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Sylvie Durmelat and Vinay Swamy, eds. *Screening Integration: Recasting Maghrebi Immigration in Contemporary France*. Lincoln & London: Nebraska University Press, 2011. 282 pp. \$35.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN-10: 0803228252.

Review by Florence Martin, Goucher College.

This collection of essays tackles a set of thorny critical issues: films made by and/or about third-generation French citizens of Maghrebi origin (and how to make this category a little less wordy!); how they depict and react to integration and the republican ideology of assimilation; how integration as a screening process includes some and excludes others in the French Republic. The book offers, after Durmelat and Swamy's clear socio-historical contextualization of this filmic production, twelve essays offering differing perspectives (from a variety of theoretical backgrounds: e.g., social sciences, literary studies, film studies), and a very useful and comprehensive filmography chart (1970-2008) that indicates its reception and how this corpus fits in the larger French cinema corpus of the time. It is also a welcome study of a recent body of Maghrebi-French films that both lies in the wake of and complements Carrie Tarr's now canonical work on the topic, picking up where Tarr left off. [1] This said, this collection has the weaknesses of its strengths: because it invites a multiplicity of standpoints, the object of study--film--becomes at times diluted, and envisaged as cultural text only and not film.

With this caveat, the book is a solid, timely read that provides, among other things, a serious contextualization for the success of *Hors-la-loi* (Bouchareb, 2010), and the various celebrations of independent Algeria's fiftieth anniversary in France and in Algeria. There are, of course, several ways to read this book, and I am choosing one question among several other available guides: how is this cinema a Maghrebi-French cinema? Or how are its subjects and/or objects of the cinematic gaze Maghrebi-French subjects? If, as Durmelat and Swamy rightly point out, the term "Maghrebi-French" results from a specifically Anglophone naming strategy--definitely not a French one (see pp. 12-14), it strikes this reader as the least messy and the simplest one available so far. Far from looking at it along restrictive terms such as what duality does this hyphenated term highlight and what paradoxes does it expose, I prefer to ask what is *in* a hyphen? What does this third term qualify over the apparent traces of the initial duality that it simultaneously reveals and transcends? When read with this question in mind, most but not all essays bring fascinating, distinct answers (even if some authors resist the use of the hyphenated descriptor). Each of them points out shifting identities in becoming, and/or illuminates the distance, tensions, and stages of becoming inherent to a hyphenated identity projected on screen.

Alec Hargreaves' luminous essay unravels the difficulties in categorizing or naming the cinema studied in this collection. He first reviews the history of the various labels (*beur*, *banlieue*, *black-blanc-beur* in France, and "diasporic," "accented," "postcolonial," and "transnational" in Anglophone countries) heretofore applied to the cinema made by both first-generation immigrants and the sons of immigrants, and offers a candid exposé of their respective shortcomings. Then, he opts for a more precise descriptor: "Maghrebi-French filmmakers." He also successfully locates their filmmaking outside and beyond a bi-national tension (French and/or Algerian/Moroccan/Tunisian), in a dialogic "glocal" locus (a local rootedness in the *banlieue*, for instance, for a globally relevant topic or narrative). His persuasive argument, in the wake of the theory of transvergent cinema thus invites a fecund reading of this film

production that steers away from its former problematic, restrictive *beur* dimension to fully espouse its global one.<sup>[2]</sup> This welcome opening up of cinematic frames on a transnational level further locates the filmmakers' oeuvre in world cinema as opposed to maintaining it within ill-fitting critical, postcolonial Franco-Maghrebi shackles. Here, then, the "glocal" lies at the center of the hyphen, and opens up into the global.

Similarly, the road movies analyzed by Higbee and Abderrezak seem to provide a transvergent answer that deterritorializes identity. Taking three films as exemplars—Legzouli's *Ten'ja* (2004); Ameur-Zamèche's *Bled Number One* (2006); Gatlif's *Exils* (2004)—Higbee analyzes the directors' new twists on the "myth of return" (pp. 64–68). Here, Maghrebi-French characters (in one case a *piéd-noir*) are seen crossing the Mediterranean Southward to (re)connect to the country of their parents. In each case, however, the voyage leads to an exilic, nomadic relationship to the father's locus and culture. Hence the films point to a more anchored French identity, even if it is located at the dynamic threshold of complex Maghrebi-French and Franco-Maghrebi cultural exchanges. That same myth of return is picked up ironically in the next chapter. Hakim Abderrezak's examines Djamel Bensalah's *Il était une fois dans l'oued* (2005), a comic reversal on return films which ends up leading to a (re)questioning of misnomers such as *beur* people and, eventually cinema. The voyage between France and the Maghreb thus ends up becoming either a set of shifting connections or a farce. In the Maghrebi-French road movies above, the hyphen becomes a spatial question mark, while the travelers are negotiating and questioning the various strands of their identities.

Sylvie Durmelat's approach is historical. Starting from the premise that the intractable, official difference between French and Algerian accounts of the war (on film, among other media) was "hastily constructed" (p. 96), Durmelat demonstrates that the cinematic accounts of the French descendants of Algerian immigrants focus on the private memories, on family episodes, rather than History, and thus create other communities of memory. In that, the narratives waver between two modes of belonging, between here (France) and there (Algeria), now (of immigration) and then (of the war fought by their parents). The hyphen is not a gap here, but its opposite: full of images. It is not a distance, but a memory link.

Rosello bridges history and politics in her challenge of previous views held on Bouchareb's *Indigènes* (2006), while offering an exploration of the ethics of history in this film (and screening thereof). Her analysis first locates the film in history (both as a memorial narrative on the role of Maghrebi soldiers in WWII and as a historical event) before it takes an innovative tangent outside the strictures of history to describe the film as not "about memory," but as "an event of memory." If, beyond the moment of revelation, beyond the moment of its immediate political consequence, we read this film as asking larger ethical questions of the history of colonialism (e.g., what are the appropriate ways of remembering such a traumatic event in the public space? How do we—or can we—dislodge the politics and ethics of the collective from the individual memories and memorialization?), then the film constitutes an "event of memory." It becomes a film that shakes the very foundations of ethical and political memorialization and consciousness-raising beyond hegemonic patterns and discourses of history. Here, then, in a beautiful paradoxical arc, the hyphen becomes the site of resistance to the French hegemonic discourse on memorialization (which, in many ways, underlies the hegemonic understanding of the very term Maghrebi-French, or French citizens of Maghrebi descent).

In the next two chapters, Tarr and Sellier look at Maghrebi-French integration in films about education, and confront the republican view of education and its failings as depicted in recent films on education, outing as it were, the paradoxes of French education and their cinematic representation. Tarr contextualizes the recent crop of education blockbusters—Abdellatif Kechiche's *L'Esquive* (2004), Eric Rochant's *L'École pour tous* (2006), and Laurent Cantet's *Entre les murs* (2008)—in a larger history of rather Eurocentric films on the topic, such as Mehdi Charef's *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède* (1985), Jean-François Richet's *Ma 6-T va crack-er* (1997), Gérard Lauzier's *Le plus beau métier du monde* (1996) and

Coline Serreau's *Chaos* (2001). Here clearly, the hyphen comprises the efforts and desires to integrate via education that fly in the face of the French education system. Geneviève Sellier's cogent feminist analysis of Jean-Paul Lilienfeld's *La journée de la jupe* (2009) argues that by highlighting the questions of cultural differences, the film stigmatizes Muslim communities and conveniently erases issues of gender equity in France. It caters to the ideologies of the left and the right, eager to support French secularism, without questioning the educational system and without questioning the macho ideology that has sustained the protagonist's model of integration. Here I see the hyphen as a mask.

The following two chapters deflate the stereotyped and by now yellowing black-and-white caricature of the *Beur* male from the banlieue. Instead of further marginalizing an already marginal figure as Liria Bégéja's film, *Change-moi ma vie* (2001), does, Waldron argues that Bedjaoui's camera puts him front and center in her film *Un Fils* (2003) and thus reorients the audience gaze by her close-ups on Selim's moments of shifting gender identity performance. Yet in both movies, Waldron laments, as well as in Allouache's *Chouchou* (2003), the only alternative for the cross-dressing Maghrebi protagonist seems to be either to assimilate or to die. This erasure in the making of a Maghrebi-French male is not at all what Provencher and Pratt see in their analysis of Maghrebi-French star Sami Bouajila. They show that the latter offers various shades of a fluid masculinity from film to film, which is increasingly distant from the stereotyped image of the macho *garçon arabe* in his *banlieue*. Through four films—Dridi's *Bye-Bye* (1995), Sinapi's *Vivre me tue* (2002), Ducastel and Martineay's *Drôle de Félix* (2000), and Téchiné's *Les Témoins*, (2007)—Bouajila offers the star image of the good brother to his little brothers and integrates his Maghrebi-French self into the French family (taken as family, clan, or nation). The hyphen here underlines possibilities of integration.

Finally, Vinay Swamy's essay examines how Chibane's trilogy (*Hexagone* [1994]; *Douce France* [1995]; *Voisins, voisines* [2005]) represents an evolving *banlieue* with a unique changing perspective on ethnic, class and cultural differences. Malik Chibane, a social commentator, is a committed, ardent proponent of making social cinema show the *banlieue* in its complexity and not reproduce the various stereotypes previously affixed onto it. Hence, to dispel visions of a population mainly composed of idle, drug-dealing, delinquent, violent youth, Chibane gives voice to characters of both genders at various stages in their lives. Through his analysis, Swamy shows that the Maghrebi-French films (especially *Voisins, voisines*) can open up to other subjects displaced by our current wave of globalization. A socially and politically aware Maghrebi-French director can then offer his privileged perspective on other hyphenated identities in the making (e.g., Pakistani-French) and step away from a clannish set of ethics and politics.

By the end of the book, readers are equipped with the necessary tools to understand the diversity and political weight of the preoccupations of Maghrebi-French subjects and Maghrebi-French directors. Far from an exclusionary clause, the hyphenated qualifier throws light on an open field of possibilities, of ways of being and ways of filming that are rooted in a set of family practices and memories and open to not simply contemporary France, but the global sphere. Far from describing an ill-fitting, conflict-ridden dual origin, Maghrebi-French cinema, as seen in these pages, imagines representations of complex, fluid identities.

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## NOTES

[1] Carrie Tarr, *Reframing Difference: Beur and Banlieue Filmmaking in France* (Manchester University Press, 2005).

[2] Will Higbee, “Beyond the (Trans)national: Towards a Cinema of Transvergence in Postcolonial and Diasporic Francophone Cinema(s),” *Studies in French Cinema* 7/2(May 2007): 79-91, and Pietari Kääpa, *The Cinema of Mika Kaurismäki: Transvergent Cinescapes, Emergent Identities* (Bristol, Wilmington, Toronto: Intellect, 2011).

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