HÉDI BOURAOUI AND MULTICULTURALISM. A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE MAGHREB

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Abstract

This study is based on two key-concepts in Bouraoui's works: a) the definition of transculture, regarded as the seminal stage in the evolution of multiculturalism[1], and b) the necessity of celebrating the origins of cultural diversity. The first part of this article is dedicated to transculture as a critical perspective of multiculturalism and also an invitation to a better handling of cultural diversity. This approach leads to the deconstruction of a fundamentally Canadian myth that consists in the idea that multiculturalism was born in Canada. In this sense, the purpose is to explore how the societies of the Maghreb managed diversity historically, and how the colonial centralist nation-state model aimed to homogenize in order to better control. Our approach extends beyond the creative corpus (Bouraoui's work) in a broad exploration of socio-historical realities behind cultural diversity in the region.

Keywords: Bouraoui, transculture, multiculturalism, Canada, cultural diversity, history

Hédi Bouraoui and Multicultural Canada

Since the official adoption of multiculturalism, Bouraoui has talked about a transcultural model as a response to the limits of Ottawa's initiative. His critique is not a total rejection of multiculturalism. Transculture is a response to the necessity of fulfilling the ideals of mutlicutluralism. According to the author, his idea of transculture was developed far from Fernando Ortiz's "transcultura". As it is known, the Cuban anthropologist first launched this concept in the 1940s based on his observations of colonial Cuba (Bouraoui 2005, 9). Bouraoui's critique started in the name of the same cultural diversity as a fundamental value in a society built on immigration. It is a call for awareness against the historical determinism that undermines Canada. For this author, there is always a hegemonic desire is behind the discourse on multiculturalism. There is no better expression of this ontological evil than Hugh Lellan's concept of "solitude" according to which Canada is still suffering from problems dating from the times of its birth; each founder (Natives, Anglophone and Francophone) lives in a historical "solitude" that determines the course of Canadian history. It is only since the 1940s that academics from McGill University have discussed the necessity for conviviality between Francophone and Anglophone (Hoerder / Harzig / Shubert).

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According to Bouraoui, far from breaking the ice, celebrating cultural plurality and filling gaps, multiculturalism is still the victim of a lack of mutual understanding. In the context of the seventies, it was aimed at diluting the waves that were shaking Canada's unity; there was no better response to Quebecois separatist movement than a society that celebrated diversity and discarded the idea of a homogeneous Francophone identity.

To Hugh Lellan's three "solitudes", Bouraoui adds a fourth one. It corresponds to those who do not fit in the before mentioned main categories, those called "new-comers", "new-Canadians", "ethnic", etc. These visible minorities find themselves confronted to the same historical antagonisms: "Multiculturalism seemed to be an attempt only to reconcile "the Others" to a Canada dominated by the Francophone and Anglophone presences" (Bouraoui 1989).

As an Ontarian-Francophone author, Bouraoui talks about the difficulties of the fourth category and how it finds itself inheriting these historical antagonisms. Although a Francophone author, Bouraoui's "solitude" is not one that is related to linguistic community as a whole. As he pointed it several times, there are two categories of Francophones: the ones who live in Quebec, and the others (from Ontario, Manitoba, Atlantic Canada, and other provinces). Out of Quebec, Francophone intellectual life, especially literature, suffers from a lack of reception; it is outside of the main circuit of production and diffusion. Such a situation is translated by the expression "No salvation out of Quebec." He points out intellectual segregation even among Francophone minorities outside Quebec where to be part of the circle requires belonging to what he calls the category of the "souchique" (Francophone by birth). If not enforced, diversity becomes synonymous with what in French is called "communitarisme", with a plethora of closed cultural communities, while the ideal is a society that functions as a body in which diversity plays an organic role.

Multiculturalism can also be diverted to serve societal forms of domination. From an economic perspective, it can moralize socio-economic issues; instead of a responsible approach to structural problems, power finds in the cultural expression (especially festivals) a "cheap" way to celebrate episodically pluralism. In the meantime, newcomers are still victims of the same forms of social domination: "Multiculturalism is too often taken to mean a way of keeping the lid on recent immigrants, of binding diverse people under the same political frame" (Bouraoui 1989).

More than emphasizing the weaknesses of Canadian multiculturalism, Bouraoui focuses on how to enforce the Canadian mosaic. From a dialectical perspective, multiculturalism is considered as a stage towards the realization of the ideal mosaic. Bouraoui's approach consists of: "First, we try to establish patterns which recur in different periods. Secondly, we explore the dynamics of culture, the new modalities built on an older base. Third, we focus on the forces that produced the contemporary society being studied. Last, but not least, my emphasis is always on the creative dialectic of man and his culture" (Bouraoui 1989). This "creative dialectic" is what the author cals

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"creaculture". It is our disposition to take an active stance towards culture by reshaping it according to the context.

What is an immigrant? *Vs* Who is an immigrant?

When dealing with the human condition, Bouraoui's work is a permanent tentative to respond to two philosophical questions: *what? vs. who?* In the context of immigration the question *What is an immigrant?* determines the role of any gatekeeper. The response may be found in policies, planning, statistics, application forms, reports and even academic works. From the consular agent to the employee of Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship, this question resumes the most basic concern. The *what?* determines almost all the ideas that we have about new-comers. *In Puglia à bras ouverts*, Nicola Colangelo illustrates this tendency towards the *what?* His discussion with Samy, the storyteller, is structured around a set of questions aimed at categorizing more than understanding.

The response to the *what?* translates in reality "our desire of otherness", it provides the ingredients for an "imagology"[2] of this Other who wants to stay among us, to start a new life, to become a member of the community, and to change our lifestyles. The response to this *what?* stems from utilitarian preoccupations. Utilitarianism means reductionism. In this sense, an immigrant is first a virtual being, a "social ghost", whose status is decided by the social fabric. This being is "impersonal", denied in his "density" and "complexity"; his existence is motivated by a function or a status to find a place in a pre-configured social order; he has to fit in new societal configurations, new networks, learn new behaviors and duties. For the purpose of this new genesis, he has to be simplified, categorized, and classified in order to be better controlled. Even when these objectives are not obvious, the simple fact of defining the immigrant's existence as a project, or once landed as a piece in a new social reality, is in itself an act of "fragmentation" (Fromm). The subject is reduced to what Fromm qualifies as "object". For him the question as to "who is someone"? calls to "exploring the reality of his own being and of the world around him" (Fromm 140), which coincides with Bouraoui's principle of respecting "the Other in his otherness".

Bouraoui's work is a critique to the discourse on immigration considered as undermined by a general tendency towards silencing the origins; an immigrant's life starts at the moment of landing. Celebrating the life of immigrants as a whole often suffers from the extreme priority given to the elaboration of strategies and policies intended to manage the influx of newcomers. Considering immigration as an energizing force, an invitation to change, openness, negotiation of the self suffers often from the desire to submit immigrants to goals aimed at the reproduction, not only of existing values but also of historical antagonism and mechanisms of social domination. By this same logic, the immigrant can illustrate a dream of social vitalization as well as be a figure of a reality

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determined by feeling of frustration, segregation, fear, and, of course, racialization of whole domains of human actions (i.e. work, education, and diverse public spaces).

A better understanding of immigration starts with the question who is an immigrant? The difference between the *what?* and the *who?* is that the second is an invitation to a dynamic definition (as opposed to the static one inspired by the *what?*). When we ask who is who? We expect a response that deals with plurality, antagonisms, heterogeneity, and all qualities related to human nature. The *who?* is about life while the *what?* is about an idea of life. Synthesizing the meaning of human being in Nietzschean philosophy, Deleuze considers that "in our essence, we are driven only by the question :who" (87). For Bouraoui, the *who?* Leads to the plural meaning of existence.

The belief that an individual's life starts with his new status as immigrant puts limits to our understanding of the essence of a society built on immigration. It is in the *who?*, in the vertical dimension of the being that one can find ways to better understand immigrants. Man and culture can't be defined without the "habitus" factor (Bourdieu) as "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions* (Preston 99). A man's behavior cannot be explained without taking into consideration his existence in its continuity. Life is more than stimulus and response; every human act is rooted in the personal history as well as the collective one. From architecture to food to the most elemental routines, we all repeat fundamental acts that are the cement of who we are. Yes, we negotiate our ways of life and we are submitted to the law of the context; yet, this conception of life is also a plastic expression of this same "habitus". What is negotiated in reality is not the habit, but its pragmatic expression, its ways of contextualization. Hoerder talks about the need "to approach issues of difference and migration by reinserting a long-term historic perspective into collective memory. Understanding that migration is not a recent phenomenon helps to decode and restructure collective discourses in present societies. A comprehensive memory of transcultural interactions is needed to be able to shape policies for the future of societies and individuals" (Hoerder/Hébert/Schmitt, 25).

Bouraoui's work is rooted in the need to portray immigrants' life in its synchronic and diachronic dimensions. The sense of belonging corresponds to the necessity to be conscientious of historical continuities mixed with the disposition to change. Hence, many of his characters seem to escape the implacable law of time. In *La Pharaone*, the protagonist is a Maghrebi-Canadian who decides to go to Egypt in an initiatory journey. In this novel, the Nile serves as a medium between man and the wholeness of this one cradle of African civilization. Gods, princesses, scribes, storytellers, all come to the light to tell us how diversity and openness need centuries to reach maturity. In *Retour à Thyna*, space plays the same role as the Nile. Thyna is the town that keeps man in contact with his multiple origins; it is the blank page where Berbers, Romans, Arabs, French, Turcs, and other communities of the Mediterranean, considered as a borderless space, left their impact. His last novel, *Cap Nord* is an attempt to present current issues related to immigration from the viewpoint of the Carthaginian hero Hannibal. The ideal of a borderless Mediterranean, Ceasar's *Mare nostrum*, is now reconsidered from the

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perspective of a Hannibal reincarnated as an unemployed young Maghrebi attracted by the dream of starting a new life in Europe.

From Bouraoui's perspective, the *who?* is in close relationship with other questions: What do we have to take into consideration in a country built on immigration? How do we manage the constant change of our cultural landscape in light of the constant flux of immigrants? How to define the self according to the changing face of this otherness?

The need to study the figure of the emigrant-immigrant corresponds with the imperative of bringing the self-image of the people who we are talking about to light. For this reason, we can't avoid the need of bridging the "before" and the "after" in an effort to explore the personality in its whole dimensions. By doing so, the "social ghost" eclipses in favor of the "real subject". Looking at the cultural connections between immigrants and their countries of origin helps to deal with issues related to inter-cutlural communication, human capital, and also to take a critical look at our multicultural model.

First of all, as stated above, multiculturalism is not an experience related exclusively to the New World for the simple reason that there is no such a thing as "mono-culturalism". Homogeneity does not make sense when talking about cultures, especially in the Mediterranean context, a region with a history of interactions, hybridity, métissage, and identity negotiation. A "pure" culture is a pure ideological construct aimed to serve a certain idea of power.

What follows is an exploration of the historical background of diversity in the Maghreb.

The Maghreb and the Moors

The Mediterranean, more specifically the Maghreb, is Bouraoui's inspiration when it comes to the question of cultural diversity. In comparison with Canada, despite its multitude of nations and cultures, the Mediterranean is still a relatively small area; from west to east the distance is around 4200km while between the Western and Eastern Canadian costs it is more than 5000 km. This midland sea (*Mediterranea* or internal sea, a name given by the Romans around the V century) is mostly considered a mean of communication between shores and islands. The Mediterranean is known for its maritime roads that serve as the main domain of communications between nations as far from another as India and Morocco. Spices, fruits, manufactured goods, and slaves, all transited through this sea. The actual definition of the Mediterranean as opposed to the Atlantic came into being during the times of discoveries (in the XVI century) because of its importance in connecting lands and peoples (Lacoste). This is a sea of encounters and interactions. Its history is about the raise and fall of empires and kingdoms. A quick look at the last 5000 years of history edifies on the succession of poles of influence: Kingdom of Egypt, Hittite Empire, Assyrian Empire, Babylonian Empire, Persian Empire, Macedonian Empire, Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Sassanian Empire, Caliphate, Seljuk Empire, Crusader Kingdoms, Saladin's Empire, Mongol Empire, Ottoman Empire, Hungro-Austrian Empire, to name but those until the birth of post-colonial societies.

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These kingdoms and empires experienced some of the first cross-cultural forms of life. The geopolitical cyclic changes that affected this area were always followed by population movement, ethno-cultural mixes, the birth of new societal forms and practices, new means of production, and new forms of spirituality. The founding of a new centre of power affects the whole human geography at different levels. Consequently, the Mediterranean is a cultural laboratory where it is absurd to talk about "purity" or "homogeneity". The history of the Mediterranean presents a phenomenon of cultural sedimentation. Each empire is born from the ashes of another. The Greeks adopted Egyptian culture; the Romans did the same with the Greeks; the Moors with both; the Ottomans integrated parts of the Hungro-Austrian Empire, Middle East, and Afro-Mediterranean coast[3]. An example of how each occupying nation of the land inherits from his predecessors is the fact that upon arriving from Damascus, Idriss I (788-791), known as the founder of Moroccan monarchy, chose the Roman city of Volibulus as a capital for the Idrissid Kingdom. In this same spirit, Bouraoui identifies the Maghrebi as somebody whose origins are the result of a historical accumulation of encounters. In his journey, history is a joyful accumulation of roots. Samy concludes: "Ma nomadanse transporte avec elle toutes les origines qu'elle a acquise sur son chemin!" (10)

In his essay "Méditerranée: métaphore vive" Bouraoui presents the Mediterranean more as a metaphor than a reality. This metaphor is about travelling, interacting, exchanging, confronting, and evolving (2005). It is a means of freedom from the alienating powers of a reality that imposes borders upon what is in essence borderless. Land is the worse enemy; in *Cap Nord*, Hannibal introduces himself as "insluaire de la tête aux pieds, et fier de l'être. Partout où je vais, la terre s'évanouit devant la mer aux horizons infinis. […]. Dans ma mer mitoyenne, *cycladant* des îles au gré de mes tourments, je me sens protégé comme une lettre dans une enveloppe » (13).

Due to its strategic importance as a bridge between Middle East, Africa and Europe, the Maghreb is a land of many influences. Its first people are the Amazigh, commonly known as Berbers. Throughout history, they were invaded by, among others, Phoenician, Romans, Byzantines, Vandals, Arabs, Ottomans, Greeks, Portuguese, Spanish, Portuguese and French. From these interactions the Moors were born. These people are "métis" (mainly Arab-Amazigh who bear all these influences) whose name illustrates Bouraoui's metaphor, especially if we take in consideration that the etymologic meaning of the term "Moor" (*Mooriskiun* in Arabic) shares the same root with the Arab verb *marra* which means to pass by. Not all the Moors are/were nomadic. In fact, they are the founders of urban centers as important as the cities of Fez, Marrakech, Tlemecen, Granada, and Seville. Also, being in transit is an important part of the Moor's identity. Bouraoui defines this kind of nomadism as a psychological disposition towards movement and openness towards others as well as new experiences. One does not base the definition of himself or the others on what the author calls "infernal binary", a psychological mechanism behind the definition of the self based on the opposition to the other. The "binaries" are these emotional and intellectual attitudes that elaborate images

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of the other like "stranger", "exotic", "inferior", "aggressive", etc. To avoid these polarities, Bouraoui invites the Other to the perfection of the circle which is far from all compulsory opposition. Space is not so much about physical borders and maps as means of control of what is "ours" in opposition to what is "theirs". The nomadic way of life is a spiritual journey with the objective of defining the self according to accumulated experiences. In its metaphorical dimension space is considered as a simple medium in this quest; it is just a pretext for the projection of the need to evolve. El Baz suggests that in its essence, as an effort to translate these same attitudes, Maghrebi literature is an act of staging the "call of the desert". By "desert", he refers to a space without fences, far from the need for classifying, compartmenting, zoning, and controlling. Bouraoui doesn't agree totally with this idea because for him a government or economic and geostrategic interests can control the desert with a network of roads (2005). In reality, the main problem with this conception is that it focuses on space while the important actor is the one who re-creates space according to his need for displacement: the nomadic. The desert as a space of regenerating freedom has a seminal importance in Bouraoui's philosophy. His desert is the one that the Greeks refer to as "kôra", this space beyond "Being, Good, God, Man" (Derrida 35). The desert is inside. It is this immaculate space that regularly invites the subject to rethink these "habitus" that make the self. It is this pause or "interstice" (Bouraoui), this in-between zone that permits a constant reflection on all forms of determinism. It is in this desert where that same monist and static notion of identity advocated largely by modern nation-states vanishes.

From what precedes, one may conclude that what cements cultural diversity is the importance given to people over space; a space with delimitations dictated by the changing face of geopolitical realities. Human kind makes space, not the opposite. Bouraoui's work is a translation of this need:

> Les titres *Nomadaime*, *Éclate-Module*, *Sans Frontières*, *Echosmos*, *Reflet Pluriel*, etc. rendent compte de mon positionnement vital et scripturaire. Ce ne sont pas des néologismes fabriqués en toute hâte, mais plutôt des concepts opératoires présupposant une philosophie existentielle, une vision de la vie, dans la plus grande liberté du passage d'une culture à l'autre, d'une identité à l'autre… Cet élan vital sans frontières s'inscrit dans la logique de compréhension et de tolérance d'autrui, et de la différence. (2005, 5)

Yes, history is also about wars and antagonisms of many kinds; yet Maghrebi as well as Mediterranean spaces are essentially shaped by dynamics proper to the need of facilitating cross-cultural and trans-national experiences.

Atta'ayosh system

The essence of identity can often be found in the way people celebrate their history. There is no doubt that across the Maghreb, the most glorified historical period is when the Iberic Peninsula was under Moorish control. In the year 711, Moorish troops,

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headed by the Amazigh chief Tariq, invaded what is now Spain and Portugal and remained there until the fall of the last city-kingdom of Granada in the year 1492. Added to a population with multiple roots (Jewish, Goth, Visigoth, Iberic, Celtic, Celtiberic, Vandals), the newcomers were from places and cultures as different as the Mediterranean islands, Middle-East, Far Orient, Anatolia, and Sub-Sahara. Since the beginning Arab-Muslim Al-Andalus (from Vandalucia or land of the Vandals) was a land of *mestizaje* ("métissage") and tolerance (Rehramann; Lane-poole)

To give an institutional fundation to diversity as a social fundament, Spain was under the regime of what the Moors refer to as *atta'ayosh* (Arabic term for cohabitation). *Atta'ayosh* – also said *convivencia* in Spanish– refers to a social contract aimed at granting religious tolerance and cultural freedom[4]. The Peninsula became a place of choice for religious, intellectual, and cultural freedom. Some scholars explain this degree of tolerance by the fact that the Arab-Muslim califate (also called Arab-Muslim Empire) was built on the principle of seeking alliances among the natives of conquered lands instead of confrontation, others see in it the application of Islamic principle of respect and protection (called *dimmah*) of *Ahlo al-kitab* or peoples of the Book that are the Jews and Christians, and a third category of scholars relates it to the humanist education of the sovereigns themselves.

Perhaps one of the most original phenomena of this period is the so-called *literatura de la Frontera*. Resistance against the Moors started in 722 with the Covadonga battle and continued until their defeat in 1492. As a result of this belligerent situation, the birth of a floating border between, on one hand, Christians, and, on the other, Muslims and Jews. Although religious fervor accompanied the fight against the Moors, what we witness is more a dynamic sense of belonging than a fixed identity. This *modus vivendi* is one of the major narratives of this period, the highly popular story of « Ibn Siraj y la hermosa Jarifa ». Ibn Siraj is the prince who, indifferent towards the danger beyond the walls, left his city to meet with his lover Jarifa (Sharifa in Arabic), when he had been arrested by Christian soldiers. Once in presence of their commander, he told the latter the story behind his adventure, and asked to be allowed to see his lover for the last time. In exchange, he gave him his word to come back to face his fate. The commander's compassion, mixed with the idea of testing the sense of honor among his enemies, explains the generous gesture. The story ends with Ibn Siraj coming back and the commander granting him grace.

There are many versions of the same story, generally in the form of poems called *romanceros*. These versions are Christian, Muslim, and Jewish. Each community being eager to relate itself to the hero, we witness an appropriation of his qualities, even as an enemy (Carrasco Urgoiti; Mancing). This identification shows the dialogical nature of the border, not only in its physical dimension but also from a cultural perspective.

Except for the actual country Morocco, the rest of the Maghreb was part of the Ottoman Empire until the French occupied these lands in the XIX century (Algeria in 1830 and Tunisia in 1881). To safeguard the interethnic and multi-confessional nature of

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their empire, the Ottomans elaborated a system similar to the *atta'ayosh* called *millet*. Besides Christians and Jews, the objective was the protection of shamanistic and Buddist groups. Far from building their power on cultural or religious homogeneity, the Ottomans, decided in 1453, under the Sultan Orhan, to "institutionalize difference" (Gagnon). According to Ronen: "Members of the millet had the right to use their own language, to have their own religious, cultural and educational institutions (21). The merit of such a system consisted in a) protecting diversity from state interference (Dumper 35), b) giving an official character to ecumenism and multiculturalism (Al-Azmeh and Fokas), and c) enforcing a sense of belonging that transcends ethno-religious references (Duijzings 28).

For the critics of the *millet*, it did create micro theocratic societies by giving large powers to religious leaders (Yale) and not being able to create a fully equalitarian society, especially when it comes to some minorities like the Albanians.

The practice of cultural and religious diversity in Arab-Muslim Iberic peninsula as well as in the Ottoman Empire was possible thanks to a strong institutional frame.

The Maghreb and the New World

One of the less-explored aspects of the history of the New World is the Maghrebi influence in North America. For Curtis the first Afro-American is a Moroccan captive by the name Estevan de Dorantes. He was brought to the New World by the Spanish conquistador Andrés Dorantes de Carranca in 1527 (Brooks; Barr; Cream; Haley; Ilahiane; Schenider). The presence of this Moor in such early stages of the history of the Americas can be related to the fact that the discovery of America in1492 coincided with the fall of Grenada, the last Moorish city-kingdom in Spain. Some of the defeated converted to Catholicism, others fled, while others stayed in exchange for paying a tax until when king Phillip II decided to expel them at the beginning of the XVII century, even those who had converted to Christianity. A considerable part of the escapees chose to stay in the Maghrebi Mediterranean coast where they practiced piracy. This gave a reason for Spain, Portugal, and other European maritime powers to justify military actions. Parts of the imprisoned Moors were shipped to the Americas. Mendez Paredes's work on the archives of the port of La Havana on the subject is noteworthy.

The Moorish who chose to stay in the Iberic Peninsula were called *Modejar*, which comes from the Arabic *modajjane* meaning to be domesticated. The *Modejar*'s impact on the New World can be seen especially in the domain of colonial architecture, from Peru to New Mexico[5].

To talk about this first presence of Maghrebi offers an example as to how the *atta'ayosh* model is one of the ancestors of multiculturalism as it is now known. One of the first experiences of creolization is between the Moors and the Native, especially the Pueblo. Although research is still scarce, it is interesting to see academic, especially in United States, interested in Moorish influence among natives in a range of areas from jewelry (Dear) to textile (Pierce and Wiegle), rituals, and architecture. For Sylvia

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Rodríguez the ritual dance *matachine* among the Tao Pueblo is a reminiscence of this period. According to the anthropologist, it is a version of the *Mutahuajjihine* (masked in Arabic) dance. The dancers are organized in two masked teams, one representing the Christians and the other the Moors.

Like the *Modejar*, the *Gnawa* culture is one of the main points of interest. The Moor had slaves from sub-Saharan countries, especially from the kingdom of Dahome (parts of the actual Senegal, Mali, Nigeria and Chad). These people were called the *Ganawa* or people of Guinea. At the same time, the West-African coast was the main slavery reservoir for the Europeans. The descendants of these slaves perpetuate aspects of a culture that is very similar to the one in southern Morocco and Algeria. The survival of this culture in the New World can be seen for example in Brazil, especially in liturgical practice of the Candomble, an Afro-American religion with origins from West Africa (Beggar 2007a). Bouraoui's *Haituvois* is a celebration of this common heritage. As in the Candomble, the magico-religious practices proper to Haiti are seen in what they have in common with Maghrebi trance.

Managing cultural diversity in the Maghreb

A look at the history of the Kingdom of Morocco shows that the nature of power relations between Arabs and Natives (Amazigh) is one of the most original. In fact, of the dynasties that governed this country, three consider themselves as Arab (Idrissid, Abbaside and Alaouite), and three as Amazigh (Almoravides, Almohades, Al Merinides). Even, when a house is considered Arab, the reality is other. Upon his arrival to Morocco, the first Arab king, Idriss I (considered as the founder of the Kingdom of Morocco), married Kenza, daughter of a noble Berber from the Auraba tribe. Their son, Idriss II inherited the throne. Since the XVIII century, the Allaouit, considered a dynasty of Arabs, has ruled Morocco. However, almost all of the kings were of mixed race, i.e., the mother being Amazigh or Sub-Saharan. King Mohammed VI, the actual Moroccan sovereign, is a Mahezouni (from the Zayani tribes in the Middle-Atlas) from the maternal side. Throughout history, Moroccan Kings have understood the importance of blood ties, and how marriage is the most efficient way to create alliances and build legitimacy. Power is more about inclusion than exclusion. It is in the king's interest to have a maximum of allies; marriage is a guaranty of the reproduction of power; it converts the actual enemies into relatives of the next sovereign, and, therefore, reduces the camp of opponents. Of course, this is not an idealistically equalitarian society. The other side of the coin is the phenomenon called "the cousins system"; members of the same large family or clan or tribe can create networks of control on sectors of power to the point that sometimes almost all public servants in an administration have a common ancestor. In the context of this research, what interests us the most is the principle of the negotiation of power taking in consideration the ethno-cultural realities instead of imposing homogeneous identities. This has a positive impact even for the weakest. Such a situation can be seen from the criteria of social identification. This is the case of the Gnawa who "perceive

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themselves first and foremost to be Muslim Moroccans and only perceive themselves secondarily as participants in a different tradition" (El Hamel).

Colonial assimilation. The case of Algeria

The history of the region, especially the trauma of colonialism, shows the dangers of assimilation. The practice of diversity changed with the fall of the Maghreb under French rule. The colonial experience is a highly inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment. The universal values championed by the Enlightenment are the motivating principle for a hegemonic and centralist project. France suffers from what Bouraoui considers as an extreme "Franco-centrism". This centrism refers firstly to Paris and its elite. For the critics of this attitude, French (mainly Parisian) values are imposed upon others with the objective of assimilating them. As Simon-Barouh underlines it:

> It must be recalled that until 1940 France was the "Great Nation", and the French language and culture enjoyed considerable prestige all over the world. Foreigners – and "domestic minorities", as Bretons, Basques, Corsicans, Occitans, et., were subsequently called – had no good reasons for not wanting to be incorporated, even though this usually did not occur without pain or without bitter questioning on the part of some unconditional regionalists or nationalists (Simon-Barouh 17).

The case of Algeria illustrates the dangers of such an ideology. The conquest and "pacification" of Algeria have been marked by an extreme violence that historian Benjamin Stora classifies as genocidal (Nicolaïdis 232). The French presence in this North-African country (1830-1962) is characterized by its paradoxes. One outstanding paradox concerns the relationship between Algeria and France. Officially, "Algeria is France", i.e. a French *département* with the same legal status as any other region. However, in practice, it is subjected to the so-called Indigenous Act, a legislation that relegates indigenous people to the status of subjects, in contrast with the status of citizenship the French enjoy (Montagnon 76). Even though this double standard was abolished in all French colonies in 1946, this discriminatory law remained in effect in Algeria until 1962. The Indigeneous Act not only affected Algerians inside their home country, but also as immigrants in France (Kurtovitch). French Algeria is a society built on "racial superiority" (Harbi 2004, 36). On one hand there exists a white minority composed of French citizens and European immigrants, estimated at one million people. This group controls the economy, and enjoys high standards of living. On the other hand the mostly indiginous Algerian population —eight times the size of the French and European minority— whose marginalization and misery is well known[6]. In French Algeria political rights were based on ethnic criteria. In the 1950s two separate and distinct electoral boards existed: one for Europeans, and the other for natives. In terms of real representation, a single vote from

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the former board was equivalent to ten from the latter (Tassadit 3). Algerian society under French rule was segmented according to the following ethnic-religious categories: a) French born, b) French naturalized, c) European settlers, d) Israelite communities (the Jews of Algeria have enjoyed access to French citizenship since 1870), and e) The indigenous who, in turn, were organized in two sub-categories: Arabs and Berbers (Bencheneb 417).

During the War of Algeria, the French military interned large segments of the population in what is called *camps de regroupement* in an attempt to restructure the entire society (Beggar 2007b). According to Bourdieu and Sayed, the encamped represented 25% of the population. About these camps, Cornaton stated: "One must have the courage to admit that sometimes the difference between Nazi camps and some of the provisory centers is insignificant" (Cornaton 81).

At the beginning, the purpose of the camp was to reduce the margin of defection that used to escape military control. Policing consisted in listing, indexing, and interrogating people. The camp was the power that generated knowledge, a knowledge necessary to preserve the *status quo*. Its role was to protect the "civilized" inside from the "barbarian" outside, to increase safety by exploring and correcting the others, and to reduce them to sameness. Assimilation was the cornerstone of this colonial project. For this purpose, the destruction of the tribal structure was a main objective of the French colonial regime. The ideal was "to create favourable conditions for the development of a modern economy, based on private enterprise, individual property, and legal integration" (Bourdieu and Sayed 16). The French authorities believed that governing was impossible without a complete transformation of all socio-cultural and political ground. The camp prepared the indigenous peoples to enter the French colonial project. The role of the camps was to homogenize the entire society and integrate it into the new law of the market.

When General De Gaulle came to power and General Parlange appointed General Inspector of the camps marks the history of the Algerian camps (1959-1961) entered a second phase[7]: Authorities began to use the term "village" instead of *camp de regroupement* to refer to these camps not as a temporary solution, but as a step towards the creation of "viable" "social units and as symbols of progress to be included in the local economy" (Cornaton 68). Previously, camps had been a place to inculcate values and behaviours in order to create loyal subjects that could be inserted into the French capitalist colonial project. Using various forms of coercion the French authorities forced Algerians to abandon their natural environment, their socio-cultural "habitus", and their political structures. Nevertheless, when the camps were renamed "villages" they became a social integrating force, a symbol of victory against ancestral modes of social organization such as pastoralism, nomadic or semi-nomadic life. This is a dream as old as colonization[8].

The village was associated with the prototype of the "good indigenous: whatever is the color of his skin, beyond all racial or ethnic classifications, he is the Empire's indigenous" (Blanchard and Bancel 33). To become the "empires indigenous", the villager

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was a politically, economically and morally reshaped being. Discipline was no more about punishing, isolating, relocating, remodelling, or re-educating. The villages were at the heart of the governmental propaganda campaign called "One thousand villages". Therefore authorities no longer used terms like "pacification" or "control", but "progress", "development".

Conclusion

In conclusion, as it is practiced in Canada and the Maghreb, cultural diversity must be free from all essentialist tendencies. For Bouraoui, more than identity, it is the sense of belonging that prevails. In terms of human capital, by enforcing the sense of belonging, immigrants enter into inter-cultural dynamics, negotiate their beliefs and practices, and feel that they are part of a social project that takes into consideration their idiosyncrasies while fostering their capacity to assume diversity. This can be translated in domains as vital as education, work, and political participation. The "acceptance of the other in his otherness" and the wiliness to question the self is behind a dynamic definition of the origins; instead of a static nature, those are the result of creative interactions (Bouraoui prefers the term "racineries").

Canadian multiculturalism has to be studied from a powers relation perspective. In Canada, instead of an institutional frame to manage diversity according to a changing conjuncture, multiculturalism is an *a priori*, a determining factor that resists history. The Maghrebi and Mediterranean experiences show how multiculturalism evolves according to ethno-cultural, religious, economic and political realities. Negotiating cultural belonging is a necessity that determines the destiny of Maghrebi societies.

Bouraoui emphasizes the need for Canadian multiculturalism to experience a real revolution to free itself from structural forms of social domination and ethnic tensions. If not controlled, the essentialization of "solitudes" can accentuate the desire for domination. This same desire drove the French Republic towards a disastrous adventure in Algeria. The experience of camps and "villages" in Algeria illustrates the failure of policies that do not take into consideration the constant need of recognizing diversity.

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Notes:

[1] Hédi Bouraoui (1932-) is a Canadian Tunisian-born author. He is an emeritus professor and writer in residence at York University . He wrote more than forty books (poetry, novels and essays).

[2] We consider imagology as a discipline that: "studies the origin and function of characteristics of other countries and people" (Beller and Leerssen 8).

[3] A good case to illustrate this segmentation is the system that granted the multiethnic and multi-confessional character of the Ottoman Empire. It is considered as the result of a long tradition in the Mediterranean and the Middle-East, "practiced in the ancient empires of the Romans, the Sassanians of Persia, and the Caliphs of Bagdad" (Sedlar 193).

[4] Bouraoui talks about the practice of *atta'ayosh* in his birth country, Tunisia (Ayoun) and also in all the Mediterranean. Samy (*Puglia à bras ouverts*) talks about " l'héritage en fleurs chamarrées de notre mer intérieure. Tournesols ensoleillant les esprits afin d'unir les différentes races, religions, cultures… »(5).

[5] The Christian equivalent of the *Modejar* are the *Mozarabes* or Arabized. These were Christians who converted to Islam without giving up their identity.

[6] For more details about the nature of the relations between Europeans and Algerians, see Harbi (1984, 93-97).

[7] The year before, 1958, is the year of highest rate of internments with the 2/3 of the global number (Rocard 113).

[8] In 1845, Captain Richard said: "The important thing is, in fact, to regroup these people who are everywhere and nowhere, to make them accessible to us. Once under our control, we can do all what is impossible for us now. Perhaps this will allow us someday to take control of their bodies and minds." (Bourdieu and Sayed 26).

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