidies were established, larger funds were voted for the Fonds Commun des sociétés indigènes de prévoyance and the Fonds Commun des Douars while subsidies were given to public works that improved the condition of the Moslem population. Political initiatives of the central government were heavily involved in the amelioration of the living conditions of indigenous populations and were directed towards three objectives: the fight against unemployment via the financing of large scale public works programs; the inculcation of the French language and indoctrination in French values via primary and technical educational programs; the "l'orientation agricêtre " with the development of a program of rural settlements.199 While assimilation appears to have clearly been the objective of the first two initiatives, it is also implied in the third by the fact that rural settlements introduced Western notions of village life and agricultural education aimed at Western methods.200 However it is also more than this. In 1937 the

199Le Beau, "Exposé (1937)" 72, 179, 181, 190
200Le Beau, "Exposé (1937)" 190, 191.
colonies were deemed necessary to the equilibrium of France's waning military and economic position:

L'Empire contribue en somme à rétablir l'équilibre compromis des puissances. Il permet à la France de sauvegarder dans le présent les conditions d'une grandeur menacée. ... Sur le plan économique, la France d'outre-mer est ainsi présentée comme assurant à la métropole la possibilité de son indépendance et la promesse d'un surcroît d'activité féconde. 201

The economic depression also instigated a re-evaluation of the colonial system and ideology. Albert Sarraut's policy of autarchique developed the idea of a vast Imperial ensemble of complementary resources which would escape the vicissitudes of the international market to enter a world of harmonious expansion. Proposed at the 1934 Conférence économique de la France Métropolitain et d'outre-mer, autarchy was described as un système défensif, which would establish privileged economic and trade relations between the colonies and Metropole.

The programs enumerated by Governor General Carde in 1934 and Governor General Le Beau in 1937 reflect the colonial policy of autarchique, of balancing a Metropolitan monopoly on industrial production and cheap raw materials with mutual aid and "generosity" to the colonies. Its heightened profile in Government policy in Algeria was in part a response to growing tensions there and especially in Algiers.202 The designation "assimilation" and "association" became less

201 Girardet, L'Idée coloniale. 126. Girardet continues: "Mais c'est sur le plan de la défense et de la sécurité, en fonction des impératifs suprêmes de la sauvegarde du sol national contre le menaces extérieures, que la nécessité primordiale de l'Empire et plus fréquemment et le plus fortement soulignée. (127)
202 The Popular Front established a Ministerial commission to consider "la question indigène," between September 1935 and July 1936. Demands from Moslems became more frequent, public and demanding of consideration. Le Congrès Musulman which met in June 1936 called for the rights of Moslems, representation in Parliament and the suppression of the Délégations financière. There was talk of an independent Moslem Party. In August of 1936, Messali Hadj, head of the Étoile nord africaine/Parti du peuple algérien, returned to Algiers where he won a position in the municipal government; the vote was interpreted as a vote for nationalism, for which he was the most strident advocate. The Moslem population became fractured over the question of assimilation or nationalism. There were extreme retaliatory actions undertaken by influential European Algerians. The Right, including the Mayor, condemned the demands of the Moslem Algerians as anti-French, and their European supporters as anti-democratic (some would be
useful in the 1930s as new pressures came to define the relationship between colony and Metropole. Chief among those new pressures were responses to the economic crisis and preparation for the eventuality of a second world war, together with the increasing urgency of la question indigène. Assimilation and association therefore became reconfigured by the dominant economic policy of autarchique and, increasingly, its theoretical opponent, rédéploiement—colonial industrialization keyed to world, not national, markets. Autarchique involved a munificence toward the colony in exchange for loyalty to France and its market requirements. It was the policy stitching together the artisan of the Pavillon de l'Algérie, the statistics of education and health benefits to Moslem Algerians and colons as well as the cornucopia of agricultural products and raw materials in the Pavillon annexe of the 1937 Exposition des Arts et Techniques moderns.

The subtle shifts in the rhetoric, economic and otherwise, of the parti coloniale are exemplified in the titles which Albert Sarraut, its chief representative, gave to his books, Mise en valeur des colonies françaises in 1923 but Grandeur et servitude coloniale in 1931. The emphasis given to service and duty, law and morality in the later title was intended to signal a reformed phase of colonialism. No longer would it be the brutal enterprise of conquest, but rather, having evolved beyond mere administration, colonialism was to be understood and justified as "celui d'une œuvre collective de solidarité." Sarraut's description of this configuration of a new consciousness, modern technology and a colonial morality encapsulated a dominant assessment of the 1930s colonial dynamic and is worth quoting at some length:

On y retrouve l'expression d'une prise de conscience nouvelle des liens de solidarité qui, devant un monde en mutation, unissent désormais les nations de l'Occident. Par là encore,--et il faut sans doute insister sur ce point,--l'idée coloniale se rattache au souci de modernisme si fortement exprimé par l'époque. Ce

elevated above others, for example the Kabyle and women would be penalized). 1937 was a difficult year. Kaddache, La Vie politique à Alger de 1919 à 1939 (Alger: SNED, 1970) 294-316. 203 Girardet, L'Idée coloniale 130.
n'est pas en vain si son apologie se trouve si souvent liée à celle des grandes réalisations du progrès technique. 204

By late 1934 autarchique was confirmed as the strategy of preference. 205 However, what progrès technique meant could be given different interpretations. What elusively guided the discussion and contradictions in the debates about planning in the mid-1930s was the incompatible compulsions of this hegemonic autarchy. What form and organization could serve both the conservative and innovative industries with their respective ideologies was undecided.

The Prost & Socard plan, relying on government subsidized Habitations à Bon Marché, segregated housing, incremental growth and discourses of health and hygiene, together with a regional infrastructure might be one interpretation of autarchique. The architecture and plan, with their conventional forms and lack of structural daring, like the policy of autarchique itself, were premised on the unequal productive balance of an industrialized France and less advanced colony. For Prost, progrès technique meant the resolution of colonial strife via the most up-to-date technique in large scale social planning, be it regularization or, in what Rabinow has termed, the "theatricalization of urban diversity" evidenced in the restorations of the lower Casbah or cités indigènes. 206 Prost's intervention in Algiers was a compromised version of his Moroccan policy of association which had established completely separated cities; in Algiers only housing could be segregated. Prost & Socard's plans for the Marine District with their principles formed by the policy of association were deformed by the exigencies of autarchique.

Although upheld into the late 1930s autarchique became less able to manage the economic crisis just as association could no longer contain growing claims for independence. Neither assimilation, which many had blamed for the degradation of both cultures, the spread of modernity and a crisis in French theories of representative government, nor association, in which others perceived a

204 Girardet, L'Idée coloniale 132.
205 Marseille, Empire coloniale 265-66.
206 Rabinow, French Modern 286.
deterrent to industrial and market development as well as impotency in the face of indigenous nationalist demands, seemed effective models for the maintenance of Empire. Attempts to find resolutions would remain unsystematic, fragmentary and unresolved.

There was a different understanding of progrès technique which had been articulated by le directeur des Affaires économique du ministère des Colonies which saw, with respect to the future of the colonies:

ce n'est plus la compensation d'objets fabriqués et de denrées exotiques,
mais la rivalité de produits industriels...L'industrialisation est donc inévitable
et même à brève échéance.... Dans une certaine mesure, ce n'est autre qu'un
affranchissement des servitudes du dehors. L'ère de l'enrichissement d'une
classe sociale par des débouchés extérieurs étrangers, voire coloniaux,
touche à sa fin.207

Similar ideas are found in Regional Syndicalist tracts, such as those published in Prélude, which paired modern technical achievement with colonial issues, a peaceful Europe with a new, supranational scale of economic thinking. As in reformist colonial writing, colonization was represented as "l'une des plus fortes nouveautés du monde moderne."208

However, reformist colonial discourse had to respond to two criticisms of this proposed new world: the abuses of colonialism, assimilation or association, and a disenchantment with modernization. One prevalent idea, or metaphor, was that of a "graft," a welding of colonizer and colonized, that would break the isolation of societies outside Europe with their resulting reintegration into modernity and revitalization by Western technique and organization.209 A new equilibrium to the life of the colonized would be achieved by industry. The criticism of the decline

207 Marseille, Empire coloniale 334. Louis Mérat, in the Affaires économiques du ministère de Colonies.
208 Girardet, l'Idée coloniale 132.
209 This idea is expressed in the writing of Robert Delavignette for example, Soudan/Paris/Boulogne, 1935 and Les vrais chefs d'Empire, 1938. The idea of industry being the source of a new equilibrium was elaborated in his Paysan Noir. Cited in Girardet, l'Idée coloniale 184-187.
and degradation of Western culture, of modernity and idealist hierarchical thinking of cultural difference was answered by the novel idea of symbiosis, where African and French could each remain distinct, their "essential selves," but would take the best from each other in reciprocal support and cooperation. The call for "symbiosis" was a proposal for an ordre nouveau, one which combined rather than separated cultures. As part of this "new order" would be the reciprocal "grafting," of village or Casbah, with industry and business interests, of the East with the West. Echoes of this are found in the notion of Le Corbusier's Obus "C" as "un point de soudure."\textsuperscript{210}

Although completed in early 1934, subsequent circulation of Obus "C" through 1935-37 placed it within a political arena that altered, as has been indicated, with unsettling speed. Although Obus "C" was finished just as the events which precipitated the formation of the Popular Front occurred, it was during the extraordinary formation and rise to power of the Popular Front that the prominence of Obus "C" was orchestrated in Algiers.\textsuperscript{211} Le Corbusier was not unaffected by this. He felt compelled to sever ties with L'Homme Réel as it turned towards communism in response to the clash between Right wing demonstrators and the Left in February 1934, the events from which the Popular Front was born. Instead, he strengthened his connection with the, ostensibly, non-partisan Prélude.\textsuperscript{212} Through 1936 and 1937 he would make periodic forays into the political realm of the Popular Front. Prélude, while having a distrust for parliamentary government, did express some sympathy for the Popular Front and Le Corbusier participated in it's Maison de Culture.\textsuperscript{213} The Minister of Agriculture, George Monnet, was a personal friend of the architect and assisted him in securing a site for the Temps Nouveau Pavilion in the Rural Sector of the Arts et Techniques exhibition,\textsuperscript{214} while the Pavilion itself was realized largely because of Blum's

\textsuperscript{210}The phrase comes from Cotereau, "un point de soudure" 1.
\textsuperscript{211}According to Julian Jackson, the Popular Front experienced its "emotional" founding in its 12th of February 1934 counter demonstration to the right-wing march on the French Parliament which had occurred on February 6th. It became a functioning political entity in July of 1935 and its electoral victory occurred in May 1936. Julian Jackson, The Popular Front in France defending democracy, 1934-38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 1, 5, 7.
\textsuperscript{212}McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 152.
\textsuperscript{213}McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 158, 279, 310.
\textsuperscript{214}McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 310-311.
intervention. In June of 1936 Monnet became a sponsor of CIAM. At the same time, Vaillant-Couturier, communist ally in the Popular Front, defended Le Corbusier against earlier criticism of his urbanism published in the communist paper, l'Humanité. Le Corbusier's urbanism, considered "petit bourgeois" and "counter revolutionary" by l'Humanité in 1932 had become, under the Popular Front, politically acceptable in 1937. In the same year, one of the films made by Ciné Librété, the Popular Front collaborative cinema, was Les Bâtisseurs, a film which coupled the repair of Chartres Cathedral with Le Corbusier speaking on modern urbanism.

Although Le Corbusier's work was show-cased in two important venues for Popular Front propaganda, the 1937 Arts et Techniques exhibition and cinema, it should not be assumed that all his work from this period, and especially the Algiers' plans, were direct expressions of Popular Front policy. As McLeod has shown, during the same period he also offered his services to Mussolini, providing designs for Addis Ababa after the Ethiopian "campaign" of 1935-36. Obviously, it was not a political rapport that Le Corbusier shared with the Popular Front, but rather other interests. Le Corbusier's Regional Syndicalist views, which paid considerable attention to agriculture and rural life, made him appreciative of Blum's price and market regulations. Both drew upon folklore in an effort to define economic and cultural entities, one regional the other national. At best, the architect and this hegemonic government had in common certain themes and

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215 Jackson, The Popular Front 129.
216 McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 164. In November 1936 Vaillant-Couturier published an apology in Humanité, for the critique of Ville Radieuse by Peyralbe which the paper had published in 1932. Le Corbusier, along with Gide, Rolland, Malraux and Lurçat were now listed as allies.
218 Jackson, The Popular Front 142.
219 McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 309. Mussolini justified his invasion of Ethiopia by reference to Italy's need for land and its superior technical abilities. In contravention of the League of Nations condemnation of this act of aggression Mussolini not only sent tanks against an assortment of outdated rifles and spears he also used mustard gas, outlawed since World War I. Ethiopia was one of the more modern, and independent, nations of Africa and colonization as a civilizing mission was hardly a convincing alibi. Despite Mussolini's misuse of technology against a sovereign nation, and much public condemnation of it, Le Corbusier proposed to rebuilt Addis Abba for him. Here Le Corbusier's modernism could not but play a significant role in legitimating Mussolini's actions.
220 Le Corbusier approved of Blum's national wheat office which introduced price regulations and marketing controls that he found preferable to the free market situation of 1934-35. Given that Algeria was a major exporter of wheat to France one can surmise that this controlled market functioned in conjunction with protectionist policies. McLeod, "Urbanism and utopia" 310.
assessments of contemporary power relations. The Popular Front did not have a consistent
colonial agenda and only a very general policy of culture and the visual arts. The latter revolved
around ideas of participation, diversity and access: extended opening hours for museums, public
access to radio, mass media arts, collaborative ventures and spectacles. Architecture was used
metaphorically to suggest history, collective action and community shelter, as in Les Batisseurs,
but what could be created cinematically was not be so easily realized in actuality. As Julian
Jackson has argued, the cultural policy of the Popular Front, largely motivated by the need to
establish consensus, was eclectic, undermining both the avant-garde project and the politicization
of culture.221

Prior to their election in 1936 great expectations had been placed on the colonial policy which the
Popular Front would adopt. The Blum-Viollette Bill for Moslem Algerian enfranchisement,
debated through 1935-37, had raised anticipations among Moslem Algerians that their demands for
citizenship would finally be realized. Through 1936, Moslem Congresses were called, a Moslem
"charter of rights" was formulated, demonstrations and festivals in celebration of the Popular Front
were organized and Messali, now leader of the Parti du peuple algérien (the renamed Étoile nord
africaine) returned to Algiers, gathering a crowd of some 8000 at one meeting to hear his
nationalist arguments.222 The issue for Moslem Algerians was nationalism or a new concept of
assimilation.223 At the same time, the Blum-Viollette Bill, and Moslem Algerian activities,
provoked oppositions and retaliations among French Algerians distrustful of any real political
assimilation. The fear of nationalization, and any enfranchisement of Moslem Algerians as had
been proposed by Viollette and Blum had turned industrialists and many European Algerians
against the Popular Front in Algeria.224 The Mayor of Algiers, who was hostile to the Popular
Front, employed exclusionary practices against Moslem Algerians in municipal and civic matters

221 Jackson, The Popular Front, chapter four, "The cultural explosion" 113-145.
222 Kaddache, La Vie politique 312-16.
223 While Moslem reformers used the word "assimilation," they intended to distinguish it from
gallicization, which implied absorption into French culture and religion.
224 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 206.
and collaborated with fascist groups in Spain. The fears of colonists were largely unfounded, the Popular Front introduced only subtle alterations in colonial policy. None of the constituent parties making up the Popular Front were unconditionally committed to full enfranchisement, or independence; the Radicals blocked all reforms in their bid to maintain the status quo, the Socialists advocated the creation of elites as preparation for an eventual self government, and the French Communist Party abandoned their anti-colonial stance in the interests of the anti-Fascist struggle. The high aspirations of the Popular Front were not matched by an equal level of achievement.225 Their implementation of colonial policy was merely altered to become more compliant. The problem for the Popular Front was to maintain its image as a civilizing force, bearer of enlightenment and eventually freedom to the oppressed and "less civilized" while retaining its power of consensus in political and economic matters. Due to the divisions within the Popular Front and the strained relations between Metropole and colony, there were several, and not always consistent, strategies adopted in the interests of maintaining French dominance.226

In this context Le Corbusier's Obus "C" was accorded a prominent position within the implicitly politically charged venues of the Exposition de la Cité Moderne, Faure's Alger-Capitale, the pages of Le Journal Général Travaux publics et Bâtiment and Algeria. The presence of such equivocal notions about the colony and the roles of industrial modernization sheds some light on the prescience perceived in Le Corbusier's plans by his supporters in Algiers. Obus "C" seemed to offer a means of ordering and relating the souk and modern commerce at a time when hostility towards Moslem Algerian labor was mounting. Yet if a reference to folklore or to vernacular traditions could suggest a self-sufficient indigenous economy or a cultural pluralism in the Metropole, it could also, in the context of an increasingly right-wing Algerian and Municipal government, serve to provoke counter images of a reactionary, hostile, inferior and feudal

225 Jackson, The Popular Front 154. The cultural program of the Popular Front revolved around ideas of participation, diversity and access: extended opening hours for museums, public access to radio, mass media arts, collaborative ventures and spectacles.
226 The right-wing European milieu, gathered around the Mayor, Augustin Rozis and his municipal councilors, was very hostile to the Popular Front and Albert Sarraut. Kaddache, La Vie Politique 317
community of subjects. In 1935, the recently elected right-wing mayor of Algiers could initiate policies which remunerated Moslems less on the racists grounds of their "ancestral habits" and "lesser need" than Europeans. Le Corbusier's earlier appreciation of the folklore traditions of the Mozabites of Ghardaia or the people of the M'zab which allowed them their own cultural space in 1931, was purified of its vernacular and cultural difference for their inclusion in Alger Capitale of 1936. Representations of Moslem Algerians as exemplars of an unsophisticated folk-life and artisanal economies, or as assimilated modern participant, were problematized by the changing cultural order buffeted by French and Algerian economic interests.

The fate of Algeria was equated with the export of wine, wheat and "the products of the earth." Therefore, it was not only housing which preoccupied the Délégations financières but also aid to industrialists and commercial interests. In such a context Le Corbusier's skyscraper business center becomes more ambivalent. The inclusion of Moslem Algerian civic buildings in Obus "C" was perhaps an attempt to offset or balance the exploitative meaning consolidating around business interests in the colony, and to salvage the liberating intentions of its radical technology. The early 1930s had been marked by assimilation, slight increases in the number of Moslem Algerians admitted to the French power structure, a school-building program, the modernization of the Casbah with electric lighting and a new market for example. These assimilation tactics provided a precedent for Le Corbusier's adoption of commerce and technical modernization as the basis for what can be termed his "nuanced" relationship between the two cultures in his 1933-34 design of Obus "C." His inclusion of Moslem Algerian institutions also declared a form of cultural reciprocity, or "generosity."

Conclusion

227 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 209.
228 The financial contribution to the colonies, also necessary to the policy of autarchique, was always rather paltry, less than budgeted for the department of the Rhone according to Marseille, Empire coloniale 331.
229 Kaddache, La Vie Politique 210.
Just as there was no easy correlation between economic theory and political action, so there was no immediate or direct relationship between political and economic pronouncements and city planning. The plans produced for Algiers in the mid-1930s addressed a complex constituency composed of Algerian agriculturists wanting to protect their monopoly in the Metropole against competitive products from other colonies, industrialists wishing to remain competitive in international markets, Metropolitan politicians with concerns about unemployment which came to eclipse their interests in commercial reciprocity, officials suspicious of private commercial interests and a growing number of Moslem Algerians critical of French versions of progress and the modern, to isolate just a few of its diverse elements.

Obus "C" was a beacon for a specific kind of colonialism, paying particular attention to free expanses (free physically and financially), dynamic, dislodged and seemingly undirected views into three dimensional space, unencumbered and active movement defined by an unconventional vocabulary of built volumes and open spaces achieved by sophisticated, "international" technology. Its scale, material and function addressed industrialists, the only ones, it was believed, who could afford such large buildings. Beneficial facilities such as parks, civic buildings, esplanade, would be financed by productive industry, not the State which Le Corbusier advocated be replaced by Regional Syndicalism. The ramifications of this in the colonial context of Obus "C" are significant, if not what the architect would have envisioned. Colonial industrialization had been proposed in the 1930s as one response to France's economic woes, and in turn rejected by the cautious, considered by the Popular Front and only finally initiated by Vichy. In terms of the discussions of industrialization of the colonies in the 1930s it would mean a radical reformulation of colonialism. Implied were autocentric industrial production in colonial locales, the creation of second Metropoles from which to conquer foreign markets and redéploiement of wealth. The advantage was a prioritizing of economic growth over political

230 Faure, Travaux nord-africains 17 Oct. 1934: 1
domination, and the creation of a connection between Metropole and Empire which would survive all untoward evolution, and provide employment for an educated elite, "Elle susciterait un tel courant d'échanges intellectuels moraux, techniques et financiers que le problème, capital de l'intégration des élites indigènes dans le milieu français se trouverait résolu." Thus it was believed that the calls for independence and aspirations for autonomy would wither away before the "compact faisceau" of reciprocal interests which would pull indigenous inhabitant and European together. This was the picture of Obus "C" given by Faure in his *Alger Capitale* and Cotereau in his defense of "the new bombardment." Evolution, and industrialization were, according to this model of colonialism, inevitable, as Le Corbusier had, however sadly, noted 1931 travel diaries for North Africa. In 1938 L.P. Morard, President of the Economic Region of Algiers warned of the consequences of refusing industrialization in the colonies.

S'il ne peut pas être entendu (notre appel), nous aurons du moins loyalement posé le problème; il nous restera l'espoir de voir, de préférence aux capitaux étrangers, l'industrie française s'installer elle-même en Algérie pour la conduire vers ses nouvelles destinées. Il nous restera, hélas, la crainte de voir l'Algérie subir des modifications de structure sociale, au risque de compromettre la souveraineté française.232

Obus "C" was still part of the colonial project and that perhaps accounts for its being confounded with the work of Lyautey or the plan of Prost & Socard in recent critiques. But, the differences between these three are significant. The industrialization which formed the politics of Le Corbusier's vision was, within the spectrum of possibilities of Modernism of the period, the perceived path to inevitable independence and global restructuring.233 Prost & Socard's

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231 Marseille, *Empire coloniale* 253-54.
232 L.P. Morard's address to the Association des grands ports français, meeting of December 15th 1937. He was also *censeur*, examiner, of the Bank of Algeria in 1938. Marseille, *Empire coloniale* 256, 408-409, n. 44.
233 The development of local markets, breaking with the dominance and dependence on foreign markets is, Marseille suggests, the first step toward independence. It is not that Le Corbusier advocated independence for Algeria, but that his notion of a regional center and industrialization was, for the 1930s, a conception which prepared its possibility. Faure and Cotereau as *colons* were more interested in some form of
conventional project envisioned no divorce with the prevailing traditions of *mise en valeur*, except their vague inclusion of institutional buildings for Moslem Algerians, which reflected political exigency rather than theoretical reformulation. This plan represented an augmentation of colonial power administered from Paris. It was a future ever more dependent on the Metropole for funding and planning expertise in the structuring of social relations between European and Moslem Algerian according to the political necessities of France. Le Corbusier designed to the scale of the machine, it was the machine that, in his view, would determine borders, not political decrees. The ideal plan of *The Radiant City* was warped to the pull of land exploitation and a categorization of elite and worker housing; both necessary to the industrialist's vision of the colonial situation. This categorization however, was not premised upon "race," as was Prost & Socard's plan, but upon elites—Le Corbusier's utopia and the, perhaps mythic, mechanism of Moslem Algerian advancement proposed by Socialists and industrialists alike.

In 1937 Le Corbusier was named to the Commission permanente du Plan de la Région d'Alger. His next project for the business center of the Marine would be coordinated with the more precise political geography with which that Commission was concerned. The skyscraper would become a three-pronged edifice intended to consolidate local commerce within its multifaceted form while leaving everyday life to continue undisturbed. (As Faure commented, "la rue Michelet actuellement envahie par les bureaux, la vider, la restituer à l'habitation"). The building itself was given facades responsive to its different orientations, with the intention that it would convey through its diversity *Alger- Capitale d'Afrique*. 234 It was no longer the *Prélude* geopolitical artifact, but "Témoignage de force et d'organisation," where, "le gratte-ciel d'Alger prend une signification symbolique sur le méridien Paris-Alger-Afrique Equitoriale." 235 This was largely in keeping with the assessment of the colony's role as gateway to Western and Central Africa made by the Governor General of autonomy from the Metropole, for Europeans not necessarily Moslem Algerians. In addition Algeria would have been unable to pay for the infrastructural and amelioration programs for Moslem Algerians without assistance from the Metropole. See Marseille, *Empire coloniale* 240-242.


Algeria in 1937. As its capital city, Algiers was poised on the threshold to a more exotic "Other" that was necessary for both *La Grande France* and perhaps a certain definition of modernity. For certain *colon* of Algeria, here perhaps was a useful tool, commensurate with Camus' landscape, which would allow an escape from an irresolvable position. It was however, also a threshold through which the "Other" could also foray.
Chapter Four: A negotiated truce: Plans Obus "D", "E" and the Plan Directeur, 1938-1942.

...un nouvel état d'urbanisme soit appelé par l'heure comme seul capable de sauver Alger, Oran, et bien d'autres cités. Capable aussi de doter les indigènes (familles et groupes; de sauver entre autres, la Casbah d'Alger, document unique), d'équiper efficacement les nouvelles voies de colonisation prévues vers le sud.

C'est là une nouvelle ère que s'ouvre en Afrique, nécessitant aux cotés d'un grand Chef, la présence de techniciens divers, capables d'assumer cette tâche depuis l'idée jusqu'à la réalisation concrète. (Le Corbusier, letter to General Weygand)

"Tu portes une armure dont tu ne pourras jamais te défaire: la culture française. Non seulement elle te rendra toujours suspect aux yeux de tes coréligionnaires qui depuis une décennie environ versent dans le nationalisme arabe avec une unanimousé touchante, mais encore te fera parler et agir dans un sens français. L'obstacle est là et j'en parle en connaissance de cause." (Rahab Zenati) 1

Introduction

Between 1938 and 1942 Le Corbusier produced Obus "D", "E" and the Plan Directeur which were related in complex ways to their dramatically altered civic and political context.

Also significant were larger issues of nationalism and modernism which configured the

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continuities and ruptures that occurred as the architect negotiated this changing milieu. It was a time when the configuration of space, its boundaries and contiguities, were conscripted as a political strategy of consensus and domination. As recent historians—Paxton, Dorléac, Rioux, Ory and Guiraud—have demonstrated, Vichy was a period of paradoxes and ambiguities; it was an authoritarian regime in which culture retained its dynamic force, and in which authoritarian official discourse was not unchallenged.²

The period just before and during Vichy was one of complicated colonial activity. One could argue that the policies of the Third Republic, Popular Front and Vichy were in effect indistinguishable, although rhetoric and representations of colonial issues showed subtle variations.³ In addition, many government officials influential in colonial policy held their positions throughout the inter-war period, and often into the Vichy era.⁴ Dramatic revisions of colonial policy occurred before the establishment of Vichy. The Popular Front had made an abrupt reversal of its colonial policy even within its short term of office. In 1936 a solidarity of workers, French and indigène, a colonisation altruiste, had been proposed.⁵ By 1938 such a unity was deemed impossible. What ultimately compelled modification of colonial policy was anxiety about the status of national security and


³Jacques Marseille, Empire colonial et capitalisme français. Histoire d'un divorce (Paris: Éditions Alvin Michel, 1984) 337. Marseille finds nothing original in Popular Front reformism and states that for political reasons it would remain backward with respect to more progressive policies of the partisans of industrialization. Although Vichy is described as claiming a rupture with preceding periods by its modernism, albeit modified by its elitism and technocratic tendencies, it too failed to introduce real change indicative of its acceptance of modern ideas due to the hostility of traditionalists. (341-42).

⁴Marseille, Empire coloniale 419. For example, Gaston Joseph was Directeur des Affaires politiques from 1929 to 1943 and apparently exerted considerable influence on French colonial policy.

⁵Marseille, Empire coloniale 335. In November 1936 Marius Moutet, Socialist Minister of Colonies, in his opening remarks to a Conference of Governor Generals defined the following position: "Ce postulat de la colonisation altruiste exige un aménagement satisfaisant de l'économie franco-coloniale, par le privilège réservé aux produits coloniaux dans la métropole, pour garantir un juste prix au producteur et lui permettre de quitter sa vie misérable des races nues et, en contrepartie, assurer aux produits industriels métropolitains un traitement privilégié dans les colonies. Ainsi doit s'établir entre les travailleurs indigènes et français une solidarité d'intérêts, base de leur sentiment fraternel...."
domestic order. Old fears, recurrent since at least the 1870s, resurfaced. Once again it was felt that France's identity was fractured, its borders fragile, its interior disorderly. Concomitant with this was the tension between nostalgia for more stable times and an optimistic view to a modern future; only a modern state could protect its borders with Germany, only a traditional one could maintain its interior frontiers.

Both the Enlightenment ideal of the spread of civilization and the socialist aims of industrialization and modernization for the benefit of the proletariat were compromised by colonial concerns: assured markets, military recruits, cultural dominance. The late 1930s and the Vichy period experienced added pressures on the definition of the nation, strains which would have their effects on the colonies. What is to be determined, however, is the extent to which Le Corbusier's alterations to his plans for the city challenged or upheld established notions of the nation and hence of difference and alien "Others," and why, despite the show of support among French administrators in 1938 and again by Vichy in 1941, his plans neither won the approval of the elected representatives of Algiers nor ultimately the backing of Vichy.

In France, Le Corbusier significantly altered his plans for Algiers throughout these years, once before war was declared, again just before the German occupation and finally, and radically, in late 1941 early 1942 under Vichy. During this period Le Corbusier began to work in collaboration with civil servants in Algiers, especially the prominent city engineer, Renaud, and fellow members of the Regional Plan committee to which he was appointed by the Governor General in December 1937, as he was to its 1938 revised entity the Comité de la Plan Regional d'Alger. It would prove to be an unstable truce between the avant-garde architect and the more circumspect civil servants of the Municipal Council. In 1941, as a member of a Vichy committee, his position as an urbanist within the French Empire gained official status—an ill defined and insecure status perhaps as France became
ambiguously and perilously "engaged" with the Empire of the Third Reich. Each of these new positions affected the scope within which Le Corbusier assessed the role of urbanization and each was part of the enlarged role assigned to planning within the Empire. Proof of this expanded role for planning is exemplified in the escalation in number and comprehensiveness of planning bodies influential in Algiers during this period. In addition to the small municipal redevelopment project directed by the Régie foncière and overseen by the Municipal Council were two other planning groups. One, the Regional Planning committee of Algiers, possessed an authority which extended beyond Algiers to its sixteen adjacent communes. It was directed by technicians and political representatives of the various communities. The second planning initiative came from the various architecture and urban committees established by Vichy to oversee construction throughout the Empire.

The vision brought to these committees varied according to the departmental or Imperial priorities of their members; as each represented the interests of different levels of government the various plans were ultimately controversial. Le Corbusier’s final Obus plans and then Plan Directeur would offer yet another contending position. And although no clear alteration in colonial policy is articulated in any of the political ruptures which formed the contexts to these plans, an increased intensity in the anxieties about the definition of the nation did impact on the relationship between Metropole and colonies, French citizen and subject and the planning interventions considered most effective in controlling these apprehensions.

Le Corbusier is usually absolved—as a disinterested technician, a form giver, a provender of a "new vision of space" or as naive intellectual—from political intentions although, or because, throughout his career he had solicited support from various figures from across the political spectrum. In keeping with his Saint-Simonian social attitudes and Regional Syndicalist tenets Le Corbusier believed parliamentary government and the political system through which it operated to be dysfunctional and best replaced by a hierarchical
arrangement of specialists who would make decisions for society based on their expertise.\(^6\) According to this arrangement the efficient and rationalized management of production would replace the management of people and the repressive aspects of the State. This new system would allow objective technicians to replace politicians so that the actions of those working within it would be, according to Syndicalist thought, apolitical. Yet, the 1930s was a period of Le Corbusier's most direct political involvement: architecture or revolution of the 1920s *Vers une architecture* had become architecture and revolution of the 1930s *Radiant City*,\(^7\) and, as was shown in the preceding chapter, implicated in colonial politics. Although Le Corbusier's affiliation at this time with Regional Syndicalism placed him on the periphery of the French political system, his association with Redressement Français would form the inspiration for Pétain's "Révolution nationale" and become a bridge for himself and others from the Third Republic to Vichy. In addition, in late 1937 and again in early 1941, Le Corbusier took up positions within administrative and politically appointed committees. However, despite his explicit alignments with different political figures and ideologies it is difficult to anchor him to a particular faction. It is also impossible to date the origin of his plans precisely, or key their revisions or inspiration to specific colonial debates or to particular political dictates; plans worked out in the last days of the Third Republic would be defended by Vichy rhetoric. While neither wishing to ascribe an unmediated social cause to stylistic effects, nor to explain the derivation of the plans as a simple political result, it does not seem possible to divorce them fully from the political and colonial contexts in which they were produced and debated. Although Le Corbusier's architecture and planning developed seemingly independently of specific political agendas, the colonial institutions and context for which he designed, and the political structure to

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\(^7\) Mary McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia, Le Corbusier From Regional Syndicalism to Vichy," diss., Princeton University, 1985 161.
which he often appealed did assign a distinct role to architecture and planning, this was especially articulated under Vichy where these disciplines played a key role in defining the nation.\(^8\) The relationship between urban form and political agendas intended for the colonies was therefore manifold.

The trajectory of Le Corbusier's plans for Algiers might be best understood in an exploration of his talents in devising new forms and new visions of space. From this vantage point their contribution to or disruption of the power of the colonial regime might be assessed and something of what was at stake in supporting a Plan Obus, rather than a plan by Prost & Socard for example, explained. If, as Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre have variously postulated, it is through space that power is disseminated, managed, but also disrupted and challenged, then the spaces conceived by the architect and the resulting architecture and planning exhibit the process and practice of political, economic and social interaction.\(^9\) The question is, did the plans and what they proposed allow the architect to negotiate these complex interactions differently, did they facilitate alternative political and economic actions?

Some insight into the differences between the Obus plans and those by Prost and his partners Rotival and then Socard, and how they may have functioned in the colonial context of Algiers is offered by Lefebvre's conception of the "production of space" and the terms by which it can be analyzed as representations of space (conceptual), representational space (perceptual) and spatial practice (performative).\(^10\) These terms are useful in understanding

\(^8\)Some of the questions relating to the relative autonomy of political institutions, revolution, and architecture are raised by Anthony Vidler in "Researching Revolutionary Architecture," *Journal of Architectural Education* 44.4 (Aug. 1991): 205-10.


\(^10\)Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 33. See also chapter one "Plan of the Present Work," 1-67, where the assumptions and objectives of defining space as a (social) production are outlined.
the interrelationship between abstract and a priori principles of urban planning (Le Corbusier's *Radiant City* or Prost's "Urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux," for example), existing representational systems (the Casbah, the European City) and lived experience (the congestion of the old Arab quarter, or its pattern of fountains). Lefebvre aligns the production of space, and its alterations, with modes of production, thereby offering insight into the economic and labor issues which the colony raised during this period. Equally insightful is his observation that development in these three categories, and their relationship to shifts in production modes, need not be synchronic.

This chapter will examine the relationship of the developments in the plans against these multifarious events looking first at Obus "D" and "E" and their relationship to the other plans with which they competed. It will then turn to Obus "E" and the Plan Directeur and their relationship to Vichy. The intent will be to ascertain to what extent the significant alterations to the plans can be explained in terms of Vichy politics and colonial policy. Finally, the issues raised by Lefebvre will be explored with the intent of returning to the issues of race, gender and nationalism as they formed the underpinning of colonial practices influencing architecture and urban planning in ways that went beyond the impact of the particular political and partisan agendas of Third Republic, Popular Front and Vichy.

As has been shown, throughout the years of Le Corbusier's involvement in Algiers, governmental attitudes towards the colonies, including Algeria, vacillated according to Metropolitan problems, politics, and attempts to police and manage the boundaries of the nation. Aspects of discourses on modernization, regionalism, and gender were used in various ways to control and articulate the relationship of colony to Metropole, of subject to citizen. Modernization played a complex and often ambiguous part in the national identity of France and consequently in the colonies, especially during Vichy. Modernization, meaning up-dated production methods and the social structures necessary to their success,
were favored by technocrats, industrialists and often highly placed administrators, several of whom continued to hold important positions in defining colonial policy throughout the successive regimes of the 1930s and early 1940s. During the same period however modernization was problematized by certain nationalist discourses emanating from the colonized, Algeria and Indochina for example, where it was associated with progressive ideas about democracy and representation. Although modernization as a totalizing or globalizing force also played a key role in discussions of economic policy, regionalism was used to deny, modify, or qualify its introduction. The concept of regionalism was given complex roles in identifying the "true" France with its rural, largely agricultural, communities that calmed anxieties about rapid change. As economic and then military threats to France became more pressing regionalism became more prominent, finally becoming entrenched in the official Vichy policy of reconstruction in 1940-1942. As the representatives of France attempted to redefine it as a nation through the celebration of regional practices and culture, many within cultural Modernism itself used differences of culture and gender as a point of departure for a critique of conventional practices, and regionalism began to take on new conflicting and opposing roles in articulating and representing cultural significance. Modernization and regionalism were key tools subtly manipulated in the interests of power. Le Corbusier's representations of Algiers--as "capital of French North Africa" or of "the French Empire in Africa"--and the degree to which his architectural language drew from highly industrialized Modernist or regionalist vocabularies manipulated these same tools in his negotiation of the colonial context.

The most cursory comparison of Le Corbusier's plans for the Marine District (Figure 9) with the official and adopted plan by Prost & Socard (Figure 42 and Figure 43) would pit a Modern architecture and unprecedented spatiality against a rather tired and overly familiar Beaux Arts architecture and planning. Where the former would seem to speak of modernity, progress, objective practice and technology the latter would seem to call up the
Western classicism and training recognizable to the French-educated. The Prost & Socard plan appears incongruous in a colonial context where progress, technical superiority and daring had been legitimating references for colonial power and tentatively adopted by administrators in the late 1920s and early 1930s. That this early embrace of Modernism should be abandoned for a conservative and traditional scheme, one limited in scope to a single district recalcitrant against the larger conceptualization of a Regional Plan that was to be coordinated, after 1941, to the General Economic Plan of France is puzzling. This seeming anomaly will form another essential focus of this chapter.

The plans

Obus "D", 1938: collaboration with the Regional Plan Committee

Le Corbusier's Obus "D" focused on a reworked trépied, or "Y" shaped, skyscraper (Figure 9). It was a sleek, technologically sophisticated and resonant marker in the once ethnically mixed locale of the Marine District. The skyscraper was clearly the symbol of European presence, the promise of industrialization and the benefits which would extend to the indigène in the cultural precinct envisioned on the margins of the site. Moslem Algerian culture was contained and salvaged in the Casbah, buffered from the modern world by the transitional realm of civic buildings housed in stylistically modern edifices. Sketches show the skyscraper dominating the seafront along the Marine District from which it could, as Le Corbusier noted at the time, give expression to the idea of Algiers as the Capital of Africa.11 The plan was captioned, "Témoignage de force et d'organisation le gratte-ciel d'Alger prend une signification symbolique sur le méridien Paris-Alger-Afrique Equitorale."12 Algiers now functioned as a key point within the coordinates of Empire not, as previously, a Mediterranean Federation. Obus "D" spoke of the 1936 faith in

industrialization and its rhetoric of civilizing advantages. However, by 1938 colonial policy had changed once more. As the Socialist minister of the Colonies remarked: "Ce serait une lourde erreur de précipiter nos colonies vers une industrialisation irréfléchie. Il ne faut pas créer un prolétariat qui, exploité et mécontent, serait rapidement dangereux pour la souveraineté française." Keeping the indigenous in place, controlling the spatial and social relations of production as well as monitoring the boundaries and frontiers of the nation, and of French sovereignty, took priority over other political considerations. All elements of Obus "D"--the broad highways violently extracted from the Lower Casbah, the skyscraper, civic center, Forum and Arab buildings--were positioned and rationalized by the logic of the Regional Plan. Nor was the configuration of the plan bereft of local signification. The High Commissioner of Tourism responded to Le Corbusier's plan with the observation that, "Alger, Capital de l'afrique du Nord, c'est une réponse aux convoitises des voisins. C'est une affirmation en face de la population indigène agitée de diverses mouvements." In June 1939, after Le Corbusier had presented his plan for the Marine District to the Algiers authorities, the Governor General declared his desire to proceed with the construction of the business skyscraper at Cap de la Marine. This possibility was aborted by the Fascist presence and influence in Paris from the Spring of 1940. Moreover Obus "D" would never win the support of the forty-five member Regional Plan Committee composed of bureaucrats, technicians, urbanists, architects and appointed representatives.

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13 Maurus Moutet address to the Conseil supérieur des colonies, 19 Mar. 1938, quoted in Marseille, Empire coloniale 336.
14 Quoted in Giordani, "Le Corbusier et les Projets pour la ville d'Alger 1931-1942," Thèse de 3 ème cycle, Institute d'Urbanisme, Université de Paris VIII, St. Denis, 1987 350. The High Commissioner of Tourism was Roland Marcel.
15 Le Beau, Governor General of Algeria wrote to Le Corbusier on the 4th of April 1938 saying that he was interested in the business center and access to El Bia. Jean Petit writes that after the June 1939 presentation of Le Corbusier's plan for the Marine District, the Governor General wished to have the skyscraper built. (Le Beau, letter to Le Corbusier, 4 Apr. 1938, AFLC. Petit's commentary suggests that it would have been Obus "E." He quotes Le Corbusier who gives the date of June 1939. Jean Petit, Le Corbusier par lui-même, (Geneva: Editions Rousseau, 1970) 85.
of the sixteen communes comprising the region. Equally unresponsive to Le Corbusier's plans were the two lone representatives of Moslem Algerians on the Committee whose only recorded remarks on the subject consist of a deferential accord with the Regional plan and praise for the provision of indigenous housing, such as the Cité Pétain then under construction.16

Régie foncière revisions: the Prost & Socard plan

Le Corbusier's redesign of the Marine District was also a retort to the revamped Régie foncière plan, then in the process of implementation (Figure 41). Revision had been necessitated by the altered context of 1935-1938—in particular the heavy financial burden which the indemnity payments had placed on the Municipal Council. Due to the increased burden of debt, a substantial revaluation of the land of the Marine District and better rent returns were demanded.17 On April 2nd 1938 the Municipal Council voted for the addition of an administrative center, including the future Palais de Justice (Courthouse), the new Palais Consulaire (with Tribunal and Chamber of Commerce), and buildings especially planned for business functions. In addition, to comply with the new Regional Plan, the revised Régie foncière plan was required to provide access to El Biar.18

The Regional Plan Committee of Algiers also insisted that greater value be given to the seafront, where the administrative, financial and commercial life of the "Capital of French Africa," it was felt should be concentrated. The logic of the Regional plan called for

16Report on the meeting of the Comité régional, 1941 in which M. Mahieddine stated: "Je tiens à profiter de la circonstance qui m'est offerte pour remercier tout particulièrement la ville d'Alger de l'intérêt qu'elle a bien voulu porter à l'habitat indigène. Nous avons assisté dernièrement à la pose par M. le Gouverneur Général de la première pierre de la cité Pétain. Je me fais l'interprète de tous mes coreligionnaires pour vous exprimer toute leur gratitude à l'Administration qui ne cesse de se préoccuper de l'amélioration de leur port." He also praised the commune of El Biar for its treatment of indigenous peoples and asked that the bidonvilles be cleared. "Note pour M. Sabatier," AFLC 29.
17Giordani, "Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 335-36.
18Giordani, "Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 337.
topographically rationalized zoning—hills for housing, flat lands for industry—a decreased
density in the Casbah and its immediate surroundings—the lower Casbah—and the
consequent creation of new indigenous complexes. Once cleared, the unoccupied land
could be utilized for the more rational, lucrative and "natural" functions of business and
administration. Schematically, the Regional Plan resembled the zoning considerations of
Obus "C." Ostensibly prompted purely by economic requirements and with little to suggest
that any administrative reform in colonial relations was inspirational, the modified plan
would in fact assist new kinds of production—industrialized, fragmented, commercialized—
and modes of cultural reproduction such as the separation of living quarters from work.

Herein resides one of the paradoxes of the planning objectives pursued in Algiers. With
the Regional Plan modernization was paramount, facilitated by transportation networks, the
enlarged scale of administrative institutions and the infrastructural supports envisioned.
Propelled by such economic and financial considerations the Municipal Council was forced
to acknowledge modernizing forces. At the same time, however, it vacillated in adopting
the recommendations of the Regional Plan, making only the most perfunctory
accommodations by assigning administrative and commercial functions to one half of the
Marine District site and agreeing to the expense of the thirty-five meter central boulevard.
The formal vocabulary of spaces and buildings reverted to the Beaux Arts classicism of the
nineteenth-century rather than continuing the modern vocabulary of the multi-purpose
terminal or the General Government Building of 1930.

Obus "E," 1939: Le Corbusier's response

In 1938-39, Le Corbusier re-designed the Obus skyscraper yet again (Figure 10).
References to industrialization now seemed to be held at bay, the skyscraper both
promising it and denying its excesses with sheer glass walls veiled by concrete loggias.
The former \textit{trépied} configuration was simplified to a single lozenge shape, its broad sides facing the sea to the north and the European city to the south, its surfaces articulated with \textit{brise-soleil} adjusted to orientation, latitude and function within. The complexity of massing, which, in earlier schemes, had contained the references to the topography of the landscape and nature came to characterize the facades of Obus "E." \textit{Brise-soleil}, as a metaphor for nature, now formed an independent and decorative envelope for the skeletal structure of the building.\textsuperscript{19} While recalling the traditional loggia, a more general analogy with biology was advocated by Le Corbusier. The skyscraper was described as, "une véritable biologie contenant avec précision des organes déterminés."\textsuperscript{20} A conceptual "tree" was used to describe the logic of the patterns of \textit{brise-soleil} while latitude and orientation rationalized their presence. The emphasis given to cultural regionalism and geography in Le Corbusier's discussion of Obus "C" in the early 1930s had been replaced with the biological analogy of French tradition.\textsuperscript{21} The loggia-cum-\textit{brise-soleil} served as a reference to humanism and organic order while it modified the perception of the Modern, industrialized and technologically advanced aspects of the building. The objective of formal and expressive simplification in Modern architecture and, as a result, its ability to mediate cultural difference resided in and is reduced to a few elements: loggias, porticoes, \textit{brise-soleils}, while an arcane system of mathematics guaranteed harmony.\textsuperscript{22} The Western aesthetic determined by the golden section and hierarchy made of the 44 storey prism a reassuring facade, or mirror, for Western sensibility (Figure 50).\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{19}McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 389, also describes a certain retreat from the earlier more formally innovative plans and a transferal of formal invention to the facade. She states, "Plasticity and lyricism, anticipating the projects of the fifties, appeared not in the larger composition of the urban plan but in the design of an individual building, the skyscraper."


\textsuperscript{22}Le Corbusier, \textit{Oeuvre complète, 1938-1946} 62.

\textsuperscript{23}McLeod, "Architecture and Urbanism" 362.
References to Moslem culture were now less frequent and less developed than in The Radiant City of 1935, salvaging their culture seemingly less clear-cut, or politic, in the design. The North African *milieu* had become abstract determinants: the horizon, the sea, vegetation. The comparison of the Casbah, "masterpiece of architecture and urbanism" with the European corridor street, the narrow "trough," was a cursory reference from The Radiant City. Indeed, by 1938 signs and symbols of Arab culture were problematic, and the position of Moslem Algerians uncertain. The defeat of the Popular Front had curtailed their entry into the national fold, and, despite the fact that, as fears of war grew, their willingness to participate in the defense of the nation became crucial. At the same time, Moslem Algerians no longer reposed much faith in the French government or its parliamentary system as a means to citizenship and concomitant civil rights; by 1939 Algerian nationalism competed openly with mere reformism. While some effort was made to increase Moslem Algerian participation in civic bodies and financial discussions, these were largely for show, no money being allocated to Moslem education, clinics or to the rehabilitation of the *bidonvilles*, shanty-towns built of refuse materials gathered in spaces as yet escaping the urban plan and where increasing numbers of Moslems were now forced to reside. The *Délégations financières*, who approved funding in the colony, favored social centers, schools and Arabic books for libraries, sites where French cultural concerns could be reinforced, tourists entertained and foreign critics appeased.

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25 Mahfoud Kaddache, *La Vie Politique à Alger de 1919 à 1939* (Alger: SNED, 1970) 217. Although some reforms were initiated they were motivated by colonial needs. In 1939, for the first time, Moslem councilors participated in discussions of the budget, but they paid dearly for the right to do so; they were given a 21 percent increase in taxes.
26 Albert Camus, "Misère de la Kabyle," *Essais* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1965) 905-938. This piece was originally written June 5-15, 1939 for *Alger républicain*, a socialist and radical paper. See especially pages 920-23 where Camus specifically criticizes the mis-use of school building funds on facilities located according to tourist show rather than village need. The magnificent schools built—approximately ten—did not respond to the needs of the region. They were built for tourists and investigation commissions and sacrificed the most basic needs of the Kabyle to demands of prestige. On page 930 he comments on the fact that Grand Travaux were usually placed where they were not needed. Interestingly, Camus points out the discrepancy between colonial discourse and its effects, the self-serving myths of the Kabyle's inability to learn, or work, when the reality was that they had been kept illiterate and poorly paid for their labor. In direct contrast to Le Corbusier, Camus at least understood the origin of the poverty of life which Le
Despite Le Corbusier's obliging alterations of his skyscraper and plans, the Municipal Council continued to favor the Prost & Socard plan for the Marine District and the established Regional plan for Algiers. Notwithstanding Socard's advocacy of a regional Algerian architecture in the early 1930s, his plan was actually articulated in a traditional Beaux Arts manner.27 Here there were institutions and symbols of French culture but no skyscrapers or other tokens of modernization and industrialization; nor did Socard include a highway to the hinterland—the place of future colonization and Metropolitan markets, but also unsecured places and peoples.

By 1940 there were several contending schemes for Algiers: that of the Comité de la Plan Regionale Algéroise (the plan in which Le Corbusier had collaborated with Renaud and Coquerel after 1937), the Administration's plan (the Marine District plan by Prost & Socard for the Régie foncière) and Le Corbusier's Obus "E" and Plan Directeur. The statistical and functional distinctions between Obus "E" and the Regional Plan offered by Le Corbusier in his published numerical accounting of the plans were not great. Their pragmatic allocations were similar, Obus "E" provided an extra 18,000 square meters of rental space, an additional 5,000 square meters of green space, 21,000 square meters more office space,

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27 Tony Socard, "Le climat algérien et son influence en urbanisme," Chantiers nord-africains (Sep. 1933): 916-26. Socard contrasts two ways of achieving climate control. The first uses modern technology and is expensive, the second "designs with the climate"; he favors the latter. His emphasis on climate also recognizes the social aspects of the economics of geography and micro-climates such that the wealthy occupy the hills and the best climatic sites. He suggests that designing with the climate could produce new forms; and the effects of the sun, where it rises more quickly and higher in the sky than in France could be modified by orientation and street width. He maintains the standard block form with interior courts however.
and 9,000 additional square meters of housing, but 7,000 square meters less devoted to
boutiques and a 8,300 square meter reduction in public buildings.\textsuperscript{28} Both were far
superior to the statistics proffered for the Marine District which only provided
approximately half the rental space and less than one fifteenth of the open space of the other
two.\textsuperscript{29} In the end Le Corbusier's didactic exercise on the superiority of Obus "E" was
unconvincing and the fragile truce between himself and the Regional planning committee
was strained by his publication of the comparison.\textsuperscript{30} Despite the evident functional
superiority of both Obus "E" and the Regional Plan over the Régie foncière's proposal for
the Marine District, the Municipal Council voted to accept the Prost & Socard plan with
only minor alterations in June 1940. This marked a defeat of the Regional Plan
Committee's efforts to incorporate the Marine District within its all-encompassing scope.\textsuperscript{31}
The Imperial interests of France, manifested in the imposition of Metropolitan planning
agendas, were checked by entrenched colon interests. Those same interests would
eventually abandon the Regional Plan in order to maintain the spatial configuration of the
independent communes in which those interests had been staked and represented.

In June of 1941 Le Corbusier articulated his criticism of the Regional Plan, not in statistical
terms such as revenue produced, number of parking spaces or amount of park land as he
had previously, but in terms familiar from Vichy rhetoric. In Le Corbusier's view the
Regional Plan had failed to address issues of built form, housing, work and leisure. In
making this assessment Le Corbusier identified his concerns—family, work, physical and
spiritual culture—with those of Pétain's slogan, \textit{Famille, Travaille, Patrie}. It was during

\textsuperscript{28} This translates into 6\% more business accommodation, 3\% more housing, 10\% less for boutiques and
5\% less for public buildings. Obus "E" also provided for a restaurant and hotel which the Regional plan did not.
\textit{Le Corbusier, Oeuvre complète 1938-1946} 58.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Le Corbusier, Oeuvre complète 1938-1946} 58. The statistics are misleading as the Régie foncière plan,
what Le Corbusier labels the \textit{Plan Administratif}, was only for the single district of the Marine, not the
more extensive area encompassed in the other two plans.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Le Corbusier, letter to Emery, 4 July 1941, AFLC.}
\textsuperscript{31} Giordani, "Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 395. The Inspector General demonstrated the superiority of the
Regional Committee's plan obliging the Régie foncière to make revisions. A compromise was worked out
where the colony would pay for the 35 meter wide streets, and the Municipal council's decision was upheld.
this June sojourn in Algiers that Le Corbusier met with the Vichy colonial administration—
General Weygand, Admiral Abrial and Pagès, préfet of Algiers. All were, he imagined,
supporters of his plans and authority.\textsuperscript{32} During the same visit to the city, Dumoulin de la
Labarthète, a member of Pétain's cabinet, was quoted in the minutes of the Regional
Planning Committee's meeting as being "parfaitement au courant des idées défendues par
M. Le Corbusier au sujet d'Alger. Il les approuve et fait pleine confiance à M. Le
Corbusier pour les défendre hardiment."\textsuperscript{33} This support, real or imagined, did not last
long. One month later he received notice that the préfet had grown very hostile to his ideas.
Le Corbusier was encouraged by his Algiers colleagues to obtain an Imperial mandate
which could not be overturned by the préfet, the Governor General or the Committee.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Plan Directeur 1942}

In his final plan for Algiers Le Corbusier reformulated the conditions under which the
meeting of West and East, the grafting of cultures, could occur (Figure 11). The business
center skyscraper which had symbolized the progressive potential of European occupancy,
the beacon of both civilization and gateway to the African hinterland, was removed to the
European city where it would no longer be required to negotiate the spaces of Moslem
Algerian life. The historic center was abandoned, with its difficult interface with Moslem
cultural and economic demands, and the skyscraper now joined development in the
European sector of the city, along the Boulevard Lafferrière. The Marine District would
retain indigenous institutions in Le Corbusier's new scheme but they would be
marginalized spatially from the center now relocated to the European district and temporally
to the inconceivable and distant "future," which the indeterminate, arabesque sketchiness of
their representation suggested (Figure 51).

\textsuperscript{32}Le Corbusier, letter to Dumoulin de Labarthète, 21 June 1941, AFLC.
\textsuperscript{33}Le Corbusier quoted in the Minutes of the Comité régional d'Algers, "Note pour M. Sabatier" 22.
\textsuperscript{34}Emery, letter to Le Corbusier, 16 July 1941, AFLC
What prompted Le Corbusier’s shift of focus? Although developed during his last months as an official representative of Vichy planning concerns, the Plan Directeur was not finalized until mid 1942, and its most significant alteration, the relocation of the skyscraper, apparently occurred as late as June 1942, at the urging of his Algiers colleagues. The Plan Directeur more clearly participated in the rhetoric and references to Empire. French anxieties were translated into zones which distinguished new indigenous urban, residential and industrial areas from European and where the Casbah became part of historic monuments and sites and delegated to the tourist industry (Figure 52). The Plan Directeur was also aligned with the Equipement Nationale agenda formulated in June 1941 and it was in this context that Le Corbusier proposed that Algiers would be an exemplary work of Vichy urbanism.

Le Corbusier’s "plan Directeur pour Alger ville impériale," once more re-mapped Algiers' geo-political position. In accord with the city’s new location within the Empire, a dismemberment and reconfiguration was practiced which was more comprehensive than that of Obus "A" where cultural reciprocity had exerted some visible influence on the intervention; in the Plan Directeur abstract concepts fragmented the existing city. The new functional zoning complied with nascent patterns of development, light industry in Belcourt, Hamma, Polignac and heavy industry at El Harrach, business along Boulevard Lafferrère—just where Prost, Rotival and Coquerel had originally proposed. Instead of a culturally integrated city a special precinct was provided in the shape of a Forum, with all

35Louis Miquel, "Alger, Le Corbusier et le Groupe CIAM Alger," *Arts et Techniques*, (1980): 59. Miquel states that he and Emery prompted Le Corbusier to reposition the skyscraper to the Boulevard Laferrière on his visit to Algiers in June 1942. This elite would consist of members of the Algiers CIAM, friends within the Amis d’Alger, supporters of modernism, and perhaps others involved in the Mediterranean movement such as Carus. Gérard Monnier highlights the presence and importance of this intellectual elite in Algiers during this period. See Monnier, *Histoire Critique* 334-342.
36See the discussion of the Plan Régionale in the minutes of the Comité régional for June 16,1941 in "Note pour M. Sabatier."
its Western connotations of public life and order. It replaced the everyday interactions that might arise between cultures from commerce and business. The active participation of Moslem Algerians in the life of the city had been reduced to the tourist attraction of the Casbah with its artisan marketplace. Now separated from this district was domestic life with its accommodation relocated to the hills of Bab-el-Oued and Hussein Dey, in accordance with official policy. The lower Casbah was dramatically reconfigured, with only its monuments and palaces retained to house Moslem institutions and museums within open, park-like, settings: a metonym for the attempted marginalization of Moslem Algerians within Algiers politics.

Moslem Algerian representation in the city was also diminished by the relative apportioning of space to Moslem and European culture (Figure 53). The overpowering number of Moslems descending on the city was symbolically, and no doubt reassuringly, reduced by the inadequate physical and representational space allocated to them. The Moslem sphere was entered by way of the (future) Moslem institutions placed at the foot of the now radically "purified" Casbah. Le Corbusier himself claimed that, "point du tout indifférent à la question touristique, j'ai dans mon écrit même précisé: La Casbah, centre d'attraction unique au monde, deviendra pour le tourisme un centre d'attraction et pour l'indigène un moyen de renaissance." But the revamping of Moslem neighborhoods as tourist sites also functioned as a colonial management strategy in appeasing Moslem Algerians who wanted cultural recognition, Metropolitan French who needed signs of their civilizing mission and French Algerians anxious to forestall any expansion of Islamic institutions. Le Corbusier was also clear in the role he felt the plan might play in the new Vichy regime:

> Les circonstances sont telles en Alger que l'œuvre accomplie par la Comité du Plan peut conduire à l'expression la plus réelle de la révolution nationale,

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38This is discussed in Giordani, "Projets pour la ville d'Alger" 396.
39Le Corbusier, letters to Renaud, 21 May 1940 and 23 Apr. 1942, AFLC.
40Le Corbusier, letter to the préfet of Algiers, [Nov. 1942], AFLC
à laquelle chacun de nous a le devoir d'apporter tous les efforts. Alger est dans une situation exceptionnellement favorable dans l'Empire et en face de la Métropole.41

Unlike Renaud & Coquerel, who sought to segregate Moslem Algerians within the Regional Plan, Le Corbusier continued to be concerned with some assimilation of Moslem Algerians within his planning proposals. Although complying with the local planners on the division of the city into European and Moslem spheres and the assignation of touristic and historical functions to the Arab city, he also persisted in including Moslem institutions of contemporary life and initiated study of Moslem housing needs.42 This assimilationist intention of Le Corbusier prompted his criticism of the smaller scaled plan for Marine District by Prost & Socard. In this plan, Socard had failed to take into account the new indigenous institutions to be created in the Marine District, the place designated for it by history and geography according to Le Corbusier and, by the late 1930s, the logic of the Regional Plan. In Le Corbusier's estimation this district should still enable the indispensable relations to be created between French people and indigenous life: "C'est dans cet endroit, seul terrain à jamais disponible en Alger que ces institutions indigènes doivent trouver leur logement."43 Finally in the 1942 Plan Directeur, modernity, technology and industrialization were moved to the European city, undoubtedly to diminish fears of any unforeseen difficulties with a modern Moslem Algerian public then in the making. The alterations to both the skyscraper as an object within an urban site of

41 "Note pour M. Sabatier" 27.
42 In June 1942 he criticized Coquerel's plan for omitting housing, industry and leisure considerations of his plan. The "Note pour M. Sabatier" of 1941 does not list indigenous housing as a separate category. The minutes of the Meeting of the Comité Regional in June 1941 which this "note" records does include a separate category for indigenous housing, industry and commerce. In addition, Le Corbusier charged Emery with researching the problems of indigenous housing. No such study was instigated by the Regional Committee, perhaps because they were no doubt confident in the models established by Bienvenu and others. "Note pour M. Sabatier." 5
43 Le Corbusier, letter to Faure, 29 June 1941, AFLC. See also Faure "Introduction à l'étude d'un plan d'Alger," Travaux nord-africains 6 Oct. 1942: 2.
differentiated function and the plan as a whole can be re-situated within the discursive field of both Vichy and a more general colonial policy.

The Plan Directeur, "un dispositif fait de dessins... imprévisibles de la vie,"44 was to be realized in three stages, 1942, 1955 and 1980. Algiers was still the point of contact between European immigration from the North, and Moslem from the South, East and West. However, the two cultures now had separate spheres (Figure 54). That of the Moslem is smaller and centered on the (future) Moslem institutions placed before the now much revamped Casbah. The European sphere was larger, focused on the new business center which also served as the communications hub, and contained the industrial and commercial sectors, as well as the institutions of State power and persuasion, including leisure areas and a cité cinéma. Between the Moslem and European centers a civic center was envisioned as part of a future urban renewal project. Thumbnail sketches, a reduced selection from the panoply of the Radiant City, were re-deployed in Oeuvre-complète 1938-46 to suggest cultural difference and sensitivity, but in a much less provocative manner. With the aid of diagrams and text, Arab urbanism was contrasted with nineteenth-century property development, what Le Corbusier termed l'apport européen (Figure 55), and the European business center was contrasted with the Moslem mosque. Often placed in the foreground in aerial perspectives of the site, the skyscraper dominated the vaguely sketched Moslem cultural institutions, indicated merely by low blank walls and multiple domes (Figure 51). The housing provided for Moslem Algerians was equally purified of its signs of cultural specificity. Although Emery had been enlisted to study Moslem housing needs, Le Corbusier placed them in apartments perceptibly indistinguishable from their European counterparts. They were simply segregated within a net of Y-shaped towers thrown over the hills of Algiers. Housing was emphasized in the Plan Directeur, although a long standing concern with Le Corbusier, in this colonial context it also participated in concerns

44Le Corbusier, Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946  44.
with family life among both French and Moslem cultures. The family and its spatial
enclosure became the most effective terrain for resolving the incipient conflict then forming
between the colonizing French and nationalizing Moslem Algerians. For the Plan
Directeur, all that Le Corbusier required of the iconography of Moslem culture was a
landscape, view to the sea, arcaded interior courts, walled streets, and domed structures,
the people had been removed from his original postcard sources. The ability of the mosque,
Casbah, and streets to form a coherent system of representational spaces for Moslem
Algerians was more greatly compromised by the dismemberment and fragmentation
introduced by Le Corbusier's zoning plan and scale.

The skyscraper used for the business center of the Plan Directeur was merely transposed
from the Marine District proposal of 1938-39, now bereft of the cultural institutions which
had been its immediate context. The technological prism of steel, concrete, glass and
mechanical systems, was wrapped with Western culture in the form of the golden section
which allowed, while it limited, the fantasy of difference (Figure 56, Figure 57 and Figure
58). Both the benefit promised by Western presence and the escape, or frisson, of
difference seen in the exoticism of the site now resided in the modernism contained by
Western culture in the form of the golden section, and in the exotic functionalized as brise-
soleil determined by sun penetration and latitude. These reference to Western culture and
exotic brise-soleil were naturalized by reference to the growth patterns of a tree—that is
limited to the discourses of geometry, geography and biology as existed within Western
intellectual traditions, as opposed to those conventions recognizable in the Prost & Socard
plan.

Unfortunately for Le Corbusier, the negative response of the Algiers establishment
coincided with that in Vichy. Le Corbusier was dismissed from his Vichy post on July 14,
1941. At the same time it was announced that at the end of 1941 the Regional Plan would
be subsumed into an enlarged State plan that would engulf all of Algeria within its jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{45} Administration, economic restructuring and physical planning were to subsume not just the Marine District into the Regional plan but all of Algiers into the state apparatus further compromised by the advent of Vichy.

**Vichy**

When Le Corbusier joined forces with Vichy, Obus "E" and the Plan Directeur were entered into the administration of an increasingly repressive colonial administration. Although Le Corbusier had considered his commission as designer of the Exposition d'Outre-mer of May 1940 as his introduction to the official world of colonial power, it was not until 1941 that the aesthetic vision he offered at this exhibition could operate within conventional political circles.\textsuperscript{46} In February 1941 he was appointed to the Comité d'Étude du Bâtiment and remained a member of its successor the Comité d'Études de Habitation, Construction et Immobilière when it was restructured in May 1941.\textsuperscript{47} As revised it formed part of the Délégation Générale à l'Équipement Nationale responsible for the economic planning of the Empire as well as France.\textsuperscript{48} It was through such committees

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45}Emery, letter to Le Corbusier, 16 July 1941, AFLC
\item \textsuperscript{46}Le Corbusier wrote to Breuillot that the Expo France d'Outre-mer was "une consécration officielle qui me fait entrer de plain pied dans les milieux coloniaux. Le Corbusier, letter to Breuillot, 18 Apr. 1940, AFLC.
\item \textsuperscript{47}Jean Petit, Le Corbusier par lui même 83, 87. In the year that Le Corbusier was given a commission in Algiers, 1937, he also participated in a conference entitled, "Pour 1937, ce qu'aurait pu être l'exposition internationale, ce que sera Le Musée des Temps Nouveau, le centre de loisir et de repos des travailleurs." The committee for this conference consisted of, Aragon, J-R Bloch, Jean Cassou, Elie Faure, A. Gide, Jean Perrin, Romain Rolland, Henri Séllier. Speakers included Le Corbusier, J. Casou, P. Vaillant-Couturier and Marcel Gitton. Le Corbusier had hoped he would be able to continue work proposed with Jean Giraudoux in the project of the Comité d'études préparatoires in 1939.
\item \textsuperscript{48}Richard F. Kuisel, "Vichy et les origines de la planification économique (1940-1946)," le mouvement social 98 (Jan.-Mar. 1977): 77-101. Kuisel notes that the technocrats and planners were predominant in the struggle for power against the traditionalists during the Darlan government, February 1941 to April 1942. The main thrust of economic planning was to prepare France to enter the industrial era after the war. Modernization was a key concern of people such as Darlan and Lehideux. Their ambition had been to promote a competitive industry in world markets, a modernized agriculture and an enhanced level of life. Planners however had to conciliate two contrary visions of the future France. One was the idea to expand economic and technical planning. The second was the conservative official ideology of Vichy: family, work, country, peasantry and race. Although some supported industrialization of the colonies it was never the idea to do so if it meant competition with the Metropole. In 1941, after the collapse of France and with
\end{itemize}
that Le Corbusier became more firmly entrenched in the colonial system. Through them he gained access to information on official policy, and a clearer view of the centralized image of the Nation intended by Vichy. For the first time Le Corbusier could coordinate his plans with the national program where architecture and urbanism were key factors in its administrative re-organization in the interests of State and Empire.49

However, Le Corbusier’s seeming rise to prominence within the administrative structures of colonial power also occurred within a volatile context where architectural and planning strategies were given political and national signification. Especially important were the conflicts about modernism and tradition, progress and authenticity, industrialized production and socially embedded artisanal methods. These discourses transgressed the boundaries between aesthetic disciplines and political policy. The issues of modernism—education, industrialization, secularization—especially as it was associated with westernization—French language, re-oriented daily practices, the organization of life around work schedules rather than those of religious or traditional dictates—also crossed into the debates on nationalism as they were then occurring in Algeria.

Vichy ideology was fraught with ambiguity where the relationship of modernism, tradition and nationalism played complex roles in defining both the French nation and its counter-nation then being constructed by Moslem Algerians. As Vichy under Pétain looked to tradition and artisanal production as the basis for its definition of la vrai France, expressed in Famille, Travaille, Patrie or the vernacular regionalism of the L’Ordre des architectes and its reconstruction architecture and planning in 1940-42, Moslem Algerians looked to modern institutions and industrial production, as evinced in their call for universal suffrage.

technical education, and an empowered proletariat. These were the non-negotiable demands of Messali Hadj who by 1939 had become the most compelling leader among the Moslem Algerians. Those debates had a powerful effect on the course of architecture and planning in both France and Algiers.

Contemporary cultural historians of Vichy emphasize two dominant methodological and historical problems: the toleration of creative liberty within an authoritarian regime and the continuity in persons and projects from such opposed political positions as the Popular Front and Vichy. Indeed, Robert Paxton has demonstrated that much of Vichy was a continuation of the cultural aspirations of the Popular Front, for example, in terms of its the emphasis on youth, concern with folklore, interest in administrative rationalization and State involvement in the economy and culture. In the cultural realm as well, Pascal Ory asserts that Vichy did not entail a clear rupture with the past, however vehemently a break with the old, "diseased," Third Republic may have been asserted. Ory also points out how complicated the debates over the evaluation and condemnation of the Third Republic were. Especially relevant to this study was the ambiguity expressed in these early years about modernity and tradition, about what constituted the "true France," and as corollary to it, the "Other." Moreover, despite the desire for normalization and an atmosphere of vehement political debate, Jean-Pierre Rioux maintains, "il serait bien imprudent de ne pas admettre pour hypothèse de travail la persistance chez les Français d'une capacité à exprimer culturellement d'autre aspirations plus réfractaires." He also argues that Vichy created an altered space and geography as national cultural life shifted south of the Loire; Algiers,

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51 For example, Ory cites the example of the _rassemblement populaire_, which oriented both right and left towards the patriotic reintegration of the "people of France." Ory, "ruptures et continuités," _La vie culturelle sous Vichy_, ed. Jean Pierre Roux (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1990) 226.

52 Rioux, "les années noires" 44.
along with Vichy, was one of these new points of orientation. Yet these studies raise questions as to whether these "refractory aspirations" were present in Algiers, whether the altered geopolitical map of Vichy reconfigured Algiers in some way and how the "national revolution" may have impinged upon representations of the "Other" there.

Vichy and colonialism

The Empire was an important part of the discourse of Vichy as well as its conception of the nation; it was also one subject around which some general consensus could be gathered. The Empire, Vichy spokespersons argued, was necessary for French prestige and superpower status, and it could serve as compensation for French weakness in Europe. As much as Algeria was within the space and geography of Vichy it was also, as part of the myth of the Mediterranean, associated with what Valéry called "le dernier flot de liberté." It was to North Africa and "soil reckoned an integral part of France," that those seeking a safe haven for government initially turned in June 1940, and it was here that those seeking an alternative to armistice first fled. The colonies were important pawns in the ideological war between Free France and Vichy in their claims to legitimacy and power; reformist rhetoric of both sides was geared to winning colonial support. Although Vichy proclaimed that the "era of primitive colonialism" had ended, explicit references to colonial reform did not occur in Vichy but rather from the margins of France and that was not until 1943. In December of that year De Gaulle sketched the first vague outlines of reform, from

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53 Rioux, "les années noires" 47-48. Rioux also argues that there were two paradoxes of Vichy. One was that the continuities with the Third Republic were so clear that they dulled the perception of rupture that Vichy wished to promote and the second was that the spaces of liberty were vast enough that those wishing free action could be enlisted (44). Jean-Michel Guiraud also refers to the awakening of intellectual life in North Africa along with Marseilles and other cities of the south after the armistice in his study "Marseille, cité-refuge des écrivains et des artistes," ed. Jean-Pierre Rioux, La Vie culturelle sous Vichy (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1990) 391-92.
55 Guiraud, "Marseille, cité-refuge" 395.
56 Paxton, Vichy 6-7. For Vichy, the colonies were a key bargaining point with the Germans; in their negotiations Vichy proposed itself as the Mediterranean and colonial partner of the new Europe.
the outpost of Constantine in North Africa.\textsuperscript{57} From here rather than Vichy a new colonial vision was projected, it was however but a remodeled Empire; a \textit{Union Français}.

The Vichy advocates of a colonial humanism had developed the notion of an "imperial community" buttressed by essentialist notions of France, and "imagined" roots and traditions which affected the representations of citizens and subjects. Lebovics has argued that essentialist notions of cultural identity shaped the discussion of what constituted "roots" and these roots were seen to reside in "the creation of a domestic cultural definition of what it was to be French which could benefit only the most regressive sides of national life."\textsuperscript{58} Inherent in the call to \textit{Famille, Travail, Patrie} was a conception of the French family, French corporate work and French institutions and moral attitudes. These had, since the nineteenth-century, played an important role in maintaining French cultural ascendancy among French \textit{émigrés} and Metropolitan immigrants.

Gender was significant in defining the nation under Vichy, as it had been since the French Revolution and its formulation of the modern state. These debates have been influenced by concepts of national security and cultural integrity which assigned to women the role of mother, daughter and guardian of the nation's hearths and morals. Vichy reiterated and gave new urgency to those ideas as it sought to maintain "la femme au foyer" as part of "La Revolution Nationale." Vichy promoted pro-natalism due to a preoccupation with population growth and "familialism" which based social stability on the "legitimate" patriarchal family unit. These ideas date from the 1920s and had become part of State policy with the passing of the Code de la Famille in 1939. In her study of Vichy, Miranda Pollard concludes that during Vichy the "vigorous promotion of Family and population growth presented a panacea to various real and perceived threats, interior and exterior, civil

\textsuperscript{57}Shennan, \textit{Rethinking France} 142-143.

strife of the Popular Front era, immigration, German rearmament... common concerns
giving prominence to ideas of decline and degeneracy. These ideas affected colonial
subjects and citizens in various ways. The morality with which the French family was
imbued, especially after its institutionalization in the 1939 Code de la famille, and the
consensus supporting the rénovation nationale created ambiguities about culturally different
family practices and their status within the national fold. As Pollard remarks, "Vichy was
totally consistent in its drive to establish an exclusively French, pure, national community
and rid it of all foreign, degenerate elements." This suggests that as much as Algeria was
French this "drive" would be present there as well. And, as a corollary, it also implies that
as much as Moslem Algerians sought to express their culturally different familial traditions
they would be identified as one of these foreign elements.

Architecture and urbanism figured predominantly among the altered institutional, rhetorical
and physical spaces of Vichy. L'Ordre des architectes, quickly established by December of
1940, institutionalized architectural practice and made State certification necessary. Ory
argues that it was with such organizations and administrative changes that Vichy exercised
most control and influence rather than in cultural production itself. The integration of the
Regional Plan for Algiers within the Plan décennal d'équipement asserted the dominance of
the Metropole in more complex ways than had been the case when decisions had been made
by a Governor General. Yet architecture, understood as a cultural production mediated by
institutions and limited by patronage, the scale of State intervention and sponsorship, was
directly inflected by Vichy policy. Just how Le Corbusier's architecture, and planning,

59 Miranda Pollard, "Women and the National Revolution," Vichy France and the Resistance Culture and
60 Pollard, "Women and the National Revolution" 39.
61 Ory comments on the speed with which Hautecoeur drafted and got approved the founding of the new
institution, less than six months, "ruptures et continuités" 234.
62 The importance of the changed context of Vichy is also argued by Rousso, "Vichy: politique, idéologie et
culture" 37.
was influenced by the Vichy institutions within which he now worked and whose patronage he courted will be the next issue of inquiry.

**Vichy and Le Corbusier**

In April 1940, just before the fall of France Le Corbusier was concerned with the survival of his plans for Algiers. He wrote to Breuillot in Algiers urging him to impress upon the appropriate official the importance of studies made of Algiers and: "la présence d'une équipe d'élite capable de préparer dès maintenant et de réaliser quand on voudra une œuvre décisive pour la prestige de la France et l'intérêt supérieur de nos possessions d'Afrique du Nord." He continued more specifically to reference government aid: "De toutes façons nous ne pouvons que nous réjouir du choix du gouvernement a été fait par le Gouvernement quant à l'avenir de nos projets ils trouveront l'accueil qu'ils méritent." 63

Le Corbusier's relationship to Vichy, his ability to represent adequately its ideology and objectives, is equivocal. He openly declared his allegiance to the new regime, referring to Pétain's "bold new order" in *Le Destin de Paris*, written from his refuge in the Pyrenees in 1940, and he actively sought membership in the Vichy Comité des Bâtiments. He would remain in Vichy well beyond his term of office as he vainly sought reappointment. 65

Pétain's new agrarian programs, the Charte Paysanne and Peasant Corporation syndicates were evidently regarded by Le Corbusier as commensurate with his Syndicalist ideas of the *Ferme Radieuse* of the 1930s, and many of Pétain's procedures and categories were similar to those espoused in *Prélude* 66 and later writings. He had quoted Pétain as early as 1935 in *The Radiant City* concurring with the Maréchal's stress on "the necessity for imagination,

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64 Le Corbusier, letter to Breuillot, 8 Apr. 1940, AFLC.
65 Fishman, "Plans and Politics" 272, 276.
66 Mary McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 397.
will and technical knowledge, in that order."67 Destin de Paris (1940), Sur les quatre routes (1941) and La Maison des Hommes (1942), were more liberally spiced with Pétain references. These books were presented as a blueprint for housing in Pétain's new order, a "revolution done with boldness." Earlier urban and mass production housing concepts were reiterated but within the rhetoric of the "reorganization" and "reconstruction" du pays and le nouvel État français. Le Corbusier also began a working relationship and correspondence with Prost, with whom he now sought a truce in the interests of the Plan Directeur of Algiers.68

Le Corbusier shared with Vichy in the 1940s, and a great number of other French citizens during the 1930s, a distaste for parliamentary government and with it the Third Republic. Similar to Vichy doctrine, he advocated a form of corporate arrangement of authority and the mediation of power through elites. He also had in common with Vichy the rhetoric of redressement and renewal, folklore and industrialization and the dismissal of class difference and antagonism as issues to be negotiated. Vichy feared the revolution that Le Corbusier had worked to dismantle via architecture and urbanism. More specifically, Le Corbusier did not challenge two key myths of Vichy: the unquestioning loyalty to the Maréchal and to collaboration.

Embedded within Le Corbusier's writings of the Vichy period were assumptions about colonialism, the relationship between the Metropole and its borders and its moral, internal frontiers. La Maison des Hommes (1942) was dedicated to an "authentic doctrine of the human dwelling--conforming to Western traditions and new conditions."69 North Africa

68 Kopp et al., L'Architecture de la Reconstruction 73 (n. 18) and 74 (n. 19). Le Corbusier, letter to Henri Prost, 14 Apr. 1941, AFLC.
was to be engulfed within these "Western traditions and new conditions," via an economic system and cultural impositions:

A plus forte raison peut-on dire que le territoire de la France, arrondi de part et d'autre du quarante-cinquième parallèle, et complété par une pénétration africaine qui descend jusqu'à l'équateur, se trouverait capable, en temps normal, de vivre en circuit à peu près fermé, tout en assurant à la totalité de ses ressortissants une condition de vie égale ou supérieure à celle qui restituerait matériellement la dignité humaine."70

A "natural regime" based on work was advocated as an alternative to over-production, arbitrary trade boundaries and liberal economics. The extension of France's commercial borders to include North Africa was one source of tension and racism in France in the 1930s and Le Corbusier's plan was apparently to remedy the conflict.

Despite the many ideological similarities between Le Corbusier and Vichy, his position on architecture was at odds with that advocated by the official policy emanating from the L'Ordre des architectes. Le Corbusier continued to advocate an architecture and urbanism that incorporated modern techniques--primarily steel and reinforced concrete--and experimental mechanical and construction systems: "Les volumes bâtis nouveaux, dons des techniques modernes, transforment la ville et la condition des hommes. Selon le site, c'est le type frontal ou le type épine. C'est le type lentille, ou le type Y ou ce sont les redans."71 It was however more than a benign architecture and urbanism, architecture would serve a civilizing role and the new technologies would be deployed in territorial reorganization.

Il faut construire des maisons neuves, l'avenir de la race dépend de son logement. ...il fallait restaurer les régions devastées; puis fixer la conquête marocaine dans l'armature d'un puissant équipement matériel; puis,

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70Pierrefeu, La Maison des Hommes 182, 184. Pierrefeu goes on to explain this économie fermée which will organize production and consumption, work and machines. Industrialization was not to be abandoned. 71Le Corbusier, in La Maison des Hommes 171.
moderniser nos possessions coloniales, puis créer la ligne Maginot. Enfin, il faut réarmer... 72

Architecture was shown to be set within the nation, its history and Empire and rooted in family, the soil (du sol, la région) and work (métier). It was also firmly wedded to a general doctrine of building and national policy. 73 La Maison des Hommes was intended to promote "shelter with dignity: families, work, institutions, prayer and thought," all quite traditional French concerns then especially felt threatened. 74

Such traditional interests partnered with modern technology synthesized the two faces of Vichy. One centered upon Pétain's "family farms," the nostalgic image of regional life, and the other envisioning modernization demanded by the cartels which, in fact, dominated agriculture. 75 Folklore, part of the regionalist and agricultural focus, became a politically important project during Vichy. Peasants, conceived of as fecund, practical, rooted in a traditional social hierarchy were seen as the strength of the nation and the antidote to an abstract, rootless, urban culture. 76 A similar opposition was contemplated by Le Corbusier in the 1930s to favor rural Arab populations of North Africa over the dysfunctional city of the first machine age. The return to the artisanat was not only a dominant thread in Pétain's ideology of Famille, Travaille, Patrie in that it evoked family and tradition, it was also an argument within modern cultural critique. 77 However, just as rural and regional

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72 Pierrefeu, in Maison des Hommes 4.
73 Pierrefeu, in Maison des Hommes 174, 176.
74 Le Corbusier, in Maison des Hommes 189.
75 McLeod, "Urbanism and Utopia" 398. McLeod mentions that Caziot, Minister of Agriculture, had little sympathy for Le Corbusier's modernity; he was given no commissions in Vichy's agricultural program. On the evolution of Vichy's notion of agricultural reform and its regionalist and folkloric representation see Paxton, Vichy 200-209.
76 Lebovics, True France 163. Lebovics explains something of the transition from Popular Front to Vichy. "Thus the intellectual organization of the field [of folklore] moved individuals within it closer to Vichy than their own subjective motivation might have impelled them to do, creating an overdetermined complex of influences, affinities and temptations between such men as Georges-Henri Rivière and the political order created after 1940."
77 Dorlac mentions Picasso, and other Modernists who spoke of the necessity of maintaining the tools of the artisan as part of the explorative character of the work, "La question artistique" 144.
architecture as the symbol of the nation was found disturbing in the Metropole so too would a rural and Arab architecture as a symbol of Algeria be problematic for colonists.

Words such as "natural" especially as "natural selection" or "natural organization," "land," "youth," "health," were all key words of Vichy rhetoric. Although Vichy advocated the values of family farms and peasant life it also had to contend with the pressures to modernize that were being directed from within its representatives, still largely technocrats and industrialists. Such inconsistencies demonstrate the tensions within Vichy between the espoused regional values and the demands of a modern industrial state. While Vichy emphasized cultural purity, complete separation of the modern and antique in regional folklorist production for example, Le Corbusier, somewhat like Rivière at the time, did juxtapose in exhibition settings the exotic and the modern, the regional and the cosmopolitan. This was the case in both his 1935 Exposition d'Art Primitive and the Exposition de la France d'Outre-mer of 1940 in which his cinematic presentation which interspersed his plans for Algiers with development projects of sophisticated engineering was set against a display of traditional, indigenous artisan work.  

Le Corbusier's relationship to Vichy was therefore not straightforward. Although reiterating many of the slogans of the regime--organic order, nature, family, country, rural healthfulness--and praise of Pétain, he also continued to advocate modernization industrialization, and a less-essentialist notion of folklore. The period of his involvement with Vichy coincided with that in which reform and renovation were paramount, collaboration less onerous; his point of disillusionment in Algiers, albeit explained by a

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78 On Vichy see Lebovics, True France 172-173 and on Le Corbusier see Oeuvre complète 1938-1946 91-93. Both Le Corbusier's plan for the Marine District and the plan of the Comité Régionale d'urbanisme d'Alger were shown. For the display of les arts indigènes, individual objects were shown against a "photographic panoply of landscapes, folklore and regional costumes." Real objects were juxtaposed with appropriate photographic representations and isolated on pedestals and within glass cases. For the section dedicated to Equatorial Africa Le Corbusier and Simon de Vézelay created a large painting on calico which interpreted a rock engraving. See Le Corbusier, letter to Renaud, 21 May 1940, AFLC.
personal dismissal and defeat, also coincided with the change in the nature of collaboration generally and the disillusionment of many with Vichy.\footnote{Rousso, "Vichy: politique, idéologie et culture" 32-34. Rousso gives as his example L'Esprit which still felt it could justify support for Vichy based on its reform stance in March of 1941. Paxton identifies April 1942 as the beginning of the end of France's policy of neutrality and the more complex European war which followed. See Paxton, Vichy, especially Chapter 1, 131-135 and Chapter 4, 280-291 where he states that, "In retrospect the winter of 1942-43 was the war's turning point. On 23 October 1942 the great tank battle began at El Alamein, ...which turned back Rommel's deepest advance in North Africa. During the night of November 7-8, Allied forces landed on the south shore of the Mediterranean in Morocco and Algeria." (280)} In addition, his role and work within Vichy were never unanimously endorsed. Many found him difficult to work with, others rejected his ideas entirely.

There were many aspects of Le Corbusier's career that would make him unpopular with the conservative forces surrounding Pétain at Vichy. Le Corbusier's connection with the Weissenhoff Seidlungen and its so-called "non-Aryan" architecture, and his notoriety as a Modernist would have made him anathema to the Germans and like-minded officials, while his openly practiced Modernism and continued espousal of CIAM did not fully comply with Vichy notions of tradition and regional architecture. In France, the right-wing press denounced him as an enemy of national and patriotic values, \textit{Le Figaro} making subtle distinctions between the sinuous line that was "French" and the straight line found in his planning which was not.\footnote{Kopp, \textit{L'Architecture de la Reconstruction} 26.}

In June 1942 the Algerian paper \textit{Travaux-Nord-Africains} reprinted Alexandre de Senger's article, "L'Architecture en Péril," alleging Le Corbusier to be communist, a belief repeated by Augustin Rozis, not only the mayor of Algiers but also a leading obstructionist to the Obus plans. Le Corbusier's position in Vichy had lasted a mere six months, from February to Bastille Day, 1941. He continued unofficially, however, to pursue another planning position at Vichy, and a fresh endorsement of his ideas and acceptance of the Plan Directeur in Algiers as late as June 1942. Le Corbusier made a final plea on behalf of his Algiers plans to Pétain on November 4th 1942, three
days before the Allies landed in North Africa. Soon after he abandoned the Algiers project.\footnote{However, Le Corbusier's efforts in Algiers were not unrewarded. It was in Algiers, among Le Corbusier's supporters, that Claudius Petit was won over to modern architecture and the ideals of CIAM. From Petit's new concern with rebuilding the French nation as Minister of Reconstruction would come Le Corbusier's post war commissions.}

**Conclusion**

There have been two "traditions" in *l'imaginaire d'Alger*, it was a place of conquest and the inferior "Other," and a place of repair, the "salvational" and "ideal" France.\footnote{This is discussed specifically for Algiers in Michelle Salinas, *Voyages et Voyageurs en Algérie 1830-1930* (Toulouse: Éditions Privat, 1989), and for more general discussion see Mary J. Harper, "Recovering the Other: Women and the Orient in Writings of Early Nineteenth-Century France," *Critical Matrix* 1.3 (1985): 1-31, see also chapter one.} Le Corbusier continually vacillated between these two representations citing the improvements brought by military intervention and the ideal of Arab urban form. Any synthesis became increasingly problematic during the late 1930s and early 1940s when the "Other," and the "salvational" became polarized by the needs of national defense. Le Corbusier was aware of this dilemma as he positioned his work within the history and aspirations of French colonization activities. In writing to General Weygand in late June 1941 he made his position within this colonial tradition clear:

L'Afrique du Nord peut et doit fournir des démonstrations de ce qui signifier une doctrine dans ce domaine: la première colonisation algérienne après la conquête, a été remarquablement faite par les militaires, mais vers 1900 le désordre est intervenu après une période de nonchalance et sous la pression des facteurs qui ont si fortement bouleversé notre époque, notamment les vitesses de transport.
Une seconde ère de colonisation Nord-Africain s'est ouverte brillamment au Moroc sous l'impulsion du Général Lyautey; toutefois cette réalisation s'est écarter quelque peu, au cours de ces quinze dernières années des directives spirituelles et matérielles du grand Chef.

Il apparaît que, de la Tunisie, jusqu'à la frontière algérois, marocaine, tant dans les villes du nord de mer que dans les villes de l'intérieur et dans les pénétrations vers le Sud, un nouvel état d'urbanisme soit appelé par l'heure comme seul capable de sauver Alger, Oran et bien d'autres cités, capable aussi de doter les indigènes (familles et groupes; de sauver entre autres, la Casbah d'Alger, document unique) d'équiper efficacement les nouvelles voies de colonisation prévues vers le Sud.

C'est là une nouvelle ère qui s'ouvre en Afrique, nécessitant aux cotés d'un grand Chef la présence de techniciens divers capables d'assumer cette tâche, depuis l'idée jusqu'à la réalisation concrète.83

Several things are significant in this letter. First, Le Corbusier associated his work with colonization; he was also clearly aware that the plans for land and resource exploitation were in French national interest. Second, he understood the colonies to be both a laboratory for urban experiments in which Algiers was to be an exemplar of Vichy urbanism, and a museum where the Casbah was a rare "document." Third, although he does find it politic to cite the Maréchal and place his urban theory within the practices of Vichy, his principles of urbanism pre-date Vichy as does his vision of urban space in which colonialism was to occur. His plans can not be simply attributed to Vichy policy either specifically or alone.

83Le Corbusier, letter to General Weygand, 30 June 1941, AFLC.
Throughout his involvement in Algiers Le Corbusier amended his view of Modern architecture to accommodate competing notions of the role of architecture in societal relations and the built environment. Two issues complicated the debate—regionalism and a technologically informed Modernism. It was a positioning confounded by the colonial situation.

In 1930, prior to Obus "A," Le Corbusier had begun to modify his *machine à habiter* metaphor and the style it referred to by an exploration of local materials. Ten years later this process would be complicated by the co-opting of regionalism by academic practitioners and theorists and by Vichy in its attempts to define the nation as rural and tradition-bound. However, the academic and conservative version of regionalism was distinguishable from that practiced by Le Corbusier. The academic interpretation was based upon the usurpation of the forms and details of vernacular traditions in the interest of reinvigorating Beaux Arts eclecticism and validating a professional status. Most admitted compromises with tradition such that local forms, details and typologies could be manufactured by the modern techniques which economized on production costs and time. Under Vichy regional eclecticism became the nationalist doctrine and a political sense was given to this enlargement of academic practice by its avoidance of confrontation between the classical tradition of the academy and the vernacular of *les peuples*. Aspects of the class struggle and its cultural implications were deflected onto architectural style, where it was considered appeased by the new appreciation of vernacular practice. It was an effort to contain and control both political and architectural problems via professional and state

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84 Monnier, *Histoire critique* 350.
85 Generally there were two attitudes toward local traditions. A second approach was a defensive and dogmatic insistence on local typologies and details, with no intrusion of modern forms. Monnier, *Histoire critique* 344.
86 I am indebted to Monnier's discussion of this development within Academic practice. Although Academic practice is generally considered to be anti-regional, the point of this uncharacteristic interest in the regional and vernacular is that it was largely politically inspired on two counts. First, it was an attempt to maintain control within the centralized academy and secondly it was a ploy to maintain favor with Pétain.
organizations, although some cautioned against the conflation of regional with national architecture. However, as Modernism was generally associated with the Left, so academic eclecticism was understood as a counter force to bolshevism and other "foreign" ideas.

Several features of Le Corbusier's regionalism were in opposition to the practices and concerns of his academic and Vichy-entrenched adversaries. His was not intended as a repudiation of Modernism nor as a resistance to innovation. And, while French academic professionals attempted a compromised accommodation of contemporary programmatic needs within scenographic planning and nostalgic forms, Le Corbusier re-phrased local typologies and material to fit functional considerations; forms were conceived anew, not imitated. While Vichy architects spoke of traditional forms and materials, of a rootedness to the landscape, Le Corbusier, by 1940-1942, wrote of larger abstractions: climate, latitude and culture. These were abstractions given particular resonance in the rhetoric of an Algerian or Mediterranean style.

Regionalism as it was conceived by conservatives, the l'Ordre des architectes and Vichy in the early 1940s, was a strategy by which claims to le pays and la patrie were effected and through which notions of rootedness, family and nation were upheld. But it was not so simply achieved in the colony. Here, on North African soil, rootedness, family and nation invoked highly controversial debates between subjects and citizens of France.

Architecturally, the "rooted" styles were Arabic or Turkish, or at the very least conventional and established French classicism of the nineteenth-century or the arabisance of the early

87 Monnier, Histoire critique 345.
88 Monnier, Histoire critique 48. Kopp, L'Architecture de la Reconstruction 67. As an academic and bureaucratized practice, vernacular architecture was not only disembodied of its spatial and material presence but also of its traditional social production procedures, as artisans were replaced by registered professional teams and local councils by a national committee established in Vichy. Regionalism became a counter to innovation and a variant of eclecticism in the interest of the renewal of academic culture. Vernacular construction was reduced to the imitation of style and to a doctrine of conservative corporatism.
89 See Kopp, L'Architecture de la Reconstruction, Lebovics, True France and Monnier, Histoire critique.
twentieth. Just as Metropolitan academics worried about any close identification of regional
with national architecture, so too might they be concerned with a conflation of Algerian
"regional" and historicized architecture (arabisance) with national representation in this
colonial context. It could be argued that any understanding of such a "regional"
architecture (Arab, arabisance) as expressive of the nation, in the context of Moslem
Algerian demands for independence would be something to avoid. The myth of French
colonization in Algeria had been that of the colon firmly rooted in the countryside who
would seed the techniques of French civilization.90 Only after 1936 was it openly
recognized and deplored that Europeans had abandoned the land for the city. This would
make a vernacular architecture and peasantry as symbols of Famille, Travaille, Pays
difficult to manage in Algeria where Europeans were not firmly attached to the "land," and
local traditions to legitimate their presence and national identity were lacking.

If the pastiche of local materials, vernacular forms and details of traditional material culture
destroyed by the war then underway were called up in the Metropole to speak for a
mythical present of "family, work and country" at a time of population dislocation,
technocratic centralization and foreign occupation, then what might Le Corbusier's regional
accoutrements of brise-soleil, golden section, proportion and biological analogy speak of
and for whom?91 These were references to an intellectual order which Le Corbusier had
identified with mathematics and proportion, that primary order of meaning which he
demanded to be universal as opposed to a secondary order of meaning which was local and
personal.92 While the second admitted the vernacular or popular classes, the former
accepted only an elite. It was this elite which he addressed by these brise-soleil inscribed

Universitaires de France, 1979) 475-76.
91 Despite the "back to the land" rhetoric and the interest in local customs, Vichy initiated a centralization
of decision making unprecedented in France. See Paxton, Vichy 215; Fishman, "Plans and Politics"
272-3; Kopp, L'Architecture de la Reconstruction 48.
92 Le Corbusier makes this distinction between a primary and intellectual universal language and a
secondary, personal, local and culturally specific vernacular in his purist writings and theory of the 1918-
1925 period.
with golden sections, that most deeply embedded of Western aesthetic references. As Gérard Monnier has remarked about the differences between the academic viewpoint of the Sorbonne professor, Umbdenstock, and Le Corbusier: "Tandique Umbdenstock invoque pieusement 'les pouvoirs publics,' Le Corbusier sait que la culture des dirigeants, et leur idéologie, impliquent l'inscription de l'architecture dans une relation intellectuelle et dans une relation opérationnelle." 

Yet such an elite and technologically informed language was equally problematic. Through the 1930s technology was expensive and prohibitive to certain sectors of society who had traditionally contributed to the built environment. In Algiers it was argued that skyscrapers were too expensive for normal financing arrangements, and necessitated administrative and greatly enlarged levels of capital investment. Contemporary historians have identified resistance to technology with those who had been caught in a process of proletarization as a result of imperialism and developments in capitalism and were thus highly conscious of their social status and its representation. This petit bourgeoisie, not wishing to be confused with the proletariat were, as Monnier describes, "a class caught between two antagonistic classes the haute bourgeoisie and the proletariat." Their concerns were expressed in architectural criticism of the 1930s which saw both communism and an uncontrolled capitalism, witnessed in mass-produced buildings and reinforced concrete 

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93 The golden section, as a product of Greek civilization has been subsumed into the "history of Western civilization," although it may as does Greek civilization itself has have Eastern influences. It is also possible that the same proportions as those of the golden section may also exist in Eastern traditions. Also see Witkower, Architecture in the Age of Humanism.

94 Monnier, *Histoire critique* 330. Monnier calls it an "architecture of ecology," but given Le Corbusier's notions of technology--dams and highways, it was still part of his myth of modernity.


96 Monnier, *Histoire critique* 329. Examples of such anti-modern critics are Mauclair, and especially de Senger and Umbdenstock.
construction technology, as the reason for the economic crisis of the period. This critique dogged Le Corbusier throughout the 1930s and was effectively brought to bear on his involvement with Algiers in 1942. It serves, and served, to problematize Le Corbusier's position within Vichy and in Algiers where it was stealthily and successfully wielded against him by the mayor.

Modernism, especially as it sought to exploit industrial method, was identified and denigrated as the work of bolshevism in the highly politicized writing of conservatives and the right-wing. It was in these terms that Le Corbusier's architecture and planning were attacked in Vichy Algiers. In June 1942 Travaux nord-africains published a front page diatribe against Le Corbusier's industrialized modernism. A reprint of Alexandre de Senger's article, first published in Libre Parole in 1934, it highlights two significant aspects of the period. First, that the sentiments of Vichy predated Pétain and the Révolution nationale and, second, that architectural style did participate in a virulent and ongoing political debate. De Senger identified a national architecture with poetic elements determined by race, climate, material, landscape, myths and symbols of the nation fashioned by traditional métiers, this architecture created the nation, as he argued "pas de Notre Dâme, point de Paris." 97 This national architecture was contrasted with an architecture of reinforced concrete which, it was claimed, sought to destroy all national borders and history in the name of the Bolsheviks and industrial capital. De Senger identified Le Corbusier's Towards a New Architecture and L'Esprit Nouveau as well as the "new international force," CIAM, with these destructive forces. "Nous sommes témoins d'une immense razzia faite par le capital anonyme avec l'aide et le secours du bolchevisme." 98 De Senger, associated resistance to modern industrialized architecture with the prevention of the spread of capitalism and bolshevism, both of which he felt

intended to systematically destroy, via industrialization, "the soul of man." The destruction of old cities via urbanism was to be regretted as a response to the calls of high finance, concrete and steel industries and banks. In denying "all national borders and history," what was also obviously at issue was the disintegration of the nation. Significantly, de Senger refers to a "razzia," a word derived from Algeria meaning "raid," which suggests a racial, Islamic, threat to national security as well. In other words, what was seen as crucial was the preservation of not only a petit bourgeois way of life but also France.

Despite such assaults on Modernism and the popular association of technology with barbarism and defeat provoked by the prominent German military presence in France between 1940 and 1943, Le Corbusier never denied technology, although he stipulated its peaceful employ. In 1940 at the Exposition de la France d'Outre-mer, he amplified the exhibition of indigenous artifacts in a cinematic presentation that interspersed his plans for Algiers with the technology that had been the touchstone of French dominance over the indigenous. Technical superiority in the exploitation of the land was the basis of French claims to Algeria and its civilizing mission. Modernism, as a universal "good" and sign of progressive civilization, had propelled colonialism in the past, establishing the hierarchies of government, social and economic class as well as gender relations. Le Corbusier continued to espouse this hierarchical administration and triumphant rationality.

Underpinning this adherence was a belief in an industrial society and it was this which informed his notions of physical and political form. By 1941 Algiers, was the "phoenix of France, decisive pour le prestige de la France et l'intérêt supérieur de nos possessions d'

99 Monnier, Histoire critique 361.
100 Although some might argue that gender relations were "givens" rather than fully conscious policy, one can certainly read very self conscious arguments about gender and its relationship to social and colonial hierarchies in Diderot, Abbé Prévost among others in the eighteenth-century. These relationships may have been assumed in the twentieth-century but they were not uncontested.
101 Fishman, "Plans and Politics" 247. He had proposed a corps of experts who would define the basic methods of construction for the whole country. (273.)
Le Corbusier's urban strategy in the end, with the 1942 Plan Directeur, was to separate a modernized French city and an historically salvaged, aestheticized and thereby seemingly de-politicized Moslem city. This was not dissimilar to established French colonial tactics where traditional forms were used to downplay resistance while mitigating the more disruptive aspects of modernization. The synthesis of two approaches to urbanism—-one protecting tradition the other promoting development--had a long history in French colonial political strategy.

Urbanism, as an officially orchestrated technical and institutional intervention in colonial cities was practiced widely throughout the Empire, usually involving aesthetic "adaptations." In nineteenth-century Madagascar as in early twentieth-century Algiers, a métis style, a hybrid of European technology and local forms was developed. However, by the 1920s such a hybrid style was found unsuitable as French Algerian architects began formulating an Algerian and then Mediterranean style which progressively jettisoned references to Arab culture. By the late 1930s, as evidenced by the Beaux Arts buildings Socard proposed for the Marine District, the dominant colon culture refused to accommodate indigenous demands and wished a clear expression of Western dominance. For others, such as Le Corbusier's supporters, Modernism seemed the more appropriate response. What colonial strategy would be served by this new approach where references to a conquering assimilation or protective association were eschewed by modern buildings, seemingly dissociated from such political functions?

102Le Corbusier, letter to Breuillot, 18 Apr. 1940), AFLC. At this point Le Corbusier believed the choice of government would allow the acceptance of his plan.
104For examples see Wright, " Architecture and Urbanism" 291-297.
105Wright, " Architecture and Urbanism" 306-07. This occurred in the 1920s in Madagascar where, as Wright describes it, Hébrard attempted to strike a balance between industrial growth and cultural respect, between modernism and tradition. The political goal was that of increasing the administration's prestige and efficiency and the illusion of a greater involvement of the Vietnamese in government. At the same time in Algiers, although no urbanist was hired as had been the case in Madagascar, new institutional buildings were built which used not a métis style but a modern style in the manner of Auguste Perret. It was not pastiche but a structural logic within which the arts or fantasy could be appended.
The indigenous renaissance fabricated by the French government from their support for revived artisan practices, archaic living conditions and historic preservation sites served to temporarily keep the Moslem Algerians in their assigned place. But the Moslem Algerian political renaissance built of political activism and modern procedure envisioned a different spatial and temporal identity. Through the late 1930s and early 1940s the Parti Popular de l'Algérie, became more vocal in their anti-assimilationist stance and the need for Moslem Algerians to re-appropriate their land, their religion and their past. Established Moslem Algerian institutions were dissolved and new ones formed. Most were not initially as intransigent on independence as the Parti du peuple algérien. Benjelloul, former leader of the now defunct Congrès musulman, together with Ferhat Abbas created a new reform party, the Franco-musulman-algérien, l'union populaire algérien. As its name indicated, Moslem Algerian political circles of 1938 could still envision a Moslem-European nation. In April of 1939 this vision was shattered by the election of a Parti du peuple algérien candidate in Algiers, a victory based on the principle of democratic liberties and independence. Such an oppositional challenge from within Algerian politics was deemed counter to the interests of national security and the vote was disallowed. Although ostensibly a response to the outbreak of war and the threat to national borders, it was also a symptomatic response to the pressures of national dissolution felt within Algeria and France.

The French found some relief from the dismal aftermath of defeat and German occupation in the fact that the French colonial Empire remained relatively integral after the fall of France in June 1940. Pétain's Révolution nationale bolstered European spirits in Algeria.

107 Kaddache, La Vie politique 363.
with its call for a return to the past, to the time of conquest and the occupation of the land. Vichy abrogated social legislation and trade unionism for Moslem Algerians and the Crémieux Degree which had allowed the naturalization of Jews. The urban plans for Algiers were considered and debated as opposition to French rule mounted among Moslem Algerians, and the Administration and local councils in Algiers became more reactionary and defensive of their French prerogatives. With the establishment of Vichy, many of Pétain's objectives and pronouncements were given a particularly colonial interpretation. The castigation of the Popular Front as the cause of the decadence and defeat came to justify the rescinding of all Popular Front reform initiatives regarding Moslem Algerian status. Pétain's nostalgia for the past was interpreted as a return to the early years of colonization, before the liberalization of naturalization laws and any constitutional consideration of the rights of Moslem Algerians. This reactionary attitude is evidenced in the actions and words of Mayor Rozis, Peyrouton, Minister of the Interior and Weygand, Governor General of Algeria during Vichy. Here complicated notions of national pride and definition were obviously at play. In the end this dominant public of French colons in Algiers would support the Socard plan for the Marine District and Coquerel's Regional Plan. However, there continued to be some opportunity for an extensive discussion of Le Corbusier's plans.

As much as Le Corbusier's involvement with Algiers had occurred during a period of Imperial illusions of status quo it also coincided with an era of extreme anxiety about the exterior boundaries and interior frontiers of the French nation, its geographic limits and moral integrity. This anxiety was engrained in films which portrayed for French audiences the danger which cohabitation and the Casbah presented to French culture in Pépé Le Moko in 1936, the glorification of Christianity as the handmaiden of well-being and progress in L'Appel du Silence of the same year or the impossibility of Moslem-European

108Stora, Histoire de l'Algérie coloniale 87.
intermarriage in the 1938 remake of the *L'Occident*. Threatened from within by worker's uprisings in the early 1930s, "undermined" by a socialist government under the Popular Front between 1936 and 1938, and infiltrated by colonial nationalists such as the Parti du peuple algérien in the late 1930s, French nationalist impulses were inflamed. By early 1940 the body politic of France was disfigured by the German occupation and distended as the Empire became an important locus for its representation. Through the 1930s, folklore, as a family-based, rural and patriarchal organization, had been a common theme. It would be forefronted by Vichy and identified with the nation through its association with *Famille, Travaille, Patrie*. These values and hence national integrity were understood as being threatened by parliamentary debates about Moslem Algerian citizenship which would allow polygamy in the interest of Moslem religious and cultural rights as well as by Moslem Algerian agitation in the Metropole. Insecurity about national identity, exacerbated by the war, perceived demographic decline and moral degeneracy, threats from without and within, were reflected in more authoritarian colonial policies while opposition in the colonies greatly added to those anxieties.

Ann Stoler has argued that nationalist impulses affect colonial policy; the image of the nation configures the physical and psychological world of the colony where the greater the perceived threat to the nation the greater the concern to control its borders. Essential to the protection of those borders was not just military strength but also cultural practices.

111 For a discussion of the relationship between anxieties about exterior boundaries and interior frontiers see the very enlightening article by Ann Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (July 1992): 514-551. Stoler adapts the term "internal frontier" from the German philosopher Fichte, where the perceived threat was not from beyond national boundaries but from within, from the very mental attitudes of those accepted as nationals. She also borrows from Etienne Balibar who develops the significance of its contradictory connotations as a place of both contact and enclosure. "When coupled with the word interior, frontier carries the sense of internal distinctions within a territory (or empire); at the level of the individual, frontier marks the moral predicates by which a subject retains his or her national identity despite location outside the national frontier and despite heterogeneity within the nation-state." (516)
112 Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers" 517.
Schools and family were considered key institutions of cultural dissemination and control. Important to both anxieties about the fragility of those mental attitudes which kept one French in foreign contexts and to strategies of control and moral rearmament was the concept of *milieu*, of cultural surroundings.\(^{113}\) Such surroundings could be manipulated so as to reinforce French cultural values in what was, for the French, an alien, colonial context and thus circumvent the formation of a class of *décivilisés*, of a group "gone native." Concern was as much with keeping the French French, and hence supportive of a State which spoke in their name, as it was with distinguishing the cultural deficiencies of the non-French. The implications of this for Algiers in the late 1930s and early 1940s are many. Chiefly, it suggests the ways in which Algiers, with its French population, outnumbered by both disparate naturalized Europeans and Moslem Algerians, would have difficulties in policing its "internal frontiers," the mental habits which preserved French identity. The noticeable move to the Right in Algeria, among mayors especially, was one reaction to this perceived threat to the definition of Frenchness and hence control. It was a difficulty exacerbated by the election of Messali Hadj to a position within the Algerian assembly in 1939 which allowed an Algerian nationalist to infiltrate a vital organ of the

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\(^{113}\) Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers" 535, and Rabinow, *French Modern* 126-127. Also important were nineteenth century ideas of "cultural racism" which became an important strategy for policing the boundaries of the nation. This new racism had a strong cultural inflection and was embedded in the wider structures of domination based on the family and was tied to nationalist sentiments. What is significant in the context of Algiers is the fact that it was precisely the family which seemed most threatened by the reform movements which would allow Moslem Algerians access to citizenship while being unable to police or influence their formation as citizens through the indoctrination of French culture via the family, school and French language—precisely the institutions which the Moslem Algerians refused to relinquish. It indicates the relevance which Le Corbusier's references to the family may have had in this colonial context, being no longer simply a matter of skin color or physiognomy but rather of moral attitude and psychology. (See Stoler, especially 517-535) In addition, urban planning and the provision of housing were two of the more recent strategies of the state, in both the Metropole and the colonies, employed to manage correct civic deportment. As part of the "civilizing" process various Governors General introduced specialized architectural and urban departments. Governor General de Lanessan established a Service des bâtiments civils in Indonesia in 1893 in 1903 the Governor General of Algeria set up a Service d'architecture, while Lyautey initiated the first modern urban planning department, Service central des plans, in 1914 in 1918 a Commission d'urbanisme was established in Tananarive and in 1926 a Conseil d'urbanisme; similar institutions were founded in West Africa in the 1930s. See Raymond F. Betts, "Imperial Designs: French Colonial Architecture and Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa, ed. G. Wesley Johnson, *France and Africa in the Age of Imperialism* (London: Greenwood Press, 1985) 193-94.
nation. National identity became more urgent as North Africa became, in the early 1940s, the locus of Vichy legitimation against Allied and Resistance counterclaims.

The defining of the appropriate milieu was crucial to projecting a cultural belonging to France among French and European colonos such that they would not become assimilated into indigenous ways or become less rigorous in their defense of the nation. Urban planning and architecture were important venues for creating this appropriate cultural surrounding. In addition, the family and especially women were given a key role in the maintaining of French culture and civilization (as was also the case within Moslem Algerian culture). French administrators were active in implementing both housing and schools for Moslem girls in the interests of westernization, while the same programs for Europeans assisted in maintaining French cultural habits. In complex ways these infrastructural and institutional strategies, built form, demarcations of race and gender, were related and influential in the debates surrounding the Marine District and the Regional plan for Algiers. And these debates occurred at a time when it was necessary to show commitment to and identification with the invisible moral bonds by which cultural legitimacy and colonial divisions were marked and maintained.

The sustained support given to the Prost & Socard plan from 1937 to its ultimate victory in 1941 can be explained by this nationalist discourse. This plan possessed the appropriate architectural accoutrements. Drawing from the French academic Beaux Arts tradition in its classicizing details, regular building blocks with courtyards and consistent cornice lines it reproduced the representational spaces by which France would be recognized and acknowledged. Everything was composed within a familiar urbanistic deployment of space and form. A protective wall of six to eight story buildings enclosed the European quarter

on its western flank, thereby buttressing it against the incursions of Moslem Algerians from the Casbah just beyond. An esplanade opened toward the Mediterranean and hence France and secured along the seafront a panoply of institutional buildings, including a Central Telegraph Building and a Chamber of Commerce. Wide boulevards traversed the site from European suburb in the north to city center in the south. From within this precinct a dominating administration building confronted the Casbah, its denizens and customs. The cultural attitudes of tradition and order, of moral (the colonial administration), economic (Chamber of Commerce) and communication (Central Telegraph) ties with France were maintained. The scheme not only denied access and representation to Moslem Algerians, but also reinforced those invisible moral bonds, those French "essences," by which a beleaguered citizenry could recognize itself and the nation be defended. It clearly rallied to the national sentiments of the day.

Le Corbusier's architecture and plans would not have been so reassuring. None of the established trappings of French cultural identity were immediately perceptible. He had eschewed classical details, denied Perret's rectilinear abbreviations of them, and rejected the repetitive ordering of buildings along wide boulevards. Instead there was a skyscraper of unprecedented technology, unfamiliar proportions, disturbing formal references—evocations of Arab loggias (or moucharabieh) and urban configurations. Instead of enclosing walls there were extended avenues and hybrid architecture. All was spatial permeability, illicit forms, inchoate grammar: nothing reassuring to a frail national identity.

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115 The Prost & Socard plan was published in 1936 in Chantiers nord-africains, and in 1941 in its slightly modified and final form. See Giordani, "les projets pour la ville d'Alger," 386-387 and Emery, letter to Le Corbusier, 25 Jan. 1941, AFLC. Emery describes a street which divides the Marine district into two parts, with six story buildings for housing and administration buildings on the seafront half. Also see Deluz, "Alger 1962: L'Héritage...", Arts et techniques (1980): 44. It is interesting that in 1933, in connection with the Architecture and Urbanism Exhibition, Socard had spoken of an architecture responsive to climate, topography and latitude but by the late 1930s and, in this plan, his architecture and planning appear conventional, as Deluz described it "pittoresque, ... dont la médiocrité est amplifiée."
The Plan Directeur inevitably exhibited similar "aberrant" thought (or, metaphorically, "behavior") and deficiencies to the conservative forces within the French administration. Although the re-positioning of the skyscraper complied with conservative ideas of separate spheres, European and Moslem, and was perhaps a recognition of the impossibility in 1941 of reformulating the extant relationship between the two cultures, it also failed to convince the Algiers Municipal Council that the plan was appropriate. Although its salient features included the provision of housing, its emphasis on indigenous accommodation and cultural buildings placed the "Other" within, what Le Corbusier termed, a precedent for planning throughout the entire Empire, and France. Although segregated spatially, they were not differentiated stylistically; Moslem Algerians were made present within the modern world. Clearly, this would not be a comforting reality to French Algerians, nor was it thinkable within the heightened hysteria and racism of the Vichy era reacting to the demands for radical reform or national sovereignty among Moslem Algerians. Le Corbusier's plan imposed an unprecedented space which was fragmented by transparent facades of weightless volumes raised on *pilotis* disarticulated from streets, unresisting to an ambient seemingly neutralized space. Whereas Socard presented a space which was conventional, with streets bounded by substantial buildings and punctuated by monuments and institutions of comforting French convention. In the Socard plan, the visual experience would unfold along discreet viewing corridors, singularly focused; in Le Corbusier's it would be multiple, pressing in all directions, "polyscopic." Socard's plan retained physical remnants of historical appropriation even as it re-configured the site. After all, this was the history of those for whom he built--the Municipal Councilors, *colon* such as Rozis. His modest boulevards and streets united the representational spaces of

116 The term comes from Martin Jay who uses "ocularcentrism" to a give emphasis to the cultural primacy given to sight and vision and the ramifications of this emphasis. It is a "style of seeing" or "cultural optics," although Jay does not neglect the biological aspects of vision. See the discussion in the introduction of *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in 20th-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Jay is here interested in the anti-visual tradition in French thought. Chapter four, "The Disenchantment of the Eye: Bataille and the Surrealists," is particularly relevant to the 1930s.
Government Place and the Lycée, institutions of power and education, those points of reference effectively wielded for the Célébration Centenaire, fundamental to the colonial topography and so necessary to the status quo.

Le Corbusier jettisoned, or de-familiarized by fragmentation and dislocation, the spaces and objects of colonial memory and experience in the interests of what Lefebvre has termed the representation of abstract space. Thus the obelisk monument of Fort de l'Empereur, the mosques, the quai d'Anglais, the Bastion of cap de la Marine were dislodged from their historical and palpable contexts so as to become liberated symbols within a larger conception of Empire. In the Plan Directeur, space was made to flow seemingly homogeneously through Arab and European cities, thereby repressing the local as it re-configured and reconstituted neighborhoods according to the logic of functionality and system; housing, commerce, light and heavy industry, transit, leisure sites, indigenous housing and economic zones (artisanat and light industry). It was an abstract space that was then re-filled with housing, Y-shaped redents for Moslem Algerians and European alike, linear blocks for industry, a highly articulated prism for business, their cultural specificity and meaning stripped away, vacant, awaiting their cultural occupancy.

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... every society--and hence every mode of production with its subvariants produces a space, its own space; nor can it be visualized solely on the basis of a number of texts and treatises on the subject of space... For the ancient city had its own spatial practice: it forged its own - appropriated space.

Whence the need for a study of that space which is able to apprehend it as

117 Lefebvre, Production of Space. See especially Chapter 5, "Contradictory Space" 292-351. For a discussion of representation of space versus representational space see 40-46.
Lefebvre proposes that very society produces its own space. From this theoretical perspective some summarizing comments on Le Corbusier's plans for Algiers can be focused. It could be argued that Le Corbusier wrestled with the spatial practices which colonialism, its society and preoccupations had configured, more than he struggled with political parties who themselves found their agendas distorted by the Imperial locale. Le Corbusier's plans existed within a social space and traditions where gender, class and race relationships, and ultimately Algerian and French nationalism, were negotiated. The embeddedness of those spatial practices and the demands of colonialism, rather than political eras alone—Third Republic, Popular Front, or Vichy—governed both the similarities between Le Corbusier's Plan Directeur and his rivals Prost & Socard, and their differences.

The social and political role of Le Corbusier's Plan Directeur of 1942 was to provide a spatial configuration, or blueprint, for the reproduction of contemporary French moral attitudes, apostrophized in Pétain's slogan Famille, Travaille, Patrie. Also expressed in this motto is a concern for the appropriate definition and limits of those three entities and their optimal maintenance. Family, work and country also resonated within the larger agenda of French colonial practices in Algeria during the one hundred years prior to Le Corbusier's arrival. French manipulation of space according to these concepts and their attendant actions had disinherted Moslem Algerian society culturally, economically and socially, although fragments of its existing representational spaces remained: Casbah, medersa, cemetery, fountains, walled and terraced houses. These remnants had however

118 Lefebvre, Production of Space 31.
been increasingly lost from view and their use curtailed by the Western spatial practices and urban planning within which Moslem Algerians were forced with increasing rigor to eke out their own places from which their families, work and eventual nation could also be defended.

Once removed to the city, Moslem Algerian society reproduced specific spatial patterns in their new locale. As Bourdieu has summarized these patterns in Algerian culture, they comprised, "opposition between the inside and the outside... expressed in the sharp division between the woman's space--the house and its garden--a closed, secret, protected space, away from intrusions and the public gaze--and the men's spaces--the place of assembly, the mosque, the café, the field and the market."119 Terraces, specified fountains, cemeteries and customary pathways demarcated women's interstices of the city, their visitation by Moslem women managed by spatial divisions and times of use.120 Men occupied the public spaces of streets and non-domestic work. However, such distinctions were complicated, or disallowed, by colonial practices and the spatial articulation of Moslem gender relations subverted. By the 1930s most Algerian men found themselves unemployed or under-employed, their jobs in industry taken by colons, their artisan practices undermined by European competitors.121 Increasingly, it was women who had the regular if menial employment as maids or domestics. More insidiously dissolved was a cultural code of male honor which demanded that all domestic intimacy and family business be sequestered from foreign view. Withdrawal from the hostile and indifferent world of westernizing influences and presumptuous colons into the sanctity of the family home was increasingly difficult. Unable to acquire the requisite individual home, the petit bourgeois sought a modicum of shelter and privacy in European-style apartments.

121Bourdieu, The Algerians 134-144; Ruedy, Modern Algeria 114-126.
Monogamous by choice or necessity, he relied on family stability. Moslem Algerian society was altered by its attempts to fit into the spatial practices and representations of space demanded by colonialism; the extended family was more and more reduced to the nuclear family, the spatial extent of women was increasingly confined to the apartment and the veil. As Peter Knauss recounts, it was the colonial system which first dislocated the rural peasant from his or her family land and clan system, broke the family unit in which patriarchy was based and relocated it within the alienating spaces of wage labor and tight urban configurations where jobs were scarce, competitive and unsupportive of the extended family or traditional systems of male honor. The city forced the reconstitution of patriarchy into the nuclear family. What this serves to underline is the vital role gender played, albeit not always directly acknowledged, in the definition of the nation and conception and organization of space. Le Corbusier's design of cités indigènes, European style apartments and functionally segregated urban zones continued these colonial spatial practices.

For many Moslem Algerian's the preservation of their culture required that Moslem Algerian women withdraw behind the veil, while men retreated to the masculine preserve of the café. The veil was seemingly the last "space" available to the colonized materially

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123 Knauss' general theory in *Persistence of Patriarchy* is that new Moslem Algerian patriarchy would be most resistant to the liberal trends following from the reforms of women's positions introduced by Ataturk in Turkey in the 1920s and 1930 as a counter image to all that was French was sought.

124 Knauss, *Persistence of Patriarchy*. 24. The veil meant many things in the Muslim world and veiling customs have varied through time and place. Before it was a symbol of national integrity and honor it was a symbol of status. It was primarily the custom of the upper classes to veil their wives, it indicated they could afford to have a wife who did not need to work. The spread of this practice among the working and poorest classes in the mid twentieth-century was hailed as a form of democratization. It was also a protective reaction to the arrival of Westerners in countries such as Egypt and Algeria. See Nikki R. Keddie, *Material Culture, Technology, and Geography: Toward a Holistic Comparative Study of the Middle East,* in *Comparing Muslim Societies, Knowledge and the State in a World Civilization*, ed. Juan R. I. Cole (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992) 47-48. In addition, rural villages were largely familial, clan, situations and it was not therefore considered necessary to veil. When rural populations began to move into the city veiling was advocated. For an account of pressures to veil once in the city see Fadhma Amrouch and her account of life in Algeria and Tunisia during the early twentieth-century in, *My Life Story*, trans. Dorothy Blair (London: The Women's Press, 1988) 136-137.
and spatially deprived of the means of their own cultural reproduction. This in turn caused certain anxieties among the *colons*, fears expressed in the observation: "They can see our women we can't see theirs; the Arab had a plurality of wives, and therefore was possibly more virile... and with the demographic explosion spawned by his potency, he was threatening to swamp the European by sheer weight of numbers."\(^{125}\) The space of the colonial city was socially produced in response to this anxiety. By 1942 extreme segregation appeared to be the only solution. The Plan Directeur again privileged European spaces of production, business, port, commerce, and cultural identification: Forum, Courts of Justice, Labor Halls, Justice. Moslem institutions were left ill defined, perhaps partially or unconsciously, because these institutions could now only be filled by all that constituted the fears and anxieties about the French nation, an alien system and virile patriarchy.

In addition, modern middle class, French educated, Moslem Algerian women had begun to infiltrate the public spaces of *colon* women. As Knauss notes some unveiled Algerians,

\[\text{turned themselves into perfect Westerners with amazing rapidity and unsuspected ease. European women [felt] a certain uneasiness in the presence of these women.} \ldots\ \text{Not only [was] the satisfaction of supervising the evolution and correcting the mistakes of unveiled women withdrawn from the European woman, she [felt] herself challenged on the level of feminine charm, of elegance, and even [saw] a competitor.}\(^{126}\)

So the increased segregation, the sublimation of racism into rational zoning, was a compromise, an overlaying of two social patterns of spatial occupation in order to assuage the fears and anxieties of *colons* about their cultural prerogatives and national identities while attempting to keep loyal Moslem Algerian subjects from their own culture and nation.


\(^{126}\)Knauss, *Persistence of Patriarchy* 28
Colonial subjects, however, were necessary in 1942 to legitimate Vichy as they would after 1945 be necessary to Free France. The borders between the French and Moslem Algerian spheres of influence were left permeable but the lines were drawn.

The French government had, especially through the 1930s, attempted to debilitate Moslem Algerian culture and its notion of independence via the education of girls in the civil laws of France and the artisan crafts that would grant them independence from the extended family and thereby undermine polygamy. The response within Moslem Algerian society had been an increased belief in the power of Islam, a more strident patriarchal, but now nuclear, family reaffirming of the traditional beliefs and values of an "authentic Algerian" past--"as psychic compensations for colonial racism and unemployment."27 Through the 1930s the colonial city began to experience the re-assertion of that "authentic Algerian." The Oulema began to build medersas as they attempted to rebuild Islam. In the end "Algerian women became the double prisoners of this [Algerian] nationalist antithesis of everything French. They became both the revered objects of the collective act of national redemption and the role models for the new nationalist patriarchal family."128

It is noteworthy that Le Corbusier persisted in his demand that housing, especially and significantly, for Moslem Algerians, be retained in the Plan Directeur. The domestic realm was the sphere in which the French had most steadfastly pursued their foe. The fact that Le Corbusier designed apartments indistinguishable from those of Europeans makes the point; it would be the colonization of the last vestige of the representational space and practice of Moslem Algerian honor, the architectural achievement of his escapade in the Casbah with which he had initiated his eleven year assault on the city and his unveiling of Moslem Algerian women. The veiled Algerian woman had created, what Bourdieu has termed, a

128Knauss, *Persistence of Patriarchy* xiii.
"situation of non-reciprocity; like a disloyal player, she sees without being seen, without allowing herself to be seen, and it is the entire dominated society which, by means of the veil, penetrates, without allowing itself to be seen, regarded, penetrated."129 Le Corbusier's skyscraper, the business city of phallic dominance would confront the Algerian male who's family had been dishonored by the deprivation of its needed representational spaces.130 Considered again in the aftermath of the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), Le Corbusier's abstract skyscrapers would be usurped by the elite of the Front de Libération Nationale and, until recently, these edifices have served well both the modernization and patriarchal program of the new socialist Islamic state.131

129 Bourdieu, *Algeria 1960.* 123. As Knauss summarizes, "The battle of the veil became a contest of wills between Algerians and French administrators, school teachers, and colons who became zealots of the 'civilizing mission.'" (Knauss, *Persistence of Patriarchy* 25.) In the 1930s the French administration waged a war against the use of the veil, the oulema countered the French with their own attempts to re-form the family, this was noted in *La Circulaire Michel* which pointed out that the oulema were a danger.

130 The assignation of a phallic signification to the skyscraper, as is made by Lefebvre and Perez-Gomez among others, is based not only on its physical form, but on the discussions which form a part of architectural discourse. The association of the form and its functions within the city as virile (masculine, manly, potent, active, public) etc, in opposition to the effeminate, (impotent, weak) expressed in the opposition of the orthogonal, bold and learned to the curvilinear, soft, natural and the primitive has a long tradition in architectural writing and is codified at least by the early eighteenth century by Germain Boffrand who distinguished *viril,* or mâle and *feminin* characteristics and 'styles.' Germain Boffrand *Livre d'Architecture* (Paris, 1745).

131 For a discussion of the phallic qualities and significance of Le Corbusier's spatial deployment and skyscrapers see Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* 286-291 and 303-312. Evidence of the influence of this vocabulary of space and form in Algiers can be found in le terrain Garnier, l'ensemble Marine-Casbah and les hauts de Bab el Oued in J.J. Deuz, *L'Urbanisme et l'Architecture d'Alger* (Alger: Pierre Mardage, Office des Publications Universitaires, 1988) 86 and 77. For a discussion of modernization and patriarchy see Juliette Minces, "Women in Algeria," ed. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie, *Women in the Muslim World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) 166-171. As to the continued relevance of the relationship of concepts of the nation with that of gender, one need only be aware of the contemporary situation in Algiers. Present conditions in Algeria have been termed "a cultural civil war" while national identity is confirmed by the control of women; where as one Algiers Moslem Algerian woman asks: "Every time there are problems here (Algiers), its the women who get it in the neck. They've killed teenagers because they weren't wearing the veil or were dressed in western clothes. Why do they never touch guys who wear 501 jeans or Nike shoes? " Catherine Simon "Its like a stage with no actors," *Le Monde* (May 19) from *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* 5 June 1994: 14. See also Jean-Pierre Péroncel-Hugoz, "No winners in this cultural civil war," *Le Monde* (May 19), from *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* 5 June 1994: 14. Of course, these reports are being reported for the Western world. In addition France continues to have problems associated with the presence of 'ungallicized' citizens where customs of wearing the veil or the sacrifice of animals as an expression of religious principle cause great tensions within the Metropole. See Henri Tincq, "Muslim ritual slaughter tests French humane statutes," *Le Monde* (May 20) in *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* 29 May 1994: 13.
Figure 2. Rue de la Charte. (Quartier de la Marine, Algiers) J. C. [Jean Cotereau] "L'agonie d'un quartier," Chantiers nord-africains (May 1932): 386.

Figure 3. Exposition de la Cité Moderne. (Algiers). Algeria (May 1936): 31.
Figure 5. A comparison of representations of Western and Algerian women in Algiers.
(Top, left) *La dernière invention des "beach girls",* *La Dépêche Algérienne* 12 June 1934: 4
and (Top, right) *Entrée d'une clinique indigène à Alger,* *France Outre-Mer* 14 Sep. 1938:
4. (Bottom, left) *L'arrivée des Reines de beauté d'Europe à Alger,* *L'Echo d'Alger* 14
Feb. 1931: 1 and (Bottom, right) *Un beau type de femme noire de la Guinée,* *France
Outre-Mer* 1 Sep. 1939: 1.

Figure 7. Le Corbusier, Obus "B." Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 250.
This is how our last proposal (1934) would place the shoreline of Algiers on the scale of modern times.

Figure 8. Le Corbusier, Obus "C." Le Corbusier, The Radiant City 259.


Figure 11. Plan Directeur. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre complète 1938-1946* 45.


Figure 15. Postcard, *femmes*. AFLC.
Figure 16. Postcard, Alger--Intérieur mauresque. AFLC.

Figure 17. Postcard, Alger--Dans la Casbah. AFLC.
Figure 18. Postcard, Alger--*Une Rue de la ville arabe*. AFLC.

Figure 19. Postcard, Alger--*Galerie de la Grande Poste*. AFLC.
Figure 20. Postcard, *Femme Mauresque*. AFLC.

Figure 21. Postcard, *Scenes et Types--Préparations du coucous*. AFLC.
O inspiring image!
Arabs, are there no peoples but you who dwell in coolness and quiet, in the enchantment of proportions and the savor of a humane architecture?

While the street is a channel of violent movement, your houses know nothing of it: they have closed the walls which face the street. It is within the walls that life blooms.

O inspiring image! Arabs, you are at home within the hospitable and charming house, so clean, so measured, ample and intimate.

Figure 22. Postcards used in architecture and urban theory. Le Corbusier, The Radiant City. 230.
Figure 23. Le Corbusier sketches Rpt. in Von Moos, "Le Corbusier as Painter" 91.
Figure 25. Map of Algiers from Murray's Handbook for Travellers to Algeria and Tunis (London: Edward Stanford, 1895).

Figure 30. The Mediterranean Federation. *Prélude* 7 (Aug./Sep 1933): 1.
Figure 31. Le Corbusier, Nemours, 1934. Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 310.


Figure 37. Maurice Rotival, *Projet d'Aménagement d'Alger, Capitale--Aspect général dela ville dans le projet de M. Maurice Rotival*. December 1930. Rotival, "Veut-on faire d'Alger une capitale?" *Chantiers nord-africains* (Jan. 1931): 27.
Figure 40. Poster for the Cité Moderne Exhibition, Algiers, 1936. *Algeria* (May 1936): cover.
Figure 41. Le Corbusier, Obus "C," 1934. Le Corbusier, The Radiant City. 258.
Figure 43. Transformation par les Services Techniques de la Régie Foncière du Quartier de l'Ancienne Préfecture, including Alignements réservés, Emplacement d'édifices à déterminer. René Lespès and Paul Messerschmitt, "La Ville, le Port, le Tourisme," Chantiers nord-africains (April 1936): 185.

Figure 44. Comparison of la ville européenne and la ville arabe. Le Corbusier, The Radiant City. 230.
Figure 45. Le Corbusier plan types for Algiers redents. Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 247.
Figure 46. a. Traditional housing, Léon Claro, plan of Maison indigène, 1930. "La Maison Indigène du centenaire," Chantiers nord-africains (Jan. 1931): 42.

Figure 47. Le Corbusier, *redent* with Moslem decoration. Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 247.

Figure 48. Le Corbusier, drawings of Fort de l'Empereur. Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City* 243.

Figure 51. Business center skyscraper with mosques indicated in distance. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946* 47.
Figure 52. Le Corbusier zoning for Algiers. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946* 46.
Figure 53. Plan Directeur, spheres of influence. Le Corbusier, Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946 45.
Figure 54. Plan Directeur positioned within fields of cultural influences in Algeria. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946* 44.

Figure 55. Le Corbusier, comparison of European and Arab city planning. Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946* 46.
Figure 56. Cité d’Affaires, Algiers 1938-1942. Le Corbusier, Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946 55.

Figure 57. Le Corbusier, brise-soleil, scientific rationale. Le Corbusier, Oeuvre-complète 1938-1946 56.
Figure 58. Le Corbusier’s analogy between a tree and his skyscraper, producing a système, proportionné à l'échelle humaine. Le Corbusier, Oeuvre complète 1938-1946 62.
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