

World and embrace the timeless truths of the Old. It is no accident that Vamp's name evokes "vampire," an image that was sometimes used to refer to the absorption or cannibalization of another culture, such as in Robert Aron and Arnaud Dandieu's 1931 tract *Le Cancer américain*, which termed "vampirisme" America's influence on Europe. In "Charleston," another story in the *Magie noire* collection, a white character speaks of Africans' "love of real blood" (Morand 1992, 96). Morand's vampire imagery also recalls the biochemical index of blood types that, as we have seen, was invoked in the interwar years by proponents of cultural separatism.

Implicit in this affirmation of the glories of Africa is the suggestion, echoed in "Adieu New York," that people of African descent belong in Africa (or at the very least, sequestered in communities with others like them, as in "Excelsior"). This suggestion carries with it very practical and very grave implications concerning immigration. From the ostensibly innocuous thesis that modern life corrupts to the assertion that immigration should be restricted, the distance is not very great: in *Hiver caraïbe*, Morand concludes that "a border should be able to open and close like a drain" (249). These words were written in 1929, just two years before the French government reversed its comparatively liberal policy of the preceding decades, drastically curtailing immigration and expatriating many of the immigrants already in France. (From 1921 to 1931, the immigrant population rose from 1.5 million to roughly 2.9 million, whereas between 1931 and 1936, it decreased to 2.4 million.)

It is in this context that we must hear the voices urging Lincoln Vamp to "leave the land that he inhabits." But we must be attuned as well to the language of Morand's story, in which the word used for land, "terre," also means earth; in the context of the burial artifacts that provoke the hallucination, the passage might be understood to suggest that Vamp would be better off leaving this earth altogether. The two readings of this passage (implications about immigration on the one hand and about death on the other) are not contradictory but in fact reinforce one another. In the modern era, displacement and death have often gone together, from colonial "pacification" campaigns to the Vichy government's active involvement in the deportation of French Jews and non-Jewish foreign nationals during World War II. Ultimately, the key to the work of Paul Morand can be found in the primal scene he so carefully lays out for us in the preface to *Magie noire*, in the image of the slaughtered Malagasy soldiers, which shows that the fetishization of alterity ultimately serves to eliminate it.

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The Colonial Unconscious
 Ithaca Cornell U.P. 2000

Epilogue

Black-Blanc-Beur

Late in the evening of July 12, 1998, 1.5 million people crowded onto the Champs-Élysées as the enormous neon face of Zinedine Zidane beamed down from above, projected against the Arc de Triomphe; from all corners of the capital, car horns could be heard honking into the early hours. France had just won the World Cup, against all odds and all expectation, and suddenly the nation, which until very recently had been largely indifferent to the sport, was transformed into a giant soccer stadium.

In the media, the victory, which boosted Jacques Chirac's standing in the opinion polls (*Le Monde*, July 28, 1998, 5), was widely interpreted as a triumph of "l'intégration." The historian Georges Vigarello's remarks in a special postgame issue (no. 1758, July 18) of *Le Nouvel observateur* (henceforth N.O.) were typical of the rhetoric used in the heady days and weeks following the final match: "The players, flag-bearers of a multicultural France, have done more for integration than ten or fifteen years of voluntarism" (37). Yet only four weeks earlier the French team had been dismissed on the basis of its ethnic makeup. As Gérard Ejnès, writing in *L'Équipe*, the sports paper, complained, "This isn't a football team; it's a corner grocery" (35). Ejnès was alluding to the number of corner grocery shops in urban centers owned by North Africans. With France's

unanticipated sporting victory, however, the diversity that had previously been seen as a liability suddenly became a great asset: "Tonight, the three colors of France are black, white, and brown" ["black, blanc, beur"—the third term being a slang word for North African] (22). The team's success was immediately transfigured into a metaphor for national unity, with implications that extended far beyond the soccer field.

In many ways, the rhetoric used to celebrate the victory recalled that used in constructing the notion of la plus grande France: "To these four World Cups, France was able to oppose its five continents" (Martin-Casteneau, *Libération*, July 18–19, 1998). The suggestion of possession apparent in the use of the possessive adjective "ses" (its) evokes an unreconstructed sense of colonial propriety, as if decolonization had been nothing but a bad dream. The evocation of France's colonial past exemplifies one of what Kristin Ross has called "the various ways in which the practice of colonialism outlived its history" (Ross 1996, 7). Ross is referring to the period immediately following decolonization, but the parapraxes of the colonial unconscious are still in evidence at the end of the twentieth century. The expression "black-blanc-beur," echoing the colors of the French flag (*bleu-blanc-rouge*), was invoked constantly, in virtually every publication that carried news of the victory, and often as a caption beneath photos of a white player flanked by a black player and a North African player. Both the image and the accompanying rhetoric bear a remarkable resemblance to a well-known 1941 poster by Eric Castel whose caption reads: "Trois couleurs, un drapeau, un empire" (Three colors, one flag, one empire).

But the colonial empire was more than an iconographic presence in the weeks following the World Cup; it was often invoked explicitly, as in this piece of human-interest reportage: "9:00 P.M. local time in Petit Canal: The Indian community celebrates the French victory. The children have the tricolore painted on their faces. 'Like all minorities from the former French empire, we side with the *métropole*,' says a doctor whose family is originally from Mahé" (Olivier Péretié et al., *N.O.* 1758, 27). The travelogue style of this piece recalls Paul Morand's whirlwind tour of the colonies in his preface to *Magie noire*; here tattoos and warpaint have been replaced by the tricolore. With the desire to preserve la plus grande France conveniently articulated by a "minority," metropolitan French readers may be reassured of the undying loyalty of France's (post)colonial subjects. The borders of the *hexagone* have been redrawn, however. The coordinates of imperial geography designate Marseille a colonial outpost whose inhabitants are permitted a brief and charmingly carniva-



Figure 15. Poster by Eric Castel: "Three colors, one flag, one empire." Courtesy Musée d'histoire contemporaine, Paris.

lesque reversal of center and periphery: "The residents of Marseille transform Canebière and Vieux-Port into the center of the universe for a night, as in the colonial period. . . . African matrons [des *mamans africaines*] beat the tom-tom. As for the rest, it is difficult to determine the color of people's skin beneath the red, white, and blue face paint" (N.O. 1758, 30). Marseille can become the center of the universe only by means of an inversion that first entails being pushed outside the boundaries of what Herman Lebovics calls "True France," before being brought back as a resident alien, a stranger within. All eyes are on Marseille, as all gazes were fixed on the cités *indigènes* at the colonial exhibitions. The city becomes a living museum, a permanent exhibit, as its soccer fans are transformed into tribal objects of anthropological study by sociologist Jean Viard: "In this city, soccer has always served as a totem uniting an entire people" (31).

But why, after all, go to Marseille, let alone Guadeloupe, when the delights of the empire can be sampled simply by taking a stroll around the Stade de France, newly accessible by métro (as was the Bois de Vincennes in 1931)? "On the playing field, the French team presents two intersecting journeys, a fabulous voyage around the globe and a promenade through the highways and byways of the French countryside. The itinerary begins in the Loyauté Islands . . ." (32). Rhetoric such as this placed Paris at the center of a resuscitated colonial empire raised from the ashes of the wars of independence. France's phantasmatic colonial possessions were so many provincial regions at the periphery, all succumbing to the unifying force of the center. The whole world ("the globe," "the five continents") was gathered on the playing field in Saint-Denis—and the whole world was French, from "les îles Loyauté" to "la Nouvelle-Calédonie" to Point-à-Pître, birthplace of the star player of the semifinal game, Lilian Thuram, whose "heart wavers between childhood games on the beach and Fontainebleau, where his mother, six kids in tow, had come to seek a salary" (32). Thuram's divided loyalty is not unlike that of Zouzou, torn between Haiti and her gilded cage in Paris, or Zizou, nickname of star player Zinedine Zidane, "that shy kid born to Kabyle parents in a housing project in the northern part of Marseille," and who, therefore, "knows the value of this bit of blue cloth that is the French players' uniform" (32). Just as the *tirailleurs sénégalais* were routinely depicted eagerly donning military uniforms and fighting patriotically for France, the players on the French team with colonial background were repeatedly shown to be grateful for the chance to do battle for the mother country against a common enemy.

Surprisingly, however, France's real rivals were not Italy or Brazil, and opponents in the final and semifinal, respectively. As in the interwar period, the French opposed their sense of national unity during the World Cup to that of their closest international competitors, Germany and Britain: "The melting pot, certainly, exists, unlike the German situation, where there are no Turkish players on the national football team, and unlike the English team, too, where players from the former Commonwealth are rare" (37). This comparison of the ethnic makeup of competing football teams reveals more than sporting strategy. It implies a comparison of different perceptions of national identity, perceptions that are invoked not only as discourses about identity but also as expressions of identity.

Since the appearance of Ernest Renan's "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" at the end of the nineteenth century, it has become a commonplace of political theory to reiterate the distinction between the contractual model of community, associated with France, and that associated with Germany (Renan 1947–61, 887–906). Julia Kristeva, for example, adopting this model unproblematically, writes: "Quite the opposite of the 'spirit of the people' (*Volksgeist*), whose origins have been traced back to the ambiguities of the great Herder and that is mystically rooted in the soil, the blood, and the genius of the language, the French Enlightenment is embodied in the French Republic, is achieved in a legal and political pact between free and equal individuals" (Kristeva 1993, 39–40). Rogers Brubaker, too, opposes what he terms France's "concentric" and "assimilationist" conception of nationhood to a "bounded," "differentialist," and "ethnocultural" ideal based on essentialist notions of group identity—which he attributes to Germany (Brubaker 1992, 5, 6, and *passim*). Brubaker acknowledges that both discourses have at certain moments coexisted in France (during the Dreyfus affair, the interwar period, the Vichy regime, and again in recent years), when "the prevailing French idiom of nationhood—state-centered and assimilationist—has been challenged by a more ethnocultural counteridiom" (13–14). But by presenting these historical moments as anomalous blips in an otherwise uniform national landscape, these authors are creating a simplistic binary between ethnocultural and assimilationist conceptions of nationhood. Paul Morand's racial fantasies were not a "countendium" any more than the Front national is; both phenomena are an integral part of the French cultural idiom itself. To relegate exclusionary discourses in France to the status of a "challenge" posed to a "dominant" assimilationist discourse is to overlook the fact that these have always coexisted

in what Maxim Silverman calls "a single anthropological project in the modern era" (Silverman 1992, 25).

In the summer of 1998, commentators implicitly invoked Renan, as they had between the wars, in distinguishing the French concept of nationhood from that of Germany. Not only, it was suggested, do France and Germany define nationhood in different ways; these different definitions also define the nations themselves. France, in other words, differs from Germany precisely to the extent that it defines nationhood differently: "Law of the soil and not of blood, the absolute primacy of that which unites over that which separates, the relegation of particularities to the private sphere, the definition of the nation as adherence to a common destiny, and as working toward the universal: these are the characteristics of the open but firm conception that is opposed to the 'differentialisms' practiced by our neighbors" (François Dufay, *Le Point* 1348, July 18, 1998, 29). By 1998, however, the terms of Renan's distinction had been altered: the soil had replaced the social contract, suggesting that immigration had been factored into the equation of national unity and that a mythical "destiny" had replaced the mythical origin in the national consciousness.

This common destiny is the postcolonial version of a common origin, in which "nos ancêtres les Gaulois" (our forefathers the Gauls) is replaced by "nos enfants les bleus" (our soccer team, children of France). This destiny, like the mythical origin it replaces, is bound up in the notion of a national character, the identification of a difference that could unite the French at the same time that it distinguished them from everyone else. In response to the question whether the French feared losing their national identity in the face of increasing European unification and global competition, Philippe Séguin replied with a question: "Let's get this straight: would we like the Scots as much without their kilts, their whisky flasks and their chants, or the Brazilians without their samba and their carefree nature? What a dull world it would be if we all resembled each other! The beauty in the stadiums came from the different spots of color" (28). Séguin's message is indeed clear: each nation should unite around a common costume (the Scots' kilt, France's blue soccer uniform), a common character trait (the Brazilians' "insouciance")—in short, a common stereotype. Yet Séguin confuses the loss of national identity with the loss of individual identity. In seeking to preserve international distinctions (whisky, the samba), he is imposing national homogeneity. The "different spots of color" that he wishes to see can only be the collective colors of uniforms. The "black-blanc-beur" image of na-

tional unity is not an old model of integration but, rather, a new model of empire.

As Alain de Benoist, spokesman for the New Right in France, explains: "The principle of empire tries to reconcile the one and the many, the particular and the universal" (Benoist 1993–94, 88). Benoist opposes empire to nation on the basis of its emphasis on group identities: "The empire requires the preservation of the diversity of groups; by its very logic, the nation recognizes only individuals" (90). Although it is true that the French nation officially recognizes only individuals, and not subgroups within the national community (as the *affaire du foulard*, in which Muslim girls were forbidden to wear headscarves that would signal their membership in a particular religious group, demonstrated), unconsciously, imperial rhetoric infuses the language of cultural difference. But the French colonial model of empire, which, as we have seen, is still invoked proudly, poses a problem for Benoist's model of imperial culture. La plus grande France, Benoist argues, was not an empire in the true sense: "Such a designation is only abusively given to enterprises or powers merely engaged in expanding their national territory" (93). It is here that we witness the return of the colonial unconscious. In his discussion of the political formations for which he rejects the term "empire," such as "the Napoleonic empire, Hitler's Third Reich, the French and British colonial empires, and modern imperialisms of the American and Soviet types" (93), Benoist treats each of these "pseudoempires" in turn, with the exception of colonialism, which he neglects to take up again. This is because France's colonial history renders obsolete the distinction, in the French context, between nation and empire. The overlooked but persistently present element in discussions of French national identity today, the differentialist discourse of France's colonial legacy, creates an empire within the nation, a national empire, in relation to which former colonial subjects and their families are the "foreigners within."

The insistence on diversity in the heady days following France's victory in the World Cup was so great that the objects of the discourse of difference were sometimes designated its subjects, the *sujets de l'énoncé* transformed into *sujets de l'énonciation*. As Claude Imbert wrote in his editorial in *Le Point* in the week following the final match, "People are right to admire successful integration within a team of Kabyles, Africans, Armenians, etc. In truth, the so-called racism of the French is rarely directed at immigrants who are integrated. Instead, it is aroused by those who refuse our morals and our laws by entrenching themselves in their differences" (*Le Point* 1348, July 18, 1998, 5). It is "they" who impose dif-

ference, while "we" talk only of its abolition in assimilation, in integration. "We" reluctantly go along with these differences—and secretly cling to the divisions they entail. The celebration of difference is seen as a definitive departure from racism (here as in the work of Paul Morand). But as Pierre-André Taguieff points out, "The norm of respect for difference, far from embodying that fundamental human right which is the right of difference, serves to make presentable, even honorable, the obsession with contact—the phobia of mixing—which is the core of racism" (Taguieff 1993–94, 123).

The World Cup victory brought out this obsession with contact even as it celebrated team spirit. As I hope to have shown, the origins of what Ross calls "the neoracist consensus of today" (1996, 196) can be traced back to the period between the wars when, time after time, cultural texts showed that the desire to preserve cultural distance—the essence of the colonial unconscious—underlay expressions of exoticism that seemed to promote contact between cultures. A discourse of exposure at the colonial exhibitions actually concealed an aesthetic, and an ethic, of separatism reinforced by pseudoscientific theories of racial identity. The figure of the hybrid, exhibited both at the Miss France d'Outre-Mer contest and in Raymond Roussel's play *L'Etoile au front*, reinforced the very divisions it appeared to eradicate. Similarly, discourses of discovery and atavistic constructions of the primitive were grounded in a temporal alterity (*La Poussière de soleils*, *Magie noire*), while digestive models of assimilation (*Babylone*, *Princesse Tam-Tam*) were shown to lead to disastrous results (cannibalism, the fall of the Roman empire). And those colonials who might manage to accede to the higher echelons of French cultural life were apparently doomed to an existence of unhappy isolation (*Zouzou*).

All the cultural texts studied here harbor what Taguieff calls a "differentialist racism" (1993–94, 101), concealed within their celebration of cultural diversity. By juxtaposing the colonial exhibitions—official, state-sponsored events—with more subtle expressions of colonial ideology in individual works of art, I have sought to demonstrate the ubiquity of certain assumptions about identity and difference in interwar France. Rather than consider these assumptions to be diluted because they appeared at all levels of cultural production (popular and avant-garde literature, theater, film, and world's fairs), we must interpret the fact that they were taken for granted—not given a second thought—as a sign of their insidious force. This quiet but powerful influence is a function of

what, after Arendt, we might call the banality of colonial culture, its seeming ordinariness and unquestioned pervasiveness in everyday life.

Despite the fact that these assumptions were everywhere in circulation, they were nonetheless hidden from view. Colonial culture's manifest content, the discourse of assimilation, concealed a latent but powerful desire for cultural separatism. These apparently incompatible visions of French identity were complementary—indeed, often inseparable—but they have rarely been seen as such. The Enlightenment concept of universalism was never invoked more emphatically than in the colonial discourse of the Third Republic; yet, even in the frenzied heyday of French colonial rhetoric in the period between the world wars, the prospect of cultural assimilation was constantly overshadowed by the combined fear of and insistence on cultural difference. The importance of the colonial project in constructing French cultural and national identity cannot be overemphasized: it was by looking to the outside world that France was able to create and zealously guard the myth of a nation of insiders, causing the "inside" to recede endlessly beyond the grasp of many of its inhabitants. The colonial unconscious is the site of intersection between imperialism and nationalism, a site on which identity and difference could—and can—both exist, not in confrontation or contradiction but as complementary expressions of a single conception of nationhood.