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Véronique Machelidon and Patrick Saveau, eds. *Reimagining North African Immigration: Identities in Flux in French Literature, Television, and Film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018. 272 pp. Notes, references, and index. £80.00 U.K. (hb). ISBN 9780719099489.

Review by Mohammed Hirchi, Colorado State University.

This edited volume contains contributions from major francophone scholars who have done substantial work devoted to the study of North African literature, culture and cinema. To set the tone for the volume, the editors reference the speech of Justice Minister Christiane Taubira to the French National Assembly in 2013: “Taubira was enlisting the power of literature to redress present and past injustices, refresh repressed memories, denounce the hierarchy between the postcolonial margin and the hegemonic metropolis, and undermine the hegemonic narrative of French politics and history” (p. 1).

According to editors Machelidon and Saveau, the thirteen “contributors to this volume discuss similar issues related to the mimetic and transformative powers of literature and film. They examine literary works and films that help deflate stereotypes regarding France’s post-immigration population, promote a new respect for cultural and ethnic minorities, and give a new dignity to the subjects supposedly located on the margin of the Republic” (pp. 1-2). Born and raised in France, the authors studied define their creative practices beyond traditional labeling of francophone writings as “French” or “Beur,” “Maghrebi/French,” etc.: “They stage identities in flux, undermining the ideological division of (cultural) space and society along binary lines (dominant/dominated; French literature/ beur literature; center/periphery; French/Maghrebi; mainstream/minority), crisscross national and trans-Mediterranean spaces, engage in postmemorial work, and collapse clichés and stereotypes” (p. 2).

This volume takes the position that the term *beur* is a restraining designation that has limited the scope of literary and cinematic works. This geographic, ideological and cultural confinement has generated tremendous debates among critics and reactions from francophone authors. Tassadit Imache, for example, has stated that “it was quickly pronounced that we would not know how to create, go beyond our own story, as if we had been put under house arrest, forbidden to write fiction, incapable of creativity.”[1] This statement illustrates the resistance from authors and filmmakers to this form of cultural categorization and to the marginalization from national cultural heritage that it engenders. The authors in this volume claim their belonging to a literature and a cinema that is an active part of the national legacy. They are neither *beur*, post-*beur* nor minority creators, but rather multicultural French artists who contribute to the richness and diversity of the cultural landscape of contemporary France.

The contributors argue that literature and films after 2000 have been articulated beyond the binaries associated with minority works in the 1980s and 1990s. They are rather the product of a hybrid sociological framework that has imbued these works with transnational characteristics. Films by directors of Maghrebi descent undermine the foundations of the hegemonic nation-state's discourse that operate according to the republican model of integration. Instead, they rather celebrate multiculturalism, diversity and global citizenship. The authors' rejection of fixed identities opens space for the exploration of the complexities of cultural representations, sociological intricacies and ideological paradigms that tend to limit the scope of creativity when identities are assigned. However, the authors articulate their multinational belongings within a dynamic creative context that generates new strategies to embrace a richer, more global cultural horizon.

The articles in this volume contribute to the debate that has been taking place among scholars during the last few decades to delineate the nature of francophone literature and films in a global cultural market. The post-*beur* estheticism emerged as a strategic step to outline the fact that creative work should not be classified according to national paradigms that celebrate the culture of the status quo, but rather signified within a global dynamism that characterizes the twenty-first century.

This book is a must-read for scholars and graduate students who are interested in broadening their scope when dealing with works of French authors and filmmakers of North African descent.

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NOTES

[1] F. Chevillot, “Beurette suis et beurette ne veux pas toujours être: Entretien d'été avec Tassadit Imache.” *French Review* 71, 4(1998), 632-644 (p. 639).

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