

**Review of Pierre Bourdieu, ed. Tassidit Yacine, 2013, *Algerian Sketches*, Cambridge, Polity Press.**

*Algerian sketches* is the English translation by David Fernbach for Polity Press of *Esquisses algériennes*, published in 2008 by Editions du Seuil, in which Tassidit Yacine assembled some of Bourdieu's writings about Algeria. The translation adheres faithfully to the original. I want to focus on the relationship between the thematic organisation and the chronology of the assembled texts and on the different implications of the French and English publication of the collection.

**Bibliographic detail.**

The translation reproduces Yacine's bibliography of the 'Publications of Pierre Bourdieu on Algeria', presented chronologically on pages 329-31. However, it does not normally cite the English translations and, therefore, ignores the different chronology in English. For the period from 1958 to 2002, the bibliography published by Yvette Delsaut and Marie-Christine Rivière in 2002 (Delsaut & Rivière, 2002) enables us to construct a chronology of English reception alongside the chronology of production.

The texts are as follows:

1958 :

1. *Sociologie de l'Algérie*, Paris, PUF.

1959 :

2. « Le choc des civilisations » and
3. « La logique interne de la civilisation algérienne traditionnelle », in *Le Sous-développement en Algérie*, Algiers, Secrétariat Social, 52-64 and 40-51.

1960 :

4. « Guerre et mutation sociale en Algérie », *Études Méditerranéennes*, 7, 25-37.

1961 :

5. « Révolution dans la révolution », *Esprit*, 1, 27-40.
6. *Sociologie de l'Algérie*, Paris, PUF, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

1962 :

7. « De la guerre révolutionnaire à la révolution » in F. Perroux, ed., *L'Algérie de demain*, Paris, PUF.
8. *The Algerians*, Boston, Beacon. [This is a translation of 1/6, but it is significantly extended and revised. It adds 5 as its final chapter and has a preface written by Raymond Aron].
9. « La hantise du chômage chez l'ouvrier algérien. Prolétariat et système colonial », *Sociologie du travail*, 4, 313-331.

10. « Les sous-prolétaires algériens », *Les temps modernes*, 199, 1030-1051.

1963 :

11. « La société traditionnelle. Attitude à l'égard du temps et conduite économique, *Sociologie du travail*, 1, 24-44.

12. (with A. Darbel, J.-P. Rivet, & C. Seibel), *Travail et travailleurs en Algérie*, The Hague, Mouton.

1964 :

13. (with A. Sayad), *Le Déracinement. La crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle en Algérie*, Paris, Minuit.

14. (with A. Sayad), « Paysans déracinés. Bouversements morphologiques et changements culturels en Algérie », *Études Rurales*, 12, 56-94.

15. « The attitude of the Algerian peasant toward time » in J. Pitt-Rivers, ed., *Mediterranean Countrymen*, Paris/The Hague, Mouton, 55-72. [This is a translation of 11].

1965:

16. "The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle society" in J.G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 191-241.

1970:

17. "La maison kabyle ou le monde renversé », in J. Pouillon & P. Maranda, eds., *Échanges et communications. Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss à l'occasion de son 60<sup>e</sup> anniversaire*, The Hague, Mouton, 739-58. [This text was re-published several times in French, including as the second study in 20].

1971:

18. "The Berber house or the world reversed", *Social Science Information*, 2, 151-70. [This is a translation of 17].

19. "Formes et degrés de la conscience du chômage dans l'Algérie coloniale », *Manpower and Unemployment Research in Africa*, 4, 1, 36-44.

1972:

20. *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle*, Geneva, Droz. [The first 'study' is the French version of 16. The third 'study' is "Stratégie et rituel dans le mariage kabyle » which was published in English in J.G. Peristiany, ed., *Mediterranean Family Structures*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976].

1976:

21. “Les conditions sociales de la production sociologique. Sociologie colonial et décolonisation de la sociologie », in *Le Mal de voir*, Paris, Union Générale d’Éditions, 416-27. [This is the published version of an intervention at a conference on ‘Ethnology and politics in the Maghreb’ held in Paris in June, 1975. It was re-published as “Pour une sociologie des sociologues” in 27 and translated as « For a sociology of sociologists » in 34].

1977:

22. *Algérie 60. Structures économiques et structures temporelles*, Paris, Minuit. [This is based on « Le désenchantement du monde » which had been written in 1963, but never published].

1978:

23. (with M.Mammeri) “Dialogue sur la poésie orale en Kabylie », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 23, 51-66.  
24. « Sur l’objectivation participante », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 23, 67-9

1979 :

25. *Algeria 60*, Cambridge-Paris, Cambridge U.P-Éd. Maison des sciences de l’homme. [This is a translation of 22].

1980 :

26. *Le Sens pratique*, Paris, Minuit.  
27. *Questions de sociologie*, Paris, Minuit.

1984 :

28. « Mouloud Mammeri ou la colline retrouvée », *Le Monde*, 3 March.

1985 :

29. « Du bon usage de l’ethnologie. Entretien avec M. Mammeri », *Awal. Cahiers d’Études Berbères*, 1, 7-29.

1988 :

30. « Préface » in T. Yacine-Titouh, *L’Itzli ou l’amour*, Paris, Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 11-2.

1990 :

31. *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge, Polity Press. [translation of 26].

1991:

32. “Un analyseur de l’Inconscient. Préface”, in A. Sayad, *L’Immigration ou les paradoxes de l’altérité*, Brussels, De Boeck-Wesmael, 13.

1992 :

33. « La réappropriation de la culture reniée. A propos de Mouloud Mammeri », in T. Yacine (ed), *Amour, phantasmes et sociétés en Afrique du Nord et au Sahara*, Paris, L’Harmattan/Awal, 17-22.

1993 :

34. *Sociology in Question*, London, Sage.[translation of 27].

1994 :

35. « L’intelligence qu’on assassine. Entretien avec E. Sarner », *La Chronique d’Amnesty International*, 86, 34-5.

1995 :

36. (with M. Virolle) « Le parti de la paix civile », *Alternatives Algériennes*, 22, 4.

1997 :

37. « Dévoiler et divulguer le refoulé » in J. Jurr (ed.), *Algérie-France-Islam*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2. [This was a talk given at Freiburg in October, 1995]

1998 :

38. « Hommage à mon ami Abdelmalek Sayad », *Libération*, 16 March, 31.

39. « L’odyssée de la réappropriation », *Awal*, 18.

40. « Pour Abdelmalek Sayad », *Annuaire de l’Afrique du Nord*, vol. 37. [This was a talk given at the Institut du Monde Arabe and the also published in Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2000, 9-13]

1999 :

41. « Préface », in A. Sayad, *La Double absence. Des illusions de l’immigré aux souffrances de l’immigré*, Paris, Seuil, 9-13.

2000 :

42. « Entre amis », *Awal*, 21, 6.

43. « The making of economic habitus », *Ethnography*, 1, 1, 17-41. [This is the translation of a text which was published in French as 44. Bourdieu contextualises and reproduces large amounts of the transcript of an interview which was published first as an appendix to *Travail et travailleurs en algérie*, Paris/The Hague, Mouton, 1963].

2003:

44. “La fabrique de l’habitus économique”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 150, 79-90.
45. « Participant objectivation », *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, ns, 9, 281-94. [This is a revised version of the Huxley Memorial Lecture which Bourdieu gave in London in December, 2000. It was published in French as 46. It relates back to 24].
46. “L’objectivation participante”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 150, 43-57.
47. « Entretien avec Franz Schultheis », in *Images d’Algérie. Une affinité élective*, ed. Schultheis, F., & C. Frisinghelli, Actes sud/Camera Austria/Sinbad/Fondation Liber, 19-44. [this interview took place in 2001].

2004 :

48. Preface to A. Sayad, *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, Cambridge, Polity. [translation of 41].
49. « Algerian landing », *Ethnography*, 5, 4, 415-443. [This is a translation of an extract from 53. The whole book was to be published in English as 54].
50. (with Abdelmalek Sayad) “Colonial rule and cultural sabir”, *Ethnography*, 5, 4, 445-486. [This is a translation of 14].
51. (with M. Mammeri) “Dialogue on oral poetry”, *Ethnography*, 5, 4, 511-51. [This is a translation of 23].
52. “The odyssey of reappropriation”, *Ethnography*, 5, 4, 617-21. [This is a translation of 39].
53. *Esquisse d’une auto-analyse*, Paris, Raisons d’Agir.

2008 :

54. *Sketch for a Self-analysis*, Chicago, Chicago U.P.

2012:

55. *Picturing Algeria*, New York, Columbia U. P. [This contains a translation of 47].

2015:

56. (with A. Sayad) *Uprooting*, Cambridge, Polity Press. [This is a translation of 13].

### **Yacine’s presentation.**

The first section of the book is a ‘presentation’ which is entitled: ‘Bourdieu and Algeria, Bourdieu in Algeria’. It begins with the editor’s outlines of her intentions for the book – ‘the editorial project’, and it is followed by an essay entitled ‘At the Origins of a Singular Ethnosociology’. In outlining her intentions, Yacine suggests that the collected texts should be ‘read at four different levels’ (p.7). The first ‘relates to the information and analyses devoted to a colonized society in the midst of a war of liberation’ (p.7). The suggestion is that the chosen texts at this level offer a ‘realist’ account of the context of their own

production. Yacine specifically refers the reader to the articles included under the heading 'Colonization, Culture and Society' (articles 2, 3, of 1959 and article 11 of 1963) and those included under the heading 'Workers and Peasants in Disarray' (articles 14, 1964; 10, 1962; 9, 1962; and 44, 2003). The second level 'shows the experience Bourdieu acquired in the course of this war' (p.7). The emphasis, in other words, is 'experiential' and this is illustrated by the texts included in a section entitled 'War and Social Mutations'. The articles here are 7, 1962; 5, 1961; 4, 1960. The third level 'concerns the mode of intervention that would orient the whole of his work, illustrated by a return to the Algerian terrain' (p.7). This is exemplified through one article under the heading 'The Ethnology of Kabylia' (article 29, 1985); one article under the heading 'A Reflexive Definition of Anthropology' (article 45, 2000); and two articles under the heading 'Return to Algerian Experience' (article 42, 2000 and 40, 1998). The fourth level relates 'to understanding the origin of a certain number of his fundamental concepts' (p.7). The articles specified here are the one already mentioned under 'A Reflexive Definition of Anthropology'; two under 'The Ethnology of Kabylia' (now including 23, 1978 as well as 29, 1985) and 'above all' article 21, 1976 from under the heading 'Return to the Algerian Experience' and article 44, 2003, from under the heading 'Workers and Peasants in Disarray'. This categorisation in terms of levels of understanding only omits reference to two texts contained in the collection: article 47, 2003, under the heading 'Return to Algerian Experience', and letters to André Nouschi of 1958 included as an appendix.

### **Critique of Yacine's presentation.**

Bourdieu was involved in discussions of his work in the Social Theory group of the Centre for Psychosocial Studies in Chicago from 1983 onwards, culminating in a conference held in March/April, 1989, which led to the publication of C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma, and M. Postone, eds., *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, published in 1993 by Polity Press. Bourdieu wrote an epilogue to that publication in which he chose to outline the way in which he thought that his work in general should be understood rather than to take up specific points made by the contributors to the collection. In "Concluding Remarks: for a Sociogenetic Understanding of Intellectual Works", Bourdieu objected to some of the reproaches which had been directed against his work which, he thought, relied on two opposing principles. On the one hand, 'some of my readers "synchronize", in a way, different moments of my work' while others 'divide my work into fragments, atomize it, or if one prefers, "postmodernize" it' (Calhoun, LiPuma, & Postone, 1993, 264). In both cases, Bourdieu argued, the effect was the same. Readings of both kinds, firstly, 'ignored ... the question of the mode of intellectual production that undergirds my research' and, secondly, failed to address 'the question of the epistemological and social conditions under which (that is, at the same time, with which and against which) the intellectual project whose product is the work in question was elaborated' (Calhoun, LiPuma, & Postone, 1993, 264). In short, what Bourdieu regarded as misreadings of his work all arose from the disinclination of readers to recognize the '*sociogenetic point of view* that ... one must adopt towards any "creation of the mind" ...' (Calhoun, LiPuma, & Postone, 1993, 264). This was Bourdieu's comment on the way in which his work should be criticized. All criticism should be sensitive to the socio-historical and geographical

conditions of textual production. It was this injunction which ensured that, for Bourdieu, all intellectual or creative products are to be primarily analysed sociologically and only secondarily in terms of the self-referential discourses of constructed 'fields' such as 'literature', 'philosophy', or 'art'. It was consistent with this view of criticism that he should regard his own productions reflexively as strategic actions or interventions. Deploying the knowledge and understanding that she had earlier acquired in her research on Sartre and *Les temps modernes*, Anna Boschetti commented in 2006 that "Bourdieu himself stated, referring to Gaston Bachelard, that 'epistemology is always conjunctural: its propositions and thrust are determined by the principal scientific threat of the moment'(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, 174)" (Boschetti, 2006, 135).

In responding to Bourdieu's work, whether criticizing it or editing it, we must, in short, resist synchronization and atomization of his texts and be aware that what we are analysing was always contingently conjunctural. Yacine worked closely with Bourdieu for some time. She is aware of these complexities. Early in her introduction of 'the editorial project' she comments that

The interest in publishing these texts today is not to show how, right from the start, Bourdieu came on the scene fully equipped with perfectly thought-out and established theoretical concepts (habitus, capital, field), but rather to cast light on the first step in the development of his main concepts and intellectual instruments. (p.6-7)

At first sight, this seems a proper stance, but, on closer reading, the sentence is significantly symptomatic. Yacine rightly denies that Bourdieu used pre-formed, a priori, concepts in his confrontation with Algerian social reality, but her choice of words leads me to infer that her historical analysis is actually anachronistic in that it is disposed to disclose, finalistically, the conditions out of which Bourdieu's iconic concepts emerged rather than to assess the ongoing, pragmatic dialectic between thought and context which characterised his work throughout his career.

What we need, I suggest, is a close historical analysis of Bourdieu's intellectual predispositions in 1956 when he was conscripted to serve in the army in Algeria; an account of the way in which he perceived an affinity between the peasants of his native Béarn and those of Kabylia; the way in which he constructed a conceptual apparatus which would enable him to reconcile his intellectual formation with his lived experience; the ways in which he accommodated his conceptions and perceptions of Algerian society to his own predispositions in such a way as to relate in Paris his social trajectory to that of friends originally formed in Algeria and sustained in France (such as Mammeri, Sayad, and Yacine herself); and the ways in which his sustained memories of his Algerian experience functioned socio-politically in his national and international interventions. *Algerian Sketches* does an invaluable job in making some of Bourdieu's texts accessible. Some of the articles (such as the two reports published in 1959 by the Secrétariat Social in Algiers) were not easily available before in France, and certainly not in English, and the collection will therefore be extremely useful to anyone seeking seriously to understand the totality of Bourdieu's achievement. However, I believe that the book aspires to provide a new interpretation of

Bourdieu by emphasizing the Algerian dimension of his work. This is not, in principle, an aspiration which I would want to thwart, but I think the task has to be attempted with more rigorous ‘socio-genetic’ care. I can give a few examples of how the book does not avoid the pitfalls identified by Bourdieu in his concluding remarks to *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*.

The first problem follows from the process of selection. It ‘atomizes’ Bourdieu’s work by autonomizing his work ‘on Algeria’. As I have shown in my section on ‘Bibliographical detail’, there are 56 texts published between 1958 and 2015 which are identified as being ‘on Algeria’, of which *Algerian Sketches* offers 17. Procedurally, this eliminates appreciation of the cross-fertilization which constantly occurred in Bourdieu’s thought as he undertook research and developed concepts in relation, for instance, to photography, museums and art galleries, students, or to Heidegger, or to the State, or to gender relations. *Masculine Domination*, for instance, is not held to qualify as a book ‘on Algeria’ even though it is the fruit of an intellectual encounter in Bourdieu’s mind between his observations of Kabyle matrimonial strategies and developments in feminist analysis in Western European discourse. Even within the autonomized 56 texts, the interpretation is circumscribed by the selection. It is not clear whether constraints of permission shaped the collection or whether it was made to advance a particular argument. Anyone wanting to find a comprehensive introduction to Bourdieu’s Algerian work in *Algerian sketches* will find important factual detail about Bourdieu’s situation in the military and in the University of Algiers but will not find an adequate engagement in Yacine’s commentary with key texts such as Bourdieu’s methodological introduction to Part I of *Travail et travailleurs en algérie* (1963) entitled ‘Statistiques et Sociologie’ (which is still not generally available in English), or his retrospective reflections on his Algerian work offered as a Preface to *Le sens pratique* (1980), translated as *The Logic of Practice* (1990).

The second problem arises from Yacine’s categorization of levels of response to the selection. As I have indicated, individual texts fit uneasily within the headings to which they are assigned. More importantly, the categorization contributes to a synchronizing effect. Within ‘Workers and Peasants in Disarray’, for instance, an article of 2000 in which Bourdieu re-visited an appendix to *Travail et Travailleurs en algérie* of 1963 is juxtaposed with three articles actually written in the early 1960s. The section entitled ‘Return to the Algerian Experience’ seems to raise questions about the relationship between Bourdieu’s early ethnographic research and his later response to the experiences of Algerian immigrants in mainland France, but this is confined to his personal reflections rather than to his intellectual work in this field such as the interviews reproduced and contextualised in *La misère du monde* [the Weight of the World] (1993).

The third problem arises from the collection’s inattention to the significance of the contexts within which the selected texts were published. Details are itemised, but there is no consideration of the extent to which these contexts were constitutive of the positions Bourdieu was adopting. 2 and 3 were semi-official documents. 10 was written for *Les temps modernes* and, as such, engaged more explicitly than might otherwise have been the case with

Marxist terminology. 9 and 11 were written for a relatively new journal – *Sociologie du travail* – and, as such, were contributions to an emerging sociology of labour. *Algerian Sketches* makes no reference to the fact that 11 of 1963 was published in English translation in a collection which was thought to be a pioneering volume in an emerging school of Mediterranean anthropology (article 16). Article 14 was published in another relatively new journal – *Études rurales*. My point is that *Algerian Sketches* neglects the extent to which Bourdieu's publications were conjunctural or the extent to which they are manifestations of a form of self-inflicted 'censure' by which Bourdieu attempted to insert his 'creative project' within elements of the mainstream French academic 'field'. This is an important neglect because it suggests a failure to recognize how far Bourdieu was conscious of the epistemological difficulties associated with attempting to represent observed primary experience within constituted intellectual fields well before he adopted the Bachelardian notion of 'epistemological breaks' or formulated his own distinction between 'structuring structures' and 'structured structures'.

The fourth problem relates to the English publication in 2012 of this translation of *Esquisses algériennes*, first published in France in 2008. At the time (1966) in which Bourdieu was publishing his 'Champ intellectuel et projet créateur' [intellectual field and creative project] in a number of *Les temps modernes* devoted to the 'problems of structuralism', he also published 'Condition de classe et position de classe' in the *Archives européennes de sociologie*. In opposition to structuralists, Bourdieu insisted that a descriptive term such as 'peasantry' does not relate to an universal *condition* which can be analytically imposed for the purposes of inter-cultural comparison, but, rather, that in every society the nature of peasantry is a consequence of social position-taking within particular and distinctive socio-historical contexts. Bourdieu's argument applies, a fortiori, to the colonial *condition*. Working in affinity with Bourdieu's project, Christophe Charle has analysed comparatively French, German, and British imperialist pretensions between 1900 and 1940, suggesting that differences in imperial policies correspond with different internal social pressures within each of the imperialist states (see Charle, 2001). Osama W. Abi-Mershed has recently argued that French colonial policy in Algeria was significantly shaped by military leaders, most of whom had been influenced by Saint-Simon and Comte during their training at the École Polytechnique, that is to say that it was shaped as a consequence of the legacy of a peculiarly French intellectual tradition (Abi-Mershed, 2010). Yacine is right to suggest that Bourdieu encountered 'orientalist' thinking amongst academics at the University of Algiers, but it is also the case that his conceptualization of traditional Algerian society owed much to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century representations of it offered by military administrators such as the authors of *La Kabylie et les coutumes kabyles* (1873). Bourdieu cannot readily be situated within post-Said 'orientalist' debate. The unwitting effect of the English translation of *Esquisses algériennes* is to allow another pitfall in responding to Bourdieu which he did not himself specify, namely the pitfall of universalization. Bourdieu dealt with this problem in his Preface to the English translation of his *Homo academicus*. He insisted that the book should not be read as one *about* French higher education, but as one which should be regarded as offering a paradigm

by which all readers might analyse the cultural and institutional contexts within which they found themselves. Yacine indicates in her account of the editorial project that the collection 'is addressed above all to Algerians, and especially the young generations desiring a better acquaintance with their memory and culture' (p. 7). She suggests a specific socio-political function for the collection. This is commendable, but the translation into English raises questions which need to be seriously considered about the transferability of Bourdieu's Algerian work to other post-colonial situations.

### **Concluding remarks.**

I have, perhaps, laboured my response to the point of what might be thought to be bibliographic pedantry. I have done so deliberately to ensure that readers possess references which will enable them to pursue further the enquiry advanced by this book. It is important to recognize that the texts contained in *Algerian Sketches* must complement Bourdieu's other texts. Without this recognition, there is a danger that a partisan interpretation may be imposed. I have read this publication in conjunction with an essay which Yacine contributed to a commemorative volume about Bourdieu published in 2005. In the essay, entitled "Pierre Bourdieu, *amusnaw* kabyle ou intellectuel organique de l'humanité"[Pierre Bourdieu, Kabyle 'sage' or organic intellectual of humanity], Yacine asked 'in what ways did Pierre Bourdieu come to have, first of all, the intuition, and, then, the knowledge of Kabyle society and its actors?' (Yacine, in Mauger, ed., 2005, 565). During the course of the essay she revealed how she had been amazed to find that Bourdieu was able to read her own book – *L'Izli ou l'amour chanté* (1988) in its original kabyle language and also that he had mastered spoken Arabic (Yacine, in Mauger, ed., 2005, 566). She discussed in detail the nature of Bourdieu's published exchanges with Mammeri and Sayad which, at the time, were little known by researchers, some of which now feature in *Algerian Sketches*. She concluded that 'For Bourdieu, kabyle culture (in a structurally homologous situation with the Béarn as a dominated region in a dominant civilization) was indispensable for true self-knowledge' (Yacine, in Mauger, ed., 2005, 572). She also concluded that Bourdieu's *Le sens pratique* [The Logic of Practice] 'shows how Pierre Bourdieu forged his own way of theorising thanks to his knowledge of the [kabyle] world which he had not ceased to observe from 1956 (until his last visit in 1976)...' (Yacine, in Mauger, ed., 2005, 573). In other words, Yacine's view is that Bourdieu had an affinity with kabyle culture and that his Algerian experience was constitutive of his subsequent intellectual stance.

*Algerian Sketches* pursues this tendency to present Bourdieu as an assimilated kabyle. The autonomization of Bourdieu's work on Algeria is dangerous because it is inclined to neglect the extent to which the character of Bourdieu's work was defined by the encounter between primary experience and the structured objectification of that experience. The process of objectification was the product of his French intellectual formation. The hallmark of Bourdieu's methodological post-structuralism was that it enabled him not to negate his formation but rather to absorb it as a component part of his self-presentation in cultural encounters. Bourdieu clearly had an affinity with kabyle culture, but, as he would have said,

it was an 'elective affinity', one which is both natural and constructed, experiential and objective. Late in his career, Bourdieu emphasized the notion of 'socio-analytic encounter'. This is a process which rejects assimilation which is achieved force majeure as an act of symbolic violence. Socio-analytic encounter, like linguistic exchange as discussed by Bourdieu in *Ce que parler veut dire*, is dependent on the encounter between mutual reflexivities. It is an I-Thou encounter which preserves difference whilst accepting that recognition of fundamental similarities is a prerequisite for dialogue.

I welcome the publication of this selection from Bourdieu's writings about Algeria, but I also recommend caution. In a new book, I argue for the importance of Bourdieu's cultural relationism as a possible solution to many of our current problems of international politics (see Robbins, 2014) and this is why I urge readers to be careful that *Algerian Sketches* does not appropriate Bourdieu for a partisan, post-colonial cause. Bourdieu believed that the properly objective recognition of dissensus is the sine qua non for the achievement of consensus. He was acutely aware that Western anthropology/sociology exercised a 'ruse of imperialist reason' (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1999), but I am convinced that he would have been equally suspicious of the ruses of post-colonial reason.

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