

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/35581>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**"French Colonial Discourses: the Case of French
Indochina 1900-1939".**

Nicola J. Cooper

**Thesis submitted for the Qualification of Ph.D.
University of Warwick.
French Department.
September 1997.**

Summary

This thesis focuses upon French colonial discourses at the height of the French imperial encounter with Indochina: 1900-1939. It examines the way in which imperial France viewed her role in Indochina, and the representations and perceptions of Indochina which were produced and disseminated in a variety of cultural media emanating from the metropole. Framed by political, ideological and historical developments and debates, each chapter develops a socio-cultural account of France's own understanding of her role in Indochina, and her relationship with the colony during this crucial period.

The thesis asserts that although *consistent*, French discourses of Empire do not present a *coherent* view of the nation's imperial identity or role, and that this lack of coherence is epitomised by the Franco-indochinese relationship. The thesis seeks to demonstrate that French perceptions of Indochina were marked above all by a striking ambivalence, and that the metropole's view of the status of Indochina within the Empire was often contradictory, and at times paradoxical. Indeed, the thesis argues that Indochina was imagined through a series of antitheses which reflect the incoherent nature of French colonial discourse during this period.

This thesis uses as its primary material a variety of key cultural media which informed the popular perception of Indochina during this period: metropolitan and Franco-indochinese school manuals; the writings and designs of French colonial urbanists; the works of influential colonial apologists; 'official' texts relating to the organisation and impact of the *Exposition coloniale* of 1931; travel journalism; and metropolitan fiction relating to Indochina. The discursive approach that this thesis takes, focusing clearly upon the socio-cultural dimension, should provide an important re-evaluation of French Indochina and its legacy, and should make a contribution to the understanding of France's relations with her colonial territories during the first half of the twentieth century.

Table of Contents

	Pages
<u>Chapter 1: Introduction</u>	
1. Aims of this Thesis	1 - 2
2. Overview of Thesis	3 - 6
3. Overview of Studies concerning French Indochina	6 - 9
4. Terminologies	9 - 10
5. Historical Overview of the Conquest of Indochina	10
a) Initial Contacts: religious interest in Indochina	10 - 11
b) Economic Interests and Naval Imperialism	12 - 14
c) The Tonkin Crisis of 1873	14 - 15
d) The Legacy of Jules Ferry	16 - 18
e) Concluding Comments	18
<u>Chapter 2: <i>La France impériale et l'Indochine française</i> - Colonial Policy and Imperial Propaganda</u>	
1. Introduction	19 - 21
2. Corpus	21
3. Colonial Education at Home	
a) Propaganda and the French Empire	22 - 25
b) A Certain Notion of Imperial France	
i) France's Imperial 'Tradition'	25 - 28
ii) <i>La Plus Grande France</i>	28 - 32
iii) Principles of French Colonialism	32 - 36
c) La France en Indochine	
i) Rewriting the Narrative of Conquest	36 - 39
ii) Representing France's Contemporary Role in Indochina	39 - 43
4. Concluding Comments	43 - 44
5. Education in Indochina	45 - 47
a) Educational Policy and Aims in Indochina	
.... i) New Educational Needs and Educational Reform	47 - 54
b) <i>Autrefois Maintenant</i> : New Historiographies of Indochina	54 - 58
c) <i>Qu'est-ce que la France ?</i>	58 - 61
d) <i>Les Devoirs des Colonisés</i>	61 - 64
6. Concluding Comments	64 - 65
7. Conclusion to Chapter Two	65 - 66
<u>Chapter 3: French Colonial Urbanism in Indochina</u>	
1. Introduction	67 - 69
2. Nineteenth Century French Colonial Urbanism	69 - 72
3. From Assimilation to Association	72 - 74
4. Colonial Urbanism and Imperial Prestige	74 - 76
5. The Work of Ernest Hébrard in Indochina	76
a) Hébrard's Career in Indochina	76 - 78
b) Hébrard's Urban Ideal	78

i) Association and Urbanism	78 - 79
ii) Reinforcing the Identity of <i>Indochine française</i>	79 - 84
c) Modernisation versus Tradition	84 - 88
d) Health, Zoning and Segregation	88 - 100
6. Conclusion	100 - 101

Chapter 4: L'Exposition Coloniale de Vincennes, 1931: Indochine, la "perle" de l'Extrême-Orient

1. Introduction	102 - 103
2. Official Rhetoric of Empire	
a) Reinforcing the <i>autrefois/maintenant</i> contrast	103 - 106
b) Universal Benefits of <i>la Mission civilisatrice</i>	106 - 108
c) Establishing a Legal framework and New Legitimacy of Empire	109 - 110
d) Gendering the Colonial Relationship	110 - 112
e) Defining the <i>Union indochinoise</i>	112 - 114
f) Concluding Comments	114
3. <i>L'Exposition Coloniale de Vincennes</i>	
a) The Importance of the <i>Exposition de 1931</i>	114 - 117
b) An Overview of the <i>Exposition</i>	117 - 120
c) Indochina Exhibited	120 - 121
i) Angkor	121 - 128
ii) The <i>Union indochinoise</i>	129 - 131
iii) The <i>Palais central</i>	131 - 142
4. Conclusion	142 - 144

Chapter 5: Literary Representations of Indochina

1. Introduction	145 - 148
2. Overview of Literary Currents	148 - 149
a) The Exotic Novel/The Colonial Novel	149 - 153
3. Corpus	153 - 154
a) Claude Farrère	154 - 155
b) Henri Daguerches	155 - 156
c) Georges Groslier	156 - 157
4. Colonial Stereotypes	157
a) Linguistic Stereotypes	157 - 159
b) Thematic Stereotypes	159
i) Opium	159 - 160
ii) Inhospitable Climates: Disease and Suffering	160 - 162
iii) War and Death	163 - 165
5. Tracing the Evolving Colonial Relationship through Fiction	165
a) Saigon and Images of Decadence and Immorality	166
i) Paris/Saigon	166 - 169
ii) Bourgeois Morality/Moral Licence	169 - 170
iii) Civilisation	170 - 172
b) Images of the Metropolitan Male Settler and the Role of French colonialism in Indochina: <i>Le Colon bâtisseur</i>	172 - 176
c) The Metropolitan Woman	176 - 179
d) Gendered Representations of Indochina	179 - 182

e) "Indigenisation": the acculturation of Western Man and the Attractions of Indochina	182 - 194
6. Conclusion	194 - 195

Chapter 6: Metropolitan Travel Journalism and Criticism of Colonial Policy in Indochina

1. Introduction	196
2. Overview: Questioning French Colonialism during the Inter-war Years	196 - 199
3. Travel Journalism and Views of the Franco-indochinese Relationship	199 - 203
4. The 'Yen Bay' Uprising of 1930	203 - 206
5. The Betrayal of Ideals	206 - 210
6. The Vilification of the Settler Community	211 - 216
7. A Renewed Sense of Mission	216 - 220
8. Conclusion	220 - 221

Conclusion

1. France and Empire	222 - 225
2. France and Indochina	225 - 228
3. Indochina Revisited	229 - 231

Bibliography

232 - 249

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Aims of this Thesis

This thesis focuses upon French colonial discourses at the height of the French imperial encounter with Indochina: 1900-1939. It examines the way in which imperial France viewed her role in Indochina, and the representations and perceptions of Indochina which were produced and disseminated in a variety of cultural media emanating from the metropole. Framed by political, ideological and historical developments and debates, each chapter develops a socio-cultural account of France's own understanding of her role in Indochina, and her relationship with the colony during this crucial period. This approach, which focuses clearly upon the discursive, socio-cultural dimension should provide an important re-evaluation of French Indochina and its legacy, and should make a contribution to the understanding of France's relations with her colonial territories during the first half of the twentieth century.

The interest of this thesis thus lies not so much in the historical facts of colonisation, but in the perceptions of Indochina, the myths and images of the colony created by, and disseminated within, metropolitan France. It is these very images and myths which reflect back upon the metropole, and provide telling insights into France's own conception of herself as an imperial power.

Placing the Franco-indochinese relationship within this wider discursive framework of Empire will, in addition, allow for an approach which highlights the contradictions inherent in French colonial discourse, and relates them to the ambivalent metropolitan attitude towards Indochina. While historical accounts of the French role in Indochina are clearly useful, the discursive angle taken by this thesis should provide the opportunity to reassess the broader implications of imperial rhetoric and practice in relation to a specific colonial territory.

This thesis will assert that, in spite of the shift from assimilation to association in the early twentieth century, and the refinement of the principles of colonialism in the 1930s, the *doctrine coloniale* which Jules Ferry elaborated in the 1880s provided the enduring backbone to ideas of French imperial identity and purpose. Although France's imperial persona obviously evolved in response to external as well as internal political and ideological factors, there nevertheless remained a consistent, residual, and clearly tenacious perception of France's colonial role and status.

Secondly, this thesis will argue that although *consistent*, these discourses of Empire do not present a *coherent* view of the nation's imperial identity or role, and that this lack of coherence is epitomised by the Franco-indochinese relationship. The thesis will seek to demonstrate that French perceptions of Indochina were marked above all by a striking ambivalence, and that the metropole's view of the status of Indochina within the Empire was often contradictory, and at times paradoxical.

Although the findings of this thesis may not appear surprising, its interest lies in the intersection of the various media which are the focus of the respective chapters. While one might have expected different views of Empire to emerge from the different cultural media under examination, and the different chronological periods to which they refer, the findings of this thesis demonstrate, on the contrary, how little France's colonial ideal changed over the decades.

Similarly, and although this thesis should not be regarded as a comparative work, one might have expected representations and perceptions of Indochina to differ significantly from images of France's other colonial possessions. However, the thesis seeks to show that whilst Indochina was frequently termed 'la perle de l'Empire français', she was nonetheless repeatedly stripped of her 'special' status to be stirred into the colonial slurry of contempt and debasement along with France's supposedly more 'primitive' subject peoples.

2. Overview of Thesis

This thesis will first provide a brief overview of contact between France and Indochina since the seventeenth century, and a synopsis of the French conquest of Indochina, in order to contextualise the ensuing chapters and to delimit clearly the period under examination. Following in a broadly chronological sweep, each chapter will focus on a particular cultural medium as a means of gauging the various metropolitan responses to Indochina which marked what will be termed 'the period of consolidation'.

The second chapter takes a broadly historiographical approach to ideas of imperial and colonial identity. While many contemporary metropolitan discourses of colonialism sought to establish and codify national identity, by using as its source material school manuals from both the metropole and Indochina, this chapter seeks to pinpoint the founding principles of the French colonial ideal at their most reductive and simplified level. This chapter will thus examine the way in which colonial educational policy and propaganda served to anchor the idea of France as an imperial power, and also the political and cultural notion of 'Indochine française', in both the metropolitan imagination and amongst the colonised populations of Indochina.

In order to define further the status of Indochina in relation to concepts of French imperial identity and ideals of French colonialism, the third chapter will focus upon a second feature of colonial policy: colonial town-planning and urban design in Indochina. Through an analysis of the functions and uses of urban planning within the colonial context the chapter will seek to uncover not simply the ideological imperatives of metropolitan policies, but also their physical application. Focusing principally upon the work Ernest Hébrard in Indochina, the chapter will examine the tension between modernising and traditionalist visions of the indigenous city; the conflict arising from the creation of an 'Indochinese style' alongside attempts to

reinforce further the French identity of Indochina; and finally the issues of segregation and zoning, and their implications for French imperial identity.

By placing this examination of urban policy within the context of the move from assimilative policies to the more reformist attitude of association, the chapter will highlight further the discrepancies which undermined much French colonial discourse between the turn of the century and the onset of World War Two. The chapter will argue that the perceptible shift in imperial identity and colonial thought which has been thought to have gradually transformed imperial France's relationship with Indochina, was far less marked than historians have tended to assume. Indeed, the chapter will assert that in spite of the less overtly authoritarian stance adopted by proponents of associative native policy, Indochina and her inhabitants were nonetheless subjected to disciplinary practices and procedures through the implementation of French colonial urban policy.

The fourth chapter of this thesis examines the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* (1931) in order to reassess the colonial ideal at the height of metropolitan confidence in Empire. The first part of the chapter provides a detailed analysis of the government's own account of its mission in Indochina, drawing upon the vast amount of propagandist texts and 'official' documentation which proliferated at the time of the *Exposition*. The chapter seeks to pinpoint how the ideal of French colonialism had been refined and transformed since the beginning of the century. The second part of the chapter examines in detail the exhibition itself, particularly the way in which Indochina was exhibited. It seeks to determine the reasons why Indochina was so predominant amongst the French colonies at this exhibition, and discusses the significance of the exhibit which dominated the exhibition: the Khmer temples of Angkor.

The chapter will argue that at the apogee of Empire, French imperial propagandists reinforced the ideals of colonialism which were discussed in the second

chapter in order to establish an ethical basis for this essentially exploitative project. Secondly, the chapter will maintain that the 'special' status Indochina was accorded at the *Exposition* through the predominance of Angkor was not sustained throughout the various colonial exhibits, and functioned largely as a feature of French imperial rivalry with Great Britain, and as a sign of the value and benefit of French colonialism throughout the Empire.

The fifth chapter examines fictional responses to the Franco-indochinese relationship. Focusing principally upon three novels by metropolitan writers which are representative of the many which were published during this period, this chapter seeks to show that literary images of Indochina tended, inevitably, to mirror the successive stages of the French relationship with the colony. Shifts in the nature of colonial rule, from the days of the conquest and pacification through to the period of consolidation gave rise to different emphases and different literary themes. Through a close analysis of each novel, the chapter shows that colonial literature at once reflected and perpetuated images and myths of Indochina which had been disseminated through cultural media and propaganda discussed in the preceding chapters.

The final chapter reviews examples of a growing unease or uncertainty with Empire principally through an examination of the texts of two prominent journalists of the 1920s and 1930s, Louis Roubaud and Andrée Viollis, who travelled to Indochina in the wake of the Yen Bay uprising of 1930. Against the backdrop of the official views expressed during the contemporaneous period of the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*, the chapter evaluates their reactions to corrupt or abusive instances of French colonial rule in Indochina, and the ways in which they sought to reconcile the 'ideal' of colonialism with the reality of the situations they found whilst visiting Indochina. The chapter concludes that, although at times critical of the colonial administrations in Indochina, these writers clearly reinforce the colonial

rhetoric and ambitions of the period. Challenging the assumption that their criticism of certain colonial practices in Indochina amounted to a burgeoning anti-colonialism, this chapter will suggest that journalism of the 1930s helped to perpetuate the strong sense of France's 'mission civilisatrice' in Indochina.

3. Overview of Studies concerning French Indochina

It is surprising that given the current scholarly interest in reassessing colonial attitudes, the renewed interest in francophone culture, and the prolific theorising which has occurred in (it has to be said, mainly anglophone) postcolonial circles, that little attention has been paid to French Indochina. While France's North African territories have received, and continue to receive much scholarly attention, and francophone Africa is emerging as a subject of intense academic activity, Indochina, though representing a considerable colonial investment for France, has rarely been the principal focus of academic studies.

Where commentators have addressed the question of France's relationship with this, the nation's largest colonial possession outside Africa, they have tended, for the most part, to focus exclusively on the Franco-indochinese war (1945-54), and the period of decolonisation which it triggered¹. The period of French colonial rule in Indochina, which spanned some ninety years, tends to be relegated to the status of

¹ There exist several histories in English of the French involvement in South-East Asia, most notably O'Ballance, E., The Indo-China War 1945-1954 (London: Faber, 1964); and Hammer, E., The Struggle for Indochina (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954). However, the following French authors have produced much more nuanced and comprehensive histories of the Franco-indochinese war and its aftermath, the works cited being simply a representative example of their work in the area: Ruscio, A., La Guerre française d'Indochine 1945-54 (Bruxelles: Editions complexe, 1992). Dalloz, J., La Guerre d'Indochine 1945-1954 (Paris: Seuil, 1987). Please refer to the bibliography of this thesis for fuller details of literature on the Franco-indochinese war.

prelude to the Franco-indochinese war, occupying a chapter or two at the beginning of largely military narratives.

There have been some relatively recent historical accounts of French colonial rule in Indochina², but these works tend to take a statistical and factual approach, ignoring the discursive practices of colonialism and the cultural aspects of the Franco-indochinese relationship. Equally, many more general works on French colonialism tend to feature Indochina alongside France's other colonial possessions in an attempt to give an overview of French colonial policy³, propaganda⁴, economics⁵, or iconography⁶. While these works are interesting in their own right, they offer general insights into the vast diversity of the French colonial Empire, rather than a specific understanding of French Indochina. Although there do exist several works which focus upon single aspects of the French colonial relationship with Indochina, in the main literary histories⁷, or descriptive accounts of settler life in Indochina⁸, there

²The most useful and thorough being Brocheux, P., and Hémery, D., Indochine: la colonisation ambiguë: 1858-1954 (Paris: La Découverte, 1995); another interesting, if partial source, has been Franchini, P., (ed), Saigon 1925-45: de la 'Belle Colonie' à l'éclosion révolutionnaire ou la fin des dieux blancs (Paris: Les Editions Autrement/série mémoires, no. 17, 1992).

³See for example Raymond Betts work: Betts, R., Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory 1890-1914 (London: Columbia University Press, 1961); and Tricouleur: the French Overseas Empire (London: Gordon and Cremonesi, 1978).

⁴The most authoritative and comprehensive work on the development of the French colonial idea remains: Girardet, R., L'Idée coloniale en France (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972). Also extremely useful on propaganda and imperial lobby groups are Brunschwig, H., Mythes et réalités de l'impérialisme colonial français 1871-1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1960), and Ageron, C-H., France colonial ou parti colonial ? (Paris: PUF, 1978).

⁵See Marseille, J., Empire colonial et capitalisme français: histoire d'un divorce (Paris: Albin Michel, 1984).

⁶See Blanchard et. al., L'Autre et nous: scènes et types (Paris: ACHAC, 1995).

⁷The most comprehensive work is Malleret, L., L'Exotisme indochinois dans la littérature française depuis 1860 (Paris: Larose, 1934); but see also the chapter on fictional representations of Indochina in this thesis for a fuller review of works concerning 'Indochinese' fiction.

⁸See for example, the rather turgid account of Indochina's metropolitan community in

has however, been no single authoritative work which attempts to draw together the many strands which came together to constitute the Franco-indochinese relationship⁹.

Although this thesis seeks to go some small and preliminary way towards building up a coherent view of the French relationship with Indochina, there is clearly insufficient time in a study of this nature to complete adequately such a large, time-consuming and demanding task. Furthermore, it should be noted that this thesis forms part of an ongoing project, and that research has, inevitably, revealed further areas of potential interest which should prove fruitful to this continuing endeavour.

A study of the curricula and teaching undertaken at the *Ecole coloniale* would provide a more complete picture of colonial education in the metropole. An examination of the work of the *Institut Pasteur* in Indochina would doubtless provide further insights into the metropolitan obsession with health and hygiene which is discussed in chapter three. The images and representations of Indochina contained in popular journals such as *Le Tour du monde*, and *L'Illustration* around the time of the exploration and pacification of Indochina would undoubtedly paint a different picture of the colony than do the fictional portrayals of the period of consolidation under discussion in this thesis. The *Société géographique d'Indochine*, and the various societies and groups, such as *Les Français d'Asie*, which were formed by the metropolitan community in Indochina would give a more comprehensive view of both metropolitan perceptions of Indochina, and also the nature and attitudes of the metropolitan settler community in Indochina. Although the post-1945 period has been amply documented, little light has been thrown on the significant years of 1939-

Mayer, C., *Les Français en Indochine 1860-1910* (Paris: Hachette, 1996).

⁹It should be noted that at the time of writing, Panivong Norindr's long-awaited book on Indochina has just been published. Its publication came too late for his work to be taken into account in the main body of this thesis. Norindr, P., *Phantasmatic Indochina: French Colonial Ideology in Architecture, Film, and Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

45, when Indochina was under Japanese rule. Finally, looking towards a more contemporary period, the relationship between the *Ministère de la Francophonie* and a modern Vietnam which has now emerged from the Cold War period would be a fascinating area of study.

4. Terminologies

Because the principal focus of my work is metropolitan French attitudes towards, and representations of, these colonised areas of South-East Asia, I will be mirroring French usage of the period by using the term 'Indochina', *Indochine*, to signify Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This should not be viewed in any way as an acceptance or legitimisation of the term *Indochine*, but rather should serve as a reminder that the geographical space imagined by imperial France, was in fact, an artificial construction. The successive terminologies used by imperial France to evoke these very separate and individual countries, *Union indochinoise*, and *Fédération indochinoise*, clearly played a significant role in ideologies of empire which successive French regimes sought to popularise during the period of consolidation.

Indeed, Indochina, as the territory's name suggests, was initially perceived as a hybrid entity. In the early days of conquest and pacification, Indochina was referred to as *Indo-Chine*, with a hyphen reflecting this hybrid status. The nomenclature fixes the territory geographically as 'in between' India and China. The implication was that the territory lacked a specific identity of its own. By denying individuality, separate cultural history and identity (let alone the issues of language, religion and tradition proper to the countries of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam), French imperialists sought to homogenise a diverse geographical area, to impose an artificial pattern and design upon their imperial efforts in South-East Asia.

Similarly, in order to avoid continual circumlocution, Indochina will often be referred to as a colony. Although only the region of Cochinchina was accorded the

full status of a colony, Annam, Tonkin, Cambodia and Laos being placed under the protectorate of France, the way in which they functioned under a French Governor General amounted to full colonial rule.

5. Historical Overview of the Conquest of Indochina

This thesis is principally concerned with the period of French colonial consolidation in Indochina (ie 1900-1939). However, in order to situate this period, it is important to first give a chronological overview of the French relationship with Indochina and her imperial interventions in this area.

The various component parts of Indochina were annexed, appropriated, and acquired and accrued by metropolitan France over a period of around 30 years, from approximately 1860-1890. As many historians of French imperialism have noted, French expansionism did not form part of a coherent policy. This observation is all the more true in the case of Indochina. The French acquisition of Indochina resulted more from a series of individual and autonomous acts on the part of explorers, merchants and traders, than from intervention from Paris.

a) Initial Contacts: religious interest in Indochina

Indochina's political boundaries were delimited in 1887, when the French government created the *Union Indochinoise*. French intervention in this corner of South-East Asia however, predates this creation by several centuries. A combination of economic interest, rivalry with Britain, and the defence of French missionaries led to French intervention in Indochina. Until the mid-nineteenth century however, it was the Catholic church rather than the French nation which sought to implant itself in Vietnam, and to a lesser extent, Cambodia and Laos. Jesuit missionaries, expelled

from Japan, made their way into Tonkin in the 1620s. Alexandre de Rhodes¹⁰ established the first French mission there in 1627. In the 1660s, the *Société des Missions étrangères* sent missionaries to Annam on the basis of Rhodes' reports; and in the 1670s, the Vatican sanctioned French missionary activities in the area.

The imbrication of religion and politics led to further French intervention in Indochina in the eighteenth century. Mgr. Pigneau de Béhaine, the Bishop of Adran, became involved in local politics when the Lay Son dynasty crushed the ruling Nguyens. The Bishop's support of the sole Nguyen survivor of this massacre led Pigneau de Béhaine to seek the sponsorship of Louis XVI. In return for French military and naval help, France was accorded full rights over the islands of Noi-nan and Poulo Condore. This entitled French subjects to the exclusive right to trade and to establish naval and commercial bases there. The French government reneged on its agreement, and Pigneau de Béhaine decided to take matters into his own hands, recruiting adventurers and sailors, and purchasing arms with funds obtained from traders based in the Indian Ocean. The Bishop's initiatives led to military intervention in 1789, which ensured that the restoration of the Nguyen dynasty in 1799.

The revolutionary period in France drew attention away from South-East Asia, and it was not until the accession of Minh Mang to the throne of Annam in 1825 that the French once more became involved in the area. Minh Mang's dislike of the interference of 'prêtres étrangers'¹¹ in his kingdom marked the beginning of an era of persecution of French priests in Indochina which continued until the end of his reign in 1840.

¹⁰Alexandre de Rhodes is perhaps best known for his transcription of Annamese into a latinised script known as *quoc ngu*. The publication of his Annamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary in 1651 facilitated the spread of Christianity in Indochina.

¹¹Made formal in Minh Mang's edicts of 1833 and 1836.

b) Economic interests and Naval Imperialism

Until the mid-nineteenth century it was thus religious interests which governed French relations with the countries which were to become Indochina. However, when the British gained Hong Kong in 1842, French desires to establish a trading base in South-East Asia were renewed. The French annexation of areas within Indochina should be viewed within the context of the second Opium War (1856-60), for French interest and intervention in Indochina can be viewed in part as an attempt to contain British ambitions and territorial progress in South-East Asia. Indeed, comparison and competition with Great Britain was an abiding feature of French imperial rhetoric, and is particularly marked in relation to Indochina.

The Napoleonic era saw a more concerted approach to the establishment of a French presence in South-East Asia. Napoleon III had grand ideas about French prestige and economic development. He supported the missionary involvement in the area, sending the Montigny mission to the Far East in 1855 as a diplomatic move to reopen relations with the Court of Hue. Things came to a head over the persecution of priests under the reign of Tu Duc, who promulgated a new edict in 1855, which once more engendered the persecution of French missionaries.

In response, France recommended that a protectorate be established over Cochinchina. Ostensibly a move intended to establish religious freedom, this intervention was not viewed as a conquest, as it was thought that the Cochinchinese were suffering under a tyrannical King and would welcome the French with open arms.

In 1857, a commission agreed that the protectorate was necessary and desirable; arguments concerning national prestige and international rivalry were uppermost in the debate. Thus in 1858, Admiral Rigault de Genouilly arrived in Tourane with 2300 men. As Franchini notes,

C'est dans ces conditions que s'engage le processus d'une conquête, sans plan véritable, avec des objectifs non précisés, adaptables aux circonstances et aux décisions des chefs militaires¹².

Rigault de Genouilly met with many difficulties in Tourane and his troops soon fell prey to profound disillusionment. The Admiral himself felt reproachful towards the missionaries who had made assurances that Cochinchina was ripe for French intervention. Where were the thousands of indigenous Christians who were supposed to join the ranks of their liberators ? The Cochinchinese did not appear to be a population impatient to shake off the yoke of a tyrant.

The Expeditionary Corps indeed met with tremendous resistance in Tourane. They lacked supplies, and Rigault de Genouilly's manpower was decimated through sickness. Neither was the Admiral making any headway in negotiations with the indigenous populations. Nevertheless, Rigault de Genouilly took Tourane in August 1858, but because he did not have sufficient forces to push on towards Hue, it was decided that the French Navy strike at Saigon, which was captured in February 1859.

Due principally to the continuing war with China, Rigault de Genouilly pulled out of Tourane, and the conquest of Indochina was later relaunched from Saigon under Admiral Charner, once the treaty of Peking had been signed with China in October 1860. His mission, under the direction of a new *Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies*, Chasseloup-Laubat¹³, was to gain as much territory as possible before proposing peace terms. If he met with indigenous resistance, Charner was to press on further to Mytho and Bienhoa.

Charner had established himself in Mytho when Admiral Bonard took over operations. Chasseloup-Laubat hoped to build upon this improvised conquest and to

¹²Franchini, P., *Les Guerres d'Indochine* (Paris: Pygmalion, 1988), p. 77.

¹³Chasseloup-Laubat was minister from 1858-1867, and is often viewed as the inspiration behind French expansion into South-East Asia.

establish a sort of suzerainty which he hoped would allow for the establishment of free trade to be extended to Siam and Cambodia. Bonard duly seized Bienhoa, Baria and then the citadel of Vinhlong and the island of Poulo Condore.

Tu Duc, who was plagued with internal rebellions which were backed by the Chinese, now appeared ready to cooperate with the French invaders. In a treaty of 1862, France was accorded the provinces of Giadinh, Bienhoa and Mytho, and Poulo Condore. Vinhlong was to be placed under continued French occupation until pacification was accomplished. Three ports, including Tourane, were to be opened to French commerce. Religious freedom was to be established. No part of the territory was to be ceded to a foreign power other than France. Admiral de la Grandière completed the pacification of the provinces acquired under the treaty of 1862. He annexed further territories of Vinhlong, Chaudoc and Hatien, thus completing the colony of Cochinchine. In August 1863, a further treaty was signed placing Cambodia under the protectorate of France.

During the Second Empire, French intervention in Indochina was motivated principally by competition with Britain for economic influence in the area. With very little territory in Asia, Indochina was France's only 'yellow badge', and the French foothold in Indochina allowed the penetration of the Chinese market via a path where the British were absent.

c) The Tonkin Crisis of 1873

Many expeditions were undertaken, by renowned explorers such as Doudart de Lagrée and Garnier, to ascertain the navigability of routes in Indochina. Chasseloup-Laubat, also president of the *Société de géographie* demanded the exploration of the Mekong and plateaux in Laos and a study of relations with Yunnan (China). The aim of the mission was to draw up an inventory of the area's natural

resources, to create new *courants commerciaux* which would open out onto central China, to explore unknown regions.

It was the action of these explorers and adventurers which led, ultimately, to the 'Tonkin' crisis of 1873. Garnier had accompanied Doudart de Lagrée in the exploration of the Mekong (1866-68), and was subsequently sent by Admiral Dupré (Governor of Cochinchina) in 1872 to oversee the free passage of Jean Dupuis, a French trader based in China, through the delta of the Red River (in spite of instructions from Paris to cease all action in Tonkin). Seizing the occasion to establish trade routes, Dupré also envisaged establishing a protectorate over Tonkin. As the Royal Court at Hue refused to negotiate with the French, Garnier decided to use force, and seized Hanoi and various strategic points throughout the delta in November 1873.

In the ensuing war, in which pirate bands fought with the Indochinese against the French invasion, Garnier was killed. Then when mandarins rallied the local population against Christianity and 'ces Français d'intérieur', and several Christian villages were burned down, the situation seemed to have escalated beyond all control. Instructions from Paris were that Dupré withdraw.

Although a treaty was finally signed between France and Indochina, confirming the cession of Cochinchina to France and establishing trade routes, Tonkin was nonetheless evacuated, and opinion in Paris became hostile towards events in Indochina. Ideas of further conquest in Indochina gradually faded until the 1880s.

d) The Legacy of Jules Ferry¹⁴

Domestic events and crises at home had focused attention on the metropole and on Europe until the 1880s when metropolitan interest in colonisation was renewed. Indochina occupied a central role in the colonial debate between 1880 and 1885. More than any other area into which France sought to expand, Indochina embodied the colonial problematic which was under scrutiny during this period.

As early as 1872, Gambetta had anticipated the debate of the 1880s in observing that

Pour reprendre le rang qui lui appartient dans le monde, la France se doit de ne pas accepter le repliement sur elle-même¹⁵.

Indeed, the well-documented polemic which was to divide France's politicians was one which pitched colonial expansion against an inward-looking stagnation born of the 1870 defeat and a *revanchardiste* vision of France's status and prestige.

The clash of these opposing views came to a crisis point over events in Tonkin, where the Commandant Rivière had renewed the French assault on Hanoi. These actions led to Chinese military involvement, indeed to the threat of a full-blown Franco-chinese war. Negotiations with Peking paving the way for a compromise (the partition of Tonkin between a Chinese zone of influence in the North, and a French one in the South of the region), foundered however, when Ferry's second ministry opted instead to set about the conquest of Tonkin in 1883.

Rivière's subsequent death allowed for war credits to be obtained from the Chamber and a new expedition to be sent to organise a Tonkin/Annam protectorate, which was eventually secured in 1884, amidst much vociferous opposition in the metropole. The second 'Tonkin crisis' erupted however in the wake of a surprise

¹⁴See Robiquet, P., Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry, tome 5: Discours sur la politique extérieure et coloniale (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897).

¹⁵Quoted by Franchini, op. cit., p. 100.

Chinese/Indochinese assault on the French fortress of Lang Son. Metropolitan opinion, unconvinced by Ferry's expansion in Tonkin and outraged at the possibility of suffering a 'Sedan colonial'¹⁶, ousted Ferry on 30 March 1885.

In spite of Ferry's fall, and continuing opposition to colonialism particularly from the Radical Party, the protectorate treaty of 1884 between France and Indochina was ratified in June 1885. Indeed once the crisis of 1885 had passed, the majority of political opinion in the Chamber rallied to the colonial idea, and it was during this period that the French colonial ideal began to take shape. The prolific debate which raged in the French parliament effectively defined the nation's response to imperialism and expansion.

In the aftermath of *l'affaire tonkinoise*, Ferry's speech to the Chamber of 28 July 1885, drew a sense and logic from events in Indochina, and set the terms for a 'politique coloniale' specific to France. What had essentially amounted to the piecemeal acquisition of Indochina was represented as a veritable demonstration of imperial policy. Distinguishing between a 'politique qui consiste à aller au hasard'¹⁷ and 'une entreprise coloniale [...] poursuivie à l'origine d'un plan concerté, d'un dessein arrêté à l'avance'¹⁸, Ferry sought to provide his (mis)management of events in Indochina with an order and purpose, a weight and import which this overview has sought to dispute.

Similarly, Ferry constructed a conception of colonial expansion which sought to coincide and accord with Republicanism and humanitarianism, whilst simultaneously emphasising the renewal of French grandeur and prestige. Indeed, Ferry's vision was to exercise a tenacious hold over French ideas of colonialism for decades:

¹⁶From *Le Temps*, quoted by Brocheux and Hémery, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁷*Discours et opinions*, op. cit., p. 182.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 186.

[la France] ne peut pas être seulement un pays libre; (...) elle doit aussi être un grand pays, exerçant sur les destinées de l'Europe toute l'influence qui lui appartient, (...) elle doit répandre cette influence sur le monde, et porter partout où elle le peut sa langue, ses moeurs, son drapeau, ses armes, son génie¹⁹.

e) Concluding Comments

French intervention in Indochina was born of religious evangelism and pursued through a combination of international imperial and maritime rivalry. Often the result of action on the part of naval officers or largely autonomous explorers, with little if any direction from Paris, the French acquisition of the component territories of Indochina owed more to *la force des choses* and the escalation of events on the ground, than a defined imperial vision and purpose.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 220.

Chapter 2: Colonial Policy and Imperial Propaganda: Colonial Education in Metropolitan France and Indochina

1. Introduction

This chapter examines French colonial discourses at their most reductive level. It will serve therefore as a founding block from which more detailed analyses of the complexity of French colonial discourses will spring. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the way in which colonial educational policy and propaganda served to anchor the idea of France as an imperial power, and also the political and cultural notion of 'Indochine française', in both the metropolitan imagination and amongst the colonised populations of Indochina. One domain which offers perhaps the most fertile ground for a comparative exploration of both policy and propaganda at home and abroad is the analysis of school manuals. Metropolitan school manuals provide the view of her new imperial status which France expected her citizens to adopt. They demonstrate the idea or model of French Indochina which official France wished to propagate; they define Indochina's status and position within the French empire; and reflect metropolitan perceptions of the relationship with these colonised territories.

The chapter will thus bring into focus one of the most tenacious myths¹ of French imperialism in Indochina: the very notion of *l'Indochine française*². For the countries which were, during the period of French colonisation, known as Indochina, present a startling disparity which belies their colonial nomenclature. The metropolitan use of 'Indochine', to signify Vietnam³, Cambodia and Laos alerts us to the fact that the geographical space imagined by imperial France was, in fact, an artificial

¹The use of the term 'myth' is to be understood in its Barthian sense.

²The political term 'L'Union indochinoise' was adopted in decrees of 17 and 20 October 1887.

³Which itself was comprised of three different areas: Annam, Tonkin and Cochinchina.

construction. The frequency and use of the term *Indochine française*, as the introduction suggested, clearly has a significant role to play in the ideologies of Empire which successive French regimes sought to popularise during the period of consolidation.

To recap, Indochina, as the territory's name suggests, was initially perceived as a hybrid entity. In the early days of conquest and pacification, Indochina was referred to as *Indo-Chine*, with a hyphen reflecting its hybrid status⁴. The nomenclature fixes the territory geographically as 'in between' India and China. The implication of this hyphenated term is that the territory lacked a specific identity of its own. By supressing its hyphen and adding its own national adjective, imperial France was able to forge a completely new domain of cultural influence. The affix *française* wiped out, in this limited and linguistic sense, Chinese and Indian influence, thereby creating a new territory, *Indochine française*. Whilst the change in terminology was instituted and accepted gradually from the turn of the century onwards, the most important factor for successive metropolitan governments was to implant this political and cultural notion of French Indochina amongst the populations at home and abroad.

The main focus of this chapter will thus be an examination of the constructed identities of imperial France and of *Indochine française*. The chapter will examine the ways in which French governments sought to consolidate the Indochinese Empire

⁴The etymology of this term is unclear. Norindr (Norindr, P., "Representing Indochina: the French colonial fantasmatic and the Exposition Coloniale de Paris", in *French Cultural Studies*, vi, February 1995, pp. 35-60) has traced the hyphenated orthography to the Danish geographer Conrad Malte-Brun in the early nineteenth century. The OED however, asserts that the name 'Indo-China' was coined by John Leydon (1775-1811), a Scottish poet and Orientalist. Nor is it clear when the hyphen disappeared from current French usage. It seems to have gradually been dropped from the late nineteenth century onwards. Norindr however, suggests that the hyphen disappears 'at the very moment French fantasies of Indochina take hold of the French popular imagination' (p. 39).

amongst a generation of metropolitan and colonised youth through the use of school manuals. Attention will be paid to the attempt to create an awareness of Empire, and more specifically an awareness of the status of *Indochine française* within the Empire, and to the perception of France's imperial mission in South-East Asia. This chapter will be divided into two sections, treating firstly metropolitan manuals, and secondly providing a comparative view by analysing manuals for use in Franco-indochinese schools. Both sections will firstly analyse the ways in which both sets of school manuals defined and described the French Empire. They will further examine France's perception of itself as an imperial power, the status of Indochina within the French empire, and lastly France's relationship with Indochina.

2. Corpus

The primary texts under discussion in this chapter fall into three categories. The first are history and geography school manuals used in metropolitan schools from 1905-1930. All of the metropolitan texts under discussion were widely adopted in the Republic's schools. The second category of text is comprised of official documents: *arrêtés ministériels*, documentation published by the *Service de l'Instruction publique*, and literature concerning colonial education made widely available following the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* in 1931. These documents provide the basis of what might be termed the 'official' aims and objectives of metropolitan France as regards the representation of Empire in school manuals.

Thirdly, the section on education in Indochina examines school manuals created and published at the behest of the French *Service de l'Instruction publique* in Indochina in the wake of the educational reforms of 1910-1930. This latter selection includes texts written by both indigenous and metropolitan educators in order to demonstrate the similarity of content, and the evident complicity of indigenous writers in this metropolitan project.

3. Colonial Education at Home

a) Propaganda and the French Empire

Arguably one of the most significant undertakings of the Third Republic was the overhaul of the metropolitan education system⁵. The creation of France's Third Republic amidst a climate of defeat, radical left uprising and an enduring political leaning towards monarchism in many quarters, meant that the construction of a new national identity around the notion of The Republic was crucial⁶. It was principally⁷ through the development of compulsory, secular education that Jules Ferry⁸ and his supporters sought to institute a *civisme républicain* and a sense of French national identity amongst the primary-school children of metropolitan France.

By the turn of the century, once France had accumulated her vast overseas Empire, it became necessary to extend 'national' identity in order to incorporate her new accretions into that very sense of nationhood. The notion of 'la plus grande France', stretching out the *hexagone*'s limits to envelop the overseas territories, required a significant shift in the composition of the Third Republic's sense of nationhood. The reworked sense of national identity which the Third Republic now sought to popularise meant not simply an inward-looking sense of what it was to belong to metropolitan France. It involved an understanding and appreciation of the

⁵See Girardet's commentary on the importance of education under the Third Republic in his anthology on French nationalism: Girardet, R., Le Nationalisme français: une anthologie 1871-1914 (Paris: Seuil, 1983).

⁶For an overview of the issues of nationalism, national identity and republicanism see Hazareesingh, S., Political Traditions in Modern France (Oxford: OUP, 1994).

⁷Although other important features of this consolidation of national identity are military service, the adoption of various national symbols and the spread of French as the national language.

⁸It is interesting to note that Ferry's principal and complementary achievements under the Third Republic are generally recognised to be education and colonialism.

implications of France's role and status as an imperial nation. National identity, in other words, had now to encompass and complement a *conscience impériale*⁹.

From the turn of the century onwards, but most notably in the 1920s and 1930s, successive governments, supported by the *parti colonial*¹⁰, made the dissemination of this new sense of national identity one of their prime educational aims. This imbrication of national and imperial identity is demonstrated in the observations Messimy made in 1933 on the education of metropolitan French schoolchildren:

il est indispensable qu'ils sachent exactement ce qu'est la France, qu'ils voient nettement la place qu'elle occupe dans le monde, qu'ils comprennent que seule, est désormais une grande puissance la nation qui possède dans toutes les parties du monde des bases de départ pour le développement de son influence morale et de son commerce matériel, que, seule, est une nation véritablement mondiale, un Etat qui n'est pas limité entre les étroites frontières qui morcellent la petite Europe¹¹.

At a time when France could not expect to expand her frontiers on a European scale, French national identity is viewed as reposing upon extra-national factors, and extra-European influence. Messimy further stressed that

tout l'Enseignement en France doit être imprégné, dans ses diverses modalités appropriées, de la pensée coloniale qui est liée étroitement à la mission de la France dans le monde¹².

⁹Thirty-eight hours were given over to 'colonial' education in primary schools following the reforms of 1925. Many commentators still believed this to be too little.

¹⁰The composition and action of the *parti colonial* under the Third Republic is documented by Ageron, C-H., *France colonial ou parti colonial ?*, (Paris: PUF, 1978), and Andrew, C., "The French Colonialist Movement during the Third Republic: the unofficial mind of imperialism", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vol. 26, 1976.

¹¹*Rapport Général*, vol. 6 (i), (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1932-5), p. 82.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 80

A clear link can thus be established between education and the diffusion of state-created notions of national identity. Just as it had at its outset, the Third Republic continued to place emphasis upon the inclusion in educational curricula of specific ideals of national prestige and grandeur. By the period now under discussion, the French Empire had become the most convincing means of demonstrating and exemplifying national prestige.

School manuals, which contain both deliberate propaganda and also indirect reflections of the relatively conservative mind-set of metropolitan educationalists, thus illustrate both educational policy and the 'official' vision of French colonialism of the era. Precisely because they were aimed at an unsophisticated audience, the school manuals under discussion present a schematised, unnuanced and largely unfiltered overview of France's role as an imperial nation in Indochina. Indeed, they present the reader with the basic founding principles of French colonial discourses. Sections within history and geography manuals which dealt with the French Empire set state-produced notions of the imperial nation alongside state-produced representations of the Indochinese Union. The patriotism which had previously been directed solely towards the Motherland was therefore to be extended to include the overseas territories.

Because a youthful audience is far more impressionable than its adult counterpart, French government officials had far greater liberty in setting the terms and boundaries of their own representations of French imperialism in school manuals than they would have encountered elsewhere. By inculcating into a generation of metropolitan French youth chosen tenets of government imperial ideology, the nation was not only ensuring short-term support for her imperial designs, but was furthermore ensuring that the spirit of Empire would be instilled in generations yet to come. As August has noted, 'Lessons learned in childhood remain for a lifetime. The socialisation of one set of youth forms the cultural inheritance of the following

generation'¹³. School children were the most fertile ground on which to sow the seeds of imperial propaganda:

c'est sur l'enseignement primaire qu'il faut avant tout compter pour donner à la France cette conscience coloniale qui lui a manqué jusqu'ici...¹⁴

The metropole's version of Chamberlain's drive to encourage the British to 'learn to think imperially', was thus encapsulated by the discourses of colonialism present in school manuals from the turn of the century onwards.

The following sub-sections will examine the content of the metropolitan school manuals in order to pinpoint the idea and model of imperial France which educators sought to implant during this period.

b) A Certain Notion of Imperial France

i) France's Imperial 'Tradition'

As this chapter has already asserted, imperialism and colonialism were directly linked in school manuals to notions of national prestige and grandeur. Metropolitan France was great because she was a colonial power with an imperial past. Even though this representation of France's prestige had not been unanimously accepted within political circles and especially during the first decade of the Third Republic¹⁵, school manuals had never reflected an anti-expansionist view.

Thus, in order to popularise and consolidate the notion of the French Empire amongst the metropolitan population, colonisation was presented as a 'natural' policy

¹³August, T., The Selling of Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda 1890-1940 (London: Greenwood, 1985), p. 107.

¹⁴Rapport Général, vol. 6 (i), op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁵For a useful overview of the two sides of the expansion debate of the 1870s and 1880s, see Girardet, R., L'Idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962 (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972).

or stance on the part of European nations. School manuals established a narrative in which colonialism was presented as a prerogative of the French nation, and a traditional impulse of European nations. Imperialism was thus presented as both a national and a European prerogative, doubly legitimising the French colonial enterprise.

Discussions concerning the extent and nature of contemporary French colonialism thus tended to be situated within a historical background. The majority of school manuals were at pains to emphasize the historical precedent of more recent colonial acts and conquests, and to place these events within a French 'tradition' of colonisation. This narrative of imperial design is invoked in many manuals in their references to the 'old' empire, or the 'first' French empire. Ferrand for instance, in a manual dating from 1904, relates the following:

La France a été parmi les premières nations qui aient acquis des colonies. (...) Un moment, sous Louis XV, Dupleix, gouverneur aux Indes, pensa nous conquérir de sujets, mais Louis XV perdit toute l'Inde moins 5 villes, et tout ce qui nous restait encore du Canada (1763). Les guerres de la Révolution et de Napoléon achevèrent la ruine de notre empire colonial dont les Anglais recueillirent les meilleurs morceaux. Elles ne nous laissèrent que quelques îles, la Guyane, les 5 villes de l'Inde et quelques comptoirs en Afrique. Depuis ces désastres, la France s'est remise patiemment à l'oeuvre. En moins d'un siècle, elle s'est refait un empire colonial¹⁶.

Ferrand's account of the French imperial past places the colonising act within an unacknowledged political or ideological movement promoting the acquisition of overseas territories. The moral value of this movement, whose other partisans are not mentioned, is clearly implicated in the competitive angle with which Ferrand slants the statement: France was one of the first countries to succeed in creating an empire;

¹⁶Ferrand, L-H., Géographie de la France et de ses colonies (Cours moyen, préparation au certificat d'études), (Paris: Cornély, 1904), p. 75.

the loss of this 'first' empire is regretted, and blame apportioned, in the choice of terms such as 'la ruine' and 'ces désastres'. Thus, without discussing either the implications of the imperial act, or even mentioning the overseas populations, Ferrand valorises French colonial aggression as 'une oeuvre'. Furthermore, in introducing an element of competitiveness to this expansive impulse (the references to British recuperation of 'French' colonial territory, the insistence on France being 'parmi les premières nations', and the emphasis on the struggle to regain an empire), he situates French imperialism within a framework of national grandeur and status.

Foucart and Grigault, in their manual of 1909, not only refer to the acquisition of colonial territories as a traditional element of French foreign policy, but also, more specifically than Ferrand, place this gesture within the framework of a competitive pan-European movement of expansion:

En donnant à son empire colonial l'extension qu'il a aujourd'hui, la France n'a pas seulement obéi au mouvement qui, pendant la seconde moitié du XIXème siècle a poussé presque tous les pays d'Europe à s'emparer de nouveaux territoires: revenant à une politique traditionnelle, elle a, en même temps, reconstitué avec d'autres éléments un domaine extérieur que des guerres malheureuses lui avait fait perdre¹⁷.

The desire to place the 'new' empire within the context of a French imperial tradition, or even within a European tradition, can, to a certain extent, be perceived as a response to change. To use Hobsbawm's term, this 'invention of tradition' may be seen as a response to a novel situation which takes the form of a reference to old situations¹⁸. The 'old' model of the former empire is used for the new purpose of establishing structure, continuity and some sense of the invariance of national motives

¹⁷Foucart, G., and Grigault, M., La Géographie au brevet élémentaire: La France et ses colonies (Paris: Delagrave, 1909), p. 254.

¹⁸See Hobsbawm, E., (ed), The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), particularly Hobsbawm's introduction in which he discusses his approach (pp. 1-14).

and intent. The repetition here establishes a sense of national social continuity and community of purpose. The 'new' empire was thus presented as a 'reconstitution' of the first.

This notion of reconstitution allows writers and educators to posit the precedent of the former Empire. The very existence of this former Empire is then used as irrefutable grounds for approval of the reacquisition of a colonial domain. By citing the existence of a colonial precedent, and by valorising that precedent, these writers avoid having to engage in the imperial debate, and having to justify the imperial act. Indeed, nowhere in these manuals is there an objective discussion of the anti-imperial argument. The omission of the reasons for, or justifications of, these expansive acts, coupled with the lack of a counter-balancing argument, presents the legitimacy of the French empire as beyond contestation. French colonialism, the reader is given to understand, is inherently justifiable.

ii) *La Plus Grande France*

As this chapter has suggested, concepts of national prestige and grandeur came to be linked in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century France with expansionist policies. The most enduring discursive characteristic of this political shift is the widespread use of the term *la Plus Grande France*, another tenacious myth of French imperialism, to signify French political and cultural influence on an international scale.

Indeed, one of the principal aims of 'colonial' education in metropolitan France, complementing the concern to popularise the French Empire, was to inspire amongst the younger generation a patriotic affection for these far-flung territories. The following quotation, taken from the introduction to Josset's manual *A Travers les colonies* of 1901, typifies the aims of school books of the turn of the century:

Il importe de préparer nos fils à cette tâche colossale: il faut leur faire connaître nos possessions lointaines et les leur faire aimer comme leur propre patrie (...) il faut enfin, par des exemples probants, réfuter cette erreur funeste qui veut que le Français ne soit pas colonisateur, et inspirer à la jeune génération cette confiance en soi qui fait les peuples forts¹⁹.

Josset, in the above extract, typifies the discursive intention of the notion of *la Plus Grande France* in representing the colony as an extension of the French nation.

Indeed, the colonies, it was hoped, would be viewed with the same patriotic fervour as the homeland.

The problem of extending filial affection for the Motherland in equal measure to the colonies is a frequently recurring site of tension in French colonial discourses. To love an extra-national territory *as one's own*, implies an equality of identity which, as later sections will show, French discourses of colonialism simultaneously reject. The conflict raised by this notion of *la Plus Grande France*, that of alterity and similitude, is never truly resolved in French colonial discourse, and is connected, as Josset further reveals, to the very kernel of French imperialism.

For Josset's preamble is also suggestive of certain imperial misgivings which resurface regularly in French colonial discourses. His objectives, to build confidence in Empire, to inspire a patriotism which extended to colonial territories, are undermined by his allusion to the notion that it was somehow 'un-French' to colonise. His preamble raises the intrinsic problem of French imperialism without further elaboration: the paradox of universalism and liberty. This ellipsis points to the irreconcilability of the elements of French Republican tradition which bisect and fracture attempts to produce a coherent and monolithic French discourse of colonialism. On the one hand, the strong belief in the universality of French

¹⁹Josset, E., *A Travers les Colonies* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1901), preface.

civilisation, on the other, the forcible imposition of that very culture and civilisation upon other peoples in the name of liberty and fraternity.

Lavisse's catechistic exhortation in a section entitled 'Le Devoir patriotique', epitomises the image of France which educators hoped to impress upon the young generation, and articulates the reasoning which lies behind France's 'civilising mission':

En défendant la France, nous défendons la terre où nous sommes nés,
la plus belle et la plus généreuse terre du monde.

En défendant la France, nous nous conduisons comme de bons fils.
Nous remplissons un devoir envers nos pères, qui se sont donnés tant
de peine depuis des siècles pour créer notre patrie.

En défendant la France, nous travaillons pour tous les hommes de
tous les pays, car la France, depuis la Révolution, a répandu dans le
monde les idées de justice et d'humanité.

La France est la plus juste, la plus libre, la plus humaine des patries²⁰.

Lavisse's superlative portrayal of the nation provides the basis from which an ethical vision of French colonialism can spring: an exemplary humanitarian past, and a faultless list of qualities which differentiate the nation from her imperial rivals. France's heritage of humanitarian *génie* coupled with a republican desire for universalism once again forms the central principle of colonial propaganda.

Josset's preamble differs very little from the Ferryist discourses of expansion which were current in the 1870s and 1880s. His perception of colonisation as an element of a population's strength and a nation's prestige is reminiscent of Leroy-Beaulieu's assertion of the 1870s that

²⁰Lavisse, E., "Le Devoir patriotique", in Histoire de la France - cours moyen - préparation au certificat d'études primaires (Paris: Armand Colin, 1912), p. 246.

Le peuple qui colonise est le premier peuple²¹.

Indeed, this terminology of *la Plus Grande France*, and its symbolic manifestations, are also invoked in metropolitan school manuals in order to impress upon their young readers the extent and importance of French influence. The French Empire represents *ralliement*, the incorporation of the 'outside' territories to the Motherland, and the extension of the *hexagone*'s national boundaries to include the far-flung acquisitions of the French Empire. To this end, Josset's book, for example, takes three brothers on an imaginary trip around the world through the remembered anecdotes of 'Oncle Martin' who served in the colonies:

si vous êtes capables de m'écouter plusieurs jours de suite, je vous conduirai successivement dans les cinq parties du monde, dans ces contrées très différentes, habitées par des peuples noirs, jaunes ou rouges. Sur toutes ces contrées flotte cependant le même drapeau: le drapeau de la France²².

Here, the national flag, the symbiosis of the Republic and the French nation, provides a visible symbol of *ralliement*. The *tricolore*, incarnating 'une certaine conception unitaire et conciliatrice du destin national'²³, demonstrates the transplantation of the myth of foundation and unity to the colonies. The French national flag asserts a notion of permanence and cohesion which in fact masks dispersion and disunity.

As Barthes indicated in "Grammaire africaine", colonial discourse tends to divest population groups of their individuality, by representing them as neutral, passive and homogeneous. Barthes distinguishes between 'le pluralisme des colonies', and 'l'unité métropolitaine' whereby France rallies to her all that is by its nature

²¹Quoted by Girardet, *l'Idée coloniale en France*, op. cit., p. 56.

²²Josset, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

²³ Girardet, R., "Les Trois couleurs", in Nora, P., *Les Lieux de mémoire 1: La République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p.32.

diverse and multiplicitous²⁴. Josset thus seeks to minimise cultural difference and conflict by celebrating the unifying power of the French nation. France sees its own identity in imitations, imperfect copies as they may be, but copies entirely fabricated by the colonising power.

The notion of *la Plus Grande France* is thus used in school manuals to demonstrate the unificatory scope of the French nation. The prestige of the French nation is reinforced by its very ability to rally to it, and embrace, a diverse Empire. However, this very notion of *ralliement* brings into focus one of the most significant conflicts which lies at the heart of French colonial discourse. The tension arising from the idea that French culture and civilisation were inherently valuable, coupled with a belief in the universality of the values affirmed by the French Revolution. Transposed to the domain of colonialism, this ideological founding block of the Republic thus seats an acquisitive nationalism uncomfortably alongside the presentation of colonisation as political and ideological liberation.

iii) Principles of French Colonialism

Whilst much time is given over to the description of France's imperial past, and her qualities as an imperial nation, far less time is accorded to an overview of the nature of the metropole's colonies. Indeed, the 'colonial' sections of history and geography manuals are far more concerned with the history of French imperialism than they are with the history of the colonies. Few school manuals offered a concise, preliminary definition of what was meant by *colonie* in their introductory paragraphs on the French empire. Most often, imperial France was once more the prime focus of the manuals, and the colony was evoked only in terms of how the colonising nation benefited from 'possessing' the territory, or in terms of the ways in which that

²⁴ Barthes, R., *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957/1970), pp. 137-46.

territory 'received' the actions of the colonising nation. In his manual of 1905, Mane however, produced the following definition:

On appelle colonies des établissements créés par une nation dans un pays étranger, principalement dans une autre partie du monde, soit pour recevoir les émigrants de ce pays, soit pour aider au développement de son commerce²⁵.

This definition draws heavily upon myths of creation. Both 'créer' and 'établir' suggest generation and development. The vocabulary employed in Mane's definition suggests that nothing existed, or at least nothing of value in French-defined terms, prior to the act of creation on the part of the colonising nation. The colonised country is presented as a commodity: its value as a commodity however, is only realised and recognised once engendered and developed by the presence or intervention of the imperial nation. The ambivalence of the term 'établissement', when juxtaposed with 'nation', strips the colony of its 'countryhood', or 'nationhood'. By thus denying nationhood, Mane further emphasises the commodification of the colonised territory, which is clearly presented as an entity entirely fabricated by the colonising nation. Simultaneously, the colony is represented as a repository: it receives emigrants from the metropole. This description reinforces the sense of the colony as an extension of metropolitan France.

Many school manuals discussed empire in relation to ideals of French colonialism: generosity, benevolence, protection. These definitions and descriptions again rely heavily on verbal constructions which emphasise the benign yet originary nature of French colonialism: *cultiver, créer, établir*. Ferrand, for instance, provides a description which, whilst not specifically defining the 'the colony' as such, allows the

²⁵Mane, F., *Géographie élémentaire de la France et de ses colonies* (Classe de 7ème, enseignement classique, certificat d'études primaires), (Marseille: Laffitte, 1905), p. 148.

reader to infer certain meanings which define the colony in terms of the imperial nation:

Si l'Européen trouve dans ces territoires un climat approprié, s'il y rencontre peu d'indigènes, il s'y établit avec sa famille, il cultive, il crée de nouvelles provinces quasi-européennes (...)

Si le climat est dangereux, si la population indigène est nombreuse, le conquérant ne peut songer ni à peupler ni à cultiver sa colonie. Il y envoie de l'argent, des directeurs de culture, des commerçants, et il fait travailler les indigènes (...) ²⁶.

This type of description allows the reader to infer a definition which is evidently delimited and circumscribed by metropolitan terms of reference and value systems. The European is seen as deciding on the worth of the colony; he acts according to whether the climate and terrain are appealing to him. In discussing 'colonies de peuplement' in the first paragraph, Ferrand creates a gentle, familial view of imperialism, which once more draws upon the assimilatory terminology of *la Plus Grande France*. The second paragraph however, is more aggressive in tone, signalled by the introduction of the figure of the conqueror. Indeed, the 'colonies d'exploitation' of this second paragraph are marked by a hierarchy which is made much clearer and more immediate. The European French are the managers and directors, the indigenous populations are the pliant workforce. The imposition of capitalist principles on the colony is carried out in the name of development and progress, allowing Ferrand to present economic exploitation as a beneficial feature of French colonialism, an example of *la mise en valeur*.

However, the commercial and financial aspects and benefits of colonisation tend to be explained tersely and baldly in most school manuals. Although these preliminary 'definitions' limit the colony's role and status to that of an economic asset

²⁶Ferrand, op. cit., p. 75.

for the colonising nation, further descriptions tend to ignore this basis in an attempt to mitigate the original economic imperatives of colonial expansion. Far more space is given over to the evocation of the generous and humanitarian aspects of the colonial relationship. Lavissee thus hurries over economic matters, preferring to evoke at much greater length the more abstract and less quantifiable aspects of the colonial relationship:

A quoi servent les colonies ? Les colonies sont très utiles au commerce et à l'industrie de la France. Nous y vendons beaucoup de nos produits, ce qui augmente la richesse nationale. Nous y achetons les produits dont nous avons besoin.

Mais un noble pays comme la France ne pense pas qu'à gagner de l'argent. En Indo-Chine, la France a mis fin aux ravages de bandits venus de Chine (...)

Partout elle enseigne aux populations le travail. Elle crée des routes, des chemins de fer, des lignes télégraphiques²⁷.

His clear attempt to distance France from a solely economic rationale of colonialism points not only to the desire to differentiate France from her imperial rivals in Europe, but more importantly, to the unspoken need to formulate an ethical basis for what was essentially an exploitative project.

Lavissee thus introduces the notion of France's *oeuvre civilisatrice*, and its close discursive companion *la mise en valeur des colonies*. These twin concepts serve to provide French colonialism with the ethical basis which the economic exploitation of the colonies obscures. The defining characteristic of French colonialism is, according to Lavissee's vision, its altruism and selfless interest in protecting and developing its colonies.

²⁷Lavissee, op. cit., p. 244.

The emphasis in school manuals was thus firmly placed upon the humanitarian as opposed to economic rationale for French colonialism. The consistent prominence of the trinity of metropolitan protection, generosity and benevolence serves to mask a more profound examination of the motivations of French expansionism.

c) La France en Indochine

i) Rewriting the narrative of Conquest

Given the principles of French colonialism which have been discussed above, it is not surprising that the violence of the conquest is attenuated in these school manuals. Indeed, the most striking feature school text books share in their portrayal of France's acquisition of an Indochinese Empire, is the attempt to dismantle and rewrite the narrative of conquest. Representations of the conquest of Indochina therefore demonstrate once more an attempt to create an ethical basis for French colonialism in South-East Asia. Historical accuracy appears to have been a minor concern, as do impartiality and objectivity. The conquest is represented without fail as a reactive gesture: a response to Chinese aggression, Siamese 'encroachments', or other, often less specific, 'problems':

En Indochine, des difficultés avec l'Annam, à l'occasion de l'établissement d'un négociant français à Hanoi provoquèrent la prise de cette ville par des troupes envoyées au Tonkin. Le traité de 1874, qui mit fin au conflit, plaçait l'Annam sous notre protectorat; ce protectorat, assez vaguement défini, ne devint effectif qu'en 1883, après une nouvelle intervention au Tonkin pour y faire cesser des troubles causés par des irréguliers chinois²⁸.

Des empiétements que faisait systématiquement le Siam sur des territoires dépendant de l'Annam, notre protégé, et que n'avait pas arrêtés le traité de 1886, nécessitèrent en 1893 l'envoi de troupes au

²⁸Foucart et Grigault, op. cit., p. 258.

Laos et de forces navales devant Bangkok. Le Siam céda et évacua la rive gauche du Mékong, nous laissant la libre disposition du Laos ²⁹.

The use of vocabulary such as 'nécessitérent', 'céda', 'nous laissant la libre disposition', removes motivation and agency from the French conquerors. France's role in the conquest is thus reworked, and is now described using terms which suggest arbitration and protection.

As Barthes noted of the evocation of war in French official colonial discourse:

GUERRE: Le but est de nier la chose. On dispose pour cela de deux moyens: ou bien la nommer le moins possible (procédé le plus fréquent); ou bien lui donner le sens de son propre contraire (procédé plus retors, qui est à la base de presque toutes les mystifications du langage bourgeois). *Guerre* est alors employé dans le sens de *paix* et *pacification* dans le sens de *guerre*³⁰.

Indeed, and as Norindr has suggested, these narratives of creation, and the naming of Indochina, were 'designed to erase from the collective memory the bloody history of its foundation'³¹. Presenting French intervention in Indochina as a reaction to some maleficent force then enables these texts to describe that intervention in terms of purely altruistic intent. France, rather than being represented as yet another aggressor, is treated in these texts as a protector. Thus, the protagonists of the conquest are elevated to the status of national *héros* or *martyrs*.

The famous names of the Indochinese conquest are rehabilitated, and represented as making an ultimate sacrifice in the name of the nation, and thereby as embodying the values of the nation:

Voilà une colonie qui nous a coûté cher, dit Louis, quand son frère eut fermé le livre. Garnier, Rivière, Courbet, Paul Bert, que d'hommes illustres ont payé de leur existence l'acquisition du Tonkin!

²⁹Ibid., p. 259.

³⁰Barthes, op. cit., p. 139.

³¹Norindr, op. cit. p. 39.

- Ils ont donné leur vie sans marchander, lui dit le capitaine, parce qu'ils avaient foi dans l'avenir de ce pays, l'un des plus riches du globe. C'est à nous de marcher sur la voie que ces grands morts nous ont ouverte, c'est à nous qu'il appartient de relever en Extrême-Orient le prestige de la France, tombé en bas depuis que l'Angleterre est la maîtresse incontestée des Grandes Indes³².

The texts' disavowal of premeditation or imperial design on the part of the French nation is to an extent accurate. The conquest of Indochina did not result from a defined plan or directive from Paris. The component parts of the Indochinese Empire were accrued by individuals acting autonomously, often without the knowledge, let alone the support, of the French government. These 'national martyrs' are represented as the embodiment of national values ('foi dans l'avenir', 'le prestige de la France'). Although school manuals are generally at pains to avoid emphasising the economic rationale behind colonialism, Josset here alludes to loss of life in the process of colonial conquest in economic terms. The residual, yet concealed narrative of financial gain through colonisation, here resurfaces, although still veiled, as a sacrificial act of national faith.

Expansionist actions and the war of conquest are thus presented as abstract gestures relating solely to the prestige of the French nation. These narratives of heroism deflect attention from the bellicosity and violence of the French imperial adventure, and add a different moral and historical weight and importance to what was in fact a disorganised series of events.

Two conflicting historiographical visions of French imperialism thus emerge from metropolitan school manuals. Paradoxically, having situated French colonisation within the context of a national or European tradition, these texts elaborate a myth of imperial purpose which sits uncomfortably alongside their disavowal of imperial

³²Josset, op. cit., p. 261.

desires. A defined goal is invented and used to explain the French presence in Indochina, which involves describing the French nation as rallied as one behind the conquest. This portrayal ignores the prolific debate over France's expansive policies which raged in the 1880s, and once more omits any reference to the anti-colonial view.

ii) Representing France's Contemporary Role in Indochina

The metropole's contemporary role in Indochina is imagined along lines which follow the same trajectory as demonstrated by reinscriptions of the conquest: liberation and protection from maleficent and domineering exterior forces. Josset's depiction of French colonialism in Cambodia thus focuses upon both interior and exterior aggressions which have provoked the political and cultural decline of the Khmer peoples:

Le despotisme aveugle des souverains a fait de ce peuple, si bien doué, un peuple d'esclaves. Pressurés sans cesse par leurs rois, habitués à courber le dos sous le joug, les Cambodgiens n'ont plus aujourd'hui d'autre force que la force d'inertie. Ils ont succombé sous les coups des Siamois qui leur ont pris Angkor, et des Annamites, qui leur avaient enlevé la Cochinchine. Depuis que la France a établi son protectorat sur le Cambodge, la décadence politique des Kmers (sic) s'est arrêtée. Le Siam, possesseur d'Angkor n'ira plus loin³³.

Again, as in the case of the conquest, narratives concerning French action in Indochina often present intervention as a reactive gesture; here in response to despotism and local annexations. Furthermore, French intervention is represented as reviving indigenous grandeur. The temple site at Angkor³⁴, which at the time the

³³Ibid., p. 273.

³⁴The broader significance of the Angkor site will be discussed in detail in the chapter on the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* of 1931.

manual was written had not yet passed into French hands, serves as the symbol of the motivations and value of French colonialism.

-Il est regrettable que cette belle pagode ne soit pas en territoire français, dit Louis.

-Je le déplore comme toi, mon ami. Nous veillerons à la conservation de ce monument mieux que ne le font les Siamois³⁵.

In the above quotation it is implied that Angkor, the symbol of past Khmer glory, can be protected, restored and *mise en valeur* by the careful application of the principles of French colonialism. Thus the colonised Indochinese are not only protected by French colonialism, they are also perceived to gain stature and prestige through their association with metropolitan France. French colonialism is thus presented as a mutually beneficial project: the metropole increases its own grandeur in its possession of an Empire; Indochina gains reflected glory through its association with the metropole.

This notion of mutually reflected grandeur and prestige exemplifies yet another inconsistency within French colonial discourse. Having justified expansion through the use of Republican and patriotic discourses which assert the great tradition and heritage of the metropole, these manuals simultaneously suggest that France can be great only through the addition of extra-metropolitan countries to the nation. In order to deflect attention from the metropole's need, that very need is displaced and relocated to the colony. These manuals thus elaborate a discourse of generosity in order that the prestige France aspires to will not be tarnished by her own lack.

This notion of 'prestige by association' is expanded in examinations of contemporary French actions in Indochina. Indeed, these manuals are at pains to

³⁵Josset, op. cit., p. 273.

emphasise the notion of *mise en valeur* in their examination of colonial rule in Indochina. Much of their detail is focused upon the improvements which have been wrought since French colonial rule was established. However, these developments and transformations are once more defined in terms of replicating the French nation in Indochina. Thus the mirror of France which French *colons* have created is held up for praise and admiration. On Hanoi, Josset notes:

-C'est qu'aujourd'hui toute une cité moderne s'est élevée à côté de la ville asiatique qu'on a eu le soin de respecter. Ah ! Si Garnier, si Paul Bert revenaient à Hanoi, ils seraient émerveillés des changements rapides qui se sont opérés dans la capitale de cette colonie, pour laquelle ils ont donné leur vie. Ils y verraient les coquettes maisons blanches, d'élégantes boutiques, de belles avenues et des installations industrielles: fabrique de meubles en bois de rose, scierie à vapeur, usine électrique, filature, etc., en un mot, une ville européenne, animée, bien vivante, qui ne demande qu'à s'étendre et à prospérer³⁶.

Although Josset nods in the direction of the newer associationist policy that had begun to take hold amongst colonialists at the time of his writing ('la ville asiatique qu'on a eu le soin de respecter'), his main emphasis is on the transformations which render Hanoi more 'European'. Furthermore, the adjectives used to describe the 'Europeanised' Hanoi imply a lack of industriousness and vivacity on the part of the indigenous populations. The assimilative vision of the French role in Indochina is made clearer in the following quotation, again from Josset:

-Est-ce que Saigon ressemble vraiment à Paris ? demanda Louis, nous n'y sommes établis pourtant que depuis 1859.

-C'est vrai. On ne peut songer sans admiration au petit nombre d'années qu'il a fallu à la France pour faire d'une ville malsaine, aux

³⁶Ibid., pp. 282-3

canaux marécageux, une cité élégante, aux riches édifices, aux rues larges, aérées, bien ombragées³⁷.

Here the contrast between Saigon before and after French intervention is one which stresses the unhygienic, unhealthy properties of the indigenous city, with the elegant, healthy one constructed by the French. The transformative power of colonialism thus again involves the debasement of the indigenous city. This quotation also reveals the assimilative intentions still at work behind the mask of associative rhetoric. The notion of *la Plus Grande France* here acts to implement the gallicisation of the colony.

Rendering Indochina French, however, is not an aspiration without limits. The extension of ideals of French civilisation to Indochina comes abruptly to a halt in respect of government in Indochina. These school manuals quite candidly emphasise the perceived inferiority of indigenous regimes which remain in place in certain regions of the *Union indochinoise*:

Ce n'est que très lentement qu'il [l'Annamite] acceptera nos idées, et seulement quand il sera convaincu de notre supériorité. L'Alliance française dont je vous ai déjà parlé fait d'énergiques efforts pour propager parmi les indigènes l'usage de notre langue. Avec elle nos idées pénètrent chez l'Annamite. Ce sera l'oeuvre du temps. N'oublions pas cette belle maxime, inscrite dans les écoles d'Annam: la force réprime pour un temps, l'instruction enchaîne pour toujours³⁸.

This quotation emphasises the superiority of the French colonial rulers, and imputes to them complete domination of the Indochinese peoples, which flies in the face of associationist policies. Here an under-handed authoritarianism masquerades as indirect colonial rule. The authoritarian nature of French colonial government is made more explicit in the following quotation which refers to the Royal Court at Hué:

³⁷Ibid., p. 262.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 284-5.

On ne change pas en quelques années des coutumes séculaires, dit le capitaine. A vouloir tout bouleverser, nous nous attirerions bien inutilement une foule d'ennemis. Laissons faire les années. Pour l'instant il nous suffit d'entretenir quelques postes dans la citadelle; il importe de surveiller ces monarques asiatiques, rusés et perfides, et d'être prêts à tout événement³⁹.

Here the ostensible adoption of a policy of association, or indirect rule, is revealed to be a sop to indigenous rulers. Careful colonial surveillance prefigures a time when total French domination is envisaged. This vision of France's role in Indochina is clearly at odds with the presentations of reciprocity and mutual benefit which the manuals have elsewhere asserted as a tenet of French colonialism.

4. Concluding Comments

Colonial sections in metropolitan school manuals establish an imperial identity for the French nation which is riddled with contradictions. On the one hand, the imperial identity they seek to assert consists essentially of a simple extension of the nation's pre-imperial values, references and defining features. The founding principles of French national identity under the Third Republic, its Republican heritage and humanitarian *génie*, are perceived as being extended wholesale to its Empire. A colonial ideal emerges, in which the French nation was presented as a unificatory agent, rallying diverse and dispersed fragments to her greater self. In keeping with the principles of 1789, imperial France was presented as the epitome of generosity and protective benevolence.

On the other hand, discourses of colonialism which appear in these manuals in respect of Indochina reveal that this extension of French civilisation is both severely limited in political terms, and authoritarian in character. Although the colonial ideal

³⁹Ibid., p. 278.

examined in these school manuals stresses the liberatory and protective nature of French colonialism, it also reveals that in order for colonial rule to be maintained Indochina must remain in an inferior position vis-a-vis the metropole. *La Plus Grande France* is imposed upon Indochina in restricted cultural terms, but the equality the term suggests remains shrouded in hierarchical discourses of French superiority.

These manuals also reveal the kernel of what was intended to be understood by the term *Indochine française*. A hybrid territory made up of diverse regions, cultures and traditions, Indochina is made a coherent whole through the homogenising and unificatory action of the French nation. Indochina is rid of its Asian associations, and recreated in French terms. The representation of French Indochina in metropolitan school manuals clearly places emphasis on the French additions, improvements, modifications and influence which have been brought to bear in the colony. All vestiges of Asian history and culture are rigorously excluded from descriptions of Indochina, either by effacement or by substitution. The 'history' of Indochina dates solely from the beginning of French interest and intervention, and references to a pre-colonial past only emphasise threats and aggression aimed at the Indochinese peoples. Since French colonial intervention, Indochina is presented as having increased its prestige and stature through association with the imperial nation. This enables writers to present French colonialism as a mutually beneficial project, as opposed to one which France itself needs in order to regain prestige. French colonialism is at once generous and viewed as bestowing benefits, and self-seeking in its desire for prestige. The innate superiority of the French nation and its colonial representatives in Indochina is nevertheless clearly asserted, thus once more reinforcing the grandeur of the French nation.

5. Education in Indochina

As this chapter has already noted, the great effort of the Third Republic in the 1880s to create a secular and universal system of education which would provide the nation with virtuous and patriotic citizens was viewed as one of the regime's greatest successes. Education is evidently a crucial way in which to maintain and strengthen domination over a colonised people. It should not be surprising therefore, that one sees the same desire to inculcate a certain idea of the French nation in schools in the colonies. Indeed the 1920s and 1930s witnessed a significant *effort scolaire* in the colonies.

Although as early as the 1860s, the conquering Admirals of the French Navy had attempted to set in place a school system to counteract the influence of the traditional teachers who had consistently agitated against French intervention⁴⁰, the period of consolidation of French rule, from the turn of the century onwards, exemplifies most clearly the imbrication of policy and propaganda in education programmes in Indochina. The concerted metropolitan effort to consolidate colonial rule is clearly demonstrated in the desire to establish a notion of *l'Indochine française* amongst the dominated populations.

Indochina occupied a privileged place in metropolitan educational programmes, and was treated as something of a showcase for French colonial efforts in the field of education. This, as Kelly suggests, might be attributed to the personalities of the colonial governors in Indochina: their ambitions, and personal views of how the colony should be developed⁴¹. However, it seems more likely that

⁴⁰On resistance to the French conquest see Van, N., Viêt-nam 1920-1945: révolution et contre-révolution sous la domination coloniale (Paris: L'Insomniaque, 1995).

⁴¹See Kelly, G., "Colonialism, indigenous society and school practices: French West Africa and Indochina 1918-1938", pp. 9-32, in Altbach, P., and Kelly, G., (eds) Education and the Colonial Experience (London: Transaction Books, 2nd Revised Edition, 1984).

education policy was more fully developed and more carefully implemented in Indochina than in the other colonies for reasons which have a more direct correlation with ideologies of colonialism rather than simply the personal qualities of its governing elite. Indochina enjoyed a privileged place in the metropolitan imagination: it was perceived as *la perle de l'Extrême-Orient*, a colony to rival Britain's 'Jewel in the Crown'. Competition within South-East Asia, but particularly competition with Imperial Britain and that benchmark of colonialism, British India, was a crucial point of reference for French colonialists. The imperatives of maintaining and visibly demonstrating metropolitan prestige and grandeur, of impressing *le génie français* upon the international community, meant that Indochina received considerable care and attention in the domain of education.

More importantly however, Indochina was perceived as occupying a higher rung on the ladder of civilisation than the African colonies. Its populations, as Challaye noted at the beginning of the century, should not be treated in the same way as 'n'importe quelle peuplade nègre du centre de l'Afrique'⁴². More than any other colonised people, the Indochinese were perceived as at least approaching the metropolitan level of civilisation, and therefore of being capable of achieving the most improvement. It was a fertile people to educate. This hierarchical and racial approach to colonial education is thrown into relief if one compares educational policy and practice in Indochina and in French West Africa⁴³.

The following sub-section will provide an overview of the aims of the reforms which metropolitan France carried out in the 1920s and 1930s in the field of education in Indochina, in order to pinpoint the overlaps between political motivations and propagandist effort on the part of metropolitan France in Indochina

⁴²Challaye, F., *Souvenirs sur la colonisation* (Paris: Picart, 1935), p. 20

⁴³See Kelly, "Colonialism, indigenous society and school practices: French West Africa and Indochina 1918-1938", op. cit.

during this period. Attention will then shift to the content of the school manuals themselves. The works under examination were all commissioned and adopted by the *Service de l'Instruction publique* following the reforms of the 1920s, and thus provide a representative sample of curriculum content used in Franco-indochinese schools during this period. Equally, the manuals have been chosen to include works by both indigenous and metropolitan writers. A comparison of these works will demonstrate the complicity of certain indigenous educators in the political agenda of their French rulers. Mirroring the objectives of the previous section, this section will analyse the ways in which France and Indochina were represented in school manuals.

a) Educational aims and policy in Indochina⁴⁴

i) New Educational Needs and Education Reform

Unrest in Indochina had often been fed, even engendered, by the mandarin teachers who had traditionally been at the forefront of opposition to colonial rule. This was particularly true during the early days of metropolitan intervention in Indochina. In the nineteenth-century, Indochinese schools had been perceived as recruiting-grounds for anti-French agitators, and the mandarins were viewed as capable of mobilising political opinion against French rule. Consequently, the French education system had been most highly organised in places where Indochinese resistance was strongest. Additionally, education reform arose from the concern that rival empires and nations, particularly Japan and China, would influence Vietnamese education if the French did nothing. As Anderson has noted, French educational policy was intended to break the existing politico-cultural ties between the colonised

⁴⁴See: Plan d'études et programmes de l'enseignement primaire supérieur franco-indigène : réglementation du Diplôme d'études primaires supérieurs franco-indigène (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1928); and Bourotte, B., La Pénétration scolaire en Annam (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1930).

peoples and the immediate extra-indochinese world, most particularly China, but also (in the case of Laos and Cambodia), Siam⁴⁵. The implementation of education programmes in the nineteenth century can thus be regarded as a reactive and controlling gesture on the part of French administrations.

By the 1920s and 1930s however, the French drive for educational reform in Indochina arose from somewhat different criteria. Concerns over the state of indigenous education in Indochina were raised by the *Résident supérieur* of Indochina in 1919. It was thought that the system currently in place was outdated and no longer sufficient 'pour les besoins de la vie sociale actuelle'⁴⁶. As Albert Sarraut's observations reveal, reform of the education system in Indochina, it was hoped, would provide a two-fold benefit for imperial France: the increased economic viability of the colony, and the creation of an Indochinese elite who would assist the French in their government of the colony:

L'instruction, en effet, a d'abord pour résultat d'améliorer largement la valeur de la production coloniale en multipliant, dans la foule des travailleurs indigènes, la qualité d'intelligences et le nombre des capacités; elle doit, en outre, parmi la masse laborieuse, dégager et dresser les élites de collaborateurs qui, comme agents techniques, contremaîtres, surveillants, employés ou commis de direction, suppléeront à l'insuffisance numérique des Européens et satisferont à la demande croissante des entreprises agricoles, industrielles ou commerciales de la colonisation⁴⁷.

These *chefs indigènes* were to act as 'intermédiaires entre nous et populations indigènes'⁴⁸, and were to be educated in such a way as to ensure that they diffused

⁴⁵ See Anderson, B., Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, revised edition, 1991), pp. 124-27.

⁴⁶Bourotte, op. cit., p. 1

⁴⁷Sarraut, A., La Mise en valeur des colonies françaises (Paris: Payot, 1923), p. 95. Sarraut's other influential work on French colonialism, Grandeur et servitudes coloniales, will be discussed in the chapter on the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 96.

'parmi les éléments de ces troupes, avec la conscience plus claire des bienfaits de notre civilisation, les raisons profondes de la servir et de la défendre'⁴⁹. Their education was clearly intended to be propagandist and to facilitate the dissemination and inculcation of French ideals amongst the Indochinese populations. Thus the first aim of education in Indochina was to be the formation of a second 'tier of influence'. Metropolitan propaganda was to be reinforced by an ideologically loyal section of the indigenous community.

However, whilst education might indeed allow certain sections of the indigenous community to improve their chances of advancement, these *chefs indigènes* would never attain the same status as their colonial masters. Furthermore, for the majority, the reformed education programmes fitted them solely for manual work, and subservience to the colonising elites. These objectives demonstrate the unspoken limits and restrictions which lay behind discourses of metropolitan generosity. The second imperative of reformed colonial education was therefore one which served the economic interests of imperial France⁵⁰. Loubet noted of revised school manuals to be adopted following the reform programmes of the 1920s:

Ils ont été rédigés de manière à assurer au petit paysan ou au petit citadin de condition ouvrière qui quitte l'école pourvu de son certificat d'études élémentaires le minimum indispensable de connaissances dont il aura besoin: lecture, écriture, calcul, langue locale, éléments de français, histoire de l'Indochine, géographie de son canton, de sa province et de sa région, morale traditionnelle, rudiments d'enseignement manuel⁵¹.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰ Support for expansion in Indochina had, in the 1880s and periodically thereafter, been mitigated by arguments which emphasised the economic unviability of the Asian colonies and protectorates. See Girardet, op. cit.

⁵¹Loubet, *L'Enseignement en Indochine en 1929* (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1929), pp. 5-6.

These modest aims reflect the reluctance on the part of many colonial administrators and thinkers to allow indigenous populations unsupervised access to the breadth of the French canon. There was a deeply-felt reluctance to spread ideas from the Enlightenment thinkers, or the inquisitive tenets of modern science, to indigenous colonised peoples. Most commentators considered it dangerous to permit the peoples of Indochina even technical education beyond the most basic level, lest they become 'ambitious'. The educational 'needs' of the colonised Indochinese populations were thus perceived to be rudimentary, and largely of a practical rather than intellectual nature. As Altbach and Kelly have noted, science education was adapted to the colonised's needs 'as the colonizer perceived them', which effectively reduced 'science' to the following: personal hygiene, domestic science, agricultural work, caring for animals⁵². Education in Indochina thus resembled a form of modest vocational training rather than an education in its traditional and accepted sense.

Some contemporary commentators have perceived this reluctance to offer the Indochinese a more traditional and intellectual education as a means of reasserting difference between colonised and coloniser. As Lebovics⁵³ has noted, the aim of French education reformers was not to jeopardise French colonial rule by creating a generation of Indochinese whose educational background enabled them to contest French rule, or to contest the superiority of their French rulers. On the contrary, the aim of education in Indochina was, as Lebovics suggests, to 'reroot the Vietnamese in their villages':

Conservatives' fears for the loss of traditions, and with them of a certain essential identity (...) fueled the anxieties and projects of

⁵²Altbach, P., and Kelly, G., (eds), Education and Colonialism (London: Longman, 1978), p. 14.

⁵³Lebovics, H., True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity 1900-1945 (London: Cornell University Press, 1992). See chapter entitled: "Frenchmen into Peasants: Rerooting the Vietnamese in their Villages", pp. 98-134.

Frenchmen concerned with Indochina. If bad imitations of Frenchmen could be turned once more into good Vietnamese peasants, the disorder of the world would subside⁵⁴.

Although it must be stressed that the education reforms of the 1920s were not intended to re-establish a pre-colonial Indochinese identity - on the contrary, the aim was very clearly to reassert French influence and a French-dominated cultural identity within Indochina - there is indeed a sense in which the reform of education in Indochina aimed to reinforce racial hierarchies between metropolitan rulers and their colonial subjects.

The new imperatives of associationist policies, coupled with the desire to create this specific identity for *Indochine française* meant that there was a certain realisation that the metropolitan system could not be transported wholesale to Indochina⁵⁵. Teaching methods and curricula had to be adapted to the peculiarities of the *milieux*:

Il faut, dans chaque colonie, adapter au caractère spécial du milieu, aux besoins locaux comme aux mentalités de races très distinctes, la souple variété des programmes d'enseignement et de méthodes pédagogiques dont une application identique et uniforme en tout lieu serait une lourde erreur, déjà condamnée par l'expérience⁵⁶.

A series of reforms was therefore carried out between 1924 and 1926⁵⁷. The reformed *Code de l'Instruction publique* provided a breadth of schooling ranging from elementary to university education. Elementary education consisted of a three year programme (*cours enfantin, cours préparatoire, cours élémentaire*), followed

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 133.

⁵⁵Loubet, op. cit., p. 4.

⁵⁶Sarraut, op. cit., p. 97.

⁵⁷See: Gouvernement général de l'Indochine, Direction de l'Instruction publique, Plan d'études et programmes de l'enseignement primaire supérieure franco-indigène: réglementation du diplôme d'études primaires supérieures franco-indigènes (Arrêtés des 26 décembre 1924, 16 janvier 1925, 13 mars 1926, 1 juin 1926, 23 novembre 1926), (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1928).

by a three year primary cycle (*cours moyen 1, cours moyen 2, cours supérieur*). This in turn was followed by a four year primary superior course and three years of secondary education leading to the Indochinese version of the *baccalauréat*. The Indochinese university, founded in 1906, but periodically shut down, and under constant transformation, was the pinnacle of the system.

The *Commission de lettrés* organised a public competition in order to elaborate new school manuals in Indochina⁵⁸. In line with the now accepted doctrine of association, it was decided that different books had to be created for the five different regions within the *Union indochinoise*. Equally, the French administration had to ensure that these books were produced cheaply in order to ensure that they were as accessible as possible to the indigenous populations. The books had to suit a variety of ages and be appropriate to a wide age group (elementary: 6-10 years; and post-primary: 10-16 years). These manuals were also intended for the use of adults studying at home.

These reformed school manuals were also intended to ensure the diffusion of the French language, just as had Ferry's reforms in mainland France during the 1880s. Language was perceived as a crucial vehicle for the propagation of French ideals of Franco-indochinese cultural identity:

Le développement de l'enseignement du français correspond trop aux vœux des indigènes et aux besoins de notre pénétration pour que la Direction générale de l'Instruction publique ne considère pas comme son principal devoir de l'assurer par tous les moyens⁵⁹.

⁵⁸These reforms are set out in detail in Les Manuels scolaires et les publications pédagogiques de la Direction générale de l'Instruction publique (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1931).

⁵⁹Barthélémy, P., (Inspecteur de l'Instruction publique), Direction de l'Instruction publique, L'Enseignement du Français à l'école franco-indigène (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-orient, 1927), p. 3.

French language was not only to be used as a propaganda tool, it was also to have an extremely important role in the homogenisation of Indochina. The creation of a coherent linguistic area would facilitate the indigenous acceptance of a reformulated geographical and political entity - *Indochine française*. It was thus equally the intention of manuals to render the various dialects within the various countries and regions of Indochina uniform:

Il est incontestable que cet effort d'unification du vocabulaire doublé d'un effort identique en ce qui concerne la syntaxe et la fixation de l'orthographe, aura pour effet de répandre dans les contrées proprement annamites l'usage d'une sorte de langue commune que ces livres généraliseront ...⁶⁰

A much smaller place was to be given to the teaching of indigenous languages - a minimum of two hours and a maximum of three - thus ensuring the gradual adoption of French as the language of common communication in Indochina.

Indochina was thus furnished with a highly centralised education system. An office of Public Instruction supervised the hiring of teachers, their performance, commissioned text books, drew up lists of texts permissible for use in classrooms, published curriculum guides, inspected schools and set exams. A series of initiatives was implemented to create publications aimed at indigenous teachers in Franco-indochinese schools. These monthly publications were intended to provide the indigenous teachers with material, and also to keep them informed of new educational reforms, and the latest accepted pedagogical methods. They contained model lessons, lesson plans and references. The French administration thus kept a tight rein upon both the material taught and the methods in which it was taught in Franco-indigenous schools.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 22.

The following sections will examine in detail the content of school manuals which were used in Franco-indochinese schools following the implementation of the education reforms of the 1920s. Attention will be focused upon two main areas: firstly, the ways in which these manuals sought to represent imperial France and its colonial role in Indochina; and secondly, their representations of Indochina, with particular reference to the period of French colonial rule. Educational policy, as exemplified by the content of these school manuals, will be linked to colonial propaganda through the analysis of the political motivations which lay behind the representations within these manuals.

b) *Autrefois/Maintenant*: new historiographies of Indochina

As this chapter has suggested, the 'colonial' sections within history and geography manuals used in metropolitan schools elaborated a 'certain idea of imperial France', the nation's history and role as an imperial power. The manuals intended for use in Indochinese schools had similarly to present to the indigenous populations a history, a narrative, and an 'ideal' of Indochina. The concern to establish and anchor the notion of 'Indochine française' amongst the colonised populations involved the obliteration of former cultural attachments and references to neighbouring Asian cultures. Points of comparison and cultural models in school manuals all had to take metropolitan France as their central point of reference. Indeed, school education was intended to recreate an identity for the Indochinese populations, an identity which placed them firmly within the political, cultural and historical sphere of influence of *la Plus Grande France*.

According to the reformed education programme, history lessons were to focus upon two main features: 'Notions d'histoire locale, et de celle du pays de

l'Union où se trouve l'école. L'oeuvre française en Indochine'⁶¹. This recommendation demonstrates the importance accorded to the colonising nation in the history of the colony itself. Indeed, the examination of these school manuals shows that far more time was given over to the history of imperial France than to the history of Indochina.

In Altbach's and Kelly's comparative work on educational policy in colonised countries, the authors make the general observation that the teaching of the history of colonised territories tended to avoid the evocation of pre-colonial history as far as possible:

What history was taught revealed a devaluation of indigenous cultures. History, in the main, if it touched on the colonized's past, was only the history of the colonized since they were ruled by Europeans. If precolonial history was touched on, it usually emphasized, through chronology, civil wars, tribal conflicts, famines, and barbarism in order to contrast them with the peace and orderly progress under colonial domination⁶².

Indeed, the pre-colonial history of Indochina is presented in school manuals in extremely limited, general and underdeveloped terms:

Le Viet-Nam est un beau pays. Il s'appelle encore l'Annam. C'est la patrie de tous ceux qui descendent de Lac-Long Quan, parlent la langue annamite, habitent cette terre féconde comprenant le Tonkin, l'Annam proprement dit la Cochinchine.

Le Viet-Nam existe depuis plusieurs milliers d'années. Il a été sous la domination chinoise et il a beaucoup souffert. Mais ses souffrances n'ont pas été vaines, car elles l'ont fait aimer davantage de ses enfants qui travaillent sans cesse à le rendre plus riche et plus puissant.

Le Viet-Nam a beaucoup prospéré depuis qu'il est placé sous le protectorat de la France. Cependant, il est encore peu de chose à côté

⁶¹Ibid., p. 11.

⁶²Altbach and Kelly, Education and Colonialism, op. cit., p. 14

des Grandes Puissances du monde. Il faut pour le classer parmi elles, que ses habitants redoublent d'efforts physiques et intellectuels.⁶³

The first paragraph demonstrates the confusion over identity which French colonialism had exacerbated. The partitioning of Vietnam into the administrative regions of Annam, Tonkin and Cochinchina, each with a slightly different colonial regime in place, here renders the depiction of a communal history difficult. The notion of a *patrie* is effectively fragmented.

In the second paragraph, past suffering and repression under Chinese domination is contrasted with the benevolent protection offered by the French nation. This extract also reiterates and reinforces the historiographical approach taken in metropolitan school manuals. 'History' in Indochinese school manuals thus mirrors the view of French colonialism as protective, and reactive: a response to aggression, and disorder. Given the need of the colonising nation to maintain and strengthen its control over the indigenous populations, it is not surprising that manuals based their 'history' of Indochina around an axis which contrasted a negative view of the period before colonial rule, with a laudatory narrative of the country's situation since colonial rule began.

The national values which are invoked in the above quotation are remarkably similar to those previously cited from Lavissee's section on 'Les Devoirs patriotiques'. The Indochinese manual appeals to the industriousness of the people, their sense of communal history, and their patriotic duty to the homeland. This similarity is mitigated however, by the insertion of negative comparative statements which suggest that in spite of their efforts, the Indochinese peoples remain 'peu de chose' next to their French rulers.

⁶³ Nguyen Duc Bao, Pour nos jeunes écoliers: lecture courante et expliquée (Cours élémentaire et cours moyen, 1ère année des écoles franco-annamite), (Hanoi: Tan Dan Thu Quan, 1925), p. 190.

This *autrefois/maintenant* dichotomy operates in many forms and covers most domains in these manuals. Descriptive texts always note the improvements to indigenous life that French changes have wrought.

La maison commune de mon village a été remise à neuf l'année dernière. Elle est grande et belle⁶⁴.

Une grande route traverse mon village. Mon père m'a dit qu'autrefois il y avait à la place un sentier étroit et mal entretenu. On ne pouvait y marcher qu'à la file. La moindre pluie le rendait boueux et glissant. Maintenant, c'est une route large, propre, empierrée et bordée d'arbres⁶⁵.

Hanoi est la capitale du Tonkin. Cette ville, construite à la française, est maintenant la plus jolie⁶⁶.

Le Viet-Nam a beaucoup prospéré depuis qu'il est placé sous le protectorat de la France⁶⁷.

Although these improvements are not always specifically attributed to French colonisation, the contrast between *autrefois* and *maintenant* clearly pitches previous backwardness, poverty or lack of prestige against current progress, development and prosperity.

Often, these contrasts are more overtly articulated to the detriment of pre-colonial Indochina. A section in one manual on 'L'Assistance médicale' eulogises the work of the Pasteur Institute in Indochina, whilst denigrating the Indochinese medical resources in place before the arrival of the French:

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 70.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 76.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 128.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 190.

Avant l'arrivée des Français, les malades n'avaient aucune ressource. Les médecins étaient rarement bons; la plupart étaient des charlatans qui tuaient plutôt leurs clients avec leurs médicaments douteux⁶⁸.

Containing a veiled threat, this extract seeks to provoke fear for a return to the past. Similarly the indigenous education system is criticised as being 'purement littéraire', and open only to an elite, whilst

La France s'efforce d'ouvrir de plus en plus largement devant ses enfants d'Asie comme devant les fils de sa race, le vaste domaine où les fruits du savoir tendent à qui sait cueillir leur nourriture saine et puissante⁶⁹.

The purpose of the *autrefois/maintenant* axis is clear. Through the systematic denigration Indochinese history and society, the new French identity of Indochina could be more firmly established. Although Indochina did benefit from the technological advances which colonial rule brought with it, this axis nevertheless strips the pre-colonial society of any cultural value.

c) *Qu'est-ce que la France ?*

The concern to eradicate Asian influences and to 'make Indochina French' results in the description, at great length, of the French nation in these school manuals. More time is given over to, and far more emphasis placed upon the evocation of France rather than Indochina in these manuals. These descriptions fall into two categories: the status and specificity of France within the global arena, and her role in Indochina as a colonial power.

France is consistently described in superlative terms as a superior nation:

⁶⁸Pham-Dinh-Dien and Vu-Nhu'-Lâm, *Manuel d'histoire d'Annam* (Nam-Dinh: Imprimerie My Thang, 1931), p. 110.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 114.

La France est habitée par un peuple actif, industriel et bon. C'est un des pays de la terre où la civilisation a atteint son plus haut degré. La France a mis tout son génie à améliorer les conditions de l'existence humaine. La France a toujours cherché à répandre ses bienfaits dans le monde entier⁷⁰.

Emphasising the humanitarian and universalist tradition of Republican France, this type of narrative allows for negative comparisons which place Indochina in an inferior position. The quotation draws on traditional Orientalist myths of Asia as passive and slothful by implying a series of antitheses which posit the French as active, industrious and good, and the Indochinese populations as passive, lazy and bad.

France was often evoked in contrast with other imperial nations. The metropolitan concern with imperial rivalry here acts to reinforce the benefits to Indochina of French colonial rule. In Paquier's manual of 1932, his interpretation of the conquest of Indochina emphasises the debt owed by the Vietnamese to the French conquerers, and is marked by comparisons with France's imperial rivals, in particular Great Britain. In the following quotation, the distinguishing feature of French colonialism is its generosity:

Les grands colonisateurs des autres pays n'ont pas agi aussi généreusement que les explorateurs français. L'Anglais Stanley, au service de la Belgique, traita les Noirs sans pitié⁷¹.

By contrast,

La France a pacifié ses colonies: elle a chassé les pirates et empêché les différentes tribus de se battre entre elles; elle a supprimé l'esclavage, ainsi que la traite, c'est-à-dire la vente des nègres esclaves.

⁷⁰ Nguyen Duc Bao, op. cit., p. 192.

⁷¹ Paquier, P., Histoire de France à l'usage des élèves du cours supérieur des écoles franco-annamites et des candidates au certificat d'études primaires franco-indigènes (Hanoi: Editions Tan-Dan, 1932), p. 137.

Grâce à la paix apportée par les Français, les indigènes ont pu travailler et s'enrichir⁷².

The result of French colonialism is therefore to allow the indigenous populations to embrace capitalism and to adopt the French national characteristics of industry and application. However, this interest in the economics of colonialism is not attributed to the colonising nation:

Beaucoup de nations européennes considèrent seulement les colonies comme un moyen de gagner de l'argent. Les Français ont voulu faire mieux: ils ont cherché à civiliser les peuples protégés. Ils ont respecté les coutumes, les religions, les habitants et les usages indigènes⁷³.

This quotation mirrors the representation of French colonialism which appeared in metropolitan manuals. It pitches economic concerns against concerns to share the benefits of French civilisation.

Romantic narratives of mutual affection attempt to present the Franco-indochinese relationship as one of reciprocity:

Les guerres du XIX^e siècle et du XX^e siècle ont créé, entre les deux patries de France et d'Indochine, un lien puissant. Quand on a souffert ensemble, on s'aime davantage.

Des soldats, des fonctionnaires et des missionnaires français sont morts pour sauver les Annamites de la domination des mandarins chinois, pour rétablir l'ordre, chasser les pirates et mettre en valeur le pays; des Annamites se sont sacrifiés pendant la Grande Guerre pour sauver la France.

Français et Annamites sont liés pour toujours par l'amitié profonde que crée une commune histoire⁷⁴.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 148.

An attempt is made to emblematisé the relationship between France and Indochina through the participation of each country in the safeguard of the other. However, seeing as reciprocity is suggestive of equality, the terminology used to evoke the Franco-indochinese relationship tips the balance of debt towards the Indochinese rather than French peoples. The second paragraph thus enumerates the instances in which the French nation has come to the aid of Indochina, and starkly notes that many French died in the pursuit of Indochinese well-being. This list includes not only wars, but also political domination, territorial integrity and economic development. The Indochinese on the other hand, are portrayed as having made a 'sacrifice' in return. The mutual benefit of the association between France and Indochina, the sense of 'communal history', is thus undermined by the power hierarchy of the 'friendship'.

The use of veiled threatening discourses completes the picture of an indebted Indochinese society.

Ce Monsieur est français, il est plus fort que celui-ci qui est annamite.
Il faut protéger les personnes faibles⁷⁵.

Thus although these manuals set out a portrayal of common aid and benefit, they also consistently present Indochina as occupying a weak, inferior, and potentially dangerous position, should French colonialism be removed.

d) *Les Devoirs des colonisés*

As this section has already suggested, Indochinese school manuals were more concerned with the instruction of *moralité* than they were with intellectual education. Many school manuals take the form of moralistic fables, which exhort

⁷⁵Méthode de langage français et annamite destinée aux Ecoles de l'Indochine (Quinhon: Imprimerie de Quinhon, 1923), p. 69

young members of the indigenous community to work hard at school, not to cheat, or to be lazy. Alongside French literature, Indochinese history, general history, but particularly French history, these school manuals were also intended to provide moral education for the Indochinese. During the first year of their *cours moyen*, indigenous students were therefore to be taught 'la morale', which comprised 'devoirs de l'enfant dans la famille, à l'école, hors de l'école et après l'école, envers lui-même et envers autrui'⁷⁶.

Most manuals display a clearly political intention, which had been mooted in reform programme:

Dès maintenant, à côté de la presse indigène, les manuels contribueront à former l'opinion populaire⁷⁷.

This propaganda tool, masquerading as moral education, enabled educators to influence, if not transform, the customs and practices native to Indochina:

Il convient aussi d'escompter que ces manuels, en combattant certaines habitudes néfastes et certaines routines finiront par exercer une influence bienfaisante sur l'hygiène et les mœurs des populations⁷⁸.

These *leçons de morale* were also to include sections on loyalty to France, and the instruction of what Indochina owed to France. The following extract epitomises the moralistic and threatening tone adopted by many school manuals:

La France se montre généreuse et juste; elle est humaine, elle a pitié des peuples arriérés et malheureux; elle leur prodigue ses soins et ses bienfaits sans compter.

⁷⁶Barthélémy, op. cit., p. 11

⁷⁷Plan d'études et programmes de l'enseignement primaire supérieure franco-indigène: réglementation du diplôme d'études primaires supérieures franco-indigènes, op. cit.

⁷⁸Ibid.

Pour l'Indochine, ces bienfaits sont immenses. Les troupes françaises protègent nos frontières, contre les ennemis du dehors et débarrassent notre pays des bandes de pirates et de brigands. Le paysan vit heureux et tranquille, il peut vaquer à ses travaux sans être inquiété.

La France nous apporte la science occidentale. Elle nous fait bénéficier des profits de cette culture pratique et cherche toujours à élever notre niveau intellectuel. Sous la bienveillante direction de savants maîtres qu'elle envoie, l'Indochine fait figure aujourd'hui parmi les pays les plus civilisés de l'Extrême-Orient.

La France se préoccupe aussi de notre éducation morale. Les bons exemples qu'elle nous donne et le bien-être matériel qu'elle nous procure contribuent à nous rendre meilleurs⁷⁹.

The newly-acquired 'civilised' status of Indochina, it is suggested, can be maintained only through continued association with France. The veiled threat of a return to past disorder is effected through the juxtaposition of the enemy held at bay and the peaceful and prosperous existence of the peasant under French protection.

However, these benefits of French colonialism demand a reciprocal duty:

En reconnaissance de tous ses services, nous devons aimer la France, notre patrie d'adoption, d'un même amour que nous avons pour notre propre pays⁸⁰.

Nous lui devons encore du respect et ce respect nous oblige à nous conformer aux ordres du Gouvernement qui la représente ici, à nous instruire à l'Ecole française, et à lui vouer une grande fidélité⁸¹.

The patriotic objective of *la Plus Grande France* stated in metropolitan school manuals is mirrored in this first paragraph. However, whilst metropolitan schoolchildren were enjoined to extend patriotic affection to Indochina from the

⁷⁹Pham-Dinh-Dien and Vu-Nhu'-Lâm, Manuel d'histoire d'Annam (Nam-Dinh: Imprimerie My Thang, 1931), p. 116.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 117.

higher motive of altruism, Indochinese schoolchildren should do so out of a sense of debt. This debt shifts from being an ideological point to a political one in the last paragraph. Thus the narrative of mutual affection and duty can be transformed into political obedience and loyalty.

6. Concluding Comments

Metropolitan educational aims in Indochina during the 1920s and 1930s were fourfold. Imperial France sought firstly to create a new, gallicised identity for the colonised peoples of Indochina. This objective was in part achieved through the obliteration of links with extra-indochinese Asian communities and influences. Imperial France further sought to create a body of able indigenous workers who could fulfill the economic demands of the colonising nation. Lastly, education in Indochina attempted to limit the aspirations of the indigenous peoples by reducing, if not entirely removing the intellectual content of school manuals.

These aims reveal an inconsistency of intention on the part of imperial France in Indochina. The gallicisation of Indochina and its indigenous communities created a further hybridisation. For the 'Indochinese', denied access to French citizenship and stripped of their Asian cultural heritage, were neither French nor Asian. As Altbach and Kelly found, colonial education

represented a basic denial of the colonized's past and withheld from them the tools to regain the future; what occurred in colonial education was a simultaneous obliteration of roots and the denial of the wherewithal to change, except on limited terms⁸².

Furthermore, although reform of colonial education was undertaken in Indochina due to the metropole's higher regard for Asian as opposed to African populations, those

⁸²Altbach and Kelly, Education and Colonialism, op. cit., p. 15.

very reforms attempted to suppress the intellectual capabilities of these supposedly 'promising' populations.

Indigenous peoples of Indochina were taught a limited amount about their own culture and their own country. What they were taught about their own history was clearly a metropolitan view of that history. School manuals rewrote the history of Indochina in such a way as to emphasise the beneficial influence of French colonialism. This narrative operates principally around an axis which contrasts former disorder, poverty and susceptibility to aggression, with present order, progress and prosperity under French protection. Indochina is thus totally defined by the presence/absence of the colonising power.

7. Conclusion

School manuals of the turn of the century onwards are primarily concerned with the creation and reinforcement of national, imperial and colonial identities. They demonstrate the colonial ideal which metropolitan France sought to inculcate into a generation of colonised and metropolitan youth, and attempt to provide a coherent view of French colonialism, and a clearly colonially-defined identity for Indochina.

However, the examination of school manuals used in both the metropole and in Indochina demonstrates that French colonial discourse is riddled with inconsistencies and contradictions. Indeed, this preliminary observation should serve to remind us that it is impossible to speak of one overriding and coherent discourse of colonialism as regards French Indochina. The very ideal which they sought to popularise is undermined by largely unresolved tensions which surround France's own conception of herself as an imperial power.

In these school manuals France is simultaneously benevolent and protective, yet also authoritarian. The presentation of imperial intervention as liberatory is coupled with an insistence upon the 'natural right' of the French nation to colonise.

The colonial relationship with Indochina is at once reciprocal and impositional, generous yet self-seeking.

These inconsistencies, which spring to a large extent from the very Revolutionary heritage which the nation feels beholden to export, will be more fully examined in relation to French Indochina in the chapters to follow.

Chapter Three: French Colonial Urbanism in Indochina

1. Introduction

As a corollary to the second chapter of this thesis which sought to define ideals of French colonialism through an analysis of colonial education policy and propaganda in Indochina and the metropole, this chapter will focus upon another important feature of French colonial policy in Indochina: colonial town-planning and urban design. The purpose of this approach is to define further the status of Indochina in relation to concepts of French imperial identity and ideals of French colonialism. The primary focus of this chapter is thus the writings and designs of a number of prominent figures involved in colonial urbanism during the 1920s and 1930s.

An analysis of the functions and uses of urban planning within the colonial context will provide a revealing source of insights into the relationship between France and Indochina, as it uncovers not simply the ideological imperatives of metropolitan policies, but also their physical application. French colonial urbanism has been the focus of several recent studies¹. However, these studies have tended to fall short of making explicit the links between French urban policy in the colonies and broader issues such as colonial and imperial identities, and the manipulation of indigenous space and history in the colonial context. French colonial urbanism has not been explicitly linked with French colonial ideals, principles and identities. Nor has it been explicitly linked with French colonial

¹The most notable and thorough studies have been undertaken by Gwendolyn Wright: See Wright, G., "Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy", Journal of Modern History, no. 59, 1987, pp. 291-316, and Wright, G., The Politics and Design of French Colonial Urbanism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). See also her joint project with Paul Rabinow: Wright, G., and Rabinow, P., "Savoir et pouvoir dans l'urbanisme moderne colonial d'Ernest Hébrard", Cahiers de la recherche architecturale (villes nouvelles, cités, satellites, colonies: de l'art urbain à l'urbanisme), (2), no. 9, 1981, pp. 27-43.

strategies for upholding these principles, asserting these ideals and stamping the imprint of imperial identity upon Indochina. An analysis of the functions and uses of urban planning within the colonial context which makes specific these neglected areas will therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between France and Indochina.

As AlSayyad has observed, 'dominance is not exclusive to colonial cities but the use and manifestation of dominance in the colonial context is particularly blunt²'. Indeed, the urban plans conceived for, and, in certain cases implemented, in Indochina, will highlight the strategies employed in order to consolidate and perpetuate French rule in Indochina. By drawing upon these visual discourses of power and control, this chapter will underline the tensions which underlay the reformist discourses which characterised the associationist stance adopted by colonial administrations.

Having presented an overview of changes in colonial policy which provide a necessary backdrop to the issues which arise from urban planning, the chapter will discuss four main features of colonial urbanism in Indochina. The chapter will examine the work of Ernest Hébrard in Indochina, focusing upon the following areas of examination: the tension between modernist and traditionalist visions of the indigenous city, the creation of an 'Indochinese style' alongside attempts to further reinforce the French identity of Indochina, and finally the issues of segregation and zoning, and their implications for French imperial identity.

This approach will highlight the contradictions and discrepancies which undermined much French colonial discourse between the turn of the century and the onset of World War Two. By placing the analysis of urban planning in Indochina within a framework which acknowledges the shift in French colonial thought and policy from assimilationism to associationism, this chapter will seek

²AlSayyad, N., Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992); see chapter 1, "Urbanism and the Dominance equation: Reflections on Colonialism and National Identity", p. 5.

to show that a perceptible shift in imperial identity and colonial thought which has been thought to have gradually transformed imperial France's relationship with Indochina, was far less marked than historians have tended to assume.

In order to contextualise these perceived changes in colonial policies, the following section will provide an overview of urban planning in Indochina in the nineteenth century in order to clarify the ostensible move from assimilationist to associationist policies in Indocina.

2. Nineteenth Century French Colonial Urbanism

As was noted in the introduction to this thesis, the French conquest of Indochina was a protracted and incoherent affair. It consisted of multiple and dispersed initiatives rather than global action. Resistance to French imperial intervention was widespread³, and the French military thus had to establish an authoritarian regime which would crush indigenous revolt. Military control was expressed not simply through military buildings, but also in the initial urban plans for the cities which France had conquered. Urban design in the nineteenth century was thus dominated by spatial concerns which reflected the military imperatives of the conquering French Admirals.

Indeed, it was a military engineer, Coffyn, in the 1880s, who drew up the first plans for the redevelopment of Saigon⁴. Coffyn's plans were dominated by the concerns of military surveillance: he stressed the need for large open streets which would permit observation, but rejected the creation of large open spaces lest unauthorised indigenous gatherings occur. Coffyn perceived the need for a few ostentatious buildings which were intended to attract European investors.

³For a study which closely examines the genesis and actions of indigenous resistance movements, see Van, N., Viet-nam 1920-1945: révolution et contre-révolution sous la domination coloniale (Paris: L'Insomniaque, 1995).

⁴See Brébion, J., "La Naissance et les premières années de Saigon, ville française", Bulletin de la Société des Etudes indochinoises, vol. 2, no. 2, 1927, pp. 63-138.

Similarly, he attempted to give a French feel to the city, emphasising the need for symbols of French greatness.

The policy of assimilation, coupled with these military concerns in Indochina in the nineteenth century led to the destruction of the indigenous city of Saigon. In an attempt to destroy any vestiges of indigenous organisation, the city was razed and rebuilt. This destruction stemmed from an intense dislike of the intrusion of indigenous motifs and references in architecture. Perceived as a transgression against the sanctity of French culture, this *métissage* was rigourously avoided. Brébion for instance, praises the soldiers of the conquest for having 'tiré pour nous Saigon de sa brousse et de sa vase'⁵, and goes on to say:

Il était souhaitable (...) que la ville européenne fût aussi homogène que possible pour éviter ces constructions en un style que nous qualifierons de métis...⁶

The rebuilding which took place after the destruction of Saigon was therefore intended to assert a domineering and inviolable image of the imperial nation. Buildings were formalist and grandiose: their ornamentation made reference to classical and baroque monuments. They represented a visible expression of the universality of Western concepts of beauty and order. Like the references to the Europeanised cities which pervaded school manuals, much was made of the connection between the prestige of Paris and Saigon. For some Saigon was a symbol of magnificence - an embodiment of French cultural superiority. Perceived as the *Paris de l'Extrême-Orient*, Saigon was a symbol of French prestige and cultural hegemony⁷.

However, urbanism and construction in nineteenth-century Saigon was of a largely superficial nature. The French built an 800-seater theatre, a racetrack, countless pavement cafés, yet failed to modernise the defective water supply

⁵Ibid., p. 83.

⁶Ibid., p. 100.

⁷Examples of the perceived value of this gallicisation occur in school manuals' descriptions of the 'Europeanised' indigenous cities. See previous chapter.

system. Often, the buildings constructed were also inappropriate to the tropical climate in Indochina. Saigon's *Notre-Dame* cathedral for instance, (completed in 1880 by the architect Jules Bourard) was a red brick construction with Gothic vaulting. Its ventilation system was more suited to a Northern European climate than the heat and humidity of Indochina. As Wright notes, it was not until 1942 that the French were to concede finally 'the need to pierce additional openings in the lateral chapels, following more or less the traditional Vietnamese practice for ventilating pagodas'⁸. The initial metropolitan rebuilding of Saigon and Hanoi demonstrated, in effect, the inadvisability of assimilative policies. The wholesale export of metropolitan principles of town planning and design had resulted in inappropriate buildings which were ill-suited to Indochina.

Indeed, by the turn of the century, certain commentators were beginning to express reservations about urban policy in Indochina. For some, French reconstruction in Saigon represented embarrassing pomposity. As Lyautey noted

Saigon, c'est la tarte à la crème de tous les Français qui naviguent en Extrême-Orient: 'Quand vous aurez vu Saigon !' J'y circule depuis ce matin avec une impression grandissante: beaucoup de toc⁹.

Views such as Lyautey's became increasingly current in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Wright has noted, Saigon represented extravagance, a loss of sense of proportion rather than French elegance: urbanism in Saigon was perceived as 'la folie des grandeurs'¹⁰. Demonstrating this post-conquest dislike of overt representations of French cultural and economic superiority, Lyautey further noted:

Trop de monuments administratifs, trop de cariatides, trop de piâtres, trop de galons dans les rues, - que de galons ! Je cherche

⁸Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, op. cit., p. 176.

⁹Lyautey, H., *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar 1894-1899* (Paris: Armand Colin, third edition, 1933), p. 59.

¹⁰See Wright's chapter bearing this title in *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, op. cit.

les banques, les grosses maisons d'affaires, les gens et les choses, en un mot, qui n'émargent pas au budget et dont la richesse et la situation sont faites d'autre chose que d'émoluments mensuels. Ah! Des cafés, par exemple, monumentaux; et des hôtels, des guingettes, des restaurants. L'aspect général de toute cette décoration de carton dans cette magnifique végétation est très satisfaisant et réjouit l'oeil. On a très vite le sentiment qu'il ne faut pas gratter et que si l'on retire les fonctionnaires, les militaires et les énormes droits protecteurs, tout craque¹¹.

3. From Assimilation To Association

These reservations and criticisms became particularly acute in the light of increasing concern with 'native' policy as a whole. The 'native' policy which came to be known as *association* was evolved during the last decades of the nineteenth century by colonial administrators, several of whom had served in Indochina.

Galliéni's 'method' is often viewed as the basis of the associative policies France hoped to apply in the colonies in the early decades of the twentieth century¹².

Quoting Galliéni's *Instructions* (1898) in his Lettres du Tonkin et Madagascar,

Lyautey notes:

Le meilleur moyen pour arriver à la pacification dans notre nouvelle colonie est d'employer l'action combinée de la force et de la politique. Il faut nous rappeler que dans les luttes coloniales nous ne devons détruire qu'à la dernière extrémité, et, dans ce cas encore, ne détruire que pour mieux bâtir. Toujours nous devons ménager le pays et les habitants, puisque celui-là est destiné à recevoir nos entreprises de colonisation future et que ceux-ci

¹¹Lyautey, op. cit., p. 59

¹²Galliéni arrived in Tonkin in 1892 and was faced with a continuing struggle against pirate bands ('pavillons noirs') along the coastlines of the colony. He quickly succeeded in pacifying the area by building a chain of military posts in concrete along the coastline to protect from further pirate attacks, and by convincing the locals that the French intended to remain in the area, thus rallying the population to the French side. He made the local inhabitants his chief allies against the pirates, and employed them as often as possible in the administration of the region. This policy was perfected in Madagascar, and Galliéni's expressions, 'tâche d'huile' and 'politique des races' became famous in colonial circles.

seront nos principaux agents et collaborateurs pour mener à bien nos entreprises¹³.

Force was to be used in a limited way, whilst native customs, institutions and organisation were to be respected as far as possible. Indeed, native bureaucracy already in place was to be left intact as far as possible, and French administration was to be flexible and based on the needs of each region. Reforms were to be studied carefully in terms of native need, and above all, administrators were to avoid introducing European institutions *en bloc*. The doctrine of association was officially endorsed in 1905 by then Minister for Colonies, Etienne Clémentel. The policy was finally given sanction in a resolution of the Chamber of Deputies in 1917.

Urbanism, a less overtly disciplinary form of domination than military control, was one of the methods used in an attempt to demonstrate this more reformist attitude towards the Indochinese. Albert Sarraut introduced the policy of association to Indochina during his office as Governor General (1911-14, 1917-19). The rhetoric of his speeches was mirrored in the basic themes of the architecture and buildings constructed during his period in office. Lyautey noted in his speech at the opening of the *Congrès international de l'urbanisme* (1931) that

...lorsque nous arrivons dans les pays neufs, nous devons commencer par respecter les traditions des indigènes qui les habitent. Il faut que ceux-ci continuent à se sentir chez eux, qu'ils n'aient pas une impression de déracinement, de mise à l'écart¹⁴.

He contended that colonialism respected and served the Vietnamese, giving them greater representation in the running of their country than they had previously enjoyed. Under Sarraut the colony began to adopt indigenous motifs for public buildings. Acknowledgement of Vietnamese culture in architecture was intended

¹³Lyautey, op. cit., p. 638.

¹⁴*L'Urbanisme*, 2, no. 11 (1933), p. 104; see also Sarraut, A., *La mise en valeur des colonies françaises* (Paris: Picart, 1923).

as a gesture of respect and tolerance. It was hoped that this would gain the gratitude of the indigenous peoples. Sarraut's period of office marked the break with the previous stance towards French cultural hegemony, and the weakening of the nineteenth century *Beaux-Arts* ideal of universal beauty. His associative policies were perpetuated by the series of 'reformist' Governors General who were to succeed him¹⁵.

However, as the following sections will show, the shift from assimilative to associative policies pertaining to urban design in Indochina engendered a series of tensions. Two competing projects emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century: one of asserting metropolitan prestige and superiority over the indigenous populations, of perpetuating metropolitan control; and second, the new desire to demonstrate more respect and consideration for indigenous traditions and customs. This dual conundrum, never satisfactorily nor fully resolved throughout the duration of the French Empire, ultimately demonstrates that the universalist and assimilationary impulses which lay at the heart of French colonialism continued to assert an undeniable lure.

4. Colonial Urbanism and Imperial Prestige

Colonial urbanism continued, up to the 1930s at least¹⁶, to be viewed as a privileged means of asserting the metropole's grandeur and prestige as an imperial nation. This very sense of prestige, manifested through grandiose monuments and public buildings, posits the visual impact of colonial urbanism as an aggressive gesture: visible manifestations of imperial prestige were used as a means of perpetuating control over indigenous populations. As Vivier de Streel noted at the *Congrès de l'urbanisme* (1931),

¹⁵Long, Merlin, Pasquier.

¹⁶These views were consistently reiterated at the *Congrès de l'urbanisme* which took place in 1931.

C'est par l'éclat de leurs monuments et de leurs travaux d'urbanisme que les Grands Etats ont conquis, de tout temps, le prestige qui était leur principal instrument de domination sur les populations soumises à leur souveraineté¹⁷.

Reinforcing this latter notion in a comparison with the impact of Roman urbanism, Vivier de Streel continues:

...là se sont affirmées, de façon saisissante, non seulement la force mais aussi la supériorité intellectuelle et morale¹⁸.

Colonial urbanism is clearly viewed as a means of asserting coercive force and reinforcing cultural and economic superiority over the colonised peoples of the French Empire. In addition, colonial urbanism was perceived as a valuable asset in France's competitive vision of her status amongst fellow imperial powers:

...ils [les pouvoirs publics] doivent avoir celui [le souci] de remplir leur devoir vis-à-vis des sujets et protégés français, et de ne pas entendre dans leurs bouches des comparaisons peu flatteuses entre l'effort français et celui des autres puissances coloniales¹⁹.

Thus, in spite of the proliferation of the rhetoric of association from the first decade of the twentieth century onwards, urbanism and city-planning in Indochina were concomitantly used by imperial France as a means of reasserting her imperial identity and colonial ideal. Embodied in the plans, the construction and the visual impact of the cities, edifices and monuments created in the 1920s and 1930s in Indochina, was a codified version of France's *doctrine coloniale*. As Vivier de Streel concluded,

C'est qu'en effet l'urbanisme est l'une des formes les plus nobles de la civilisation puisqu'il satisfait à deux préoccupations également élevées: l'amour du prochain, se manifestant par la mise à sa portée de la santé, de la salubrité, du confort de l'habitation; les satisfactions esthétiques obtenues par les grandes réalisations

¹⁷Vivier de Streel, M., "Urbanisme et colonisation", pp. 2-4, in Royer, J., *L'Urbanisme aux colonies vol. 2* (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), p. 4.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

architecturales, l'embellissement du foyer, de la cité et de ses alentours²⁰.

5. The Work of Ernest Hébrard in Indochina

Ernest Hébrard's work in Indochina embodies these types of contradictions which crosscut the Franco-indochinese relationship. Hébrard's speeches and texts on his urban ideals are all marked by concerns which were born out of the move towards association. However, Hébrard's background equally inclined him to a universalist view of urban design. In his formative years he had been involved in the conception of a 'ville mondiale'²¹: a universalist vision of a global city. Hébrard believed he had isolated the universal principles of urban planification in this design, and tried to refute the notion that his global plan would have to be adapted to local milieux. This rationalising, universalist and essentially modernist vision sat uncomfortably alongside the imperatives of association. Yet nevertheless, Hébrard's own stated ideals concerning urbanism in Indochina propelled him towards the adaptation of buildings to local conditions. This fundamental tension is constantly played out in Hébrard's vision of town-planning in Indochina. The lure of assimilatory and universalist principles undercuts and undermines the drive towards association in urban planning. Hébrard's dilemma in Indochina thus reflects the conflict between difference and homogeneity which characterises so much of French colonial discourse.

a) Hébrard's Career in Indochina

Maurice Long succeeded Albert Sarraut as Governor General in 1919. His period of office saw the systematisation and further implementation of the politics of association. In 1920, he requested funds for a new technical council in Indochina, to be headed by a professional urbanist. He admired the urban

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Hébrard collaborated in this project with Henrik Christian Anderson, an American sculptor. The plan of this project was published in English in 1912 and in French in 1913.

accomplishments of Lyautey and Prost in Morocco²², and felt that Indochina would benefit from this type of concerted urban policy, rather than merely the random, individual policy towards public building which had prevailed until then. Indeed, Long hoped to create in Indochina an aesthetic in the associationist spirit.

The decision was thus taken to bring to Indochina a professional urbanist as a government advisor. Long appointed Ernest Hébrard, a member of the *Société française des Urbanistes*, in 1921. Long also created an official urbanism department in Indochina in 1923 and made Hébrard the director of the *service d'urbanisme*, which was part of the *Inspection générale des Travaux Publics*. Hébrard's first task was to be the redevelopment of the *quartier du Gouvernement général* in Hanoi. Maurice Long had been unfavourably impressed by the construction of a large *lycée* right next to the *Palais du Gouvernement*, and hoped to repair this fault by buying up from a credit company the surrounding land with the intention of creating a government administrative *quartier* there. This *quartier* would regroup all the governmental departments, which were at that time scattered throughout the city. Hébrard's plan for this development was approved in 1924 by Long's successor, Governor General Merlin, and construction began the following year with the financial and registry buildings²³.

During his career in Indochina, Hébrard undertook a wide variety of redevelopment and building works. The construction of the *Institut Pasteur* (completed 1930), the *Musée Louis Finot*, the museum of the *Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* in Hanoi (completed 1931), being just two of the most prominent. Hébrard's largest project however was the creation of a 'model city': Dalat. Referred to as a 'ville d'agrément et de repos pour les Européens fatigués par le climat tropical'²⁴, Dalat was designed as a Summer seat of government, and

²²For a commentary on Prost's work in Morocco see: Rabinow, P., "Colonialism, Modernity: The French in Morocco", pp. 167-182, in AlSayyad, op. cit.

²³Education, justice and agricultural departmental buildings were to follow, but economic cut-backs prevented their construction.

²⁴"L'Urbanisme en Indochine", *L'Architecture*, vol. 36, no. 7, (1923), p.97.

a retreat for the metropolitan elite. It was conceived as a highly controlled environment: Dalat was intended to inspire governmental efficiency, high-minded leisure, the health of body and mind, through its site and its design.

b) Hébrard's Urban Ideal

i) Association and Urbanism

As many of Hébrard's contemporary urbanists and administrators asserted, the acknowledgement of Vietnamese culture in architecture was desirable as a means of demonstrating the new attitude towards colonial rule embodied in associationist policy, and should be viewed as a gesture of respect and tolerance. However, as was noted at the *Congrès de l'Urbanisme*, the recognition of indigenous architecture in colonial building projects also had a political pay-off for imperial France; it would engage

la sympathie des indigènes en leur affirmant notre respect pour leurs ouvrages et en les associant à nos travaux. Ainsi, peu à peu, se gagne le coeur des indigènes et se conquiert cette sympathie qu'il est du devoir des colonisateurs d'obtenir²⁵.

The adoption of this 'décor qui ravit et rassure l'âme indigène'²⁶, reveals the quasi-deceptive quality of colonial urbanism in the 1920s and 1930s. Masking the true political and imperial intentions of the metropole, urbanism was intended to quell indigenous fears and to perpetuate the control which military rule in Indochina had ensured in a less overt fashion. Colonial urbanism in Indochina thus played not only an aesthetic, but also a political role in the consolidation of French rule in the colony. As Wright and Rabinow have noted,

Un des principes de cette définition moderne de l'urbanisme entraîna une reconnaissance du plan culturel comme une variable politique clef - une prise de conscience que le pouvoir colonial se devait d'utiliser les différences culturelles plutôt que d'essayer de

²⁵Marrast, M., "Dans quelle mesure faut-il faire appel aux arts indigènes dans la construction des édifices?", in Royer, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁶Ibid.

les détruire ou de les ignorer: elles étaient une ressource qu'il fallait exploiter²⁷.

There is clearly an immediate tension which arises from these two competing projects: French colonial urbanism in Indochina was used as a means of asserting superiority, but was concomitantly intended to assuage indigenous fears. While associationism sought a simultaneity of indigenous and metropolitan cultures, it did not seek to promote equality of culture. The funds of the *Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* were directed towards conservation projects which brought prestige to France, such as the preservation of Angkor Wat. Vestiges of Cham, Annamite and Laotian monuments, less likely to attract attention and less worthy of French interest, were often left to rot and disintegrate²⁸.

The perceived 'usefulness' of indigenous cultural difference clearly had a political role in the French imperial project in Indochina. French colonial government in Indochina hoped to control the indigenous populations through urban design, whilst simultaneously attempting to display a more reformist and understanding approach towards indigenous rights. Urbanism, a less overtly disciplinary form of domination than military control, was used in an attempt to demonstrate this more reformist attitude. The objective of Ernest Hébrard in Indochina was in fact not only to adapt local environmental controls to French architectural purposes, but also to the metropole's imperial and political purposes.

ii) Reinforcing the identity of *Indochine française*

In keeping with these tenets of associationist colonial policy, Hébrard's intention was to create an 'Indochinese style'. He stated:

L'architecture en Indochine devrait tenir compte des caractéristiques du peuple, de ses habitudes et de ses traditions. Il

²⁷Wright, G., and Rabinow, P., "Savoir et Pouvoir dans l'urbanisme moderne d'Ernest Hébrard", op. cit., pp. 28-9.

²⁸See Hébrard, E., "La Conservation des Monuments anciens et des vieilles villes indigènes de l'Indochine", in Royer, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

devrait se baser sur des études des monuments indochinois sans les copier²⁹.

However, this acknowledgement of local conditions and styles was to be accompanied by new 'forms':

Il est bien entendu que l'adoption des moyens modernes de construction facilitera la mise en oeuvre de formes nouvelles qui devront toujours être adaptées aux conditions du pays³⁰.

It was the conception of these 'new forms' which constituted the more radical side to Hébrard's approach, and also one which mitigated his acceptance of the tenets of association.

In a practical sense, this gesture of respect and tolerance was to be highlighted by the use of indigenous craftsmen in building projects. Hébrard's urban 'ideal' for Indochina involved the production, invention, or 'guided evolution' of a new style which would be specific to the Indochinese:

au lieu d'élever en Indochine des pastiches d'européen, pourquoi ne pas diriger les indigènes dans une voie qui s'accorde bien avec leurs traditions, leurs tempéraments et leurs aptitudes, et les faire évoluer normalement vers un art moderne, qui leur restera bien particulier³¹.

Hébrard's own use of language here clearly indicates the extent to which this 'style' was to be manufactured by metropolitan overseers: the verbs 'diriger' and 'faire évoluer' effectively wrest aesthetic control from the indigenous artists and architects. It was, it appears, inconceivable that local traditions and styles might be left intact to evolve at their own pace, or that this evolution might be generated from the Indochinese populations themselves.

In addition, Hébrard's perception of an Indochinese style is premised upon the fact that this style would be distinguished, selected, and put into practice

²⁹Hébrard, E., "L'Architecture locale et les questions d'esthétique en Indochine", in Royer, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 34.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

under the guidance of French experts. Advocating the use of indigenous artisans in order to arouse their *sympathie* towards imperial France, Marrast states:

On ne saurait mieux y parvenir qu'en confiant, dans une très large mesure aux artisans indigènes l'ornementation, leur laissant toute liberté dans des limites définies³².

The perceived necessity of limitation and guidance of the indigenous workers demonstrates the extent to which the associationist discourses of the 1920s and 1930s were nevertheless underscored by a desire to assert metropolitan controls and aesthetic hierarchies.

Thus, although French officialdom in Indochina attempted to demonstrate a democratisation of artistic expression by using indigenous artisans, censorship played an important part in their work. The hands of indigenous artisans were guided and censored by the *service d'urbanisme*.

Hébrard further attempted to implement the principles of association in the design and execution of his buildings by making architectural allusions to South-East Asian cultures. In order to discern and delimit this Indochinese style, Hébrard spent much time photographing and studying indigenous architecture - Angkor Wat, Buddhist pagodas, simple rural dwellings. He similarly studied the principles of site planning, ventilation and choice of materials which prevailed in the Far East, and attempted to use Indochinese technical mastery over the environment (stilts, verandas, thinner walls etc.) in his building design. Hébrard's principal aim was to find local antecedents for official structures, and to strike a balance between tradition and modernism, industrial growth and cultural respect.

In spite of his painstaking research of local architectural designs, Hébrard seemed oblivious to centuries-old cultural rivalries between the different countries which made up the Indochinese Union. As the *Musée Louis Finot* demonstrates, Hébrard freely mixed elements from different regions and also from countries

³²Marrast, J., "Dans quelle mesure faut-il faire appel aux arts indigènes dans la construction des édifices ?" op. cit., p. 24.

outside the Indochinese Federation in order to generate his ideal of an innovative, adaptive aesthetic. As a result, the museum, and many of his other buildings resembled a pastiche of exotic details superimposed upon a *Beaux-Arts* plan, rather than the more radical change in direction which he advocated.

The *Musée Louis Finot*, a museum designed to house the *Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* and its collections, presented, as Wright has noted³³, an eclectic mix of architectural motifs. Its facade evoked Japanese Shinto temples; its steep-tiled porch roofs recalled Hindu temples in India; the two-tiered roof of the central core alluded to Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian temple structures. Although the museum appealed to the EFEO's scholars' knowledge of a diverse range of oriental stylistic traditions, the blurring of national cultural references and styles nevertheless signals the imposition of metropolitan cultural and aesthetic values, and the subsumation of separate Indochinese identities under an homogenising Orientalist and imperial vision of the identity of Indochina under colonial rule.

Hébrard's desire to create an 'Indochinese style' had further repercussions in that it effectively marked a break with indigenous architectural continuity. The historical break which French colonialism had itself effected was used to create an entirely new and modern architectural and urban model in Indochina. This model would serve not only to anchor the notion of new cultural and historical status for *Indochine française*, but would also present a long-lasting acknowledgement of French intervention in South-East Asia. Not only a permanent visual testament to French reinterpretations of indigenous cultural and political identity, Hébrard's 'Indochinese style' also functioned as a long-lasting influence on any future developments in indigenous architecture. In 'inventing' an 'Indochinese style', by not using French exemplar, nor rigidly preserving traditional models, Hébrard

³³See her chapter on Indochina entitled "La Folie des grandeurs", op. cit.

effectively created a hybrid architectural style, peculiar to French Indochina, which reflected its colonial status.

The use of a range of Asian motifs in metropolitan urban projects in Indochina further exemplifies the tendency within French colonial discourses to essentialise Other cultures. For, although French colonial discourses at times reflect a desire to accord Indochina a specificity of her own, they also at times tend to deny that very specificity. Metropolitan aesthetic values in architecture and urbanism operated in such a way as to insist on the invented stereotype of Indochina rather than the diversity of the territories themselves. This observation points to imperial France's difficulty in acknowledging diversity: both the diversity of her various dependant territories, and also the diversity which prevailed amongst her subjugated South-East Asian cultures. In colonial urbanism the essentialising project of universal Republicanism is exacerbated, and the polar tension between diversity and homogeneity is played out to the full.

Hébrard's concern to create and use in his designs an 'Indochinese style' thus reflects the new directives of associationist policy, but also underlines the tensions and conflicts which its adoption highlighted. For while school manuals used in Franco-indochinese schools had attempted to break all ties with neighbouring cultures in an attempt to establish more firmly the identity of *French Indochina*, the move towards association, particularly in urban design, seems, at first glance, to work against this desire, and on the contrary to revive and to reintroduce these Asian cultural references and traditions.

The creation of an 'Indochinese style' nonetheless has a similar intention to that espoused by the school manuals examined in the second chapter. Colonial urbanism in Indochina was undeniably linked to the political aim of implanting a French identity amongst the Indochinese populations. Not only were the territory's regions and countries blurred into the French construction of *l'Union indochinoise*, but more importantly, distinctions were further effaced and masked

by Hébrard's plundering of neighbouring cultures for artistic and architectural references.

c) Modernisation versus Tradition

Colonialism itself has often been viewed as an essentially modernising project, and Ernest Hébrard's principles of colonial urbanism certainly reflect a modernist vision of French action in Indochina. The streamlining and rationalisation of development programmes, and the emphasis on the implementation of technological progress bears out this assertion. Throughout his speeches Hébrard consistently emphasises the importance of the centralisation and rationalisation of administrative buildings, the necessity of creating efficient transport between the various zones, the speed of commercial transport and its proximity to industrial centres.

Equally, the colonies were frequently perceived as *laboratoires*, or *champs d'expérience*. New concepts of urban design, new building techniques and designs were to be tried out in the colonies before being applied in the metropole. The colonies represented a place in which to work out the social, political and aesthetic dilemmas besetting France, in order to apply the positive results to the motherland. Colonial urbanism was thus perceived as a playground for the avant-garde. The colonies allowed urbanists and architects much more freedom to experiment than they enjoyed in the metropole. As Vaillat noted in reference to France's Asian possessions:

Les colonies, tout en étant des conservatoires de vie orientale, seraient aussi des laboratoires de vie occidentale³⁴.

The concerns of intellectuals and architects were transformed into policies: theories were put into practice. This sponsorship of modernisation can be seen in Hébrard's streamlining of offices and administrative buildings in Indochina, in the

³⁴Vaillat, L., "L'Esthétique aux colonies", in Royer, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 23.

overhaul of hospitals and public works. Modernising projects meant more standardised, rationalised, and efficient constructions.

The above quotation, however, also serves to point out the dual intentions of colonial urbanism. Urbanists and architects of the 1920s and 1930s were concerned to find that delicate balance between East and West: preserving indigenous identity whilst imposing Western (or more pertinently, French) ideals of progress and technology. Colonial urbanism was thus, on the one hand, a domain in which modern concepts could be put to the test, but also a showcase for traditional ideas about Oriental culture. For, alongside the moderniser's preoccupation with progress and rationalisation, there was a desire amongst colonial urbanists to view part of their role as that of conservationists.

As this chapter has already noted, Hébrard fulfilled this second feature of his role by spending much time studying indigenous architecture. In conjunction with the *Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, Hébrard hoped to build up a detailed inventory of all the important indigenous monuments and public buildings in Indochina. Science and scholarship were thus clearly complicit with France's colonial project. Here that complicity is revealed through the creation of an imperial archive: classifying, collecting and collating information which was to serve to exercise political rule over the indigenous populations and to perpetuate French rule in Indochina.

One of the implications of the creation of such a database is that it was used by specialists in order to decide which aspects of indigenous culture to retain or emphasise. Data-collection, and the study of indigenous architecture, thus evolved, in the hands of urban specialists and orientalist scholars, into a practical and applicable value system which, as Hébrard's texts show, could be invoked to support urban change:

Lorsqu'elles représentent un intérêt esthétique, les vieilles villes devraient, autant que possible, être conservées. Il faut néanmoins les assainir et les doter de perfectionnements modernes³⁵.

When not transformed by modern improvements, the retention of certain aspects of unadulterated indigenous architecture rather than others depended upon their perceived aesthetic value. Hébrard's criterion for conservation was therefore, largely defined by his own, Western-influenced aesthetic sensibilities. In spite of the 'respect' and 'tolerance' which associative policies were intended to represent, French colonial urbanism in Indochina nevertheless subsumed indigenous culture and identity under French imperial and cultural hegemony.

A further effect of this metropolitan classificatory system upon indigenous cities in Indochina was to create designated 'traditional' areas within the colony. This form of 'museumification' transformed indigenous cities, buildings and monuments of cultural or religious significance into objects of quaint charm rather than symbols of political, cultural and historical identity. The retention of 'traditional' aspects of Indochinese architecture, which tends to be viewed positively, and often uncritically, as an example of one of the well-intentioned and advantageous results of colonialism nevertheless served to fix and delimit indigenous cultures according to essentialised metropolitan perceptions of that Other culture. As Hamadeh has noted, the image of the 'traditional' indigenous city often

served as an administrative tool to promote, often with the best intentions, the idea of an exotic, static and disorderly people in contrast to advanced and normalised European society³⁶.

³⁵Hébrard, E., "La Conservation des monuments anciens et des vieilles villes indigènes de l'Indochine", in Royer, vol. 2, op.cit., p. 26.

³⁶Hamadeh, S., "Creating the Traditional City: A French Project", chapter 10, pp. 241-259, in AlSayyad, N., Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), p. 242.

Relating this assertion to Hobsbawn's notion of 'invented traditions', Hamadeh further observes that

in the context of French colonial rule in North Africa, invented traditions, rather than providing a changing society with a sense of historical continuity, were meant to affix certain societal rules, rituals and routines that would present historical continuity as an impediment to change. It is in this sense that the notion of the traditional city can best be understood against that of the old city; it strips the city of its potential for future transformation and removes it from the historical continuum³⁷.

Similarly, the retention of old, 'traditional', aspects of indigenous culture meant that Indochina was fixed in its past, negatively juxtaposed against the progress effected in the metropole and by the metropolitan colonialists in Indochina. Progress and development were clearly seen to be desirable only when delimited by metropolitan criteria. Hébrard obliquely makes this point when discussing the conservationist aspects of his role as urbanist in Indochina, denigrating autonomous indigenous progress and prosperity from an aesthetic and economic point of view:

Un ensemble de ville ancienne est difficile à conserver, surtout quand celle-ci devient riche et prospère. Des boutiques nouvelles, plus ou moins modernisées et d'un goût déplorable, viennent remplacer les anciennes échoppes pittoresques...³⁸.

Therefore, when existing indigenous areas of cities were conserved under Hébrard's redevelopment plans, they were effectively frozen in time and space. The image of indigenous peoples, their habitats and ways of life were fixed by the urbanist's desire for preservation. This policy prevented autonomous growth and progress, and as Hamadeh noted in relation to North African cities, 'contributed equally to the creation of the image of an immobile and ahistorical Orient',

³⁷Ibid., p. 242.

³⁸Hébrard, E., "La Conservation des Monuments anciens et des vieilles villes indigènes de l'Indochine", in Royer, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 26.

concluding that 'association did not mean the repudiation of Orientalism, but its modification. The French image of the indigenous populations remained intact'³⁹.

The policy of association thus tended, in the domain of colonial urbanism at least, to turn the culture of the 'Other' into a timeless tradition. This observation underlines one of the contradictions apparent in the application of associative colonial policy in Indochina: on the one hand, the modernist vision of French colonialism sought to effect French-driven progress, on the other, urban design and redevelopment was implemented in such a way as to keep Indochina visibly 'primitive'. These conflicting desires produced a dichotomy of urban forms in Indochina: one indigenous, traditional and frozen; the other French, modern and continually developing.

Hébrard was thus in part the curator of the museum into which Indochina had been partially transformed. He was also the moderniser in pursuit of rationalisation and progress. The ghost of assimilationist policies thus lingered on in the enforced gallicisation and modernisation of certain urban areas, whilst the conservation of indigenous quartiers acted as a sop to the newer tenets of the policy of association. The universalising notion of *l'Asie française* could legitimately be pursued, whilst under the guise of a beneficial respect and tolerance, that very vision of progress and development was undermined by practices aimed at fixing Indochina as a traditional and therefore backward society.

d) Health, Zoning and Segregation

Dalat, the *station balnéaire d'altitude* which was to double as a Summer seat of government was one of Hébrard's largest projects, but was never entirely completed due to financial constraints⁴⁰. It is also an urban project which

³⁹Hamadeh, op. cit., p. 257.

⁴⁰See Pineau, L-G., "Le Plan d'aménagement et d'extension de Dalat", in *La Vie Urbaine*, no. 49, 1939, pp. 29-49.

combines the abiding concerns over health and hygiene with colonial urbanism most readily. In addition, Dalat was at once a military outpost, a sanatorium and a seat of government, thus combining all the predominant features and concerns of French colonial rule in Indochina.

Dalat had been the focus of speculation for some time, although it was not until Hébrard's appointment as *chef de l'urbanisme* that a concerted attempt was made to draw up coherent and extensive plans for the development of this polyfunctional city. Hébrard's designs envisaged a governmental quarter with residences for administrators and functionaries, an electricity plant and an improved water supply, new wider roads and avenues, an artificial lake, a casino, hotels, sports pitches, lycées, two hospitals and a museum. The total area of the city was to cover some 1760 hectares, of which 500 were to be given over to administrative and public service buildings, 185 for military quarters, 173 for the government quarter, and 206 reserved for indigenous use. The remaining areas were to be put up for sale.

This grandiose plan was intended to respond to the perceived need for a station balnéaire ou d'altitude pour permettre aux fonctionnaires et colons, et à leur famille, de prendre du repos et reconstituer leur santé⁴¹.

This mountain health resort, with its temperate climate and high altitude⁴², was conceived of as a place in which metropolitan health and governing powers could be restored and rejuvenated; the type of city

⁴¹Pouyanne, A., Les Travaux publics de l'Indochine (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1926), p. 283.

⁴²"La station est habitable toute l'année. Sur le plateau baigné dans le soleil, circule un air vif et lumineux, excitant les fonctions digestives défaillantes. Les brouillards y sont rares et les vents modérés. Elle convient aux organismes fatigués et ne présentent aucune affection aiguë en évolution", Abbaticci, Dr., "Aperçu sur les stations climatiques des colonies tropicales françaises", in Royer, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 14.

où le capital européen se conserverait, grâce à un climat sain, bien choisi, et qui serait l'organisme d'où 'partirait, comme d'un immense cerveau, la pensée directrice et créatrice'⁴³.

Hébrard viewed the 'zoning' of the colonial city as extremely beneficial to urban environmental concerns, and essential in the case of Dalat, which was planned according to the following five 'zones': an administrative centre; residential districts; recreational spaces (parks, cultural centres); commercial areas; and industrial sectors. Thus different areas within the city would be set aside for different uses, and European quarters segregated from indigenous ones:

La ville est divisée en: quartier de commerce genre européen et indigène; quartier d'habitations, européen et indigène; quartier des garages; quartier des chantiers, ateliers, petites industries et usines⁴⁴.

This strict manipulation of urban topography was perceived as 'une sauvegarde contre les voisinages industriels, dont nous souffrons tant dans la métropole'⁴⁵.

Hébrard's zoning design was intended to serve several purposes. Firstly, using this system of spatial organisation, Hébrard intended to implement rationalised plans which would override the economic interests which had previously governed the expansion and growth of Indochinese cities. By implementing his zoning plans, and rejecting the irregular and uncontrolled autonomous expansion of the city, Hébrard was, in effect, inscribing order onto the landscape. As Wright and Rabinow have suggested, Hébrard's colonial cities, and particularly Dalat, reflected his

idéal d'ordre, de propreté, de ségrégation spatiale et de hiérarchie⁴⁶.

⁴³Abbatucci, op. cit., quoting Governor General Doumer, p. 13.

⁴⁴Hébrard, E., "L'Urbanisme en Indochine", pp. 278-289, in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux vol. 1 (La Charité-sur-Loire, Delayance, 1932), p. 284.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Wright, and Rabinow, op. cit., p. 38.

Hébrard's modernising vision of the colonial city was thus additionally used as a tool through which to control colonial topography and indigenous itineraries. In recent theories of the use of city space, the map has frequently been viewed as a totalising device⁴⁷. As Harvey has observed, the map can be seen as a 'homogenisation and reification of the rich diversity of spatial itineraries and spatial stories'⁴⁸. This question of order and control is particularly relevant in the case of Indochina, as Asian crowds were an extremely prevalent mythological element of French travel literature on Indochina⁴⁹. The *grouillement de la foule* is viewed by many writers as one of the most disquieting elements of the 'Indochinese experience'. Hébrard's modernising vision of the colonial city can thus be viewed as a tool through which he hoped to contain and subdue the unruly natives. The zoning of city space, and the inscription of its ghettoising strategy upon official maps and plans, can be seen as an attempt to reestablish control over the multiplicitous and thus evasive character of the indigenous populations.

Urbanism can thus be viewed as a disciplinary service in that it uses its techniques and forms to ensure the ordering of human multiplicity. If, in Foucauldian terms, space is necessarily a receptacle of social power, then the reorganisation of space can be viewed as a reorganisation of the framework through which social power is expressed⁵⁰. The reordering of urban topography which Hébrard hoped to accomplish in Indochina can be viewed in part as a form of exclusionary social control. By delimiting ethnic quarters and producing visibly distinguishable, if not rigorously enforced boundaries, Hébrard's zoning of city space created indigenous ghettos which were immediately recognisable.

⁴⁷See for example, de Certeau, M., "Parcours et cartes", pp. 175-180, in *L'Invention du quotidien 1: arts de faire* (Paris: Folio/essais, 1990).

⁴⁸Harvey, D., *The Condition of postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1989), p. 253.

⁴⁹See Viollis A., *SOS Indochine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), and Roubaud, L., *Vietnam: la tragédie indochinoise* (Paris: Valois, 1931), whose work is examined in chapter six of this thesis.

⁵⁰Foucault, M., *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard/Collection tel, 1975).

This form of ethnic segregation also tends to use visibility as a means of oppression. This is achieved through the exhibiting of the people and their city so that they can be observed and understood from an external view point. By segregating European and indigenous populations, colonial urbanism directed surveillance and the gaze of the agents of social order to the excluded, or spatially marginalised sections of the city population. Segregation and zoning can thus be viewed as an attempt to neutralise the effects of counterpower that spring from multiplicity: agitations, revolts, spontaneous organisations and gatherings, and coalitions. Hébrard's supposedly reformist vision of colonial urbanism thus functioned in much the same way as the militaristic designs which prevailed under the policy of assimilation.

Secondly, as the above observations imply, Hébrard's 'zoning' plans clearly raise the issues of class and racial segregation. Hébrard's plans show that he intended to separate and juxtapose European and indigenous commercial and residential districts, mirroring the class segregation which operated in the metropole. Hébrard's assumption was that the greater majority of the indigenous population in cities was roughly equivalent to metropolitan 'lower' classes. In the following quotation, for example, he imagines the urban-dwelling indigenous populations of Indochina as a useful workforce whose proximity to European residential areas would provide necessary manual labour:

Dans certaines contrées, les centres indigènes existeront; dans d'autres, il faudra les créer à proximité de la nouvelle ville européenne; tout groupement européen ayant besoin d'une agglomération indigène pour vivre; soit afin de disposer d'une domesticité indispensable, soit pour le commerce, soit pour les travaux d'exploitation⁵¹.

The contact Hébrard envisages between European and indigenous populations is thus one in which rules of social hierarchy and class segregation prevailed.

Although the Indochinese populations were viewed as capable of scaling

⁵¹Hébrard, E., "L'Urbanisme en Indochine", in Royer, vol. 1, op. cit., p. 279.

metropolitan-defined class structures, of attaining a similar status as a bourgeois metropolitan family through the accumulation of capital, the vast majority of these populations were relegated to inferior status, and habitation.

Il ne faut pas oublier que les Européens ont absolument besoin des indigènes pour leur existence, et que ceux-ci s'établiront à proximité de l'agglomération européenne et formeront un centre commercial qui prendra une importance en rapport avec le développement du centre européen. Les domestiques vivent chez leurs maîtres, mais tous les jours vont au marché pour leurs achats, ou dans la ville indigène voir leurs familles et leurs amis. Il se forme autour de tout établissement européen une ou plusieurs agglomérations indigènes; celles-ci correspondent, en somme aux groupements de commerçants et ouvriers de nos villes modernes, qui sont, en vérité, séparés des habitations bourgeoises sans qu'une limite absolue soit tracée⁵².

Although Hébrard asserts that boundaries between zones are not impermeable, nor absolute, that contact between the races was inevitable, he also envisages that contact as organised, rationalised and sanitised:

Il est souvent question de quartiers européens et de quartiers indigènes, et certains pourraient croire à une spécialisation absolue et penser que des zones devraient être rigoureusement tracées pour éviter tout contact pouvant, par le temps d'épidémies, devenir dangereux. En Indochine, les groupements sont distincts, mais si très rarement les Européens habitent les centres indigènes, par contre des indigènes aisés vivent souvent dans les centres européens⁵³.

These concerns had passed into law even before the plans for Dalat were made clear, when, in a 1922 bill, the *conseil municipal de Saigon* decreed that in a large section of the city only European houses could be built. This bill was intended to isolate from the European part of the city the poorer Asian populations whose proximity was perceived to constitute a danger because of its ignorance of the most elemental rules of hygiene. Furthermore, Hébrard's design proposals for Dalat reveal that he intended strict racial and environmental controls

⁵²Ibid., p. 285.

⁵³Ibid.

to be exercised within the city: the Vietnamese needed permission to enter the city, and were housed beyond its Northern hills.

Indeed urbanism and concerns with hygiene were closely linked during this period. Hébrard's plans for Dalat reveal an obsession with health and hygiene which is present in much writing and thought on France's colonies. An abundance of health and hygiene manuals proliferated during this period, which was also marked in Indochina by the construction of several further sanatoria for the metropolitan and European populations (other main sanatoria: Bokkor in Cambodia, built 1925; Tam-Dao, built in 1905 in Tonkin; Chapa in Tonkin)⁵⁴. Hébrard's texts and speeches also express an abiding concern with hygiene. He relates these concerns principally to climactic problems specific to Indochina. Indeed, Indochina's climate was widely viewed as nefarious to the health of Europeans. However, as much writing, both fictional and factual, about Indochina shows, descriptions of the countries' tropical climate was frequently linked to metaphors of disease and contamination⁵⁵. The territory was increasingly linked in the popular imagination in France with sickness and suffering. Indochina was imagined metaphorically as a malignant, life-draining organism, seductive yet debilitating.

However, with regard to colonial urbanism in Indochina, it was not simply the colony's climate and topography which constituted a health risk to Europeans. As several of the quotations from Hébrard's papers above show, the native populations of Indochina were also perceived as a danger to public hygiene. In a 1912 hygiene manual which is representative of the many which were published from the turn of the century onwards, Docteur Pavrel (*secrétaire adjoint de la Société des Etudes coloniales et maritimes*) makes the following observation on the location of European residences:

⁵⁴This potentially fruitful area of study remains to be examined, as does the work of the *Institut Pasteur* in Indochina.

⁵⁵See the works under discussion in chapters five and six of this thesis.

La maison doit être bien située, c'est-à-dire à une certaine distance des agglomérations indigènes trop souvent infectées et malpropres⁵⁶.

This view is not simply one which reflects the concerns of early settlers to the colonies. It is a view which is reiterated throughout colonial discourses well into the 1930s. Dr. Marcel Léger (a former director of the *Institut Pasteur* in Dakar), presenting a paper entitled, "L'Habitation coloniale du point de vue médicale", at the *Congrès de l'urbanisme* in 1931, wrote in favour of racial segregation:

Pour éviter la contamination de ces locaux sommaires, les Européens agiront sagement en ne permettant que le moins possible aux indigènes de pénétrer chez eux, et en surveillant soigneusement à ne laisser aucun débris d'aliments qui attire les bêtes, en particulier les rats⁵⁷.

Les raisons d'ordre sanitaire qui militent en faveur de la ségrégation sont donc de première importance et indiscutables⁵⁸.

Alongside vermin, debris and waste, the indigenous populations are viewed as vectors of disease and agents of contamination. The indigenous individual is viewed as the intermediary between a malignant Nature and Civilisation. The bearer of disease, he represents the threat of rampant, uncontrollable, and pernicious forces of nature interposed against and threatening to the civilised metropolitan settler. As Léger continues:

Les indigènes sont, en effet, pour certaines maladies, des *réservoirs de virus* qu'il est bon d'éloigner. On connaît le rôle important qu'ils jouent dans le maintien de *l'endémicité paludéenne*⁵⁹ (emphasis in the original).

⁵⁶Pavrel, G., Hygiène coloniale: comment on doit vivre aux colonies (Paris: "Colonia", 1912), p. 4.

⁵⁷Léger, M., "L'Habitation coloniale du point de vue médical", in Royer, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 46.

Here, the human is conflated with the biological, forming a type of 'demographic pathology'⁶⁰ in which the role of a rapidly spreading malignant organism is imputed to the indigenous populations.

This notion of fear and loathing is a common feature of colonial discourse. As Spurr has noted,

The obsessive debasement of the Other in colonial discourse arises not simply from fear and the recognition of difference but also, on another level, from a desire for and identification with the Other which must be resisted⁶¹.

One might be tempted to suppose that this fear and loathing be somewhat mitigated in the case of Indochina, for as the second chapter asserted, Indochina occupied a high status in imperial French racial hierarchies. The Indochinese were not comparable, as Félicien Challaye had noted, to 'n'importe quelle peuplade nègre du centre de l'Afrique'⁶². However, the medical experts quoted above drew frequent comparisons between Indochinese and African natives, rarely distinguishing between the housing and health situations of the two⁶³. This type of blurring of colonial territories, their homogenisation into *les colonies* rather than separate and different areas is repeated in the title of Pavrel's document: Hygiène coloniale: comment vivre aux colonies. This lack of distinction between the various overseas territories suggests a more profound malaise. Imperial France appears unable to accept diversity at some basic level. While, as the following chapter will show, it was acceptable if not advantageous to distinguish between the colonies on grounds of relative cultural sophistication, in more fundamental questions such as health and hygiene, imperial France blurred all 'native populations' into one indistinguishable morass of disease and filth.

⁶⁰Spurr, D., The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 89.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 80.

⁶²Challaye, F., Souvenirs sur la colonisation (Paris: Picart, 1935), p. 20.

⁶³See Léger, op. cit., p. 41, for instance.

Segregation from the Indochinese populations was thus conceived of as an act of preservation, or self-preservation, against the danger of collapse into indifferentiation. The notion of indigenous abjection, which is an important component of the discourses of catastrophism (which was a feature of school manuals, and was reiterated in Albert Sarraut's texts discussed in the following chapter) which served as a pretext for colonial intervention, is also consistently invoked as a means to reinforce difference between colonised and coloniser. Segregation thus functioned as a means by which to avoid contamination (both physical and moral). This fear of contamination, as Fanon's work has shown, is social and psychological as well as biological⁶⁴.

Indeed, moral and social fears arise from the same discussions of physical health and the biological fear of disease. In a similar way to the imprecations of hygiene manuals concerning physical health, these discourses operate around notions of potential metropolitan degeneracy in the face of indigenous debilitation. The ostensible dirt, filth and moral degradation of the indigenous populations is viewed not simply in physical and medicinal terms, the insalubrity of the natives is also perceived as a threat to the moral order of European settlers. This link between the physical and the moral order is made explicit in the following extract from Pavrel's 1912 manual, in which he asserts that anyone enjoying good health can live in the colonies

à condition de se plier aux lois d'hygiène de pays chauds, d'être sobre, économe de ses forces physiques et riche en énergie morale⁶⁵.

Not only do Pavrel's hygiene imprecations appear to acquire legal status, he also predicates health upon moral character or 'energy'.

Concern for the moral character of Europeans settled in the colonies was an almost ubiquitous feature of fictional works on French Indochina, particularly

⁶⁴Fanon, F., *Peau noire: masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952).

⁶⁵Pavrel, op. cit., p. 2.

the fiction of the first decades of the twentieth century. A privileged site of decadence and moral degradation, Indochina, and more particularly Saigon, was widely perceived as an amoral, or immoral society. Rife with the dangers of infestation and pollution, Saigon was therefore linked to the potential physical and moral degradation of the European populations. Seen from this perspective, the significance of Hébrard's plans for the mountain retreat of Dalat are highlighted: its remoteness from the dangers of Saigon and Indochina's other large cities, the idea of a 'cure', both physical and mental, and the emphasis on its 'elite' of residents, all reflect a desire to distance the European population from sites of contamination.

These issues of sanitation and segregation open up a further avenue of enquiry which revolves around questions of 'moral hygiene' and differentiation between colonised and coloniser. In his health manual, Pavrel, for example, moves almost imperceptibly from expressing a medicinal desire for segregation to a moral desire for segregation:

On a quelque tendance en pays tropical à se laisser aller aux douceurs du *farniente*, à prolonger outre-mesure la sieste, à fumer paresseusement sur de moelleux sofas à l'ombre des vérandas en s'intoxiquant de nicotine, d'opium ou d'alcool; on en vient ainsi rapidement à un état déplorable de déchéance physique qui prépare la faillite de la volonté et de l'énergie. Là-bas on appelle cela *s'indigéniser*. C'est en effet descendre des hauteurs de la Civilisation pour tomber dans les abîmes de l'abrutissement négritien⁶⁶(emphasis in the original).

As this quotation demonstrates, the principles of boundary, exclusion and difference which characterise discourses of abjection and debasement are intimately linked to notions of indifferentiation and the fear, or threat, of 'going native'. Reflected in this fear and in the exaggerated concerns with boundaries and frontiers, is a lack of confidence in France's imperial identity. Human bodies and

⁶⁶Pavrel, op. cit., p. 6.

colonial cities become metaphorical substitutes for one another, expressing a physical, moral and spatial anxiety over the integrity of imperial identity.

Indeed, Pavrel's disquiet over the moral conduct of the settler communities in the colonies reveals more profound misgivings concerning the stability or security of France's colonial project. The imperial identity of France, predicated on the perceived moral strength and rectitude of Western, and more particularly French, civilisation, is here perceived as easily threatened, and readily abandoned. The whole issue of health and segregation is connected explicitly with the perpetuation of France's Empire, and with her colonial aspirations. Health, hygiene and segregation come to assume the status of a pillar upon which rests the very possibility of the continuation of French rule.

Finally, it is the terms and terminology of France's *mission civilisatrice* which disguise these anxieties and reassert difference as a means of shoring up France's imperial identity and integrity. In his conclusion, Léger explicitly considers hygiene and health concerns in the same framework as that of France's *mission civilisatrice*. It is, in fact, the very modalities of this civilising ideal which allow for a metropolitan discourse of fear and loathing of the indigenous populations to be masked:

La tâche est rude, mais elle est bien française. Elle se résume ainsi: permettre à ceux qui s'expatrient de conserver la santé, de manière à augmenter au maximum nos échanges et notre production nationale; répandre nos idées parmi ceux que nous devons guider et protéger; imposer l'hygiène, non par la force, mais par la persuasion et par l'exemple; amener les indigènes à envier notre façon de procéder, en particulier, nos habitations, de manière à ce qu'ils nous imitent⁶⁷.

It is a measure of official France's success in diffusing its ideal of colonialism, that it permeates both cultural, and here, scientific thought on the colonies. Not only does this last quotation draw upon all the fundamental principles of French

⁶⁷Léger, op. cit., p. 46.

colonialism, it also points to the contradictions inherent in those very discourses. Behind the French colonial discourse of generosity and protection lies a desire to reaffirm difference between colonised and coloniser, thereby asserting metropolitan superiority over more 'primitive' and backward populations: in spite of the overarching concern with health and hygiene in the colonies, no mention is made in the above quotations of increasing health care provision for the indigenous populations, nor of the education of indigenous doctors, nor the creation of medical schools in Indochina. On the contrary, as the second chapter showed, the ideal of progress and development in French Indochina did not extend to equality of education and medicinal development between metropolitan and indigenous populations.

6. Conclusion

French colonial urbanism in Indochina is revealing of the relationship between France and her South-East Asian colony on several counts. Firstly, although French colonialism of the 1920s and 1930s has been viewed as more reformist and less authoritarian than its earlier manifestations, the implementation of associationist urban policies demonstrates that the principles of French colonialism examined in the second chapter remained widespread. In school manuals, France was depicted as simultaneously benevolent and protective, yet also authoritarian. The colonial relationship with Indochina was at once reciprocal and impositional, generous yet self-seeking. These conflicting visions of France's imperial role are reinforced by, and extended in her approach to colonial urbanism in Indochina.

The work of Ernest Hébrard in Indochina reveals that the shift in French colonial thinking and policy which was supposed to have been engendered by the move from assimilationist to associationist 'native' policies was less dramatic than historians have tended to portray. Although it may be tempting to suppose that evolving attitudes and the refinement of colonial policy engendered a

transformation in the Franco-indochinese relationship, this examination of urban policy and design demonstrates that certain key principles of French colonialism remained constant over time. The respect, tolerance and reformist attitude of association were in fact consistently undermined by the seemingly almost irresistible French propensity for the universalising and homogenising policies normally associated with assimilation.

Secondly, colonial urbanism in Indochina was viewed as a means of asserting an inviolable image of the imperial nation. Despite the rejection of military expressions of superiority and control, the need and desire to impress these latter founding stones of colonial authority over the indigenous populations remained an acutely felt imperative of colonial policy and management in Indochina. These desires are reflected in the imposition of hegemonic metropolitan value systems over local architecture, and in the refusal to acknowledge cultural specificity to the component parts of the Indochinese Union.

Finally, the ghettoisation of indigenous populations into visibly distinguishable *quartiers*, coupled with a policy which rigidly preserved the 'primitive' features of indigenous cities, demonstrates that French colonial urbanism was less interested in the global implementation of progress and development than it was in the maintenance of a veneer of metropolitan social, cultural, political and technological superiority. Revelatory of deep-seated and largely concealed concerns and anxieties over imperial integrity and identity, the importance of boundary and segregative practices reinforced the sense of differentiation necessary to the maintenance of colonial control.

Chapter 4: *L'Exposition coloniale de Vincennes, 1931: Indochine, la "perle" de l'Extrême-Orient*

1. Introduction

Most commentators agree that the 1931 Colonial Exhibition at Vincennes marked the apogee of France's colonial Empire. The *parti colonial's* strenuous efforts had at last come to fruition, and the Empire was, for the duration of the exhibition at least, the primary focus of the metropolitan media and imagination. The occasion of the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* triggered an unprecedented proliferation of works discussing French colonialism: journalism, exhibition literature and works published by prominent colonial thinkers and administrators to coincide with the exhibition. The exhibition itself generated a nine volume work which exhaustively describes the organisation of the exhibition, the exhibits, and also reproduces the speeches and comments of the leading figures involved in its conception and organisation.

The high profile accorded to the exhibition clearly provided an important occasion to reassess France's colonial ideal. The Exhibition provided France with an opportunity to express her colonial views and demonstrate her imperial prowess on an international stage. The exhibition was a forum in which the specificity of French colonialism could be laid before both the metropolitan public and France's international imperial competitors. By the 1930s, conquest and pacification had become a distant memory, and French presence, government and administration were firmly established in the component parts of her diverse Empire. Confidence in Empire was at its height. From this secure position, ideals of Empire could now be subtly reworked to present French colonialism in its maturity. The Exposition provided an opportune moment to reassess the *génie* of French colonialism in comparison with that of her imperial rivals.

The chapter will be divided into two sections. The first will provide a detailed analysis of the government's own account of its mission in Indochina, drawing upon the vast amount of propagandist texts and 'official' documentation which proliferated at the time of the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*. The chapter will show that these 'official' sources reinforced, extended and at times reworked the 'principles' of French colonialism which were discussed in the second chapter. The section will analyse in further detail the discourses of colonialism which proliferated at this time: the 'official' view of French colonialism represented in texts coinciding with the exhibition, the speeches of leading members of the government and organisers of the exhibition. This chapter will thus seek to pinpoint how the ideal of French colonialism seen in the second chapter was extended or transformed in exhibition literature for an international and often more sophisticated audience.

The second section will examine in detail the exhibition itself, particularly the way in which Indochina was exhibited. It will seek to determine the reason why Indochina was so predominant amongst the French colonies at this exhibition, and will discuss the significance of the exhibit which dominated the exhibition: the Khmer temples of Angkor. The chapter will suggest that the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* provides revealing insights into the special status of Indochina in the metropolitan imagination.

2. Official Rhetoric of Empire

a) Reinforcing the autrefois/maintenant contrast

According to the Rapport général de l'Exposition Coloniale Internationale, the official report on the 1931 exhibition, the chief aim of the exhibition was to highlight 'les réalisations de la politique indigène, et les progrès économiques dûs à la

colonisation'¹. These notions of success and progress were repeated throughout the exhibition literature, and were reinforced by imagery which implied a state of chaos or disorder reigned in the colonies before the intervention of France overseas.

This imagery, reminiscent of the *autrefois/maintenant* comparisons which permeated school manuals, enabled French colonialists to justify the colonising presence by contrasting the benefits of a 'harmonising' and 'enlightening' colonial rule, with chaotic pre-colonial instability. The Rapport général idealised the colonialist enterprise by setting the 'moral' progress engendered by France against the emptiness or void by which it qualified the pre-colonial situation of the colonies.

One of the most prominent voices of the exhibition was that of Albert Sarraut, member of the *Parti Radical*, Governor General of Indochina 1911-1914 and 1917-1919, and later Minister for Colonies. Viewed as one of the most influential voices of the colonial lobby during the inter-war years, he published his long account of France's great colonial history² to coincide with the *Exposition Coloniale*. In Grandeur et servitude coloniales, Sarraut insisted on the moral obligations of the colonisers, whom he viewed as 'agents de la civilisation', 'répandant les lumières sur l'ignorance de ses protégés'³. Thus cultural notions of France's role were also marked by universalist desires to see the enlightening, egalitarian principles of 1789 extended to all peoples gathered under the French flag. As the school manuals examined in the first chapter stressed, *devoir*, *responsabilité*, and above all *générosité* were to characterise the motherland's relationship with the colonies.

This assumption leads Sarraut to refer to the colony in terms of lack, emptiness, and absence. Sarraut qualifies the colonies as void spaces bereft of the

¹ Rapport général de l'Exposition Coloniale internationale, 9 vols (présenté par le Gouverneur général Olivier) (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1932-5).

² Sarraut, A., Grandeur et servitude coloniales (Paris: Sagittaire, 1931).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

light of knowledge and civilisation. Colonisation thus becomes, in the logic of his argument, the deliverance of the colony from this state of nothingness:

Sans nous, sans notre intervention, dont l'intérêt universel a d'ailleurs bénéficié, ces populations indigènes restaient vouées à la misère et à l'abjection; les épidémies, les endémies massives, les famines continueraient à les décimer; la mortalité infantile faucherait encore la moitié de leur progéniture; les roitelets sanguinaires ou les chefs corrompus ne cesseraient pas de les sacrifier à leurs caprices odieux; leur esprit s'avilirait toujours dans la pratique des basses superstitions ou des mœurs les plus barbares; et ils périraient aujourd'hui de misère sur des richesses inutilisées⁴.

The misery and abjection of the indigenous peoples before French intervention is associated with their moral and intellectual degradation, and provides both a justification for the colonising act, and reiterates the fundamental difference between colonised and coloniser.

The indigenous peoples were similarly described in terms of lack and absence. Sarraut's discourse of abjection vis-à-vis the pre-colonial situation of the overseas territories enabled him to draw upon the three fundamental principles of French colonialism and thereby to discuss French intervention into overseas territories in terms of 'generosity', 'sharing' and 'endowment'. Examining France's role abroad, he said:

Il faut qu'elle s'y montre supérieure surtout en sagesse, en moralité, en équité. Elle ne le sera qu'en demeurant la grande missionnaire de son noble humanisme, de sa tradition glorieuse d'altruïsme, éduquant, exhaussant et perfectionnant les autres races, ayant sans cesse en vue le sort de l'Homme, de son esprit, de sa dignité, de son bonheur⁵.

Official discourses thus extend the *autrefois/maintenant* contrast in order to justify the perpetuation of French colonialism. The threat of disorder and chaos are

⁴Ibid., p. 117.

⁵Ibid., p. 281.

reinforced and here extended to include moral degradation and abjection. Whereas school manuals emphasised the threat of war and annexation, the focus in these works is extended to a moral order. The French colonising enterprise was referred to as a *généreux dessein*, in which indigenous peoples were 'invited' to share in the great cultural polity that was France. Without France, colonial territories would backslide into social, intellectual and moral misery.

b) Universal Benefits of *la Mission civilisatrice*

The colonising enterprise was, by the 1930s, envisaged as a part of France's wider role in the world. This may be unsurprising in the context of the Vincennes exhibition, particularly given the international ambitions of the *exposition*, but it nevertheless demonstrates a considerable shift in thinking. Whilst in school manuals, emphasis had been placed on the creation and inculcation of an imperial identity, exhibition rhetoric bears testimony to the readiness with which France had adopted the imperial mantle. Justifications of Empire which relied on the imperatives of national grandeur and prestige gave way to arguments which emphasised the universal value of French colonialism.

Furthermore, in conceptualising France's colonial ideal, Sarraut introduces the notion of the universal benefits of French colonialism: 'l'intérêt universel a bénéficié', 'le sort de l'Homme', 'le domaine commun'⁶. Colonialism, far from being simply a national concern, as it had appeared in school manuals, was catapulted into the international arena. This reflects France's need for approbation: her identity as an imperial power had to be sanctioned by her contemporaries in order that the perceived prestige and grandeur conferred by Empire could be enjoyed.

⁶Ibid., p. 113.

These points are taken up with insistence in the official literature of the exhibition. In its discussion of the 'moral' benefits of colonialism, the Rapport categorically states: 'l'idée coloniale se retrouve assimilée à celle du développement de l'humanité'⁷. Where previously French colonialism had been perceived as of benefit to the metropole and the backward populations of her various colonial possessions, here the new notion of the wider importance of French intervention is revealed.

The insistence upon the benefits to mankind, and not simply to the metropolitan populace, of French colonial action effectively extended the founding principle of 'generosity' to the world at large. Europe, Sarraut argued, had to act to safeguard her great colonising *oeuvre*:

Non seulement à cause des bienfaits et des lumières qu'elle a répandus sur la misère et l'obscurité des autres races. Mais parce que, par elle aussi, elle a préparé l'unité du monde, fondement de la grande solidarité de la famille humaine⁸.

In his reference to 'la famille humaine' Sarraut's extends the myth of unity between France and her colonies to a global dimension. The accomplishment of humanitarian colonial duties is for Sarraut the outward expression of the grandeur and solidarity of all European peoples. French colonialism must therefore be perpetuated as it is a founding block which will ensure future world peace.

Sarraut's notion of 'human solidarity' means uniting the intellectual and moral qualities of Europe with the material wealth of the colonies (the European 'soul' and the colonial 'body'). The rhetoric of human solidarity in turn seeks to represent the imposition of colonial rule as the restoration of a harmonious order. For Sarraut

⁷Quoted by Coquery-Vidrovitch, C., "L'Apogée: L'Exposition Coloniale Internationale", pp. 213-225, in Thobie, et. al., Histoire de la France coloniale 1914-1990 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990), p. 216.

⁸Sarraut, op. cit., pp. 234-5.

mythologises Nature, not as wisely benevolent, but as the source of an unequal apportionment which humanity must amend. The preservation of colonialist rule as well as the exploitation of colonised territories thus became a moral imperative. In order for Sarraut's vision of French generosity of spirit to operate, the desire for colonial intervention had to be shifted from France to the colonies:

La vieille France d'Europe et la jeune France d'outre-mer se sont peu à peu rapprochées malgré les distances, réciproquement pénétrées et mêlées, et sont devenues inséparables⁹.

This myth of unity and reciprocity transformed the violent acts of expansion and conquest into a mutually desired and mutually beneficial marriage between France and her colonies. One might say that the ensuing union (and the duties it imposed on France) was viewed as acquitting France of the rape of the colony. Hence the exhibition's further objective to justify a continuing French presence abroad.

The perpetuation of a French presence overseas was, as previously suggested, intimately connected with an ideology of duty to humanity. The humanitarian ideology expressed during the Exhibition however, appears to subsume France's duty to subject peoples under the nobler duty she owed to 'mankind' in general.

Established by the tradition of Enlightenment thought and now applied to the Exhibition rhetoric of 1931, the French concept of universalism thus permitted the right of inheritance of 'mankind' naturally to supersede the narrower political interests of the two entities present in the colonial relationship: the colonising power and the subject people.

⁹Quoted by Girardet, R., L'Idée coloniale en France (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972), p. 186.

c) Establishing a Legal framework and New legitimacy of Empire

While school manuals had legitimised French colonial expansion through references to the past, and a tradition of Empire, the official colonial discourses which proliferated at the time of the Exposition preferred to distance themselves from the expansive imperialism of earlier decades. This radical departure from the justifications of Empire which appeared in school manuals, some of only a decade earlier, reflects the revised formulation of colonialism which France wished to diffuse amongst its international audience.

In *Grandeur et Servitude coloniales*, for instance, Sarraut conceded that colonialism was originally a primitive act of force, but asserted that this initially violent confrontation could be transformed into a collective triumph of solidarity. The French *doctrine coloniale*, he argued

transfigure les traits originels de l'entreprise coloniale, elle leur donne de l'ampleur et la dignité qui leur manquaient; et parce que, désormais, elle l'établit sur cette idée de solidarité avec toutes ses conséquences, elle fait de la colonisation, acte primitif de force, une admirable création de droit¹⁰.

Thus while the school manuals analysed in the first chapter tended to 'rework' their narratives of the French conquest in order to eliminate culpability on the part of the metropole, Sarraut expresses a shift in political thinking from violence to law, and from a mercantilistic impulse to a nurturing imperative. 'Le droit du plus fort', he contended, had been replaced by 'le droit du plus fort à aider le faible'¹¹. This new 'pacte colonial', he further asserted, was conceived for the benefit of both parties:

La possession lointaine ne sera plus à présent un simple comptoir, un dépôt de richesses, un débouché où le "conquérant" vient rafler les épices et écouler sa marchandise en pressurant une race indigène taillable et corvéable à merci. Les colonies cessent de n'être que des

¹⁰Sarraut, op. cit., p. 207.

¹¹Ibid., p. 106.

marchés; ce sont des entités vivantes, des créations d'humanité, des parties solidaires de l'Etat français dont on va par le progrès scientifique, moral, économique et politique, favoriser l'accès à de plus hauts destins, au même titre que les autres parties du territoire national¹².

Sarraut distances the French state from notions of pillaging and despoiling, and points to a more 'human' relationship rather than a simply economic one. Like the *colon*, the French state is qualified as giving rather than taking; Sarraut rejects the acquisitive aspects of colonialism for the nobler aim of bestowal.

By the 1930s then, the initial violence of conquest and expansion were being more explicitly acknowledged. Distance in time however, appears to reduce the culpability of the metropole. The 'new' legitimacy of France's colonial doctrine was centred around a crucial distinction between expansion and colonial presence. Imperial France gained new legitimacy through the combination of ideals of universal benefit and human solidarity.

d) Gendering the Colonial Relationship

The language in the official texts concerning the Exhibition reflects this shift through its tendency to speak of colonialism in gender related terms. However, whilst consciously, attempts were made to distance France from the language of domination and force by qualifying her role in relation to her colonies as that of a nurturing, protecting Motherland, it seems clear that France was still unconsciously viewed as an authoritative Fatherland.

Key concepts of this unacknowledged discourse revolve around values or attributes which have traditionally been viewed as masculine: vitality, energy, action and virility. In official texts the (male) settler becomes the prime symbol of this virile

¹²Ibid.

fantasy: 'le colon est, *par excellence*, créateur d'énergie [issu de cette] terre d'énergie qui est la France'¹³. Similarly, Pierre Laval, *Premier Ministre* in 1931, noted that 'l'exposition donne à tous les enfants de France la plus virile des leçons'¹⁴. The concept of the heroic *colon* was re-established but in a reworked form: the colonial settler was no longer presented as an explorer or a conquistador, but as an engineer, a builder of roads and bridges: ostensibly he was a 'giver' rather than a 'taker'. Where previously this masculinised aspect of colonialism was exemplified by the exploration, penetration and domination of the (feminised) colonies, this male energy was now to be channelled into future action, future improvements:

Il reste encore sur la terre de vastes champs à défricher, de pacifiques batailles à livrer à la misère, à l'ignorance, à toutes les forces mauvaises de la nature. En montrant l'immense labeur déjà accompli par les nations colonisatrices, l'Exposition montrera par surcroît, qu'il reste beaucoup à faire¹⁵.

The notion of 'le colon bâtisseur', an image which proliferated in fictional colonial works of the 1920s and 1930s¹⁶, is a key concept of French colonialism, but one which raises contradictions. For these new, peaceful channels for action continue to be described in terms which draw on imagery suggestive of war and conquest: 'de pacifiques batailles', nature as 'forces mauvaises' to be overcome. According to the Rapport, the Exhibition, was, above all

l'affirmation nette, près des grandes puissances coloniales que l'Occident ne renonce pas à poursuivre dans le monde sa mission, où il y a encore de grandes et belles batailles à livrer, et à gagner contre la maladie, la sorcellerie, contre la mort¹⁷.

¹³Quoted by Coquery-Vidrovitch, op. cit., p. 217.

¹⁴Le Temps, 16 September 1931

¹⁵Lyautey, quoted by Dagens, B., Angkor la forêt de pierre (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), p. 110.

¹⁶The figure of the 'colon bâtisseur' will be discussed in chapter five of this thesis.

¹⁷Rapport général, vol. 6 (i), p. 67.

This paradoxical desire to present the colonial settler as both peaceful and combative, virile yet moderate, relates to the conflicting imperatives of France's colonial enterprise in the 1920s and 1930s. France wished her superiority and the legitimacy of her presence overseas to be readily accepted and innately obvious, but it was becoming increasingly necessary to sustain authority by countering nationalist agitation in the colonies (the Rif war 1925, the Yen Bay Uprising of 1930¹⁸) with a military show of strength. The representation of the peaceful yet potentially combative *colon* thus contained the veiled threat of violent retribution should France's authority be further challenged.

e) Defining the *Union indochinoise*

In effacing the appropriative aspects of the colonial enterprise, Sarraut consequently transforms the colonial relationship into a putative appeal on the part of the colonised. This appeal may, as we have seen, take the form of chaos that calls for restoration of order, of absence that calls for affirming presence, of natural abundance that awaits the creative hand of technology. Sarraut's colonial discourse thus transfers the locus of desire onto the colonial object itself. This becomes particularly clear in the following statements which refer specifically to Indochina:

Elle sait, en effet, cette élite, que c'est la souveraineté française, basée sur le droit du bienfait et du progrès, qui a vraiment fait l'Indochine, fondé la France d'Asie, créé cette union puissante de pays hétérogènes et de peuples divers dans laquelle, comme dans une mutualité fraternelle, l'effort de chaque profite à tous et l'effort de tous à chacun. De ces pays différents, séparés, sans lien, trop faibles avec leurs seuls moyens, plus vulnérables dans leur isolement, condamnés chacun par leur solitude à ne devenir, dans le grand

¹⁸For a general overview of nationalist agitation in the French colonies during this period see: relevant chapters in Thobie et al, Histoire de la France coloniale 1914-1990 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990). The Yen Bay Uprising, which is more pertinent to this thesis, will be discussed in chapter six.

tourbillon de la vie moderne, que les satellites obscurs et serviles d'autres Etats¹⁹.

La souveraineté française est ici comme l'armature puissante qui encercle et soutient les pièces d'un échafaudage. Qu'on l'enlève, et tout s'effondre; il n'y a plus, jonchant le sol, qu'un amas de fragments dispersés. Sans la souveraineté française il n'y a plus d'Indochine²⁰.

Sarraut legitimises France's position through the myth of unity which homogenises the disparate nations and cultures which made up the Indochinese Union. He thus conceptualises French sovereignty through a series of building metaphors ('fondé', 'basée', 'échafaudage' etc.). The image of scaffolding suggests that the construction of French Indochina is not yet completed, and harks back to the newer image of the colonial settler as a builder. More importantly however, the founding myth justifies continued French presence, and emphasises the importance of the integrity of the *Union*. Although he believed that enlightened emancipation would be the ultimate gift of France to her colonies, Sarraut's apocalyptic vision of Indochina without French rule allows him to envisage this future as far off. He remained convinced that the *mission civilisatrice* to prepare the colonies for self-determination was far from accomplished.

Thus, although within the context of the *exposition*, it was hoped that Indochina would appear as 'une métropole seconde, foyer d'influence française, poste avancé de notre commerce et de notre industrie'²¹, it was simultaneously necessary to temper this vision of technological and commercial success with an ominous portent of Indochina if bereft of French involvement. In order to sustain colonial rule and authority in Indochina official discourses were thus obliged to create a dual narrative

¹⁹Sarraut, op. cit., p. 265.

²⁰Ibid., p. 266.

²¹Demaison, A., L'Exposition coloniale internationale 1931 Guide officiel (Paris: Mayeux, 1931), p. 20.

of success and disaster. This double-faced vision of Indochina was, as the second section will show, mirrored in the ways in which Indochina was displayed, described and exhibited in the *Exposition coloniale*.

f) Concluding Comments

The *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* was significant in that it gave French colonial ideologists a forum in which to reiterate and develop ideals of French colonialism. The new focus of thought was on the global benefits of French colonialism, Republican universalism thus being extended to mankind in general. The acknowledgement of the conquest as an act of violence allowed for emphasis to be placed on the move from violence to law, and the legal and therefore legitimate status of French colonialism. Prominent colonial thinkers drew on the myths of *autrefois* and *maintenant* to paint an apocalyptic view of colonial economies and cultures of the pre-colonial period. Within this revised colonial ideal, Indochina stood as a significant component. Her continued presence and integrity within the Empire was viewed as essential to her survival.

3. L'Exposition coloniale de Vincennes

a) The Importance of the Exposition de 1931

Although the Exposition coloniale of 1931 was not the first nor the last of France's colonial exhibitions²² it was arguably the most significant. The largest of France's colonial exhibitions, covering 110 hectares between *Porte dorée* and the *Bois de Vincennes* to the East of Paris, the exhibition of 1931 was inclusive and

²²Notable others include *l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 1922; *l'Exposition générale du centenaire de la conquête d'Algérie*, 1930; *le Salon de la France d'outre-mer*, 1933; *l'Exposition du tricentenaire du rattachement des Antilles à la France*, 1935; *le Quarantenaire de la conquête de Madagascar*, 1935.

exhaustive: it sought to represent not only each and every one of France's colonies and protectorates, but equally included a substantial section representing France herself.

Furthermore, the 1931 exhibition opened its arms to its imperial competitors. The exhibition was ostensibly given over to the glorification of 'la grandeur des empires', but while other colonial powers (Denmark, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands amongst others) did play a part in this great spectacle, France dominated it. Significantly, Great Britain declined to participate²³, leaving France free rein to emphasise her prestige and status in South-East Asia. France's predominance was thus symbolised not least by the immense reconstruction of the Cambodian Khmer temples of Angkor Wat, which towered over the other constructions evoking the splendours of the colonies.

The culmination of the uniquely colonial propaganda which had first found expression in the embryonic Marseille exhibitions of 1906 and 1922, the Vincennes exhibition was intended, according to Albert Sarraut, to constitute 'la vivante apothéose de l'expansion extérieure de la France sous la Troisième République'²⁴. The importance attached to this colonial manifestation was reflected in the choice of France's capital city as host. Although the Marseille exhibitions had been successful, they had not constituted a reflection of France's colonial greatness in its maturity. By the 1930s, a period often described as the apogee of French colonialism, it was argued that it was only fitting that Paris be the stage. Governor General Olivier noted that the exhibition would confer international status upon France's capital:

²³Britain excused herself on the grounds that she was still paying off the debt incurred through the staging of the British Empire Exhibition of 1924. The significance of her absence to the French will be further discussed in a later section of this chapter.

²⁴Rapport, vol. 1., op. cit., p. 340.

La capitale de la France, grâce à l'Exposition, sera plus que jamais la capitale de l'intelligence humaine²⁵.

Thus, although ostensibly a *colonial* exhibition, focus was, from the exhibition's inception, firmly placed upon the colonising nation. Similarly, although the exhibition included the word *internationale* in its official title, prestige and attention were firmly focused upon the French metropole.

The *Exposition de Vincennes* was to be both a 'fête populaire' and a 'spectacle d'art', appealing to all levels of French society. Lyautey even went as far as imagining the event as a force for social cohesion amongst the poor, communist-inclined masses of Eastern Paris²⁶. Its organisers envisaged the exhibition as a great forum for international debate: the exhibition was to be a 'foyer intellectuel intense où les savants, les écrivains, les philosophes, les sociologues de tous les pays viendront confronter leurs thèses ou exposer leurs travaux'²⁷.

The exhibition's role was not solely that of a forum for debate: it was equally intended as a seductive and picturesque entertainment. Hailed as the 'événement de l'année'²⁸, the exhibition dominated both the daily and popular press. There was a prolific output of literature and images concerning the exhibition: guides, newspaper and journal articles, posters, even songs. According to many historians, the exhibition had a profound and lasting effect on its visitors:

Le retentissement fut énorme (...) nombre d'enfants trouvèrent à tout le moins dans ce grand spectacle l'écho et la confirmation imagée des immenses plages roses dévolues à l'empire sur les cartes scolaires, et de l'idéologie impériale déjà véhiculée par les chapitres coloniaux du

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶'Je suis convaincu que l'exposition peut être un grand facteur de paix sociale dans cette région de Paris', quoted in Hodeir, C., and Pierre, M., *L'Exposition coloniale* (Brussels: Editions complexe, 1991), p. 26.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸*Le Temps*, 6 January 1931

fameux manuel d'histoire des classes élémentaires de la Troisième République ou *Petit Lavis*²⁹.

The Exhibition was thus to be a lesson in the legitimacy of France's notions of her own self-worth as a colonising power. It was also an exercise in unification and community. Paul Reynaud asserted that

Il faut que chacun de nous se sente citoyen de la grande France, celle des cinq parties du monde³⁰.

The metropolitan French population were thus exhorted to take possession of, and to appropriate the colonies for themselves as a national community; to feel their collective power as members of a nation which had extended her influence across five continents.

b) An Overview of the *Exposition*

A wealth of information pertaining to both the colonies themselves, and to metropolitan action, was provided for the visitor. One of the principal educational sites of the exhibition was the newly-constructed *Musée colonial*³¹: a permanent structure, which along with the zoo and aquarium, were to remain after the exhibition's closure. Its impressive facade, created by the sculptor Janniot, sported an immense fresco purporting to represent: 'l'apport de biens terrestres de l'Empire à la mère patrie'³². The fresco bore the inscription: 'A ses fils qui ont étendu l'Empire de son génie et fait aimer son nom au-delà des mers, la France reconnaissante'³³, and depicted allegories of abundance, peace and prosperity.

²⁹Coquery-Vidrovitch, C., in Tobie et. al., Histoire de la France coloniale 1914-1990 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990), p. 214.

³⁰Reynaud, P., L'Empire français (discours prononcé à l'inauguration de l'Exposition coloniale), (Paris: Guillemot et Lamothe, [n.d.]), p. 19.

³¹Its architects were Jaussely and Laprade.

³²Rapport, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 68.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 68.

The *Musée colonial* gave a symbolic infrastructure to France's colonial power. Within its walls, it contained a retrospective of France's colonial past beginning with a historical survey of the Empire under the monarchy and the Second Empire. A further *section de synthèse* gave a historical overview of France's empire from 1870. This section was intended to 'en dégager dans son ensemble l'oeuvre de la France dans ses colonies et la somme de la puissance que représentent pour elle leurs activités totalisées'³⁴. The *section de synthèse* was in particular supposed to render 'ainsi sensibles les réalités incluses dans cette formule généreuse de "la plus grande France", demeurée si vague pour la plupart des Français'³⁵. Thus the aim of the museum, and, as we shall see, the exhibition as a whole, was to render the 'myth' of the French empire a more tangible reality:

En France, la notion d'un empire colonial, loin d'être familière aux hommes privés, n'a même pas été clairement exprimée dans la vie publique. (...) La section de synthèse, en faisant surgir, vivante et palpable, l'image même de "l'empire" a, plus qu'aucune autre, préparé cet avènement³⁶.

These didactic aspects of the exhibition were coupled, however, with attractions and entertainments designed to draw in the less educationally-minded crowds. Thus a visitor to the *Exposition* could choose to ride around the immense *Parc de Vincennes* either by the scenic railway or by elephant or camel. He might take a trip round the lake Daumesnil in an indigenous boat; sample indigenous food at one of the many restaurants representing each colony; marvel at the spectacular light and water shows or the exotic flora and fauna in the purpose-built Vincennes zoo. As

³⁴*Rapport*, vol. 5 (i), op. cit., "Les Sections coloniales", p. 9.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*

Panivong Norindr has pointed out, these attractions formed part of the exhibition's design to "'ravish" and arouse desires' for the colonies³⁷.

The Exhibition abounded with metaphors which extended the controlling, colonising gaze to a wider French public. These metaphors concern the possession and consumption of the colony, and involve the importance of the visual impact of the Exhibition as a spectacle. In poster and publicity campaigns, the exhibition's principal slogan was: 'le tour du monde en un jour'. The allusion to Jules Verne's Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingt jours, emphasised the elements of adventure and exploration inherent in the colonising act, and enabled the general public to share in that 'virilité' which was embodied by the early colonisers. The slogan also points to progress: rather than in eighty days, the Exhibition allowed the Empire to be colonised in a single day. Here was an Empire in miniature: the marvels of a perceived colonial golden age were spread out before the public, to whose commanding, colonising gaze they offered both aesthetic pleasure, and also information and power. In an age of media colonialism, the emphasis was not on the penetration of unknown continents, but on the surveillance of the appropriated. The Exhibition conferred on the public the position of authority at the centre of the Panopticon which Foucault recalled in his discussion of the intimate relationship between power and visual surveillance. The observed Empire was thus trapped and fixed by the authoritative gaze of the dominating power. The Exhibition also reinforced the myth of unity: it suggested order and purpose that in fact belied the reality of France's Empire, scattered as it was over five continents. It was a world that had been selected, collected, ordered and relocated by Western powers; and which had been contextualised and given value according to a Western value system.

³⁷Norindr, P., "Representing Indochina: the French colonial fantasmatic and the Exposition Coloniale de Paris", in French Cultural Studies, vi, February 1995, p. 37.

The exhibition was a representation of the colonised world, an artificial and mythical embodiment of a Western view of the colonial territories. Filtered through the imperial eyes of France's colonial ministers and the historians of the Third Republic, the Empire, in all its diversity, was homogenised as a simple extension of the Motherland.

Although all of France's overseas possessions were amply represented at the exhibition, it was Indochina which dominated³⁸. The following section will discuss in detail both the exhibits and buildings relating to the Indochinese territories: the way in which the countries and their inhabitants were represented and exhibited; the role France imagined for herself in relation to these territories; and the ways in which these representations of colonised and coloniser related to France's stated view of her 'imperial mission'.

c) Indochina Exhibited

Britain's absence from the Paris exhibition allowed French Asia to shine, and not be outshone by British India. The metropole's *perle de l'Extrême-Orient* stepped out of the shadow of her rival's 'jewel in the crown'. The specificity and importance of the Indochinese Empire to the metropole is emblematised by the predominance of Angkor Wat. However, as this section will suggest, this admiration for Indochinese culture nevertheless remains at odds with colonial discourses which emphasised Indochina's inferiority to her colonial protectors. As the previous section suggested, the exhibition established a dual narrative of success and disaster in its vision of Indochina. As this second section will show, this double-sided representation of

³⁸For a more detailed overview of exhibits relating to territories other than Indochina, see Hodeir, C., and Pierre, M., L'Exposition coloniale, op. cit.

Indochina is mirrored in the ways in which Indochina was displayed, described and exhibited in the *Exposition coloniale*.

i) Angkor

The temple of Angkor Wat was just one part of the remaining Khmer ruins in Cambodia. The site in fact covers 50km from East to West and includes a walled city, further smaller temples, and an impressive irrigation system³⁹. Nevertheless, Angkor Wat was, and remains⁴⁰, a peculiarly fascinating archeological marvel for French scholars. The interest generated by the site lies partly in the fact that for centuries it remained relatively invisible to the West. Built between the ninth and twelfth centuries, Angkor and its surroundings were abandoned, not forgotten, but allowed to fall into ruin. The departure of the Khmer dynasty following a Chinese invasion meant that the site gradually succumbed to the encroachment of the Cambodian forest. Although Spanish and Portuguese explorers stumbled upon the ruins in the seventeenth century, it was not until two centuries later, on the publication of Henri Mouhot's *carnets de voyage* that this impressive site became the focus of concerted Western attention.

Mouhot, a naturalist, visited Angkor briefly, and died a year later in Laos. The posthumous publication of his travel diaries and sketches, Voyages dans les royaumes de Siam, de Cambodge et de Laos⁴¹, was a media event and created something of a

³⁹For a full description of the site see Dagens, op. cit.

⁴⁰A major exhibition, "Angkor et dix siècles d'art khmer", took place in Paris as recently as February-May 1997. It is interesting to note that although this exhibition alluded frequently to the work of the EFEO in Cambodia, no mention was made of the fact that the country had been a part of the French Indochinese Empire. The language of the 1997 exhibition nevertheless remained remarkably similar to that used during the period of French colonisation, particularly in its insistence on the date of the 'discovery' of the Bantreay Srei temple as 1914.

⁴¹Mouhot, H., Voyages dans les royaumes de Siam, de Cambodge et de Laos (Paris: Binbliotheque rose, 1868), (repr. Genève: Olizane, 1989).

cult around his name. The diaries were published in 1863, coinciding with the formal establishment of the French protectorate over Cambodia. The diaries had a considerable impact as they were first published over 14 weeks in Le Tour du Monde, complete with drawings and engravings transformed from Mouhot's sketches.

In an era when the West was absorbed by mapping, charting, classifying and collecting, building a global archive, and pushing back the frontiers of geographical and historical knowledge, France gained prestige from claiming to have discovered this important site, and brought it to European attention. Angkor Wat thus played a significant role in France's early relationship with Indochina. The assertion that France, through the person of Henri Mouhot, had discovered Angkor, awakened curiosity and encouraged explorers, archeologists and photographers to take an interest in the Indochinese peninsula⁴². Further visits and explorations took place throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the expeditions of Garnier, Delaporte and Doudart de Lagrée helped to turn metropolitan attention towards these vestiges of an ancient Khmer dynasty.

The role of the *Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* (EFEO) in the dissemination of information concerning France's Asian possessions was of course significant⁴³. The exploration, classification and description of this 'marvel' had helped to legitimise colonial intervention in terms of scientific advancement and the protection of native cultures. Its appropriation and *mise en valeur* by the *Ecole*

⁴²Charles Bouillevaux, a French missionary, had in fact visited the temples several years before, in the 1850s. For an interesting discussion of the way in which the 'discovery' of Angkor was appropriated by the French media, see Barnett, A., "Cambodia will never disappear", New Left Review, no. 180, 1990, pp. 101-125.

⁴³An analysis of the role of the EFEO in French colonial projects would be an extremely rewarding field of enquiry, but one which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Française d'Extrême Orient further strengthened the case for technological intervention, and encouraged tourism in Indochina. Although France had established a protectorate over Cambodia in 1863, the regions in which the Angkor site was situated had been ceded from Cambodia to Siam. France strenuously endeavoured to wrest these territories from Siam, and finally succeeded in 1907. The involvement of the EFEO in French attempts to gain control of the Angkor site demonstrates the complicity of science and scholarship in the colonial project.

The various 'voyages of discovery' to Angkor fuelled an already-present desire for the mysterious and exotic in metropolitan France. The fact that it had long been hidden by the surrounding jungle only added to Angkor's mystery and mythology. The temples became a feature of much literature, both factual and fictional: Groslier, Malraux, Dorgelès, Claudel, and Loti all drew on the 'mystery' of Angkor in their works⁴⁴. Angkor simultaneously embodied the fairytale or legend and the key to ancient historical secrets: it was 'la ville au bois dormant'⁴⁵, and 'le refuge des antiques mystères'⁴⁶.

However, the replication of the site at the *Exposition coloniale* brought the temples to a far broader spectrum of the metropolitan population. Hailed as 'l'oeuvre maîtresse', 'la clef' of the exhibition⁴⁷, the immense reconstruction of the Cambodian temples of Angkor Wat dominated the exhibition. The temples of Angkor Wat had featured in previous exhibitions of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries,

⁴⁴Malraux, A., *La Voie Royale* (Paris: Grasset, 1930); Loti, P., *Un Pèlerin d'Angkor* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1912)(repr. Paris: Kailash, 1994); Claudel, P., *Oeuvres complètes de Paul Claudel: Tome 4, Extrême-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952); Groslier, G., *A l'Ombre d'Angkor*, (Paris: Emile Paul, 1916); Dorgelès, R., *La Route mandarine* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1925), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1994).

⁴⁵See Dagens, op. cit., p. 85. See also Daney, C., "Angkor au bois dormant", *Histoire*, special issue, "Le Temps des colonies", no. 69, 1984, pp. 37-39.

⁴⁶Loti, P., *Un Pèlerin d'Angkor* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1912), p. 73.

⁴⁷*Rapport*, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 110.

and most successfully at the Marseille exhibition of 1922. The 1931 exhibition however, was dominated by these towering Cambodian structures: Angkor Wat occupied 5000 square metres at the 1931 exhibition, and its central tower rose to a height of 55 metres.

The re-creation of the temples at the Exhibition however, symbolised the most valuable attribute of French colonialism: French intervention had retrieved the temples from obscurity and had enabled the public (*humanité*, mankind in general) to share rightfully in the enjoyment of this colonial wealth. In spite of the Exhibition's professed internationalist agenda, and the attempts of many officials to integrate colonialism into an ideal of *rapprochement* and international cooperation, the reconstruction of Angkor Wat served to set France apart from the other colonial powers at the Exhibition. Indeed, the Exhibition was intended to affirm 'aux yeux du monde, la grandeur de l'oeuvre coloniale de la Troisième République'⁴⁸. Britain's absence from the exhibition allowed France's South-East Asian marvel to glitter all the more brightly. In a contemporaneous issue of *L'Illustration*, Claude Farrère notes of the temples:

En étendant donc le drapeau de la République sur ces débris-là, qui sont aujourd'hui le Cambodge, et en forçant les Siamois à restituer Angkor aux Cambodgiens opprimés et dépouillés, nous avons donc fait oeuvre non pas d'impérialisme, mais d'affranchissement⁴⁹.

Angkor thus comes to occupy a paradigmatic status in terms of French colonialism. It stands for French colonial principles of protection and *mise en valeur*. It functions both as a sign and a myth of French colonialism: it stands for French colonialism

⁴⁸Coquery-Vidrovitch, op. cit., p.117

⁴⁹Farrère, C., "Angkor et l'Indochine", *L'Illustration*, Album hors série sur l'Exposition coloniale, no. 4603, 23 May 1931.

everywhere, hence its appearance in ever-increasing volume and stature at exhibitions since the turn of the century.

Reynaud's speech at the exhibition's opening, provides further insights into the significance of Angkor, and upon the perceived status of Indochina amongst other French colonies:

En Asie, où nous avons apporté aussi comme premier présent l'ordre et la paix, que nous maintiendrons, nous avons trouvé à son déclin une civilisation millénaire pour laquelle nous avons de l'admiration et du respect.

N'est-ce pas nous qui avons sauvé le temple d'Angkor de l'étreinte meurtrière de la forêt vierge qui l'avait envahi ?⁵⁰

The Angkor ruins encapsulate what was intended to be understood by allusions to pre-colonial void and disintegration. Yet they also epitomise Indochina's hierarchical advantage amongst France's colonial possessions. France's other colonies had nothing to compare with the splendours of Angkor. The culture which, centuries earlier, created the vast site is both admired and respected. The largest and most prominent exhibit, after Angkor, was the pavilion of *l'Afrique occidentale française* (AOF): a reproduction of Djenné's great mosque. However, comparisons between the two were often unfavourable towards AOF, as the following press account reveals. While Angkor is

taillé comme un joyau, couvert sur toute sa surface d'admirables motifs ciselés

the reproduction mosque, representing a 'pays des tam-tams', is described as

un quartier de Djenné, village de l'AOF, où paraissent des cases d'un art sommaire, sommées d'énormes chignons de boue, traversés par des pieux⁵¹.

⁵⁰Reynaud, op. cit., p. 25.

Indochina was thus perceived as more 'civilised' in the hierarchy of race and culture which French imperial ideology operated. As Reynaud had noted

Le secret de la France, c'est d'être une mère généreuse et de ne distinguer entre ses enfants que par le mérite et les talents⁵².

Indochina was thus distinguished and favoured thanks to cultural relics which for several decades had remained outside French control.

The admiration and respect for Angkor was nevertheless unmatched by a similar respect for its ancestors. In keeping with views of pre-colonial Indochina expressed in official discourses of French colonialism, the Cambodian inheritors of Angkor were viewed as in decline. Many allusions to the magnificence of Angkor and the craftsmanship of its Khmer architects were shot through with sentiments which castigated contemporary Cambodians for its decline and degradation. The *décadence* of the Cambodian peoples served to reinforce the perceived necessity of colonial intervention.

Similarly, although this example of indigenous culture was ostensibly admired and respected, Angkor was simultaneously debased through commercialism. The temples featured in innumerable posters, advertisements and postcards. Angkor came to signify luxury, wealth, elegance: Lincoln cars, Gévelot cartridges, Frigéco refrigerators, Rollo and Cyma watches. Its sumptuousness turned back upon itself, and Angkor became a *produit publicitaire*. Its increasing presence in advertisements rendered it a commodity. Endlessly replicated at a series of metropolitan exhibitions, Angkor was divested of its religious and cultural significance and became part of the exhibition's *féerie*.

⁵¹Quoted by Hodeir, and Pierre, op. cit., p. 44.

⁵²Reynaud op. cit., p. 29.

Furthermore, the reproduction of the Angkor temple at the exhibition was partial and deceptive. The large esplanade in front of the reconstruction of the Angkor temples was a point of concentration for parades and corteges, and a meeting place for the hordes who gathered on the *jours de fêtes*. The reconstruction of the temples was intended to recreate 'l'impression de grandeur et de majesté que le visiteur éprouve à Angkor Vat'⁵³. Reworked and remodelled by architects Blanche and Blanche to suit the needs of the exhibition organisers, the Angkor site was not in fact reproduced in its entirety. The scale of the other pavilions had been reduced in order that Angkor Wat dominate. The complex of temples was simplified to include only the the *massif central* of the site. This central spacing was surrounded by a gallery, which in Angkor itself surrounds all four sides of the site. The gallery reshaped in such a way as to improve the spectator's view:

Afin de permettre au public la vision directe du massif central, cette galerie dut être largement échancrée en devant dans l'axe du massif. Ainsi, l'escalier monumental qui escalade le soubassement fut visible de tous les points de la chaussée, ce qui permit pendant les grandes fêtes de l'exposition d'y grouper d'imposantes et pittoresques figurations⁵⁴.

Faithful reproduction and authenticity thus gave way to the more imperative needs of spectacle.

Angkor thus appears to take on the qualities of a fetish in the metropolitan imagination. A detached spot of intense visual focus, a material object cut off from the body (Indochina), indeed preferred to the body itself, Angkor becomes the signifier of an absent totality. This reading of the significance of Angkor draws attention to the ambiguous status of Indochina for the metropole which revolves

⁵³Rapport, vol. 5 (ii), op. cit., p.670.

⁵⁴Ibid.

around axes of absence/presence, desire/repudiation, recognition/disavowal. As Bhabha has noted of the colonial fetish or stereotype:

Within discourse, the fetish represents the simultaneous play between metaphor as substitution (masking absence and difference) and metonymy (which contiguously registers the perceived lack). The fetish or stereotype gives access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it⁵⁵.

The prominence of the temple of Angkor Wat at the *exposition*, epitomises the ambivalent and contradictory images and representations of Indochina which were prevalent in metropolitan France during this period. Angkor was possessed, admired, copied, and exhibited as desirable. It lent credence to the vision of Indochina as the *perle* of the French Empire. However, Angkor was equally used as a 'proof' of indigenous weakness. Its restoration under French mastery was used to reprimand and castigate its indigenous descendents. Used as a metaphor, Angkor demonstrated the prestige and value of indigenous Indochinese culture. It was a focus of Western admiration, thereby shortening distance and difference between European and non-European cultures. As metonymy, it functioned as a visible sign of indigenous chaos, disorder and passivity. It served as a visible sign of the benefit of French protection and development, held before the indigenous populations, and the world at large, as a tangible monument to continued French colonial intervention.

⁵⁵Bhabha, H., "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism", pp. 194-211, in Barker, F., et al, The Politics of Theory (Colchester: Essex Conference of the Sociology of Literature, 1982), p. 202.

ii) The *Union indochinoise*

Apart from this immense reconstruction of the temples of Angkor Wat, the remainder of the Indochinese section represented one tenth of the whole exhibition. It included a central *palais*, 'pour l'exposition d'ensemble de la colonie'⁵⁶; a pavilion for each member of the *Union indochinoise*, and separate pavilions which covered administrative, economic, and historical aspects of the colony.

Two *pavillons d'Annam* recreated the Imperial Palace of Hué; Cambodia was represented by a scaled-down model of the *Musée Albert Sarraut* of Phnom Penh, inside of which a pagoda was built. The Cochinchina pavilion was decorated with contemporary Chinese art inspired by the buildings of Cholon⁵⁷. Tonkin's pavilion was a reproduction of the Balny pagoda (situated near Hanoi), and had installed alongside it indigenous shops and stalls. Laos was represented by a village, comprising a pagoda containing a library and chapel, and an exhibition pavilion of four *cases*. Three further buildings (*pavillons forestières*) mounted an exhibition of hunting, fishing and the forests of Indochina. Additionally, there was an Indochinese restaurant built in the style of the Chinese houses of Cochinchina; housing for the Cambodian dancers; and a *pavillon de la presse indochinoise et coloniale*, once more built after the Chinese style⁵⁸.

The following architectural imperatives were expressed by the exhibition's organisers:

Tous les bâtiments de la section devant être essentiellement évocateurs du milieu indochinois et recréer pour ainsi dire l'ambiance exotique, ce fut une obligation impérieuse de se conformer

⁵⁶*Rapport*, vol. 5 (ii), op. cit., p. 658.

⁵⁷Cholon is the name of the Chinese commercial district within the city of Saigon.

⁵⁸These details are laid out in the *Rapport*, vol 2, op. cit.

strictement, dans l'établissement des projets, aux types et aux règles de l'architecture locale ⁵⁹.

The above quotation employs terminology in which the competing projects of representation and authenticity are clearly at odds. Conformity to the rules of indigenous architecture is juxtaposed with the evocation of an ephemeral exotic atmosphere. What the *section indochinoise* in fact amounted to was remarkably similar to the results of French colonial urbanism: a transfigured vision of indigenous buildings which better conformed to French aesthetics.

Mannequins, 'reproduisant exactement les types ethniques'⁶⁰, and wearing traditional costumes were placed inside each pavilion: 'personnages' from the *Cour impériale* were grouped around the Emperor Khai Ding in the Annam pavilion; 'types populaires' were placed within the various rooms of the Cochinchinese pavilion; mandarins and notables populated the Tonkin pavilion⁶¹. A reconstruction of a Buddhist ceremony was created from drawings from the *Ecole d'Art*. Further visual stimuli were provided within each pavilion through the use of several different display techniques: *cartes lumineuses*, cinematographic films, dioramas, models, graphs and charts, paintings and drawings.

These attractive methods of display can be viewed as a *mise-en-scène*, or a staging of Indochina. Indeed, it was significant part of the exhibition's aim to seduce the visitor:

Pour attirer les visiteurs et les retenir, il était indispensable de recourir à toutes les séductions du pittoresque et à la magie irrésistible de l'art⁶².

⁵⁹Rapport, vol. 5 (ii), op. cit., p. 670.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 691.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²de Beauplan, R., "Les Palais de l'Indochine", *Illustration*, no. 4612, juillet 1931 (pages non-numérotées).

The 'spectacular' aspects of the exhibition, often referred to as 'la féerie de l'exposition', encouraged the fair-goer to position him/herself as a consumer. As Walter Benjamin's work shows, world-fairs and exhibitions such as the Vincennes extravaganza can be viewed as 'sites of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish'⁶³. Indeed, the exhibition laid out a panoply of 'exotic' wares for both the literal and metaphorical consumption of the visitor.

In order to pinpoint the ways in which metropolitan France sought to represent Indochina, and her own perceived *oeuvre* in the colony to the visiting public, the following section will focus in greater detail on the exhibits mounted in the *Palais central*, which was intended to represent Indochina as a whole.

iii) *The Palais central*

According to the exhibition's Rapport général,

L'Indochine devait apparaître, au milieu des colonies françaises et étrangères qui seraient représentées à l'Exposition comme un grand état moderne, avec l'ensemble de son organisation politique, la représentation exacte de sa puissance économique et le tableau complet de son activité sociale et intellectuelle⁶⁴.

The exhibition's aim is clearly one of verisimilitude. The representation of Indochina is to be exact and complete, which was further reflected in the exhaustive inventory of articles exhibited. The terminology in the above quotation immediately illustrates the slippage, in the minds of the exhibition's organisers, between the antithetical concepts of representation and exactitude.

Throughout the exhibition, in both its visual artefacts and textual documentation, metropolitan representations of Indochina are posited not as

⁶³Benjamin, W., "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth-century", Reflections (New York: Schocken, 1976), p. 152.

⁶⁴Rapport, vol. 5 (ii), op. cit., p. 660.

simulacra, but as authentic and 'real'. Imagined, idealised and mythologised versions of Indochina and its indigenous populations were presented to visitors as authentic, unmitigated contexts and inhabitants. The exhibition therefore perpetuated and reinforced images and myths already partially implanted in the collective conscious of a metropolitan population through the popular press, exotic literature, and school manuals⁶⁵.

The *Palais central* demonstrates metropolitan France's abiding concern within the context of the exhibition to pay constant homage to herself. Each of the following sub-sections gives an overview of the ways in which 'official France' chose to evoke aspects of colonial Indochina.

Economic policy: *outillage économique, production*

Four large galleries in the *palais central* were given over to the evocation of the economic activity and success achieved in Indochina under French auspices. In the section on 'outillage économique', displays showed major public works, the development of rail and road networks; the improvement of the fluvial network; the creation of bridges, and hydraulics. An adjoining section evoked the work of *L'Inspection générale des services agricoles*: the use of raw materials, alimentary production; progress in creating cultivable lands; the modernisation of agricultural methods and mechanical tools; the standardisation of Indochinese products. A further four rooms were devoted to Indochinese products, both alimentary, textiles, raw industrial materials. Modes of indigenous production were demonstrated alongside

⁶⁵The exhibition reinforced the political action of colonial France in creating the *Union indochinoise* by conflating image with political desire: in the grounds of the *Parc de Vincennes*, this constructed Indochinese identity became a visible and tangible reality for visitors. As Norindr has noted, 'By enframing the popular and political images of Indochina within this new geographical space of the Exposition, these Indochinese fantasies (...) become identified as the real markers of that new French colonial possession triumphantly named "Indochine", destroying in the process both the region's cultural specificity and its diversity', op. cit., p. 40.

contrasting modern methods and techniques. Informative explanations and indications were situated above each exhibit, along with illustrative photographs, slides and dioramas.

The importance of the commercial and economic value to the metropole of this colony rich in natural resources was further emphasised by the inclusion of an entire section devoted to credit and banking services.

As in many of these subsidiary exhibitions, The idea of Indochina was evoked solely through the perceived 'benefits' that the colonising country had brought to the colony. Where indigenous techniques, tools or methods of production were demonstrated, it was in order to provide a compelling portrait of the intrinsic value of the modernising action of metropolitan France.

Tourism and transport

All the large rail, air, maritime and river navigation companies had installations within this pavilion. The ground floor of the building was completely taken over by a *diorama mouvant* which took the spectator on a voyage throughout Indochina: 'un merveilleux voyage, au décors toujours changeants, de France en Indochine, puis autour de l'Indochine, par le navire, la chaloupe, le train, l'automobile et l'avion'⁶⁶. An immense touristic map detailed all the sites and monuments of interest to a Western visitor, indicating routes and hotels along the way.

It is interesting to note that a voyage through Indochina had France as its *point de départ*. Mirroring the mythologised departure for the colonies so often portrayed in the openings of colonial and exotic novels, this diorama rendered this familiar *topos* of popular literature more accessible and 'real'. Moreover, this exhibit can be viewed as a microcosm of the exhibition itself. While *l'expo* had as its slogan 'le tour du monde en un jour', the touristic diorama similarly extended to the visitor

⁶⁶Rapport, vol. 6 (i), p. 698.

the opportunity to 'faire le tour d'Indochine en moins d'un jour'. This appropriative gesture transformed the visitor into a coloniser.

The forestry pavilion

This pavilion contained details, specimens, reproductions and images of local flora and fauna; portraits of various 'typical' landscapes, and traditional sampans and fishing vessels, which, according to the Rapport général, 'donnait une impression de vie réelle'⁶⁷. Once more it becomes clear that the exhibition's organisers had complete faith in the role of mimetic displays to represent a colonial reality that was thought to be transparent and accessible. The principal curiosity, it appears, was

la reproduction d'un récif de corail, expédié pièce par pièce de la colonie, présenté en diorama, avec un premier plan donnant l'illusion parfaite de la masse d'eau qui, à marée haute, recouvre le récif⁶⁸.

By expropriating natural phenomena and manipulating it through the use of techniques of spectacle, the organisers attempted to recreate the colony within the confines of the *Parc de Vincennes*. Moreover, the visual immediacy of this peculiar combination of illusion and authenticity operated in such a way as to subsume the 'real' under the fictitious. The 'reality' of Indochina was replaced by the transfiguring metropolitan vision of Indochina.

La Politique Indigène

The inclusive and exhaustive ambitions of the exhibition were manifest once more in the administrative section, which was created in order to give the general public 'un aperçu très simple, mais très complet, de l'organisation de notre colonie'⁶⁹. The respective administrative services were represented in schematised graphic

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 699.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 700.

charts: financial services, defence, customs and telegraphical services, the judiciary, the police, and *la garde indigène*.

The emphasis was once more placed upon a comparative vision of Indochina in which the indigenous practises of pre-colonial times were understood to be inadequate, subsumed as they were under the unmitigated glorification of metropolitan reorganisation and modification:

Le public pouvait se rendre compte, en parcourant les galeries consacrées à l'oeuvre administrative, de l'évolution très sensible qu'elle a provoquée au point de vue politique et social⁷⁰.

As metropolitan school manuals had done, the exhibition too tended to eclipse Indochinese history, which became subsumed under the more important task of evoking the action of imperial France.

La Salle historique

'Il suffisait, pour mesurer l'étendue de cette évolution, de parcourir la salle historique', boasted the Rapport général, 'où l'on pouvait se rendre compte à la fois des étapes de l'influence française dans le passé et des grands faits de l'histoire des peuples de l'Indochine'⁷¹.

This section drew on an immense variety of sources in order to allow the visitor to 'revivre le passé de l'Indochine'. Not only were institutions such as the *Bibliothèque nationale*, *les Musées nationaux*, *l'Ecole des langues orientales*, *les Missions étrangères*, and the *Archives de guerre et de la Marine*, responsible for providing exhibits and information, but this section also drew upon personal collections, and the *témoignages* of representatives from the families of those who

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

had played a significant role in the 'history' of the colony⁷². According to the Rapport, with their help

On a pu revivre le passé de l'Indochine et le souvenir de ceux qui ont été les précurseurs et les bons ouvriers de l'action française: missionnaires, soldats, voyageurs etc⁷³.

These sources were, evidently, all of metropolitan French origin. Not only was the history of Indochina (as one might imagine, given that 'Indochina' had been imagined and constructed by the French) presented as beginning with the intervention of French explorers and missionaries, but more importantly, the origins of the separate countries of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were completely occluded.

By placing emphasis on the testament of explorers, travellers and soldiers (which itself formed the basis of the 'knowledge' classified and catalogued by institutions such as the *Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*), this retrospective accorded legitimacy to the narratives of conquest and government mythologised in these popularised accounts. Indochina's was clearly a history which could be written by the French alone. Wresting from the indigenous populations their access to the writing of their own past, this exhibition reiterated that Indochina was a fixed space which came into being through the glorious actions of metropolitan explorers, missionaries, administrators and soldiers.

Exposition artistique et scientifique

This reconstitution of modern and contemporary history had a more anthropological focus, and was organised jointly by members of the *Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* and the *Direction des Archives de l'Indochine*. French archeological work in Indochina made up the third part of this historical overview.

⁷²Representatives from the Garnier, Chasseloup-Laubat, Pavie, and Delaporte families.

⁷³Rapport, vol. 6 (i), op. cit., p. 701.

Within this section was an ethnographical sub-section displaying skulls and fossils discovered in caves in Tonkin. These exhibits were further embellished with mannequins representing various races, which had been copied from photographs. They were dressed in traditional costumes and were surrounded by scaled-down models of their dwellings and tools. This 'science française', as it was termed in the Rapport, had enabled French 'savants' to cast 'quelques clartés sur le mystère qui les entoure [les races], à établir avec précision la chronologie de leur histoire, à retracer les formes successives de leurs civilisations'⁷⁴.

Here too, the claim of French 'science' was the creation of Indochinese cultural history. The indigenous populations were 'reborn' and had their identity reinstated by French historians. Implicit in the absence of indigenous research in ethnography or archeology was the notion that these traces of the past could only be excavated, restored, studied and understood by metropolitan experts.

Oeuvres d'hygiène

This section celebrated the work of metropolitan institutions and organisations to eradicate disease in Indochina, with the three Indochinese branches of the Pasteur Institute taking pride of place. Displays informed visitors about the scientific study of tropical diseases, the preparation of serums and vaccines, and the creation of sanatoria and *stations climatiques*. Charts showed the extent and dispersal of diseases through Indochina. Tables revealed the progress made and results obtained in the metropolitan battle against disease. Dioramas showed the interiors of French-built hospitals, and graphic displays presented the 'progression constante des vaccinations contre la variole, le choléra, la peste etc.'⁷⁵.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 702.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 704.

This scientific modernisation was sharply contrasted with 'backward' indigenous medicinal practises:

Le contraste entre les méthodes de la science occidentale, avec son arsenal thérapeutique, et la médecine traditionnelle indigène était mis en lumière d'une façon pittoresque par l'installation de deux boutiques de médecins et pharmaciens sino-annamites...⁷⁶.

The indigenous pharmacies are relevant and interesting only in the sense that they provide a picturesque tableau for the Western viewer: their worth is neither a pharmacological nor a medical one. On the contrary, the reduction of indigenous medicine to an aesthetic object strips these exhibits of any professional status they might presume, and places metropolitan France, and the exhibition's visitors, in a superior and patriarchal role which communicates in a starkly visual way the inferiority of indigenous science.

Oeuvres d'enseignement

This section provided descriptions of the system of education put into place in Indochina since the arrival of French government.

Le soin des esprits s'impose aux colonisateurs au même titre que le soin des corps. Aussi dès notre arrivée en Indochine avons-nous considéré l'éducation des races indigènes comme un de nos devoirs primordiaux⁷⁷.

Scaled-down models depicted the school re-building programmes; graphics, statistics, and photographs demonstrated how the metropolitan system had been successfully adapted to Indochinese students; and a collection of students' *cahiers* 'permettaient de saisir la vie même de l'enseignement indochinois'⁷⁸.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 705.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 706.

The benefits of metropolitan educative action is further eulogised in descriptions of a perceived 'renovation' of indigenous art:

Oeuvres d'art et d'inspiration coloniale : il est permis de dire qu'une part dans cette oeuvre de renaissance revient à l'influence des artistes français qui ont séjourné en Indochine, notamment aux boursiers de la colonie, qui, soit par leur enseignement à l'école, soit par les expositions de leurs oeuvres, n'ont pas manqué d'exercer une action sérieuse sur les jeunes artistes annamites⁷⁹.

Not content with claiming control and authorship of Indochina's historical past, the exhibition extended its appropriating arms to the cultural traditions and heritage of the colony.

Les oeuvres littéraires

A section entitled 'le livre indochinois' was intended to reveal to the metropolitan public 'la place que tient l'Indochine dans notre littérature'⁸⁰. The section exhibited works by 'maîtres de la littérature française', and writers who resided in Indochina, but nowhere present was there the work of an indigenous author⁸¹. It was precisely during this period however, that francophone indigenous writing had begun to flourish. The first indigenous creative works of fiction in French had appeared in 1913, and the first novel in French was published in 1921⁸². Indeed, 1930 marked the publication of a collaborative novel between a French writer and an Indochinese author: Truong Dinh Tri, with Albert de Teneuille, published the novel Ba-Dam, in Paris⁸³. This silencing of the indigenous author allowed metropolitan

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 709.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 710.

⁸¹For a detailed account of indigenous literature in French, see Yeager, J., The Vietnamese Novel in French; a Literary Response to Colonialism (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1987).

⁸²Nguyen, P., Le Roman de Mademoiselle Lys (Hanoi: L'Imprimerie tonkinoise, 1921).

⁸³Ba-Dam (Paris: Fasquelle, 1930).

writers to devise and portray an uncontested image of the colony. Metropolitan writing was to write not only from the colony, but also for the colony.

Les Figurants

The *délégation indigène* from Indochina comprised 409 people of whom 250 belonged to the military contingent (a detachment of *tirailleurs indochinois* stationed in France). According to the Rapport, these representatives were made up of 'les types les plus variés et caractéristiques de la société villageoise'⁸⁴. The indigenous *figurants* were, however, not strictly participants in the exhibition in that they functioned as objects to be viewed rather than as actors, agents and the equals of the metropolitan visitors. Alongside the inanimate exhibits, they thus became another part of the *grand spectacle*.

The theatrical aspect of the Indochinese section comprised the music of the *Garde indigène*, the Cambodian ballet, the Laotian ballet and the Cochinchinese theatre. The Cambodian ballet had already appeared twice, to great acclaim, in metropolitan France (Marseille 1906, and Paris 1922)⁸⁵. Of the dancers it was reported that:

Le répertoire avait été soigneusement établi et les pièces interminables dont la représentation dure plusieurs jours à Phnom Penh, avaient fait l'objet d'une sélection, ne laissant subsister que les thèmes principaux et les scènes essentielles reliés par un argument facile à communiquer aux spectateurs étrangers⁸⁶.

The metropolitan audiences were thus presented with a travesty of Cambodian dance. What they witnessed was a carefully edited version of the original, made palatable, comprehensible and containable by French overseers. Similarly, the 'authenticity' of

⁸⁴Rapport, vol 5 (ii), op. cit., p. 720.

⁸⁵The Cambodian ballet was also the subject of a series of sketches by Rodin, who followed the company on their tour of France in the 1920s. See Dagens, p. 81.

⁸⁶Rapport, vol. 5 (ii), op. cit., p. 725.

the music provided by the daily concerts of the *Garde indigène* is open to question. It was 'created' by Governor General Pasquier, (*Résident supérieur* in Hué), and the musicians were directed by a *chef français* (Maurice Fournier).

All these spectacles were presented to the metropolitan public as authentic examples of indigenous art, culture and lifestyle. In fact, all the original elements had been reworked by French leaders: choreographers, artistic directors, conductors. They represented not 'traditional indigenous culture', but rather reflect the imposition of a metropolitan system of values.

The metropolitan visitors were firmly placed in a voyeuristic and vicarious position. Pastoral scenes, and evocations of every-day indigenous life were fixed and framed for the consumption of the visitor. The Laotians, for example,

qui venaient faire leurs dévotions à la pagode lui fournissaient une figuration vivante des plus pittoresques⁸⁷.

The Guide officiel reinforced this subject/object dichotomy between Western fair-goers and indigenous *figurants*:

Penchez-vous sur leur oeuvre. Regardez-les agir. Ecoutez leur chants et leur musique, goûtez aussi des mets nationaux qu'ils vous offrent pour un prix facile ⁸⁸.

Along with their music, dance, even food, the Indochinese populations were classified and exhibited as objects.

The indigenous populations were framed by the metropolitan view. As the following quotation demonstrates the image of Indochina and her inhabitants which the exhibition produced was intended to inform the metropolitan public and provide the visitors with a definitive and unified portrayal of France's Indochinese empire:

⁸⁷Rapport, vol. 6 (i), op. cit., p. 717.

⁸⁸Demaison, op. cit., p.20

Il est incontestable que les Indochinois retireront un profit réel des grandes assises de Vincennes. Ils en sortent mieux connus et mieux appréciés par l'opinion métropolitaine⁸⁹.

The importance of the exhibition for the Indochinese participants was thus evaluated according to a schema of metropolitan knowledge. The scopic desires of metropolitan exhibition-goers are viewed as conferring status upon the indigenous populations of Indochina:

Tous les Français de la Métropole avec qui ils ont été en contact ont été frappés, non seulement par leur instruction générale et leur connaissance de notre langue et de notre culture, mais par la clarté de leurs idées, de leur esprit pratique, leur conception de notre rôle colonisateur, leur désir sincère de collaboration⁹⁰.

This desire to gaze, and therefore know, remains circumscribed by the disciplinary nature of the Franco-indochinese colonial relationship. Metropolitan opinions concerning the Indochinese hinged upon indigenous acceptance and complicity in French colonialism. Metropolitan approbation remained predicated upon indigenous ability to assimilate French culture and practices.

4. Conclusion

The 'principles' of French colonialism elaborated in the first decades of the century were in parts reworked and refined by the many commentators and partisans of French colonialism who found in the *Exposition* a forum for the expression of their views. The most radical shift in opinion which emerged from the *Exposition* was the desire to posit French colonialism as valuable to *humanité* the world over. By emphasising the global significance and value of continuing French colonial action, official views sought to establish an ethical and durable basis for the French Empire.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰*Rapport*, vol. 5 (ii), op. cit., p. 750.

Within this rhetoric of Empire, Indochina figured as a site of ambivalence. Lauded as an advanced society and a worthy recipient of French colonial action, the goal of continued French rule was only possible if this image were tempered with a simultaneous view of Indochina as chaotic and weak, a needy inferior clamouring for French intervention and aid.

These dual narratives of success/disaster, value/ambivalence are repeated in the visual discourses of the exhibition. The *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* demonstrates the importance of Indochina to the French nation and empire. Brought out of the shadow of Britain's 'jewel', France's *perle* was *mise en relief*, framed by, and overshadowing the nation's other colonial possessions. Central to Indochina's 'special' status was Angkor Wat, a marvel unrivalled by the architectural features of any of France's other colonial possessions. Indeed, this 'special' status functioned as a feature, a weapon even, in ongoing French imperial rivalry with Great Britain. A symbol of France's strong presence in Asia, Angkor served to underline French prestige, and confirmed her international status as an equal player alongside the greatest imperial power in the world.

As a symbol of French ideals of protection and *mise en valeur*, Angkor Wat nevertheless also functioned as proof of metropolitan superiority over decadent and inferior native populations. The 'special place' Indochina was accorded at the exhibition is nonetheless undermined by discourses which deny her very specificity and tend towards a blurring of the diversity of the respective colonies by conflating all the component parts of the French Empire.

The exhibition thus reveals the ambivalence with which the colony was viewed. Displayed to advantage and held up for admiration, Indochina was nonetheless debased and commodified, its populations simultaneously applauded and reprimanded. The spectacle of otherness, amply demonstrated by the *Exposition*

coloniale, reveals the double-faced ambivalence of French colonial discourses in relation to Indochina.

Chapter 5: Literary Representations of Indochina

1. Introduction

As Said has noted, the novel has become "the aesthetic object" *par excellence*, and of particular significance for the "formation of imperial attitudes, references and experiences"¹. Novels depicting the colonial situation from a metropolitan point of view, which popularise and fictionalise colonial myths, are crucial to any study of a colonial power's relationships with its subject colony.

With regard to the study of metropolitan attitudes towards Indochina, a study of fictional representations is essential, as there are very few references to this corner of the French Empire in metropolitan popular culture. Although the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes* had emphasised Indochina amongst the colonial possessions through the predominance of the reproduction of Angkor Wat, this emphasis was not matched in other cultural arena. Furthermore, Angkor had become aestheticised to the point that it served not simply as a symbol evoking French Indochina, but one which signified the ideal of French colonialism as a whole.

Moreover, Angkor's predominance at the *Exposition* did not reflect any previous hold Indochina may have exerted over the French popular imagination, and nor did it translate into an abundance of different future representations. Unlike many of the French colonies, and particularly the North African colonies, Indochina never made serious inroads into the imagery of popular French culture. Popular 'colonial' songs² of the period, for example, are full of references to North Africa, the Pacific Islands and to a lesser degree sub-saharan Africa, whilst

¹ Said, E., Culture and Imperialism (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), xii.

² There has been no scholarly work on popular colonial song in metropolitan France. There exists however, a collection of colonial and exotic French songs which dates from 1906-1942: Chansons exotiques et coloniales (Paris: EPM, 1995).

"La Petite Tonkinoise"³, presenting only an archetypal image of loving and leaving an indigenous woman, seems to have been the only well-known song to make a direct reference to Indochina or its inhabitants. Similarly, Indochina is barely represented in French cinema of the period. During the 1930s, of 62 films featuring the French colonies, one features a few sequences set in Indochina (*Ramuntcho*), and another features Indochina alongside Lebanon and Tunisia (*Courrier d'Asie*)⁴. The examination of metropolitan novels depicting Indochina and French colonial society in the colony, is therefore one of the few means of gaining access to popular attitudes and perceptions of this important overseas possession.

Distance from the metropole may certainly account for some of these discrepancies and absences. Indochina was the farthest flung of France's overseas possessions, and this sense of distance is itself an important aspect of the metropolitan image of Indochina. Much popular literature is concerned with themes of exile and nostalgia for the homeland. Metropolitan settlers felt cut off from the homeland. Boat journeys to Indochina took four weeks, and regular air transport to Indochina was not established until 1938⁵. Again, unlike many of the French overseas territories, Indochina was never a settlement colony. The metropolitan population in Indochina never exceeded 42,000⁶.

Whereas Algeria had a far larger metropolitan population, was geographically closer to the metropole, and enjoyed a political status which ensured that the territory was closely linked to France in the metropolitan

³Christiné, H. and Scotto, V., *Petite Tonkinoise* (1906: Odéon 36801 - XP2744).

⁴See Pierre Sorlin, "The Fanciful Empire: French Feature Films and the Colonies in the 1930s", *French Cultural Studies*, ii, June 1991, pp. 135-151.

⁵Franchini, P., "La Cité blanche", pp. 26-81, in Franchini, P., (ed), *Saigon 1925-45: de la 'Belle Colonie' à l'éclosion révolutionnaire ou la fin des dieux blancs* (Paris: Les Editions Autrement, 1992), p. 69.

⁶The metropolitan population in Algeria during the same period was estimated to be 946,000. For further statistics relating to metropolitan settlement of the French colonies see Guy Pervillé's *De L'Empire français à la décolonisation* (Paris: Hachette, 1993), pp. 53-55.

imagination, Indochina remained distant both spatially and conceptually. Malleret, for example, describes how, in spite of the informative work of the *Exposition coloniale* of 1931, the metropolitan press reproduced and exacerbated this widespread ignorance, publishing incorrect and misleading information which ensured that Indochina was never understood geographically in France. Amongst his examples, Malleret notes that in 1931, Poulo Condore was referred to as an American possession, photographs of Cochinchinese women were labelled as Japanese, and Angkor was declared to be a Siamese possession⁷.

Given this physical and conceptual distance, the novels which form the focus of this chapter should provide revealing insights into the images of Indochina which prevailed during the period of consolidation. Literary images of Indochina tend, inevitably, to mirror the successive stages of the French relationship with the colony. Shifts in the nature of colonial rule, from the days of the conquest and pacification through to the period of consolidation here under discussion gave rise to different emphases and different literary themes. Through a close analysis of each novel, this chapter will attempt to show that colonial literature at once reflected and perpetuated already-created images of Indochina. As Bernard Hue has noted:

Que serait dans la littérature, l'image de l'Indochine, si elle n'était d'abord, et peut-être essentiellement, mensonge, c'est-à-dire fable, représentation mythique...⁸

Drawing not only on the stock-in-trade clichés which had come to represent Indochina in exotic literature, these novels further mirrored and propagated the accepted 'official' versions of France's role in Indochina. They are of interest therefore in their own right, as both fictionalised accounts of French rule in Indochina, and also as corollaries to the previous chapters on the discourses of

⁷Malleret, L., L'Exotisme indochinois dans la littérature française depuis 1860 (Paris: Larose, 1934), p. 18.

⁸Hué, B., (ed.), Indochine: reflets littéraires (Rennes: PUR, 1992), p. 21

French colonial administration. These novels allow one to measure the extent to which French partisans of imperialism were successful in their implantation of 'la conscience impériale' and the mythologised images of Indochina they sought to popularise. They demonstrate the enduring quality of what might be considered the 'residual' image of Indochina.

2. Overview of Literary Currents

Various scholars have attempted to draw up a literary history of metropolitan literature which concerns Indochina⁹. Most of these works date from the 1930s and therefore do not always take into account the importance of the works here under discussion. Nor indeed do they analyse these works with the benefit of a certain degree of temporal distance. Equally, these literary histories are imbued with the imperial ideology of the period in which they were written, and are therefore to be treated with a certain degree of caution, perhaps as colonial documents in themselves.

In addition, in a chapter which seeks to examine literature written about a colony from the metropole, one immediately comes up against a weight of literary history and criticism which has tended to divide these histories and analyses into two different categories which appear, on immediate view, to refer to quite separate types of representation: namely, colonial literature and exotic literature.

⁹For an exhaustive literary history of Indochina to the 1930s, see Malleret, op. cit. For more recent (but not exhaustive) critical approaches to metropolitan literature concerning Indochina see Hue, B., (ed), Indochine: reflets littéraires, Pluriel 3, (Presses universitaires de Rennes, Centre d'étude des littératures et civilisations francophones, 1992); Laude, P., Exotisme indochinois et poésie (Paris: Sudestasie, 1990); and Copin, H., L'Indochine dans la littérature française des années vingt à 1954: exotisme et altérité (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996). For general works on colonial literature which feature sections and chapters concerning Indochina, see Loutfi, M., Littérature et colonialisme: l'expansion coloniale vue à travers la littérature romanesque française 1871-1914 (La Haye: Mouton, 1971), and Lebel, R., Histoire de la littérature coloniale en France (Paris: Larose, 1931). Also of interest is Hargreaves, A., The Colonial Experience in French Fiction: a Study of Pierre Loti, Ernest Psichari and Pierre Mille (London: Macmillan, 1981).

Although it is not the place of this study to provide a detailed examination of these two literary strands, it is worthwhile considering the implications of these terminologies as regards the methodology of this chapter.

a) The Exotic Novel/The Colonial Novel¹⁰

The definition of the term 'exotique' appears in the Dictionnaire de l'Académie française¹¹ of 1835 as

Etranger, qui n'est pas naturel au pays.

Bescherelle's Dictionnaire national¹² of 1857 offers the following definition, which, again, qualifies 'exotique' as

Qui vient des pays étrangers. Qui n'est pas naturel au pays; le contraire d'indigène.

Clearly there has been an immense slippage between these early definitions and current usage. In the mid-1800s, exotic is defined in ethnocentric terms as something foreign within, and foreign to, the country of the speaking subject. Later conceptions of the exotic however, have tended to treat as exotic anything foreign to the speaking subject's experience, be it in his/her own country or elsewhere. Where previously an exotic subject was one which was displaced, and

¹⁰There are numerous critical works on 'exoticism' in literature. The most useful and comprehensive overview has proved to be Jean-Marc Moura, Lire l'exotisme (Paris: Dunod, 1992). Moura's work covers the history of exoticism, its diverse literary manifestations from medieval times to the present, a representative compilation of exotic works, as well as a useful critical approach to various narrative strategies at play in exotic works. Tzvetan Todorov's Nous et les Autres: la réflexion française sur la diversité humaine (Paris: Gallimard, 1989) includes a useful chapter entitled 'L'Exotique' (pp. 353-463), which traces the philosophical evolution of exoticism in France, but remains sympathetic to, and takes no account of post-colonial criticism of, exoticism.

¹¹Institut français, Dictionnaire de l'Académie française 6ème édition (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1835).

¹²Bescherelle, M., Dictionnaire national ou dictionnaire universel de la langue française, 1er tome, 5ème édition (Paris: Garnier, 1857).

appeared outside of its native environment, later usage applied the term indiscriminately to subjects foreign to the speaking subject's conscious, understanding or experience, wherever their location.

More recent dictionaries thus define exotic in the following terms:

[En parlant de pers., ou de choses envisagées p. réf. au pays ou à la culture propres du locuteur] Qui est relatif, qui appartient à un pays étranger, généralement lointain ou peu connu; qui a un caractère naturellement original dû à sa provenance¹³.

There is equally a school of thought which associates exoticism with a sympathetic view of the 'other'. Defining exoticism, Todorov tends to equate exoticism as 'xenophilia' (whilst the colonial novel, he asserts, represents xenophobia¹⁴), and goes as far as to say that racism does not exist in the exotic work¹⁵. He further notes of exoticism:

C'est le pays auquel j'appartiens qui détient les valeurs les plus hautes, quelles qu'elles soient, affirme le nationalisme, non, c'est un pays dont la seule caractéristique pertinente est qu'il ne soit pas le mien, dit celui qui professe l'exotisme. Il s'agit donc dans les deux cas d'un relativisme rattrapé à la dernière minute par un jugement de valeur (nous sommes mieux que les autres, les autres sont mieux que nous), mais où la définition des entités comparées, "nous" et "les autres", reste, elle, purement relative.

Les attitudes relevant de l'exotisme seraient donc le premier exemple où l'autre est systématiquement préféré au même. Mais la manière dont on se trouve amené, dans l'abstrait, à définir l'exotisme, indique qu'il s'agit ici moins d'une valorisation de l'autre que d'une critique de soi, et moins de la description d'un réel que de la formulation d'un idéal¹⁶.

¹³CNRS, (Institut de la Langue française, Nancy), Trésor de la langue française: dictionnaire de la langue du XIXème et du XXème siècle (1789-1960), tome huitième (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1980). This dictionary traces the first mention of 'exotic' back to Rabelais in 1552.

¹⁴Todorov, op. cit., p. 241.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 424.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 355.

However, exoticism is not inherent in the subjects depicted in the works under examination in this chapter. Exoticism is conferred upon them by the attitude or stance of the author/narrator. A view which regards exoticism as sympathetic, tends to obscure the authoritative, judgemental, and essentially 'colonising' gaze of the metropolitan writer. Much writing about the colonies from the metropole must therefore be viewed as an apparatus of Empire alongside more obvious forms of imperial ideology and propaganda which have been discussed in previous chapters.

Todorov asserts that, in the colonial novel as opposed to an exotic work, 'la fascination exercée par l'étrange n'est plus un ravissement, c'est un maléfice'¹⁷. Simplistic distinctions between the exotic and the colonial novel have tended to polarise critical opinion to the extent that exotic works are regarded as of value, whilst 'colonial' works are rejected and vilified. As Todorov has said of the two: 'l'un glorifie l'étranger, tandis que l'autre le dénigre'¹⁸. This sort of judgement is unhelpful, and ignores to a startling degree the similarities between the authoritative and essentially colonising narratorial stance inherent in both discursive traditions. As Todorov's title itself suggests, both exotic and colonial works tend to dichotomise into we/they contrasts and therefore to essentialise the Other (leading to literary descriptions of the Annamite, the Oriental etc.), rather than concerning themselves with others. These others are constructed through negation: 'they' is 'not us', immediately introducing a notion of national and cultural differentiation and hierarchy.

A further problem is encountered in definitions of the colonial novel: critics have tended to concern themselves with the situation of the writer rather than with the text itself. Definitions have thus often been worked according to whether the writer lived in Indochina for a substantial period of time, or whether

¹⁷Ibid., p. 422.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 426.

he/she was merely a visitor. Lebel, for example, reproaches the latter with simply producing an 'exotic' work:

...le fonctionnaire qui fait seulement un court séjour, au cours duquel il croit avoir vu quelque chose, et qui, tenté par le démon d'écrire, produit un livre avec les yeux tournés vers la métropole; c'est se donner, à bon compte, un brevet d'exotisme¹⁹.

For the purposes of this chapter, this restrictive view will be eschewed in favour of one which focuses on the textual content of a novel rather than its author. A 'colonial' novel will, therefore, be one in which the lives of European *colons* are the principal focus.

Lebel also rejects novels whose authors seek only to divert the public:

La réalité importe peu; elle serait parfois gênante, car elle choquerait de très vieux préjugés²⁰.

This desire on Lebel's part for mimetic representation appeals for the educative rather than entertainment values supposedly expressed in narratives of journeys and explorations of previous decades. What it fails to acknowledge however, is that all writing involves retelling and invention. The interest in the 'colonial novel' is precisely that it reflects an image of Indochina which is 'twice-removed'. That is to say, these novels produce representations of images and situations which are already mythologised, fictionalised and artificial (through government propaganda, military memoirs, visual imagery etc etc.). Colonial novels add a further layer of fictionality to the images of Indochina.

As the focus of this thesis is the discursive representations of Indochina rather than the factitious application of classificatory terms, this chapter will attempt to avoid a generic approach, and will seek instead to draw together common themes and images which recur in these various forms. While it will be useful, at times, to refer to respective works as of the colonial or of the exotic

¹⁹Lebel, op. cit., p. 80

²⁰Ibid., p. 80.

tradition, the representations of Indochina present in the texts under discussion will be treated in a thematic manner which subsumes other classifications. This approach has been taken in order not to impose arbitrary distinctions between novels, and it should be noted that different aspects of many of these texts could be applied to either or both of these categories.

3. Corpus

It is impossible, in a study of this nature, to attempt to present an exhaustive analysis of metropolitan literary representations of Indochina. There exist many literary works which draw on the metropolitan experience of Indochina to a greater or lesser degree. There does not exist however, a single author who, like Kipling in the case of British India, produced a defining colonial novel concerning Indochina.

This chapter seeks to pinpoint recurring themes which are common to many works of this period. The three novels under examination - Claude Farrère's Les Civilisés, (1905), Henry Daguerches' Le Kilomètre 83 (1913), and Georges Groslier's Le Retour à l'argile (1928) - were all accorded recognition and prizes of one form or another, and therefore achieved a certain degree of renown. It is thus safe to assume that these novels were relatively widely read both in the metropole and in Indochina around the time of their publication. They all reflect, in different ways, three of the most pervasive strands of thought about Indochina during the period in question. Equally, they represent three successive decades of French rule in Indochina, and as such provide both a reiteration of key tenets of the accepted French *doctrine coloniale* as they developed, and also a telling insight into the evolving image of Indochina in the metropolitan imagination.

Farrère's novel draws on themes of degeneracy and decadence in turn-of-the century Saigon; Daguerches' novel presents the reader with a moderniser's view of France's role in Indochina, which focuses upon the application of technology and progress to Indochina; and Groslier's novel reflects a backward-

looking, anti-modernist stance which is suggestive of the growing unease with which colonial rule was perceived by settlers in Indochina. For these writers, Indochina is respectively, a modern Sodom and Gomorrah, a testing-ground for the exportation of metropolitan progress, and a 'natural' haven in which to escape from this tyrannical modernist cult of progress.

a) Claude Farrère - *Les Civilisés* (1905)

Claude Farrère (1876-1957) is the pen-name of Charles Bargone, who spent two years in Indochina between 1897 and 1899, as an officer with the French Navy. *Les Civilisés* won the Prix Goncourt in 1905²¹. Farrère was elected to the *Académie française* in 1935 ahead of Claudel.

Farrère's novel is cynical, and disconcerting. It shocked a significant proportion of its metropolitan readers, for whom his portrayal of Indochina seemed at odds with the official version of Indochina as France's *perle de l'Extrême-Orient*. Ernest Babut went as far as to write a pamphlet denouncing Farrère's work, *Un Livre de diffamation indochinoise: Les Civilisés*²², in which he asserted that the novel was too 'anti-colonial'. Lebel voices the criticisms of many contemporary detractors, when he dismisses Farrère's work in a single sentence as 'unrepresentative' of colonial life in Indochina:

Ce n'est pas là une oeuvre d'observation et de vérité générale qui soit représentative de la colonies et des Français de Cochinchine²³.

²¹Other works by Farrère include: *Fumée d'opium* (1904), a collection of short stories; *La Promenade en Extrême-orient* (1924), and *Une Jeune fille voyagea* (1925), both novels set in Indochina. *La Bataille* (1907) was set in Japan, whilst *Florence de Cao Bang* (1960), which was published posthumously, tells the tale of a Eurasian woman raised clandestinely in France.

²²Babut, E., *Un Livre de diffamation indochinoise: Les Civilisés* (Hanoi: [n.p.], 1907).

²³Lebel, op. cit., p. 170.

Farrère's novel may not have been an entirely 'truthful' representation of the colonial milieu of Saigon in the early years of the twentieth century. To argue the case one way or the other is, however, to miss the point. Farrère's novel, crowned by the approbation of the prestigious Goncourt committee, contributed to the popular image of Indochina. Its veracity is not here in question. Rather, its interest lies in the extent it develops or countermands pervasive images of Indochina.

b) Henry Daguerches - *Le Kilomètre 83* (1913)

Henry Daguerches was the *nom de plume* of Charles Valat, a captain in the French artillery. Daguerches' career took him to Indochina on a number of occasions. He was part of the expeditionary corps sent to counter the Boxers' Insurrection, and remained in Cochinchina during 1908 and 1909, working for the *Direction de l'Artillerie*. In September 1912, Daguerches returned to Tonkin, then was mobilised on his return to France. In 1918, Daguerches was once more in Cochinchina, where he took his retirement in 1919. Daguerches never again left the colony.

Honoured by the *Académie française*, *Le Kilomètre 83*, is Daguerches' best known novel²⁴. In 1929 he was awarded a prize by the literary society *Français d'Asie*²⁵ for the whole of his work. The novel first appeared in the *Revue de Paris* in February and March 1913. During his sojourn in Cochinchina,

²⁴His others include: *Consolata, fille du soleil* (1906), and *Monde, vaste monde* (1909).

²⁵*L'Association des Français d'Asie* was created in Paris in 1910, and hoped to publicise and promote the literary work of French writers in Indochina throughout Europe. The Association accomplished very little in its early years but its activities were revived in 1928 when Governor General Pasquier founded an annual literary prize of 25,000 francs. Daguerches was awarded the prize in 1929, and Herbert Wild in 1930. The Association also created a *Bureau d'études littéraires franco-asiatiques*, which was intended to promote the publication in France of translations of literary work in Indochinese languages, and similarly, translations of French works for an Indochinese public.

Daguerches was sent to the Cambodian region of Battambang in order to carry out an arms inspection. *Le Kilomètre 83* draws not only on the area of Battambang as its setting, but is also informed by Daguerches' memories of conversations he had with people involved in the building of the Yunnan railway.

c) Georges Groslier - *Le Retour à l'argile* (1928)

Georges Groslier was born in Cambodia in 1887. The son of an administrator in the Indochinese civil service, Groslier returned to Paris to study, but later rejoined his family in Cambodia. During his studies, Groslier 'discovered' Angkor Wat, and returned to France to give lectures on Khmer art. This won him a mission from the *Ministère de l'Instruction publique* and from the *Société asiatique* in Cambodia in 1913 and 1914. In 1913 Albert Sarraut asked Groslier to 'reveal' to the Indochinese their own artistic traditions by organising the *Musée Sarraut* in Phnom Penh, which opened in 1920. Groslier remained the museum's curator until 1942.

Similarly, Groslier was involved with the *Ecole des Arts décoratifs* in Indochina, which, in 1917, he transformed into an *Ecole des Arts cambodgiens*. He organised the Cambodian pavilions for the metropolitan *Exposition des Arts décoratifs* (1925), and the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*. He was instrumental in the setting up of the *Ecole d'Art de Bien-Hoa*, and the *Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-arts* in Hanoi, later becoming the *Inspecteur général des Arts* in Indochina.

From 1926 onwards, Groslier concentrated principally on his literary works, winning the *Grand prix de littérature coloniale* in 1931 for his second novel. He formally retired in 1942, and participated in the anti-Japanese resistance. Imprisoned and tortured, he died in 1945.

Groslier displays his intimate knowledge of Cambodian life and inhabitants throughout the novel, although the metropolitan population remains his principal focus. The French *colons* Groslier chooses to represent can be divided into two

categories: those who are seduced by the country and may even go as far as to abandon their metropolitan roots; and those who refuse any *rapprochement* with the local culture, submitting to life in Indochina rather than actively participating in it, and waiting only for the moment of departure for the metropole.

4. Colonial Stereotypes

Novels depicting the colonies are replete with lexical, thematic and structural stereotypes. The following section will review some of these common stereotypical images and themes in relation to the representation of Indochina.

a) Linguistic stereotypes

The writers of 'colonial novels' often had recourse to the images and clichés popularised by writers in the 'exotic' tradition. The vulgarisation of certain images of Indochina by writers such as Loti and Boissière²⁶, allowed the writers now under examination to evoke quickly and succinctly a certain country, landscape and 'atmosphere' through the use of this 'short-hand' of clichés. These earlier writers had offered a rather fleeting view of Indochina, evoking simply the most unusual and disconcerting (for a metropolitan reader) features: Indochina was evoked through references to its physical features: its crops, *hévéas*, *riz* etc.; its deltas and its *arroyos*. The emphasis was firmly placed on the bizarre, the comic, or the seductive characteristics of Indochina. By the turn of the century however, these very contrasts and differences had been assimilated into metropolitan imaginations as signalling 'Indochina'.

From the very first page of his novel, Daguerches for instance, introduces terminology which simultaneously orientates and disorientates the reader. He uses

²⁶Pierre Loti's novels which concern Indochina are the following: *Propos d'exil* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1887); *Un Pèlerin d'Angkor* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1912); there is some mention of Indochina in *Pêcheur d'Islande* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1893). Jules Boissière's 'Indochinese' *récits* are: *Les Propos d'un intoxiqué* (Paris: Michaud, 1911); and *Fumeurs d'Opium* (Paris: Flammarion, 1895).

a stock of exotic phrases which operate as a kind of shorthand: 'Cholon', 'An'hoan', references to local indigenous superstitions, 'coolie', 'riz', 'pagode', 'opium' etc; and characteristic features of settler life in Indochina, 'malabar', 'boy', 'pousse-pousse'. This bank of vocabulary signals to the reader the geographical locus of the novel: they are stock-in-trade clichés which designate Indochina for the reader, and also indicate to some extent what kind of novel it will be: colonial, exotic.

The same clichéd references however, combine to produce simultaneously a distancing effect. The writer introduces from the beginning, through this very use of vocabulary, a degree of ambivalence. He plays on the tension arising from the reader's knowing/not knowing. Knowing, through familiarity with earlier fictional accounts which were comforting but largely artificial portrayals which located the novel in a containable, 'knowable' fictional universe. Not knowing, because the novel will nevertheless satisfy the reader's desire for difference, his/her desire to be transported elsewhere, and to 'lose his/her bearings'. The novel thus reflects what Bhabha has located as the fundamental ambivalence of the colonised/coloniser relationship: the double-faced desire for both inclusion and alienation:

the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*²⁷ (emphasis in the original).

To continue to use Bhabha's hypothesis, these novels portray a domain which is 'native', but not 'too native'. They assimilate Indochina into the metropolitan imagination through the use of clichés which, having acquired precisely that stereotypical quality, mitigate the 'otherness' of the colony.

The use of language in metropolitan novels concerning Indochina thus maintains a desired degree of difference (exoticism), but stops short of entirely

²⁷Bhabha, H., The Location of Culture, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 86.

alienating the metropolitan reader. Daguerches, when including unusual indigenous terms and vocabulary in his narrative, provides his reader with footnotes, explaining the Vietnamese.

b) Thematic stereotypes

As in much colonial mythology, fictional representations of Indochina are often dominated by archetypal images: the novelty and inhospitability of its climate and geography, the alluring native woman, adventure and danger. The shorthand vocabulary of exotic images of Indochina seen above - rice fields, forests, opium, sampans, rubber plantations, the *con gai* (indigenous woman) - was rapidly evolved, and then extended to create thematic stereotypes which similarly informed the reader of the location of the plot in the colonies.

i) Opium

Although China had long been linked with the theme of opium in literary works, the topos of the opium-den, and the evocation of the heightened sensory states which opium produced were ubiquitous throughout early metropolitan fictional representations of Indochina²⁸. Benefitting no doubt from the vogue for *Chinoiserie*, and the interest in the association between South-East Asia and opium which had already developed, these early French works drew on the theme for the purposes of exoticism rather than making the theme specific to the French experience of Indochina. Various described as a divinity, an idol, and a gift from heaven, opium was widely used as a short-hand to evoke this 'exotic' location, rather than as a way in which to differentiate Indochina from China.

²⁸See for example, Boissière, *Fumeurs d'opium*, op. cit., *Propos d'un intoxiqué*, op. cit.; Farrère, *Fumées d'opium*, op. cit.; and Bonnetain, P., *L'Opium* (Paris: Charpentier, 1886). The opium theme is also present in many of Albert de Pouvourville's short stories, notably *Le Cinquième bonheur* (Paris: Michaud, 1911).

In later novels, opium often figured as a 'rite of passage' for the newly-arrived settler to Indochina. In Farrère's novel, opium becomes just one of many ways in which to signal the degeneracy and decadence of his main protagonists. In Daguerches' and Groslier's novels, opium operates as a sign that a character has leaned too far towards the adoption of native customs and lifestyle: it functions as an indication of 'indigenisation', or 'going native'.

Thus, by the period of consolidation under discussion, opium, as a primary theme, had gradually died out, and was replaced by images and themes which constituted the new concerns of the metropolitan French in Indochina: France's role in Indochina, the administration and government of the colony. It might be argued that this theme died out precisely because the French government 'domesticated' opium through the management and monopoly of the opium trade in Indochina. The exotic appeal of opium was thus lessened by the intervention of the State in this romanticised practice.

ii) Inhospitable Climates: Disease and Suffering

Colonialism is widely represented as a battle against the forces of nature and many novelists present the metropolitan settlers' lives abroad as constituting a constant struggle against the maleficent forces of nature. Whereas in the case of Africa, it is the vastness of the territories which produce awe and fear in the metropolitan colonists²⁹, in the case of Indochina, the forest, and more particularly the Cambodian forest, embodies this struggle. The image of the intractable forest serves as a metaphor for Indochina, and France's relationship with the colony.

Si familier que je croie être avec la forêt et ses aspects multiformes, il y en a, en elle, je ne sais quelle réserve de vie primordiale, dont la masse m'impressionne toujours, je ne sais quel

²⁹See for example Vigné d'Octon, *Au Pays des fétiches* (Paris: [n.p.], 1891): "...une indicible stupeur plane sur tout, et le morne, l'effrayant, l'incroyable silence africain prend possession de la terre et de l'onde", p. 38.

air de bête feuillue, crochée au sol, tas obscur et moiré....de bête intuable...au point que je regarde avec admiration, à notre droite et à notre gauche, les deux bourrelets de chair écailleuse et brillante, qui ne demandent qu'à se refermer sur le dérisoire estafilade infligée par les ingénieurs du Siam-Cambodge³⁰.

The forest emblematises the ambiguous hold that the metropole has over Indochina. However familiar the metropolitan settler might feel he has become with the country, there is a certain element of it which forever escapes his grasp or understanding, which will forever be beyond that grasp. Colonialism is not presented as a durable force, as Indochina is waiting to close in over the French presence, to become whole and thoroughly impenetrable once more. Fear and admiration are mixed: fear of the inherent natural power of this strange country, whose spirit is *intuable*; admiration for the magnificence of the forest which dwarfs the derisory efforts of the French engineers to cut a swathe through its dense vegetation. Analogous to France's relationship with her indigenous subjects, this evocation of the forest recalls the series of antitheses which mark French colonial discourses concerning Indochina. It concretises a view in which Indochina is familiar yet unknowable, domesticised yet untameable, held in check but constantly threatening to break loose from metropolitan control.

As in much colonial literature, and most particularly in the context of *fin-de-siècle* fears about European degeneration³¹, this battle against nature is also presented as a psychological struggle. It might be argued that the themes of sickness, mental disturbance and death are related to the psychological trauma experienced by those metropolitan individuals who constituted the early wave of departure to the colonies. It is as though colonial expansion was undermined from within by the repressed self-doubt which seemed insidiously to pervade the nineteenth-century unconscious.

³⁰Daguerches, op. cit., pp. 65-6.

³¹Elsewhere these fears were also projected onto syphilis, prostitutes, Jews etc in the context of the *fin-de-siècle* mentality, thereby imputing perceived degeneration to different forms of Otherness.

However, these anxieties also recur in literature dating from the period of consolidation, reflecting an almost unconscious unease with Empire and the colonial situation in Indochina. The psychological changes which occur in Daguerches' characters, for instance, are always imputed to Indochina, and most often to its climate:

L'âme et l'esprit s'anémient ici (...) Une nervosité veule, une sorte de halètement débile de la pensée trahissent l'édifice intérieur qui flageole³².

Recalling the concerns and anxieties expressed in contemporaneous health and hygiene manuals which also associated climate with mental and physical degeneracy, Indochina is here compared to a debilitating virus which gnaws away at the psychological stability and mental faculty of the European settlers³³. Enfeeblement, mental anaemia, and spinelessness work from the interior to weaken the psyche, and are evoked in physiognomical terms, as exterior signs of deterioration: sagging and spinelessness. Whilst fictional portrayals of Africa reflected fears of cannibalism, and possible capture and death by wild animals, in the case of Indochina, the notion of insidious disease appears to have constituted the most acutely felt anxiety.

³²Ibid., p. 135.

³³Loutfi relates this type of representation to a generalised 'goût du morbide' in metropolitan literature; see her chapter entitled "Doutes et appréhensions", op. cit., pp. 5-43.

iii) War and Death

As is the case with many of France's overseas possessions, the first mass metropolitan experience of Indochina was almost inevitably that of war and conquest, thus adding to the association between Indochina and death. The first fictional metropolitan representations of Indochina appeared around the time of the conquest. One might wish to question the fictionality of these texts, based as they almost exclusively were, on the lived experience of the many army and navy personnel who took part in the conquest and pacification of what came to be known as Indochina. Taking the form of autobiographical *récits*, journals and diaries, they give highly subjective accounts of Indochina and its inhabitants, which are often coloured by the writer's own experience of war and suffering.

Loti, for instance, candidly documents his dislike of Indochina, and states quite clearly the personal origins of this consistent antipathy. Loti's elder brother was killed in 1865 while returning in ill health from Indochina, where he had been a naval officer. This very personal experience of loss is echoed in Pêcheur d'Islande, where the hero dies on board the ship headed for France as a result of a tour of duty in Tonkin³⁴. The ship for France becomes an 'hôpital mouvant', an 'étouffoir de malades'³⁵:

Depuis le départ d'Ha-Long, il en était mort plus d'un, qu'il avait fallu jeter dans l'eau profonde, sur ce grand chemin de France, beaucoup de ces petits lits s'étaient débarassés déjà de leur pauvre contenu³⁶.

As noted above, while fear of sickness in any of the French overseas territories may have been a common theme in colonial literature, it is particularly noticeable in the case of Indochina, which is often evoked through allusions to insidious sickness leading to death. As Malleret has noted, these accounts were filled with disturbing detail about the

³⁴Loti, op. cit., pp 125-131.

³⁵Ibid., p. 127.

³⁶Ibid.

expéditions meurtrières accomplies dans des pays d'épouvante où la vie humaine est à la merci des surprises des fauves, de la fièvre, de la forêt perfide et des exhalaisons malsaines qui montent de la terre mouvante des deltas³⁷.

Early literature concentrated on the macabre - corpses, burials and cemeteries. Malleret puts this down to a contemporary taste for 'littérature d'horreur'³⁸, and indeed, it does contain many of the aspects and images of traditional metropolitan 'histoires d'épouvante'. What has not been discussed in relation to these works, however, are the reasons why these images of death and physical degradation were so pervasive.

The association of Indochina with death certainly originated in metropolitan France with the popularisation of literature which reported the exploration and conquest of the territories. This image was undoubtedly perpetuated by the parliamentary colonial debate of the late nineteenth century, which pitched convinced 'colonialists' against those who deplored the sacrifice of 'l'or et le sang français' in foreign territories. Although Malleret notes the strength and durability of this image, he nonetheless stops short of offering a convincing argument as to the reasons for this association:

Les souvenirs colportés par les soldats qui firent la rude expédition de Cochinchine et la pénible guerre du Tonkin, ont laissé jusqu'à nos jours une trace profonde dans les esprits. Incapable de s'affranchir de cette notion formée aux premiers jours de la pénétration coloniale, le public a confondu pendant longtemps, tous les pays indochinois dans un ensemble qui conservait, à ses yeux, la même signification sinistre³⁹.

Clearly these initial portrayals of Indochina as a vast burial ground for young French men are important, yet the question remains as to why this 'first impression' was never truly replaced, even once Indochina had been 'sanitised'

³⁷Malleret, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁸Ibid., p. 79.

³⁹Ibid., p. 17.

through metropolitan progress, with a less maleficent representation⁴⁰. The durability of the association between Indochina and death, of Indochina and disease and suffering may indeed have contributed to the seeming lack of public interest in this, France's most distant colony.

5. Tracing the Evolving Colonial Relationship through Fiction

As this thesis has already suggested, French colonial discourses offer the critic something of a paradox. On the one hand, French attitudes towards Empire shifted perceptibly - for instance at the turn of the century with the change of 'native' policy; and during and after the First World War, when the colonies were (rightly) perceived to have come to the aid of the Motherland, both economically, and in terms of manpower, at the time of her greatest need. Having acknowledged these gradual shifts in opinion and colonial stance, it is also necessary to underline the fact that French colonial discourses, at their most reductive level, did not in fact undergo radical transformations during the period of consolidation. The terms of French colonialism which Jules Ferry laid out in the 1880s underpinned colonial discourses for centuries.

The following sections, will attempt to circumvent this paradox, by tracing the colonial relationship through three decades in order to show that while the principal tenets of French colonialism remained constant, some small shifts in image and attitude can be situated chronologically within the evolving colonial relationship.

⁴⁰This is clearly an interesting area for further research, although it is not within the scope of this chapter to explore the question in more depth. As the introductory chapter suggested, an examination of the many colonial health manuals which were published during this period would certainly provide a valuable contribution to the understanding of the association of Indochina with sickness, disease and death.

a) Saigon: Images of Decadence and Immorality

The earliest novel of the trio under discussion is Claude Farrère's Les Civilisés, which dates from 1905. Farrère's novel, situated chronologically most closely to the narratives of conquest and pacification of the late nineteenth century, almost straddles the period between pacification and consolidation. The sub-plot of the French Navy's involvement in local territorial disputes recalls the war-faring face of French imperialism which is pitched at the end of the novel, against France's greatest imperial rival - Great Britain. These military allusions, more akin to fiction of the late nineteenth century, are contrasted with Farrère's portrait of the metropolitan community of Saigon, and concerns which were to mark later literary output. Farrère's novel, unlike Daguerches' and Groslier's, is solely centred on the urban milieu of Saigon. The location of the plot is significant in that it allows the author to concentrate on the emerging metropolitan settler community in a recently gallicised, yet still 'exotic' city. Although, as this chapter has already observed, Farrère's novel was criticised for representing an 'untruthful' portrait of the colonial milieu of Saigon, the novel nevertheless provides the contemporary reader with an insight into the ways in which Saigon and Indochina were imagined by a metropolitan author, and thus transmitted to his readership. The renown of Les Civilisés ensured that Farrère's representation of Saigon, and the image of Indochina it produced, made an important contribution to the picture of Indochina building up in the metropolitan imagination. Finally, Farrère's novel is also one which is replete with sub-textual references to metropolitan concerns of this period: decadence and degeneration. These three strands intertwine to create a complicated novel which aptly reflects the complex relationship which France was building with Indochina.

i) Paris/Saigon

Farrère's novel presents the evolution of three 'civilisés' in Saigon. Stopping over in Saigon, an officer with the *Marine française*, Fierce, rejoins his

two friends and fellow 'civilisés' - Mévil, doctor and dissolute *tombeur*, and the engineer Torral, who has renounced women in favour of young boys. The three friends view themselves as superior, subscribing to a philosophy of life which ignores all moral arbitration. They are sceptical and nihilistic. To be truly 'civilised', in their view, is to act with complete licence, eschewing all notion of 'good' and 'bad'.

The 'civilisés' operate within Saigon, which is perceived as befitting their philosophical stance, for Saigon is portrayed as a cosmopolitan city *par excellence*. According to Torral, Saigon is the 'capitale civilisée du monde, par la grâce de son climat propice et par la volonté inconsciente de toutes les races qui sont venues s'y rencontrer'⁴¹. Saigon's cosmopolitanism, not only due to the fact that the city is a melting-pot of diverse races, is linked to the fact that the city, like the three protagonists, has renounced any moral or religious affiliation:

Chacune [i.e. each race] apportait sa loi, sa religion et sa pudeur; - et il n'y avait pas deux pudeurs pareilles, ni deux lois, ni deux religions. - Un jour les peuples s'en sont aperçus. Alors ils ont éclaté de rire à la face les uns des autres; et toutes les croyances ont sauté dans cet éclat. Après, libre de frein et de joug, ils se sont mis à vivre selon la bonne formule: minimum d'effort pour maximum de jouissance. Les respect humain ne les gênait pas, parce que chacun dans sa pensée s'estimait supérieur aux autres, à cause de sa peau différemment colorée, - et vivait comme s'il avait vécu seul. Pas de voyeurs: - licence universelle, et développement normal et logique de tous les instincts qu'une convention sociale aurait endigués, détournés ou supprimés. Bref, incroyable progrès de la civilisation, et possibilité unique pour tous les gens susdits, de parvenir, seuls sur terre, au bonheur. Ils n'ont pas pu, faute d'intelligence. Nous, vivant en marge d'eux, nous y arriverons, - nous y arrivons. Il ne s'agit que de faire à son gré, sans souci de rien ni de personne, - sans souci de ces chimères malfaisantes baptisées 'bien' et 'mal' ⁴².

As the chapter on colonial urbanism pointed out, Saigon had been razed under the rule of the French Admirals in the nineteenth century, and rebuilt in the

⁴¹Farrère, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴²Ibid., p. 22.

image of a metropolitan city. Saigon was widely viewed as the Paris of the Far-East (as many of the quotations from school manuals reflect⁴³). More than any other Indochinese city, Saigon, with its café society, its wide avenues, racecourse and theatre could be viewed and accepted as simply an extension of *la patrie*. Saigon was the epitome of *l'Asie française* - a gallicised version of an Asian city. It might be argued therefore, that Saigon represented immorality precisely because the city had become a replica of Paris, that renowned city-prostitute. In this sense, the location of the plot in Saigon may appear almost irrelevant. The city of Saigon serves as a backdrop to the action of the metropolitan characters, who are the prime focus of the novel, and functions as a displaced version of Paris. Likewise the motivations of these characters reside in the concerns of a *Belle-Epoque* metropolitan mentality, rather than in an engagement with Asian culture.

Throughout the novel however, Farrère plays down this comparison by contrasting the 'exotic' amorality of Saigon and the lives of his protagonists, with the hypocrisy and perceived prudery of Western mores:

La débauche parisienne n'a pas grand-chose à envier à la débauche exotique, quand au fond; mais elle s'embarrasse hypocritement de volets clos et de lampes baissées. Ailleurs, les gestes voluptueux n'ont point peur du soleil⁴⁴.

Farrère thus presents Saigon society as embodying a kind of ontological authenticity. Saigon allows for a more overt adoption of habits which were covertly accepted but outwardly vilified in the metropole. Farrère's 'civilised'

⁴³See for example, Josset, E., A Travers nos colonies: livre de lectures sur l'histoire, la géographie, les sciences et la morale (Cours moyen et supérieur), (Paris: Armand Colin, 1901): "-Est-ce que Saigon ressemble vraiment à Paris ? demanda Louis, nous n'y sommes établis pourtant que depuis 1859."; "-C'est vrai. On ne peut songer sans admiration au petit nombre d'années qu'il a fallu à la France pour faire d'une ville malsaine, aux canaux marécageux, une cité élégante, aux riches édifices, aux rues larges, aérées, bien ombragées", p. 262.

⁴⁴Farrère, op. cit., p. 39.

doctrine does not however amount to a critique of Western civilisation as a whole, as it does not constitute an appeal for the adoption of Eastern philosophies and habits. Furthermore, Saigon, as 'capitale du monde civilisé', extends the dilemma beyond simply binary judgements. Like Saigon, a melting-pot of races and cultures, the 'formule civilisée' arbitrarily embraces a variety of cultural references in its search for atavistic fulfillment.

ii) Bourgeois Morality/Moral Licence

These comparisons, between Paris and Saigon, East and West, are extended to a discussion of morality which permeates the novel. Farrère's novel has been viewed as an early parody of Loti's 'landing, loving, leaving' narrative model. Fierce falls in love, not with an indigenous woman however, but with an aristocratic metropolitan woman. Sélysette's discovery of his debauched lifestyle leads to her breaking off their engagement. He dies in battle aboard his ship, with her name on his lips. This *dénouement*, coupled with the ignominious death of Mévil and the cowardice of Torral, has led critics to consider Les Civilisés as a moral tale⁴⁵. Farrère however, clearly views Indochina through the lens of *fin-de-siècle* preoccupations with decadence and degeneracy.

The novel reveals a morbid obsession with sexual proclivity and perceived sexual deviance as if to provoke the reader's prurient curiosity. Rape, homosexuality, prostitution, drug abuse, and alcoholism are all placed under the spotlight in this novel, which opens with a description of Mévil fondling the breasts of an indigenous concubine. Fierce, the marine officer, a sea-faring adventurer who has travelled widely, is also however, the sexual adventurer, seeking new carnal sensations and experiences in each new country he visits. Indochina, the metropole's most recently captured 'virgin' territory, is symbolised,

⁴⁵See Siary, G., "Immoralités comparées, l'Indochine dans Les Civilisés et La Bataille de Claude Farrère", pp. 97-110, in Hue, B., op. cit.

for Fierce, in his possession of the body of a thirteen year old native girl. The analogy between the conquest of a colonial territory and sexual possession is reinforced when towards the end of the novel, Fierce rapes a local woman whilst on military manoeuvres. This narratological voyeurism appeals strongly to the powers of interdiction and attraction. The fears and obsessions of the metropole are displaced onto Saigon, which acts as a repository for repressed sexual desires and fears. Farrère thus feeds a metropolitan *Belle-Epoque* desire to witness, but from a safe distance. The distancing effect produced is two-fold: both the narrator and the very distance of Indochina from the metropole are interposed between the metropolitan readership and the events and actions which are narrated in the novel.

The image Farrère thus presents of Saigon, and by extension Indochina, is one which combines prurient disapproval and fascination, interest and dismay, desire and disgust. Both a critique of bourgeois morality, and a tale in which its alternative, sexual and moral licence, visibly fails, Farrère's novel reflects the ambivalence of a metropolitan society attempting to define its moral position both at home, and in the new arena of the colony.

iii) Civilisation

Farrère's novel functions on yet another level, in its play on the notion of 'civilisation', and its intersection with the aims of colonialism. This play on the notion of 'civilisation', which is present in the novel's very title, immediately recalls the nation's colonial *mission civilisatrice*. Farrère's 'civilisés' represent however the antithesis of the 'civilising' values which imperial France hoped to both embody and to export to the colonies. Saigon, as the 'capitale civilisée' is dissolute and therefore worthy of the 'civilisés'. But Saigon is also *civilisée* in that the city is gallicised and cosmopolitan, a mirror of Paris, and the capital of France's *Perle de l'Extrême-Orient*.

This duality is also expressed in the narrator's ambivalence towards colonial society in Saigon. For instance, while in Daguerches' and Groslier's novels, the metropolitan community is berated for its recent slide into immorality, superficiality and colonial ineptitude, in Farrère's these 'qualities' are regarded more sanguinely, and at times almost celebrated. Saigon's population is described as a

prodigieux pêle-mêle d'honnêtes gens et de gens qui ne l'étaient pas, - ceux-ci plus nombreux: car les colonies françaises sont proprement un champ d'épandage pour tout ce que la métropole crache et expulse d'excréments et de pourritures. - Il y avait là une infinité d'hommes équivoques, que le code pénal, toile d'araignée trop lâche, n'avait pas su retenir dans ses mailles: des banqueroutiers, des aventuriers, des maîtres chanteurs, des maris habiles, et quelques espions; - il y avait une foule de femmes mieux que faciles, qui toutes savaient se débaucher copieusement, par cent moyens dont le plus vertueux était l'adultère. - Dans ce cloaque, les rares probités, les rares pudeurs faisaient tâche. - Et quoique cette honte fût connue, étalée, affichée, on l'acceptait; on l'accueillait. Les mains propres, sans dégoût, serraient les mains sales. - Loin de l'Europe, l'Européen, roi de toute la terre, aime à s'affirmer au-dessus des lois et des morales, et à les violer orgueilleusement. La vie secrète de Paris ou de Londres est peut-être plus répugnante que la vie de Saigon; mais elle est secrète; c'est une vie à volets clos. Les tares coloniales n'ont pas peur du soleil⁴⁶.

The narrator's tone is less moralising than that of Daguerches and Groslier. He revels in Saigon's dissoluteness. Indeed, he romanticises the perceived criminal nature of the metropolitan population. Furthermore while Farrère's fictional Governor General reflects a dominant strand of colonial thought when he refers to the 'inferior' quality of colonial settlers in Indochina:

...aux yeux unanimes de la nation française, les colonies ont la réputation d'être la dernière ressource et le suprême asile des déclassés de toutes les classes et des repris de toutes justices⁴⁷.

⁴⁶Farrère, op. cit., p. 126.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 62.

He believes however, that from this 'fumier humain' a new 'civilisation' will be born:

Sur des terres coloniales fraîchement retournées et labourées par le piétinement de toutes les races qui s'y heurtent, il vaut peut-être mieux qu'un fumier humain soit jeté, pour que, de la décomposition purulente des vieilles idées et des vieilles morales, naisse la maison des civilisations futures⁴⁸.

From this cauldron of corruption, venality and degradation, Farrère's Governor asserts, will emerge a rejuvenated and superior 'civilisation': the formation of a new elite. Through Farrère's Governor General, colonialism is presented as an elitist project; an endeavour to reassert aristocratic values⁴⁹. Indeed, Farrère's novel, early in the cycle, emphasises the novelty and potential of France's South-East Asian possession. The notion of a new civilisation springing from the 'fumier' of the mainland alludes at once to the decadence of *Belle-Epoque* France, and to the new hopes embodied in the French Empire. Indochina was a new area of influence, a virgin territory on which to create a new society. Farrère's novel can thus be viewed as expressing the excitement of Empire during the early years of consolidation.

b) Images of the metropolitan male settler and the role of French colonialism in Indochina - *Le Colon bâtisseur*

In the novels by both Groslier and Daguerches, their male protagonists conform to the stereotype of *colon bâtisseur*. The male colonial settler or administrator who is, above all, concerned with the implementation in the colony of the metropolitan ideals of progress, development and technology. In Groslier's novel, Rollin is the chief engineer of the construction of a new bridge in

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 63-4.

⁴⁹The notions of elitism and aristocracy recur in later works which are critical of French colonial action in Indochina, and will be treated in the final chapter of this thesis.

Cambodia; Bertrand is a plantation owner. Both characters embody the stated aims of the French doctrine of *mise en valeur*. Their role in the colonies is focused upon the improvement of the colony, the turning of its natural resources to economic advantage, ensuring the endowment of French technology and science to the colony.

This concern with the tangible economic and technological advantages of French colonialism is articulated most clearly in Daguerches' novel, whose date of publication correlates most closely with the period of construction and *mise en valeur* in Indochina. As its very title suggests, Le Kilomètre 83 is a novel which dramatises the process of building a section of railway. The buildings and edifices that Daguerches' engineers construct serve throughout the novel as a metaphor for French colonial action in Indochina. The construction of the section of railway serves as an example of the beneficial effect of French colonialism⁵⁰: the new railway line serves as a visible symbol of the French colonial *oeuvre*, which glorifies modernity and the modern metropolitan nation, and also benefits the subject peoples.

Through two of his principal protagonists Daguerches presents two different views of the railway and two views on French colonialism in Indochina. Firstly, through Tourange, Daguerches presents the view of a colonial pragmatist:

Quand vous me dites: "Toute la Cochinchine est à fond de boue", je réponds: "Ce qui m'intéresse, c'est que, dans cette boue, on ait pu porter des ponts !" Quand vous me dites: "Les Vanelli et consorts sont des forbans et des fourbes", je réplique: "J'admire, moi, que ce ne soient pas seulement la cupidité, l'orgueil, la

⁵⁰This is an extremely popular image of French colonialism throughout the French Empire. Betts quotes Gabriel Hanoteaux, for instance, who suggested that the railway station was more valuable than the fort in the process of colonisation, see Betts, R., Tricouleur: the French Overseas Empire (London: Gordon and Cremonesi, 1978), p. 29. See also chapter six of this thesis for a further exploration of this topic.

luxure, mais encore l'intelligence, la hardiesse, la domination, qui fassent glu pour prendre ces rapaces à leurs propres oeuvres !⁵¹.

Tourange is indeed an archetypal moderniser. The methods by which the desired 'progress' is achieved are secondary to him. What is important, for Touranges, is that this progress be accomplished. So scientific knowledge goes hand in hand with political knowledge and control in Daguerches' novel, in which the *Ecole française d'Extrême-orient*⁵² is fictionalised and allows for Daguerches to draw upon the part played by the collection and accumulation of material to form archival databases in the consolidation of the Indochinese Empire. M. de Faulwitz finds his money-spinning idea of following an ancient Khmer route for the railway through consulting the *Revue de l'Ecole française*. Academia and scholarship thus inform and facilitate the political and economical imperatives and desires of colonialism.

The colony is represented in Daguerches' novel, as elsewhere, as a domain for male action *par excellence*:

Nous avons eu besoin ni des femmes, ni des aïeux, ni des dieux !⁵³

This arrogant opinion prefigures the perceived virtue of 'virilité' evoked in much 'official' rhetoric of the 1930s concerning the role and status of male metropolitan *colons* in Indochina. Here, however, the male settler is omnipotent, above even the gods in his power and authority within the colony⁵⁴. Furthermore, Moutier appears to speak for a generation of male European settlers when he states:

⁵¹Daguerches, op. cit., p. 173.

⁵²The EFEO was established in Hanoi in 1898. Further sites were later created in Cambodia and throughout Vietnam.

⁵³Daguerches, op. cit., p. 128.

⁵⁴Indeed, later, critical, texts were to refer to these all-powerful metropolitans as 'Dieux blancs'. See, for example, Luc Durtain's *Dieux blancs, hommes jaunes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

Et nous sommes satisfaits, notre conscience est en repos, si nous l'avons au moins consacré, ce labeur d'une vie, à quelque chose qui dépasse la vie humaine !⁵⁵.

This view recalls the objectives of the grandiose rebuilding plans intended for Indochina, and reflects the progressivist view of colonialism expressed well into the late 1930s. Visual manifestations of national prestige and superiority are deemed an adequate recompense for a life's work. Once the section of railway has been finished, Tourange contemplates it with a mixture of personal, racial and national pride:

J'écoutais chanter avec orgueil, la force de mon sang, la force de ma race !⁵⁶.

Colonialism, or more specifically, the physical by-products of colonial government, become the legacy of a generation. A stamp of permanence on a foreign soil (a railway line, a monument, an impressive building) becomes the enduring headstone of the male settler.

In contrast with Farrère, whose protagonists are largely passive, the ideal of the male metropolitan settler depicted in Daguerches' novel is replete with masculine 'virtues': he is enterprising, active, energetic, persistent and devoted to science and progress. The work of Daguerches' engineers is likened to that of soldiers, and the time spent in the building of the kilomètre 83, to that of the duration of a war⁵⁷. Thus the *oeuvre* of French colonialism is celebrated as an heroically masculine pursuit, a 'peaceful battle' as Lyautey was later to term France's colonial action⁵⁸, but glorious in its accomplishment.

⁵⁵Daguerches, op. cit., pp. 213-4.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 317.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 303.

⁵⁸At the *Exposition coloniale* of 1931 Lyautey referred to France's imperial objectives in the following terms: "Il reste encore sur la terre de vastes champs à défricher, de pacifiques batailles à livrer à la misère, à l'ignorance, à toutes les forces mauvaises de la nature. En montrant l'immense labeur déjà accompli par les nations colonisatrices, l'Exposition montrera par surcroît, qu'il reste beaucoup

The tendency towards phallic descriptions of the railway line, which accompany Tourange's outburst of pride, complete the picture of an exclusively male domain:

C'était droit, net, d'un trait, comme notre volonté tendue, comme les lignes de nos épures. C'était plat comme une table, et cela portait tout le bouquet resplendissant du ciel. Et je savais que c'était solide, durable, pas en toc (...) j'étais content, c'était notre oeuvre⁵⁹.

The concern of the male protagonists of *Daguerches*, and more particularly, Groslier's novel, appears to be the preservation of this phallogentric version of metropolitan society and its role in Indochina. Where metropolitan women are depicted, their presence is described as compromising the authenticity of French colonial society in Indochina, and the authority of its male masters. The following section will review the representation of the female metropolitan community in order to critique this image of the perceived exclusively male domain of Indochina.

c) The Metropolitan Woman

Groslier's novel of 1928, just following the influx of European women to Indochina, and the consequent transformation of the settler community, places more emphasis than the previous novels on the reactions of his female characters to life in the colonies. Much of his main protagonist's attitude towards the female European community in Indochina is coloured by his desire for acculturation and his increasingly exclusive affection for the indigenous population. Rollin thus negatively contrasts the elegance and sophistication of European women with the simplicity of indigenous women. His descriptions of a colonial ball focus upon the clothes and make-up of these metropolitan women:

à faire", quoted by Dagens, B., *Angkor la forêt de pierre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), p.110.

⁵⁹Daguerches, op. cit., pp. 304-5.

Voyant tourner ces femmes excitées qui gâchaient leurs charmes par leurs trémoussements, ces faces défardées par la transpiration, il évoqua irrésistiblement la mesure, la pudeur, la discrétion des belles indigènes qu'il connaissait, timides, concentrées et baissant leurs yeux de biches⁶⁰.

This emphasis on the 'veiling' of the female body is clearly linked to Groslier's discourse of 'the natural'. Adornment is seen as undesirable and unnatural, symbolising the artificiality and inauthenticity of Western women.

Simone Bertrand on the other hand presents the reader with Groslier's idealised view of how a metropolitan woman should behave in the colonies⁶¹. Simone ('Pomme') is lively, gay, practical and efficient. The uncomplaining, supportive wife of Pierre, Pomme Bertrand is a model of physical and moral support to her husband. Groslier delivers a prescriptive, masculine view, bordering on fantasy: Simone is 'rieuse', 'très ordonnée et courageuse'⁶²,

Elle conduisit sa maison d'une main solide, collaborait aux travaux de son mari, chassait en brousse et cent hectares nets de la plantation aussi bien tenus que les autres, dépendaient de sa seule autorité. Elle soignait elle-même les coolies malades, ou, de sa cravache, le dos du caporal indocile. Elle ne quittait le bal que morte de fatigue, mais n'employait à recevoir les gens en leur offrant des petits fours que le temps qu'elle voulait. N'oublions pas qu'en cinq ans, elle avait donné à Pierre deux garçons nourris par elle⁶³.

Mme. Bertrand adopts masculine pursuits and traits in order to be accepted into the masculinised economy which prevails in the colony. Pomme Bertrand disciplines her workers, works on the plantation, moves with ease within the

⁶⁰Groslier, op. cit., p. 154.

⁶¹Groslier's description also mirrors the prescriptions of 'official' sources concerning the role and behaviour of metropolitan women in the colonies, which is discussed in the chapter on travel journalism. See Le rôle et la situation de la famille française dans nos colonies (Paris: Editions du Journal des Coloniaux et l'Armée coloniale réunis, 1927).

⁶²Groslier, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 20-1.

colonial society⁶⁴. The defining mark of womanhood - her ability to give birth to children - is added almost as an afterthought in the narrator's descriptions of her, and is never again alluded to throughout the course of the novel. Regarded by her husband and his peers as an honorary male, Pomme Bertrand is unthreatening precisely because she is denied her femininity.

By way of contrast, Raymonde Rollin, unwilling and unable to adapt to her new life in the colony is clearly positioned as the 'bad wife', the 'narrow-minded *colon*'. Unlike Simone Bertrand, Mme. Rollin attracts the disapproval and antagonism of the male society partly as a result of her manifestly female characteristics: her clothes, make-up, social activities and thoughts. She becomes bored once in Indochina; and longs to return to France, certain that she lives 'en pays ennemi'⁶⁵, and that her life is an 'affreux exil (...) loin de tout confort'⁶⁶.

This type of European woman in Indochina appears, in this novel, to escape the control and authority of their male counterparts. Mme. Rollin, in contrast with Mme. Bertrand, refuses to participate in the economy of masculinised values which predominate in Indochina. She is therefore presented as disturbing the prevailing order of male colonial society in Indochina, and by extension, subverting France's imperial mission. In escaping the control of her husband (and hence male society as a whole), she endangers the position of male dominance in the colony, and must therefore be punished. Her punishment consists of sexual betrayal by her husband and banishment from the colony. Although her departure from Indochina is presented as a choice, it is nonetheless clear that Mme Bertrand can no more remain in the colony than she can regain the affections of her husband. Public humiliation (the revelation that her husband has left her for an indigenous woman), and the removal of her role in the colony (for

⁶⁴This image of the 'honorary male' female settler was reiterated in the androgynous figure of Eliane in Régis Wargnier's 1991 film *Indochine*.

⁶⁵Groslier, op. cit., p. 26.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 15.

what are metropolitan women allowed to do other than support their husbands ?) force her to leave. It is interesting that the vehicle through which Mme. Rollin is punished is an indigenous woman. Not only does this gesture commodify women but in this instance it draws into focus the importance of racial hierarchies. If Mme. Rollin had lost her husband to a metropolitan woman, her public shame would have been far less acutely felt.

If, as the following section will assert, Indochina is widely viewed as a feminised territory, and if, as this section has suggested, metropolitan women are frequently viewed as escaping male control, by extension Indochina is equally in danger of escaping from the authority of the male European settler. These representations thus recall the earlier signs of the uneasy conscience of the coloniser. Once the colony is sufficiently Europeanised, it is feared that the indigenous populations will assert themselves. This fear is articulated in the emphasis on male preferences for simplicity (the country, the *con gai*, the customs). It is also reflected in the veiled assimilatory desires of metropolitan administrations in Indochina. Ironically this fear was proved to be well-founded in the case of Indochina. Growing nationalist movements were fuelled by metropolitan philosophy, informed by the revolutionary and republican ideologies of France.⁶⁷

d) Gendered Representations of Indochina

Although the French nation and the Republic are usually associated with female icons, the gendering of France in relation to Indochina is more problematic and liable to change. France is most usually associated, within her own boundaries at least, with female icons and emblems: *Marianne*, *la Semeuse*, and *la Moissonneuse*. France is often perceived as the wife, the lover, or the widow.

⁶⁷These fears were also expressed in metropolitan reluctance to allow indigenous students to study in France, and by their insistence on censoring French publications entering the colony, particularly texts by Rousseau.

France's gender-nation identification appears, at first glance, to be reversed in relation to the colonies. Many commentators, both past and present, have referred to the Franco-indochinese relationship as a marriage or a love-affair⁶⁸. The later independence of Indochina from metropolitan France is similarly described in marital terms: as Hué puts it, 'le divorce à Genève'⁶⁹. In this Franco-indochinese 'marriage', the metropole is clearly positioned in the male role, and Indochina takes on the female gender identification. However, the issue is further complicated by the alternate and sometimes concomitant interplay of gendered metaphors of France, first as protective mother figure towards her adopted 'children', the colonies; and second as a patriarchal and authoritative father figure. This ambiguity is epitomised by the term 'la mère patrie'.

In Farrère's novel, chronologically nearer to the male-dominated 'adventure' stories of the nineteenth century portrayals of Indochina than Groslier or Daguerches, Indochina still retains the allure of a 'virgin' territory. Farrère's character, Fierce, is a sea-faring adventurer, but he is also a sexual adventurer, seeking new delights and sensations in the Indochinese capital, which is laid before him to be taken and ravished. The analogy between the conquest of a colonial territory and rape is alluded to in Fierce's violation of an indigenous woman while on a military mission. The further allusion to Saigon as a 'marché aux femmes'⁷⁰, emphasises the that women were viewed as the 'booty' of the conqueror.

⁶⁸Admiral Bonard observed on the signing of the treaty of 1862 which accorded France territories in Cochinchina: "La cession des provinces que le souverain d'Annam a faite à Sa Majesté Impériale est comme un mariage où la jeune fille accordée à son fiancé, tout en devant obéissance à celui-ci, ne renie pas pour cela son père. L'épouse bien traitée par celui qui la protège et veille à ses besoins perd bientôt toute appréhension et, sans oublier ses parents, finit par aimer son mari". Quoted by Franchini, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7.

⁶⁹Hué, B., "La Noce indochinoise", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁷⁰Farrère, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

In Daguerches' novel, metropolitan France is first positioned in the parental role of educator, bringing up the Indochinese child, ensuring her development, and *épanouissement*. These concepts are all in keeping with the stated aim of *mise en valeur* enshrined in official French colonial discourse. The child however, is approaching adolescence, and thus beginning to elude the control of the parent country. In a conversation between M. de Sibaldi and Tourange, Saigon is referred to 'une belle fille qui grandit vite'⁷¹. Metropolitan France is positioned as a paternal figure, threatened by the blooming sexuality of this young woman:

Et maintenant la voilà femme, avec tout son visage riant et chaleureux, et sa grande respiration tranquille, et son activité harmonieuse, et ses nonchalances éternelles de ses siestes...La voilà femme, et qui surprend et déroute !⁷².

Saigon is escaping the paternal grasp of her metropolitan parent and becoming independent. France, as parent, created Saigon, but now laments her coming of age:

Et vous, vous qui, jour à jour, heure à heure, avez suivi la transformation, vous qui croyiez connaître le moindre de ses désirs, de ses besoins, de ses rêves, chaque soir, lorsqu'elle s'endort, vous frémissez, en la contemplant, devant un mystère qui vous dépasse...Et il ne vous reste qu'à vous redire, les dents serrées: c'est nous, nous, nous les hommes venus de France, qui avons fait cela tout de même ! qui avons fait cela tout seuls !⁷³.

This sexualised and feminised portrayal of Indochina is extended beyond the paternalistic view of a young woman reaching adulthood, as the country becomes analagous with a seductive temptress:

N'est-ce pas qu'elle est belle ? Ah ! je me garde de convier à sa contemplation ces impuissants qui jugent d'une cité par ses monuments, comme d'une femme par le dénombrement de ses bijoux; dont le cerveau réclame pour s'émouvoir, les relents d'un

⁷¹Daguerches, op. cit., p. 113.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 113-4.

passé fameux, la fascination d'un musée plus gorgé de souvenirs qu'un oeil de vieille courtisane⁷⁴.

Saigon, the showcase city of France's 'perle de l'Extrême-orient', needs no decoration in order to seduce. This at first appears to be a criticism of the ways in which the metropole had attempted to 'adorn' Indochina with opulent buildings and impressive monuments. However, it is precisely the 'adolescence' of this city which is so exciting to these 'papas maladroits'⁷⁵. In contrast with Farrère's depiction of Saigon, here, unlike Paris, that emblem of the city-prostitute, Saigon is still virginal and wholesome, untainted, and all the more alluring for her naivety. If Indochina is conceived as a sexually alluring adolescent, then France, as a doting, yet sexually-threatening father, occupies a parasitic, voyeuristic role. This unacknowledged positioning is further reflected in the fear of losing possession of Indochina:

- je sais que ce à quoi j'assiste n'est que l'éclatement, le rayonnement, l'épanchement de sa vie, à elle. Je sais qu'elle peut rire de ses vieux tuteurs, qui ne se demandent plus, eux, qu'un honneur: celui de mieux se souvenir de ce qu'il a fallu de soins autour de son berceau ! Non, Monsieur, elle n'a plus besoin de nous, elle se défend toute seule⁷⁶.

This final quotation articulates the regret, nostalgia and unease of an ageing, and increasingly impotent, paternal metropolitan position in Indochina.

e) "Indigenisation": the Acculturation of Western Man and the Attractions of the Colony

Linked to the gendering of Indochina, in that it relies heavily upon the theme of seduction, is the image of Western man and acculturation. The ultimate manifestation of acculturation is 'going native' or 'indigenisation'. Indigenisation

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 114.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 116.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 117.

pushes to the extreme one of the fundamental premises of exoticism - departure and rejection of the homeland. Indigenisation amounts to the extension and exacerbation of the dissatisfaction with the Western world, and a movement towards its Other.

In Daguerches' novel, acculturation is viewed negatively. In the following passage the differences between metropolitan and indigenous ways of life are emblematised through the use of contrasting women, gods, architecture etc:

C'est un ancien sous-officier d'infanterie colonial. Le soleil et les pluies d'Indochine ont repétri son argile, lui ont fait faire prise définitivement avec ce sol adoptif. Il a une épouse indigène, une trôlée de gnôts que, sur le seuil de sa case de bambous, emplissent de riz leurs ventres nus. Il a totalement oublié, j'en ai la conviction, l'ardoise fine de son clocher natal, quelque part là-bas, en Touraine ou en Picardie, et les filles aux yeux clairs penchées sur les javelles. Et je suis sûr que lui aussi, l'heure venue, saura mourir doucement dans le giron chaud de la forêt, tandis que les tam-tams charitables écarteront de sa tête les mauvais Génies et que là-haut, par-dessus les dernières palmes pâles, miroitera un ciel étrange, corail et soufre, comme ce soir⁷⁷.

This representation of indigenisation is tinged with disapproval. The indigenous wife and children are referred to dismissively, and using mixture of slang and gallicised Vietnamese. The contrast between the 'fine' spires of his native France, and the poor bamboo, invokes a cultural hierarchy which further castigates the practice of inter-race relationships.

Indeed, indigenisation, 'going native', is regarded with shame in Daguerches' novel. As M. de Sibaldi notes:

- O honte, hélas ! Quelques-uns des nôtres, comment le nier ? ont succombé à la tentation...⁷⁸.

For Sibaldi however, indigenisation is equated with renouncing one's racial superiority, abdicating one's duty, and succumbing to vice and lust:

⁷⁷Groslier, op. cit., p. 140.

⁷⁸Daguerches, op. cit., p. 125.

Ils ont abdiqué la maîtrise et la race...Ils se sont couchés aux pieds de l'Asie, de cette idole obèse et prometteuse de luxure. Cela c'est la pire ignominie...⁷⁹.

This view is diametrically opposed to that of Groslier, and articulates a view of an immoral Indochina which is reminiscent of Farrère's portrayal of Saigonese decadence and licence.

Whilst Groslier laments the inability of his female protagonist to forget France, to rid herself of her nostalgia for her metropolitan life, and presents the indigenisation of his male protagonist as a laudable manner in which to adapt to, to know and to understand Indochina, Daguerches, on the other hand, prefers that very nostalgia to what he perceives as ignominy and betrayal.

Groslier's Le Retour à l'argile addresses the perennial problems of feeling either attraction to the country of 'exile', or an overbearing desire to return to the metropole. In his portrayal of the Rollin couple, Groslier depicts the extreme poles of these common metropolitan reactions: indigenisation and repulsion. In a classically 'exoticist' sense, Groslier's novel can be viewed as the philosophical critique of Western civilisation. The gradual identificatory process of the 'exiled' metropolitan with his newly-adopted country is presented through the character of Claude Rollin. As Laude has noted:

Le personnage de Rollin prend, tout au long du roman, une conscience de plus en plus nette de la distance qui le sépare de sa société d'origine, incarnée par sa femme, et approfondit au contraire par sa communion avec la société traditionnelle cambodgienne ⁸⁰.

Rollin's need for contact with other Europeans slowly diminishes, and he severs more and more ties with the Western world. Rollin rids himself little by little of his 'European' possessions. He begins to display a critical attitude towards European customs:

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Laude, op. cit., p. 79.

Au cours d'un grand bal officiel, ce recueillement, ce détachement se renforcèrent encore, car déjà ils avaient armé en lui une susceptibilité plus aiguë. Des toilettes prétentieuses collant à la peau en sueur, les contorsions de certains couples et d'impudiques contacts, l'afféterie ou le vide de la plupart des conversations, l'origine médiocre de quelques hauts bonnets, cette animation factice, les conventions impératives qui forçaient la plupart de ces gens à assister à ce bal - le stupéfaient⁸¹.

Here Rollin is beginning to view Western mores as superficial, even artificial. Against the background of traditional Cambodian society, Rollin becomes more and more aware of what he perceives to be the 'méfaits' of modern Western civilisation, which denature man, and cut him off from his 'natural' environment. This process of acculturation begins with feelings of *déracinement*, and moves gradually by stages to full indigenisation:

Parce qu'il voit autour de lui tant de fécondité, la paix du peuple, la bienveillance des doctrines, des mœurs simples, une civilisation immobile et satisfaite, il se demande dans une inquiétude progressive si notre progrès ne lui apparaîtrait pas, vu d'ici, comme une influence détestable; si ce n'est pas ce progrès, uniquement lui, qui par son confort, son luxe, ses perfectionnements, sa puissance désagréante aurait dépouillé Raymonde de ses vertus féminines et de la confiance en l'avenir qui l'eussent conduite ici, vaillante. Il se demande si lui, les excès et la fièvre de ce progrès, ne l'auraient pas rendu avide d'isolement et de simplicité, au point de fausser son jugement et de lui faire prendre, en ces lieux, une immobilité misérable et de l'impuissance pour du calme et de la contemplation⁸².

The view which Groslier presents through Claude Rollin is a profoundly anti-modernist one. Indeed the emphasis on isolation, calm, contemplation and simplicity are reminiscent of Romantic narratives of the nineteenth century. Throughout the novel, metropolitan commercialism, and materialism are contrasted with indigenous simplicity and peace. In spite of the presentation of metropolitan modernisation in Cambodia as 'détestable', Groslier is not promoting

⁸¹Groslier, op. cit., pp. 153-4.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 50-1.

an anti-colonial argument. He displays a nostalgia for pre-capitalist society which leads him to question 'progress' as a desirable goal:

Nous nous décivilisons en nous livrant au progrès⁸³.

This turn away from his profession and society are linked once more with a quest for the natural:

Les premiers pas de notre progrès ont commencé à nous éloigner de la nature, contrairement à notre essence qui est de nous y mêler⁸⁴.

Although, during the process of his acculturation, Rollin becomes critical of colonial society in Indochina, his criticisms remain circumscribed by the belief that colonialism has simply evolved in the 'wrong' direction:

Claude jugeait la société coloniale sans cohésion spirituelle. Elle ne se reconnaît pas de chefs, car le fonctionnarisme les lui impose. Les populations conquises qui l'entourent dans la servitude, la gonflent de vanité en lui servant de piédestal: un adjudant ou un douanier devient un haut seigneur entouré de mille coolies⁸⁵.

Thus although Groslier's characters begin to express a growing uncertainty or unease vis-à-vis one the principal tenets of the French colonial doctrine - the ideal of progress - they nevertheless stop short of questioning the fundamental right of France to perpetuate colonial rule in Indochina.

Seduction plays a major part in the process of acculturation. 'Ah ! ce pays me séduit⁸⁶', exclaims Rollin. Cambodia's seductive qualities entail the gender positioning of the colony as female, and a substantial part of the country's seductive power resides in the charm of her native women. The indigenous women of these novels are regarded as 'initiatrices du héros', 'lui permettant de

⁸³Ibid., p. 199.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 200.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 156.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 52.

découvrir "l'âme" de leur pays⁸⁷. A crucial feature of many colonial narratives, the indigenous woman figures not only as one of the colony's seductive aspects however, in many senses she represents the colony itself.

Many colonial narratives follow the 'landing, loving, leaving' pattern, which forms the backbone of the plot and drives the narrative forward. A metropolitan male arrives in the colony, falls in love with an indigenous woman, then leaves her behind on his return to the metropole. Pierre Loti⁸⁸ is generally regarded as the master of this type of thematic and structural stereotype. Amorous relationships between indigenous women and white metropolitan males are a significant feature of many fictional works concerning the colonies, and Indochina is no exception⁸⁹. The early portrayal of tropical climes as territories in which the European male could experience free and abundant sexual relations with indigenous women proved an enduring fascination for metropolitan France. Diderot's Tahitian women established a literary topos which would be seized upon by many metropolitan writers fictionalising the colonial experience. This type of image was perpetuated by travel writing of the nineteenth century, and as Goutalier and Knibiehler note,

l'Occidental pouvait donc croire que les pays d'outre-mer lui offriraient en abondance des femmes aimables, amoureuses, et toutes nues. Le mythe de la bonne sauvage transformait d'avance toutes les colonies en paradis du sexe.⁹⁰

⁸⁷Moura, op. cit., p. 104. Moura views this stereotype as originating with Loti.

⁸⁸Loti is not analysed in detail in this study as his novels predate the period of consolidation under discussion. There are several studies of the colonial novel which focus on the work of Pierre Loti, including Hargreaves and Loutfi, op. cit.

⁸⁹Moura suggests that Salomé might be the prototype for this sort of representation, and notes that the literary use of the sensual indigenous woman progressively became a stereotype from the early nineteenth century onwards, 'où elle constitue l'un des grands attrait du voyage en Orient (de Nerval à Flaubert ou Loti)', p. 104.

⁹⁰Goutalier, R., and Knibiehler, Y., La Femme au temps des colonies (Paris: Stock, 1985), p. 29.

The theme became so popular, however, that it becomes difficult to distinguish between one colony and another in this type of work: 'l'exotisme y masque la diversité des cultures'⁹¹. The site itself becomes irrelevant to these writers, and the differentiation between nationalities of the female characters even more so.

The portrayal of a cross-cultural sexual liaison added an extra frisson to the fictionalisation of the metropolitan experience of the overseas possession⁹². The indigenous woman was portrayed as one of the prizes or rewards due to the colonising male: in a symbolic sense, she represented the possession of the conquered country. Nevertheless, fictional works tended to ignore the colonial dynamic of the relationship, as Knibiehler and Goutalier have noted:

La femme indigène, lorsqu'elle accepte un partenaire occidental, est supposée céder ou consentir par amour, ou par vice, ou par vénalité. En réalité, dans la plupart des cas, elle n'a guère le choix, mais les contraintes qu'elle subit sont laissées dans l'ombre et le rapport des forces n'entre pas en ligne de compte⁹³.

Indeed, many of these liaisons were discussed in terms of commodity/consumer relationship. Lefèvre notes of the metropolitan males who remained but a short period in Indochina:

Le colon s'offrait une jeune 'Annamite', moyennant des avantages matériels, argent et cadeaux⁹⁴.

Lefèvre notes that even the least attractive, and lowliest of metropolitan males could be assured of 'getting' his indigenous lover, and quotes Jean-Pierre, a

⁹¹Ibid., p. 37.

⁹²Book covers reflect this voyeuristic tendency. See illustrations in Goutalier and Knibiehler, op. cit..

⁹³Ibid., p. 37.

⁹⁴Lefèvre, K., "Eves jaunes et colons blancs", pp. 111-119, in Franchini, P., (ed), Saigon 1925-45: de la 'Belle Colonie' à l'éclosion révolutionnaire ou la fin des dieux blancs (Paris: Les Editions Autrement/série mémoires, no. 17, 1992), p. 111.

character from Henry Casseville's novel Sao, l'amoureuse tranquille⁹⁵, to prove the point:

(...) Je sais que j'ai une sale gueule, on ne me l'a pas caché. Jamais chez nous une femme ne m'a montré de la tendresse, je ne parle pas d'amour ! Si, une peut-être, celle qui m'a dépucelé, mais elle avait cinquante ans et je ne l'ai jamais revue. Alors voilà. Cette *con gai* que je connais depuis deux jours, elle ne m'aime pas évidemment, mais elle a été tendre avec moi... Elle m'a donné du bonheur, comprends-tu, du bonheur ! Est-ce que je retrouverai ça ailleurs ?⁹⁶

The indigenous woman is thus presented as an easy conquest: she is mythologised as more compliant, and less discerning than her European counterparts, more interested in the financial rewards of being associated with a metropolitan male than with questions of love. The presentation of the ease with which metropolitan males can engage in sexual liaisons with indigenous women completes the male fantasy of Indochina. A territory in which he is undisputed monarch (governmentally, administratively), a territory in which he can exercise his fantasies of heroism and adventure, a territory in which his sexual desires are easily satisfied, the colony becomes a male utopic fantasy.

Indochina gave rise to its own mythologised version of the compliant sexual conquest: 'l'Eve asiatique', the *con gai*⁹⁷, who is a frequent feature of the literature under discussion in this chapter⁹⁸. The stereotype of the *con gai* is most fully and succinctly elaborated in a popular colonial song of the period, "Petite

⁹⁵Casseville, H., Sao, l'Amoureuse tranquille (Paris: G. Cres, 1928).

⁹⁶Quoted by Lefèvre, op. cit., p. 113.

⁹⁷This Vietnamese word, which stems from the word 'co' meaning girl, gave rise to gallicised expressions: 'encongayement', and 'encongayé' - meaning a metropolitan male cohabiting with an indigenous woman. Lefèvre (op. cit., p. 112) notes that the women destined to become *con gai* were generally aged between 16 and 22. Orphans, widows or peasants whom poverty forced from the countryside to the towns, they were generally uneducated and unskilled.

⁹⁸Nguyễn Xuân Tuê discusses later representations of the *con gai* from the late 1950s and 1960s, and particularly Jean Hougron's portrayals, in his article "Congai: une race de femmes annamites, produit de la colonisation", pp. 69-77, in Hué, B., op. cit.

Tonkinoise", which vulgarised the myth of the submissive and malleable Indochinese *con gai*. Its third and fourth verses dramatise the colonial cliché of 'loving and leaving' an indigenous mistress, and are quoted below as they epitomise popular opinion concerning the indigenous women of Indochina, and embody much of the imagery surrounding metropolitan/indigenous relationships which is evoked in the novels under discussion.

III

Très gentille
C'est la fille
D'un mandarin très fameux:
C'est pour ça qu' sur sa poitrine
Elle a deux p'tit's mandarines.
Peu gourmande,
Ell' ne d'mande
Quand nous mangeons tous les deux
Qu'un banan', c'est peu coûteux,
Moi, j'y en donne autant qu'ell' veut.

IV

Mais tout passe
Et tout casse,
En France je dus rentrer
J'avais l'coeur plein de tristesse
De quitter ma chè' maîtresse.
L'âme en peine,
Ma p'tit' reine
Etait v'nu' m'accompagner
Mais avant de nous séparer
Je lui dis dans un baiser:

Refrain

Ne pleur' pas si je te quitte,
Petite Anna, petite Anna, p'tite Annamite,
Tu m'as donné ta jeunesse
Ton amour et tes caresses.
Je t'appelais ma p'tit' bourgeoise,
Ma Tonkiki, ma Tonkiki, ma Tonkinoise.
Dans mon coeur j' garderai toujours
Le souv'nir de nos amours.⁹⁹

⁹⁹"Petite Tonkinoise", words by H. Christiné, music by V. Scotto (Odéon 36801 - XP 2744), 1906, from *Chansons coloniales et exotiques*, op. cit. This version is interpreted by Karl Ditan. Goutalier and Knibiehler quote a slightly different

The song demonstrates the facility with which metropolitan males 'acquired' their indigenous mistresses, and the value or worth they accorded them. Simple and inexpensive to keep, these women are abandoned as easily and rapidly as they were acquired.

Groslier presents a similar view of the power hierarchy of metropolitan/indigenous sexual relationships. Indeed, one might say that in Le Retour à l'argile, he presents his readership with a male fantasy of indigenous womanhood: Rollin finishes the novel having two indigenous concubines, the second a Cambodian dancer, drawing on the popularity of the Cambodian ballet which twice visited France¹⁰⁰. Whilst colonial novels often represent indigenous women as sorceresses, emphasising the *envoûtement* of the metropolitan male, here this traditional topos is absent. In Groslier's novel indigenous women represent simplicity, and closeness to nature.

Rollin's indigenous lover, Kâmlang, is frequently referred to as a dehumanised feminine presence, and Groslier consistently uses animal imagery in reference to her:

Cette présence animale qui le laissait lui-même, le soutenait cependant¹⁰¹.

Descriptions of Kâmlang centre around Claude's expectations and desires. She is evoked solely in terms of what he wants from a woman:

C'était quelque chose de permanent contre quoi il s'appuyait sans y penser, qu'il sentait là, stable, parmi tout ce qui fuyait et s'effritait: son inertie projetée hors de lui et faite femme. Pas de phrases, pas

version, op. cit., pp. 44-5.

¹⁰⁰The Cambodian ballet visited Paris and Marseille in 1906. Rodin followed the company on its tour to Marseille, and created a series of sketches of the dancers dating from 1906, which can be viewed in the Musée Rodin. The ballet visited the metropole a second time in 1922. In 1931, certain members of the company made an appearance in the Cambodian section of the *Exposition coloniale*.

¹⁰¹Groslier, op. cit., p. 143.

de récriminations: la réalité du moment, la vie si pleine d'elle-même que la pensée ne peut y pénétrer¹⁰².

In a stilted, and extremely unconvincing manner, the narrator displays great ambivalence towards the indigenous woman and re-employs animal imagery in interior monologue as if Kâmlang thought of herself in terms of a domesticated animal:

Je pense à lui souvent comme un petit chien pense à son maître¹⁰³.

The indigenous women of Groslier's novel are interchangeable: they look similar, and are not distinguished through personality or character traits:

Il regarde Nakri. Comme elle ressemble à Kâmlang (...) mêmes paroles, mêmes occupations, même ignorance, même tempérament¹⁰⁴.

The comment is racist in itself, drawing as it does upon the myth that all non-Western races are physiognomically indistinguishable. Furthermore, for Groslier, these women are simply flesh, an essence with no spirit:

Elles perdaient à certains moments tout caractère plural, se fondaient en une seule présence...¹⁰⁵.

The indigenous woman, a crucial feature of colonial novels, is thus consistently positioned as an object. An emblem of the possession of the colonial territory, thus objectified she becomes a symbol of the relationship between colonised and coloniser. The *con gai*, the Indochinese incarnation of the stereotypical portrait of the indigenous woman can thus be seen to function as a cipher through which the metropolitan male possesses Indochina.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 164.

Indeed, *encongayement* and indigenisation are presented in Groslier's novel as ways in which the male *colon* can know and possess the colony. When Pierre Bernard informs Rollin that there are rumours flying amongst the French circle in the city, Claude's response is to refer to the above concepts as a learning process:

Des mots nouveaux, mon cher, qui depuis plusieurs siècles que nous colonisons ne figurent pas dans nos dictionnaires. Eh oui ! Nous dispensons progrès et civilisation. Nous sommes, paraît-il, les bienfaiteurs de ces peuples, à jet continu. Ils ont tout à apprendre de notre Protectorat. Nous ne cessons pas d'être en chaire ! Si l'un de nous, de temps en temps, tentait l'inverse ? N'aurions-nous donc absolument rien à apprendre, par hasard ?¹⁰⁶.

This romantic and sentimental notion obfuscates the colonised/coloniser relationship. Although Claude may learn from the indigenous civilisation which he temporarily inhabits, he is not himself colonised. Colonisation is romanticised as a mutually beneficial and rewarding relationship. Power hierarchies, economic plundering and political subjugation are all ignored. Claude is free to learn from the Cambodians, should he choose to do so. As Gidley has noted,

members of the dominant group - no matter how intimate (...) their sense of their involvement with the people concerned, no matter how deep their professed interest in their subject - will represent nothing but the assumptions of their own kind¹⁰⁷.

Groslier presents a utopic image of living amongst Cambodian society. His portrayal of European acculturation verges upon the paradisiacal. Although his evident personal love of, and interest in, the country encouraged early critics to view his portrayal of Indochina as unmitigatedly sympathetic, it is clear that Groslier's 'sympathy' is circumscribed by his belief in the innate metropolitan position of power in relation to the very populations he seeks to 'join'.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁰⁷Gidley, M., *Representing Others: White Views of Indigenous Peoples* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992), p. 3.

The battleground of colonial power is transplanted in Groslier's novel to the site of gender-based *dominateur/dominé* struggles. The authority of the white male *colon* is clearly duplicated in the less contentious (at the time) authority of the male spouse. If Indochina is so consistently represented as a sexualised and feminised entity, then the indigenous woman clearly becomes an emblem and signifier of that mythologising colonial gesture.

6. Conclusion

Once the conquest and pacification of Indochina had been achieved, literary representations of Indochina tended to focus upon the newer concerns of the metropolitan population in the colony. Themes of war were exchanged for themes of government and administration. Themes of heroism and danger amongst soldiers and sailors were largely displaced by portraits of metropolitan settlement and society. This evolution of the Franco-indochinese relationship can be traced through the novels examined. Although certain thematic stereotypes regularly resurfaced in these later works, notably themes of exile, sickness and death, newer concerns emerged which were to shape the image of Indochina in the metropolitan imagination.

As Bernard Hué has noted, fictional representations of Indochina contain

juste ce qui convient au goût du public métropolitain, un mélange d'exotisme, d'érotisme, d'orientalisme, répondant à son besoin d'évasion, à ses fantasmes...¹⁰⁸.

Although these novels certainly fed the appetite of a metropolitan audience avid for exotic narratives, more significantly they also reiterate key colonial discourses already examined in different cultural media, and help to chart the evolution of the Franco-indochinese relationship during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The excitement of Empire, and its potential for metropolitan renewal and

¹⁰⁸Hué, op. cit., p. 16.

rejuvenation; the imperial values of *mise en valeur*, progress and development; and finally an almost involuntary sense of unease with the situation of the metropolitan settler.

Farrère's novel, the earliest of those under discussion, straddles the period between pacification and settlement, both chronologically and thematically. It embodies the expectation and excitement of Empire during the first years of the twentieth century. His novel also reflects the ambivalence of these first years of consolidation, in which the French role abroad was slowly becoming defined. Saigon is viewed with fascination and repulsion; Indochina is at once a territory which encourages unbridled licence and a testing ground for metropolitan morality. Daguerches' novel, published at the height of the metropolitan endeavours to provide Indochina with a transport infrastructure, duly provides a favourable view of the modernising characteristics of French action in Indochina. The novel functions as a fictional embodiment of the the principles of *mise en valeur*. A testimony to the masculine values which were to recur in 1930s literature, Daguerches' novel presents the most confident view of French colonialism in Indochina. Most concerned with native culture and its attractions to Western man, Groslier's novel is altogether less certain of the values of progress and development lauded in Daguerches' work. Groslier's work demonstrates an almost involuntary sense of unease with Empire, which was not to be fully voiced until several decades later.

Chapter 6: Metropolitan Travel Journalism and Criticism of Colonial Policy in Indochina

1. Introduction

This chapter will review the writings of Louis Roubaud and Andrée Viollis¹, against the backdrop of the official views expressed during the contemporaneous period of the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*, which were analysed in chapter four. The chapter will evaluate the reactions of these writers to corrupt or abusive instances of French colonial rule in Indochina, and the ways in which they sought to reconcile the 'ideal' of colonialism with the reality of the situations they found whilst visiting Indochina.

Although these writers have been viewed by critics as expressing serious qualms about colonialism², this chapter will seek to demonstrate that, although at times critical of the colonial administrations in Indochina, the conclusions these writers draw more often than not underwrite the colonial rhetoric and ambitions of the period. This chapter will therefore challenge the assumption that their criticism of certain colonial practices in Indochina amounted to a burgeoning anti-colonialism, suggesting on the contrary, that the literary journalism of the 1930s helped to perpetuate the strong sense of France's *mission civilisatrice* in Indochina.

2. Overview: Questioning French Colonialism during the Inter-war Years

During the inter-war years, very few groups or individuals expressed the desire to see the colonial system entirely overthrown. For the most part, critics of

¹Roubaud, L., *Vietnam: la tragédie indochinoise* (Paris: Valois, 1931); Viollis, A., *SOS Indochine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935).

² See for example, Girardet, R., *L'Idée coloniale en France de 1871 à 1962* (Paris: La Table ronde, 1972), pp. 218-20.

colonialism questioned the system's application rather than the system itself. Having, ostensibly at least, rejected the disciplinary assimilationist approach to colonial rule, the majority of French colonial administrators felt confident that the associationist policies they were implementing in the colonies demonstrated a reformist disposition, and a colonial policy of cooperation rather than domination. As previous chapters have shown, the inter-war years were marked by a firmly held belief in France's 'humanisme colonial'. Furthermore, and especially following the First World War, the crucial financial contribution of the colonies to the national war effort, and the participation of colonial troops in the salvation of the Motherland made it difficult for a weakened France not to cling to the notion that it was the possession of a vast colonial Empire which provided the nation with a sense of international prestige and grandeur.

Although the *Ligue contre l'Oppression Coloniale et l'Impérialisme* had been founded in Brussels in 1927, the movement broke up after only a few years: its actions were curtailed by the rise of Fascism, and its members were divided over policy. While its communist members had pushed for a global condemnation of colonialism, and envisaged involving the *Ligue* in revolutionary action, its non-communist associates were simply interested in guarding against the system's excesses and abuses. Criticism of colonialism as a system during this period in metropolitan France was almost exclusively the preserve of the *Parti communiste français* (PCF), and individuals associated with the Surrealist movement.

The PCF's most ferocious attacks on French colonial policy began in response to the bloody oppression of the Rif War³, and reached new heights over the repression in Indochina following the Yen Bay uprising (which will be discussed in

³For an account of the Rif war, see Thobie, J., et. al., *Histoire de la France coloniale 1914-1990* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990), pp. 190-191.

further detail later in this chapter). The anti-imperial struggle was to remain one of the main objectives of the Communists until 1935, when the changes in world politics brought the party a more immediately menacing enemy in the shape of Fascism. Furthermore, the PCF's violent attacks on French colonial policy were abandoned in favour of maintaining unity once the *Front populaire* came to power in 1936.

The Communist stand against the oppression of the indigenous 'proletariat' was echoed in 1931 by members of the Surrealist movement⁴. Mounting an attack on the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*, they attempted to organise a counter exhibition⁵ which was intended to draw custom away from the main exhibition⁶. It is a measure of the predominance and pervasiveness of the colonial ideal propagated by the *parti colonial* in the 1930s, and of the irresistible attraction of the *Exposition coloniale* itself, that the counter exhibition received fewer than 2500 visitors as opposed to the 8 million who attended the Vincennes extravaganza.

André Malraux might be viewed by some as the most constant critic of French colonialism in Indochina. While it will be useful for the purposes of this overview to provide a brief assessment of his views on French colonialism in Indochina, his journalism is not the main focus of this chapter as it was published exclusively within Indochina and therefore had little or no effect upon dominant colonial or anti-colonial discourses in the metropole. Writing on Paul Monin's newspaper *L'Indochine*⁷ from 1925, Malraux endeavoured to expose corruption

⁴The principal figures involved included André Breton, Paul Eluard, René Char and Louis Aragon.

⁵The official title of the *contre-expo* was "La Vérité sur les colonies".

⁶For an account of the *contre-expo*'s exhibits and an overview of the anti-colonial position of its principal organisers, see Hodeir, C., and Pierre, M., *L'Exposition coloniale* (Brussels: Editions complexe, 1991), pp. 111-134. Herman Lebovics also provides a short account of the counter exhibition in *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity 1900-1945* (London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 105-110.

⁷Later renamed *Indochine enchaînée*.

within the colonial administration and to encourage Franco-indochinese *rapprochement* and reconciliation⁸. As Raymond has noted, Malraux's criticism of the colonial situation in Indochina was 'fired by an idealistic passion rather than an ideologically defined set of convictions'⁹. Like the writers under discussion in this chapter, Malraux's critical view of colonial government in Indochina remained circumscribed by a strong belief that to discard colonialism would be to deprive the indigenous populations of Indochina of their 'opportunity of acquiring the identity to be found in that great cultural, supra-national polity whose centre was France'¹⁰.

During the inter-war years anti-colonial thought in metropolitan France was thus limited to a small section of the political community. Many of the most vehement and committed voices raised against France's colonial 'vocation' were those of relatively marginal figures. The most prominent views within the metropole which detracted from the colonial ideal examined in the previous chapter were critical of certain colonial practices in specific situations rather than constituting a coherent anti-colonial position.

3. Travel Journalism and Views of the Franco-indochinese Relationship

The interest of the metropolitan press was first attracted to Indochina by the news of the voyages of Jean Dupuis and Doudart de Lagrée in the 1880s. Descriptions of their charting of the Red River appeared in the Le Moniteur Universel, Le National and Le Temps. Columns chronicling the exploration of Tonkin

⁸For an account of Malraux's participation in L'Indochine and his time in Indochina, see Langlois, W., André Malraux: L'Aventure indochinoise (translated from the English by Jean-René Major, 1967), (Paris: Mercure de France, 1966).

⁹Raymond, G., "French Culture and the Politics of Self-esteem; the Vietnam Experience", in Melling, P., and Roper, J., America, France and Vietnam: Cultural History and Ideas of Conflict (Aldershot: Avebury, 1991), p. 62.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 63.

appeared in Le Figaro, Le Petit Parisien and Le Globe. Following Francis Garnier's expedition and the Conquest of the remaining territories of Indochina, most large newspapers started to send foreign correspondants to the area¹¹.

By the period now under examination, newspapers tended only to cover major events or diplomatic visits. Few critical views of French rule in Indochina emerged, and those which expressed reservations concerning certain aspects of the Franco-indochinese relationship remained convinced that it was within the capabilities of the French Republic to remedy these minor wrongs and to implement the necessary improvements. Félicien Challaye, although critical of the way in which many 'Français d'Indochine' reacted to this 'peuple d'une intelligence si fine, d'une sensibilité si délicate, d'une civilisation si avancée'¹², and scathing towards the corruption of the French missionaries based there, nevertheless concluded that

il serait possible à l'opinion française d'améliorer, par l'intermédiaire du Parlement, agissant sur le ministre et sur le gouverneur général, la situation des Annamites¹³.

Between the turn of the century and the early 1920s a steady trickle of largely positive reports confirmed the view that French rule in Indochina was successful and that the Indochinese populations were peaceable and appreciative subjects. Paul Claudel for example, visiting Indochina in 1921 as part of his duties as French

¹¹Paul Bourde accompanied the *Corps expéditionnaire* for Le Temps; Paul Bonnetain was the correspondant for Le Figaro. Both later published their collected articles: Bonnetain, Au Tonkin (Paris: 1885), Bourde, De Paris au Tonkin (Paris: 1885).

¹²Challaye, F., Souvenirs sur la colonisation (Paris: Picart, 1935), p. 20. Challaye first visited Indochina in 1901, and subsequently in 1918 and 1919. His reports from his first visit to Indochina were first published in Cahiers de la Quinzaine, January 1902, but republished in collected form in response to what Challaye perceived as the worsening situation in Indochina following the Yen Bay massacre and its repercussions.

¹³Challaye, op. cit., p. 106.

Ambassador to Japan¹⁴, was full of praise for the colony, seeing only 'la tranquillité parfaite'¹⁵, and signs 'de croissance régulière, de développement heureux et paisible'¹⁶. For Claudel, Indochina of the 1920s appeared as a model of Franco-indigenous collaboration and harmony:

Jamais en Indo-Chine la collaboration entre l'élément indigène et l'élément européen n'a été plus intime et plus pacifique. On assiste au mouvement d'un peuple entier dont le désir le plus profond semble n'être que d'adopter notre culture et notre langue elle-même.¹⁷

Claudel's observations on the indigenous populations, which recall Challaye's assertion that the Indochinese should be distinguished from 'n'importe quelle peuplade nègre'¹⁸, reveal a sympathy and admiration for the Indochinese which is premised upon their continued acceptance of colonial rule. His perception of their involvement in the colonial relationship demonstrates the view which had come to be accepted of the indigenous populations of Indochina as peacefully and gratefully collaborating with their French rulers:

L'Annamite n'est ni un sauvage, ni un fanatique, et il n'est pas notre ennemi. C'est un homme remarquablement intelligent, d'un amour-propre intense, avide de s'instruire et de s'élever. Il s'est rendu compte aujourd'hui que la culture chinoise ne répondait plus à ses besoins. Il s'en est complètement détourné et c'est à nous qu'il s'adresse pour la remplacer¹⁹.

¹⁴Claudel was first Ambassador to China (1895-1909), then to Japan (1921-27). He visited Indochina on a number of occasions, making six short trips, and three longer visits in 1903, 1921 and 1925. It was his 1921 trip which gave rise to written reflections on the colony, which appear as a combination of the *récit de voyage* with a *rapport de mission*. These first appeared in May 1922 in *La Revue du Pacifique*.

¹⁵Claudel, P., *Oeuvres complètes de Paul Claudel: Tome 4, Extrême-Orient* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), p. 333.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 334.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 333.

¹⁸Challaye, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁹Claudel, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-9.

The prevalence of this rather complacent image of France's relationship with Indochina goes some way to explaining the shock with which reports from Yen Bay were greeted a decade later.

The late 1920s and early 1930s saw an increase in literary output which expressed a growing concern and unease with the situation in Indochina²⁰. These works, which prefigure the texts which are the main focus of this chapter, acted as something of a corrective to views such as Claudel's. In 1925, Roland Dorgelès²¹ had begun to question the 'official' view of France's colonial work in Indochina. In his Sur la route mandarine, he examined the contradictions which had begun to become apparent between the metropole's colonial 'ideal' and the state of justice, development and capitalist exploitation in the colony. Similarly, in Les Jauniers²², Paul Monet perceived the contradiction between what he witnessed, and the ideal proclaimed by official organisms in the metropole, but concluded finally with an acceptance of those contradictions. In spite of his lucid accounts of colonial mismanagement and ill-treatment of the native workforce, he believed that that conflict between action and ideal could be resolved through a return to that very ideal. Monet expressed a pragmatic view of the colonial situation in Indochina. He believed wholeheartedly in the French justice system, and believed that unjust practices could, and would, be remedied in favour of the indigenous populations. Luc Durtain's influential account of his visit to Indochina, Dieux blancs, hommes jaunes²³, encapsulates his critical stance in its very title. Denouncing the way in which the native workforce were treated by

²⁰These concerns were also expressed in relation to other colonial territories by works such as Gide's Voyage au Congo, retour du Tchad (Paris: Gallimard, 1927).

²¹Dorgelès, R., Sur la route mandarine (Paris: Albin Michel, 1925), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1994).

²²Monet, P., Les Jauniers, histoire vraie (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

²³Durtain, L., Dieux blancs, hommes jaunes (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

their French masters, Durtain produced a compelling portrait of colonial malpractice and exploitation in Indochina.

These often jaundiced portrayals of the Franco-indochinese relationship of the late 1920s and early 1930s started to alert the metropolitan public to the worsening situation in Indochina, and prefigured the types of criticism which were to emerge just a few years later. Nothing, however, had prepared the metropole for the news of the Yen Bay Massacre and Uprising, and its bloody repression.

4. The 'Yen Bay' Uprising of 1930

While the metropole was celebrating its colonial *génie* at the 1931 colonial exhibition, Indochina was still suffering the after-shock of the Yen Bay uprising. While partisans of French colonialism were congratulating themselves on the generous, humanitarian and benevolent doctrine which the metropole had developed vis-à-vis its colonised peoples, the Indochinese were being submitted to probably the most severe repression the territory had yet seen under French rule²⁴.

The texts under discussion in this chapter were written, to a great extent, in response to the Yen Bay uprising of 9-10 February 1930. Louis Roubaud, having worked for some time as the colonial correspondent for Le Petit Parisien, travelled to Indochina in the wake of the uprising in order to assess the extent of nationalist sentiment in Vietnam and to interview some of the movement's leaders; Andrée Viollis visited Indochina in the last three months of 1931, as a journalist attached to Paul Reynaud's entourage. On her return, extracts from her travel diaries were published in Esprit²⁵.

²⁴For an account of indigenous rebellion and French repression in Indochina, see Van, N., Viêt-nam 1920-1945: révolution et contre-révolution sous la domination coloniale (Paris: L'Insomniaque, 1996).

²⁵The articles appeared in Esprit in December 1933.

The uprising itself occurred when the Vietnamese nationalist movement (VNQDD - Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang) attacked the French garrison post at Yen Bay. Joined by a significant number of indigenous troops stationed there, they seized the arms depot and killed a number of French NCOs²⁶. Although the uprising was part of a series of rebellions, demonstrations, attacks and protests, the fact that French officers were killed in number called for a show of strength on the part of the colonial authorities. Eighty-three indigenous 'rebels' were sentenced to death, thirteen of whom were guillotined in June 1930 after a distinctly undemocratic trial²⁷. The French airforce pursued sympathisers into the surrounding country, indiscriminately bombing assembled crowds and 'suspect' villages.

Reports of the uprising and the manner of its repression had shocked a significant proportion of the metropolitan French public. As Roubaud noted in the introduction to Vietnam: la tragédie indochinoise:

Que se passait-il ? Rien, absolument rien, n'avait pu faire pressentir à l'opinion métropolitaine de pareils événements²⁸.

This vision of French colonialism, which pitted disaffected natives against merciless European masters, was not easily reconciled to the notions of 'devoir', 'responsabilité' and 'solidarité fraternelle', which were being expounded by Sarraut, Reynaud, Lyautey and all French colonialism's major apologists. Reports of the repressive action of the French colonial administration in Indochina undermined accepted notions of French colonialism as enlightened, benevolent and humanitarian, gratefully embraced by a loyal, subject people.

²⁶This was intended as part of a more widespread rebellion to include the fledgling Indochinese Communist Party (founded 1930), but communications failed, and the Yen Bay 'mutineers' found themselves isolated.

²⁷See Viollis' appendices transcribing the trial.

²⁸Roubaud, op. cit., p. 9.

Félicien Challaye's dismay over events at Yen Bay, (which prompted his re-publication of his travel diaries containing a reassessment of his views of French colonialism) reveals the extent to which the 'official' rhetoric of French colonialism, seen above in Sarraut and the literature of the colonial exhibition, was the dominant and most widely accepted version of France's colonial history. Challaye summarises the principal themes of this representation of the colonial relationship, in order to question their legitimacy or veracity in the light of the Yen Bay revelations: the moral duty of the coloniser to educate, protect and elevate the colonised; the attribution to France of this most important of tasks; the transferal of the locus of desire onto the colony; and the nationalistic assertion of France's superiority as a humanitarian colonising power. Challaye's words also signal a feeling of disappointment and of being duped which calls into question the integrity of the Third Republic:

...je croyais naïvement ce qu'on m'avait enseigné dans les écoles de la République. Je croyais que la colonisation est une entreprise humanitaire, destinée à faire progresser des peuples de race inférieure au contact de la civilisation blanche. Je croyais que ces peuples arriérés sollicitent le secours des blancs, et qu'ils leur sont reconnaissants de cette aide dévouée. Je croyais que la France est la plus bienveillante de toutes les puissances colonisatrices et que le loyalisme de ses sujets témoigne de leur gratitude²⁹.

Furthermore, images of the indigenous populations which had been prevalent until this uprising did not equate with the representation of these 'rebels' as fanatical nationalists opposed to French rule. Claudel's portrayal, quoted above, had presented the Indochinese as model colonial subjects. At the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*, the Indochinese *figurants* had been viewed as placid and docile, willing collaborators in French colonial rule. In the exhibition's posters, they were

²⁹Challaye, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

represented as hardworking and industrious. Reports from Yen Bay effectively shattered these comforting views.

5. The Betrayal of Ideals

Although initially reluctant to believe that the repressive and inhumane reaction of the French colonial authorities to the Yen Bay uprising was anything more than a singular aberration, the writers who travelled to Indochina in the early 1930s were steadily bombarded with indications and attestations to the contrary³⁰. A large proportion of Challaye's, Viollis' and Roubaud's work is taken up with 'revelations' of colonial abuses: the torture of political prisoners, the failures of the French rice distribution networks, press censorship, etc. All three writers report sympathetically on the demands of the indigenous peoples, adopting a reformist attitude towards the problems in Indochina.

Their sympathetic view is nonetheless deeply marked by fundamental principles of colonial ideology. One of the most noticeable examples of this tendency is revealed in the proliferation of anecdotes which relate instances where Vietnamese 'de bonne famille' have been humiliated or insulted by French settlers in Indochina. Although Viollis advocates equality between coloniser and colonised³¹, it becomes clear that this equality is desirable only between peoples judged to belong to the same social class. Discussing young Vietnamese students who had returned from school in France, she says:

...en France ils étaient traités en égaux par des hommes éminents: ici des fonctionnaires sans éducation ni culture font aucune différence

³⁰See for example Viollis op. cit., p. 19: 'Je ne voulais, je ne pouvais y croire, mais mes hôtes me donnèrent des détails si précis, si complets que la conviction peu à peu s'imposa'.

³¹Ibid., pp. 35-6.

entre les Annamites de bonne famille, instruits, et les boys qu'ils traitent Dieu ne sait comment...³²

Viollis thus suggests that a hierarchy of cooperation, based on class, should operate between the French and indigenous populations.

Her concept of 'equality' is reminiscent of the hierarchy of humanity which was a fundamental tenet of colonial ideology. This system of classification graded populations between the two poles of civilisation and savagery, and served to demonstrate the fundamental justice of the colonial enterprise by ranking peoples according to their relative degree of technical, political or cultural sophistication as seen from a European point of view. Operating this same principle Challaye can allow himself to react sympathetically to the Vietnamese, who rank, for him, relatively high in this evolutionary scale:

Or ce peuple d'une intelligence si fine, d'une sensibilité si délicate, d'une civilisation si avancée, les Français d'Indochine le traitent aussi mal qu'ils auraient traité n'importe quelle peuplade nègre du centre de l'Afrique³³.

Thus although at times critical of colonial policy in Indochina (Viollis in particular is scathing towards Paul Reynaud who refused to raise the problems of rice distribution and the amnesty of political prisoners before the *Parlement*³⁴), these documents cannot be viewed as political tracts against colonisation. For the most part, the critical views of French colonial policy in Indochina expressed in these texts remain circumscribed by the cultural assumption that the legacy of French civilisation was of intrinsic value, but that its colonial heirs had betrayed it.

The ideals of French colonialism represented in the official texts of the colonial exhibition and by writers such as Sarraut appear to have reflected (and

³²Ibid., p. 17.

³³Challaye, op. cit., p. 20.

³⁴Viollis, op. cit., p. 60.

exerted) a pervading influence on attitudes towards French colonialism. Not only were Roubaud and Viollis reluctant to shed this image of benevolent colonialism, but when provided with proof to the contrary they sought not to denounce the principle of colonialism (Viollis says: 'je ne veux pas discuter ici le principe de la colonisation. Il est ce qu'il est'³⁵), but to point to the corruption of that perfect ideal.

The discovery that colonial rule in Indochina was not always managed according to the principles of human solidarity, paternal protection and nurturing enlightenment was mitigated by the adoption of a view which asserted that in the past, French colonial policy was exemplary. Disappointment was thus transformed into nostalgia for a lost, glorious past.

Former relations between France and Indochina, which were never more specifically dated than 'autrefois', or 'avant', began to assume a paradigmatic status in these texts. This vague and utopian notion of the past was held up as an archetype of 'good' colonialism, which had to be recuperated. Thus, visiting Thanh-Hoa, Viollis remarked on the French-built dam which had allowed the surrounding area to be irrigated:

Voilà du beau travail. Aussi la région ne souffre-t-elle pas de famines comparables à celle de la province de Vinh, et n'y parle-t-on point de troubles. Pourquoi avant tant d'autres dépenses inutiles, ne pas poursuivre cette oeuvre indispensable et l'étendre à d'autres provinces?³⁶

This comment not only oversimplifies the causes of the 'troubles' in a particularly patronising way, but also reveals a specific notion of the type of French colonialism which Viollis admired and hoped to see re-established in Indochina. This notion encompassed the same themes which dominated the Colonial Exhibition: economic

³⁵Ibid., p. 23.

³⁶Ibid., p. 60.

and moral progress, the channelling of colonial 'energy' into visibly successful projects which would be objects of national pride, and symbols of French prestige.

Viollis' vision was one of benevolent pastoralism: she envisaged an ideal of domestic order and tranquillity which had been brought about by the thoughtful application of European technology to an impoverished people. The Pasteur Institute in Indochina was cited as another example of 'good' colonialism: its 'admirable travail' was however, thwarted by colonial administrators who viewed the Institute's work in terms of manufacturing profit and loss. Viollis thus quotes a doctor from the Institute:

Les autorités ne comprennent et ne secondent pas toujours nos efforts, me dit l'un d'eux en souriant. Comme nous voulions envoyer une mission dans une région particulièrement impaludée: "Pourquoi faire ? nous répondit ingénument un grand chef. Il n'y a dans ce district ni usines, ni plantations..."³⁷.

Viollis articulates the clash between the economic reality of colonialism and her own ideological faith through a 'them' and 'us' opposition ('les autorités', 'un grand chef'), which attributes the nefarious effects of colonialism to the capitalist and individualist forces of the modern era. The old 'human' relationship between coloniser and colonised has, for Viollis, been debased by materialism. She resolves the evident conflict through the myth of 'autrefois': visiting a small French enclave in Southern India, Viollis notes that the natives 'nous témoignent (...) une véritable sympathie...Preuve que notre ancienne méthode coloniale de coopération n'était pas si mauvaise'³⁸.

Throughout these texts, former relationships between colonised and coloniser are viewed as exemplifying 'entente', 'coopération' and 'compréhension'. Viollis uses

³⁷Ibid., p. 37.

³⁸Ibid., p. 6.

the words of a former *résidant* of Laos to indicate the harmony that previously existed between the French and the Indochinese:

Autrefois nous voyagions à cheval dans les sentiers de la brousse: nous descendions le soir dans les villages, et, reçus par les notables, nous arrivions à nous comprendre mutuellement, à nous estimer. Depuis le règne de l'auto, les administrateurs passent en trombe sur les grandes routes, devant des dos courbés par le respect. Ils ignorent tout ce qui se passe dans leur district. Nous étions des pionniers, presque des explorateurs. Eux, ce sont des bureaucrates... ³⁹

Former colonial administrations are here viewed as sustaining solidarity between colonised and coloniser, thus allowing an harmonious order to prevail. The past compliance of the colonised (in contrast with their present rebelliousness) is presented as affirming a familial bond between France and Indochina, whilst it is implied that the current troubles have been provoked by the disintegration of the familial order.

Viollis thus reproduces a romantic narrative which plays upon a myth of social integrity and harmony, and regrets the destruction of a proto-social community. She contrasts a pastoral simplicity with urban bureaucracy through the emblematisation of the modes of transport preferred in each era. Although, ideologically, France was expounding ideas of progress, writers such as Viollis seemed to advocate a return to a pre-modern era, in which the distinct power structures are more reminiscent of a feudal model. The myth of *autrefois* would thus appear to represent French Indochina as the last outpost in which aristocratic values survived. The *colon*, innately superior by birth, nationality and class, commanded immediate respect from his underlings through his very bearing and demeanour.

³⁹Ibid., p. 124.

6. The Vilification of the Settler Community

In the above quotations, it begins to become clear that if this 'golden age' of French colonialism has disappeared, then it is the new settler community who are to blame for its disappearance. Portrayals of an undesirable 'new style' of colonial administrator are taken up with alacrity in the texts under discussion. Viollis, for example, quotes the *Chef de la Surêté* in Annam:

Tous ces troubles, d'Annam, dit-il, sont dus à l'incroyable négligence, à la nullité du personnel des services civils (...) au lieu d'envoyer dans les pays en fermentation des hommes de valeur et d'expérience, qui ont fait leurs armes et leurs preuves dans des services où ils ont été en contact avec les indigènes - des fonctionnaires des douanes, des ponts-et-chaussées, des docteurs, des ingénieurs etc. - on nomme des jeunes gens, frais émoulus de l'Ecole Coloniale. Ils sont vaniteux, satisfaits de leurs connaissances toutes théoriques, uniquement préoccupés de leur confort: glace, ventilateurs, boys. Ils ne font que rarement des tournées et négligent à ce point leurs devoirs que certains villages passent quinze ans, vingt ans sans avoir jamais vu un seul Français. (...) Ces administrateurs savent même pas l'annamite⁴⁰.

In the above quotation, activity is contrasted with passivity; theory with practice; a consumerist, egotistical and feminised society with a pioneering, selfless and masculinised one. It praises the warrior-like qualities of an elite male order ('des hommes de valeur et d'expérience, qui ont fait leurs armes et leurs preuves...'), contrasting this mythical, almost chivalric, fraternal community with a feminised bureaucracy. It reveals preoccupations which emerged from the conflicting perceptions of the colonial settler seen in the Exhibition rhetoric: the need for the dissuasive power of a forceful masculine presence, but the hope that indigenous peoples would simply accept and comply with this situation rather than testing French authority.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 128-9.

In Laos, Viollis comes across yet more administrators who fail to meet the exacting standards of *autrefois*:

Nous nous arrêtons dans quelques résidences. Je suis stupéfaite par les propos de table de certains administrateurs, leur égoïsme, leur puérité. Il n'est question que d'avancement, d'indemnités, de retour en France, de ragots. Est-ce possible ? Ces gens sont-ils aveugles ? N'ont-ils aucun souci de leur devoir, ni des problèmes qui se posent ici ?⁴¹

In both quotations a distinction is made between the maturity of the old style colonial administrator and the puerility or immaturity of their younger counterparts. Given the tendency to view the colonial relationship in terms of gendered roles, it appears that Viollis and her interviewees are lamenting the disappearance of the hierarchy which distinguished the 'parent' country from the 'child' colony. French and Indochinese appeared to cooperate because the distance between the two communities was clearly demarcated, and hierarchy was immediate. The immaturity of the colonial officials now in office in Indochina allows the indigenous population to shorten the distance separating colonised and coloniser; the superiority of the French, which justified their continued presence in Indochina, is no longer immediately apparent.

Further descriptions of members of the newer settler community highlight an anxiety that distance and hierarchy between coloniser and colonised are not being maintained. Roubaud, for example, regrets that the colony has become a sort of 'dumping-ground', receiving unwanted elements of the metropolitan community⁴²:

⁴¹Ibid., p. 124.

⁴²Albert Sarraut uses the same metaphor, referring to certain elements of the settler community as 'déchets'. See *Grandeur et servitudes coloniales* (Paris: Sagittaire, 1931), p. 210.

Le commis européen est souvent (...) un jeune cancre que sa famille a expédié ici (...) faute d'avoir pu lui trouver une place dans la métropole⁴³.

The qualities of former settlers ensured that French power and authority were immediately recognisable. Their aristocratic social position, their breeding, stature and class, demanded and obtained respect. This community of nobles, it is implied, has been polluted and thus degraded by the influx of the masses. French cultural and moral superiority, which Sarraut had cited as imperative to the maintenance of colonial rule in Indochina, has been undermined by the arrival of sections of the metropolitan population who demonstrate moral standards which are little better (if not worse) than those of the indigenous populations they are intended to dominate.

For Viollis and Roubaud, one of the most abhorrent manifestations of this unappealing face of French colonialism is what they term 'l'esprit colon'. Albert Sarraut defined 'l'esprit colon' as 'la fâcheuse survivance du sentiment de conquête'⁴⁴. This, one supposes, indicates the attitude of domination, superiority and force which Sarraut believed had since been transformed into a collective triumph of human solidarity. In these texts it appears that the women settlers are the principal perpetrators of this despised 'esprit colon'. The beginnings of the corruption of the idealised period of harmony, order and respect of the coloniser is posited with the arrival *en masse* of metropolitan French women to Indochina in the 1920s. Indeed, this is a view which persists to this day. Franchini, a contemporary historian of Indochina states:

⁴³Roubaud, op. cit., p. 246.

⁴⁴Sarraut, op. cit. p. 207.

dans l'ensemble, leur présence a pour effet de figer la société dans ses hiérarchies, ses clivages, ses préjugés, et d'aggraver généralement l'incompréhension qui mine les rapports entre colons et colonisés⁴⁵.

Roubaud similarly notes of the female settlers in Indochina

celles - trop multipliées depuis dix ans - qui ayant quitté le petit logement du 5ème, où les heures de ménage étaient chichement comptées se sont trouvées brusquement dans un hôtel particulier, à la tête d'un personnel domestique (...) Ainsi, les petites bourgeoises de quartier ayant gagné, en vingt-huit jours de traversée, leurs nouveaux quartiers de noblesse coloniale, ont importé ici le mépris de l'indigène sans distinction de classe ni de culture⁴⁶.

He emphasises the artificiality of their newly acquired bourgeois lifestyle, regretting that class superiority is no longer inherent in the French community, but has to be proved through ostentation and overt displays of power.

The unproductiveness and passivity of the women settlers is implicitly contrasted with the desired values of the masculinised community of *autrefois*: activity, creative energy, virility. Viollis and Roubaud contrast a passive, narcissistic attitude with the rough, pioneering outlook of the past. Women appear in these texts as a debased substitute for the motherland: Viollis describes the women settlers she meets in the following terms:

J'ai souffert du vide de leur cerveau, de leur âme, de leur vie ! Pas une qui semblât consciente de ses responsabilités, des douloureux problèmes qui se posent là-bas, qui vit dans les Annamites autre chose que des inférieurs à exploiter. Pas une qui se soit élevée contre les abus monstrueux qui auraient dû révolter sinon leur coeur, du moins leur nerfs. Je les ai vues sincèrement ahuries quand je leur demandais, dans les villes, si elles fréquentaient des femmes de la société annamite, dans les campagnes, si elles se préoccupaient de la santé, de

⁴⁵Franchini, P., "La Cité blanche", in Franchini, P., (ed), Saigon 1925-45: de la 'Belle Colonie' à l'éclosion révolutionnaire ou la fin des dieux blancs (Paris: Les Editions Autrement/série mémoires, no. 17, 1992), p. 44.

⁴⁶Roubaud, op. cit., pp. 243-4.

l'hygiène des familles paysannes et surtout des enfants. Non, il faut le dire, le répéter, les femmes françaises, en Indochine, ne sont pas à la hauteur de leur tâche qui pourrait être si belle⁴⁷.

She regrets that the female settlers are unable to offer the nurturing, protection and education which the motherland should confer upon the indigenous populations. She implicitly calls for a form of patriarchal feminism, in which the French women in Indochina would undertake to perform the role of moral tutors to the 'uncivilised' natives ('si elles se préoccupaient de la santé, de l'hygiène...'); and a return to the former relationship of *entente*, and (ostensible) mutual respect, in which there was contact between coloniser and colonised of a similar social class ('si elles fréquentaient les femmes de la société annamite'). The women that Viollis met appeared to subscribe to the materialistic and exploitative values that the *grands chefs* and new administrators had upheld ('Pas une ... qui vit dans les annamites autre chose que des inférieurs à exploiter').

Official discourses of colonialism mirror these concerns. A 1927 publication of the Colonial Army⁴⁸ urging the foundation of metropolitan families abroad, observed that the presence of metropolitan French women in Indochina should improve conditions in the colony. Its prescriptive view of the role of metropolitan women in the colonies presents the sort of 'ideal' from which Viollis clearly felt the women she encountered had fallen. The presence of European wives, the pamphlet asserted, should play a considerable part in raising moral standards in the colony: European women saved men from debauchery, and the ignominy of creating a 'temporary marriage' with an indigenous woman; they furthermore reinstated in male minds the benefits of a stable home life. European women, it was said, also

⁴⁷Viollis, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴⁸Le rôle et la situation de la famille française aux colonies (Paris: Editions du journal des coloniaux et de l'Armée coloniale réunis, 1927).

encouraged the technological improvement of the colony: they were perceived as catalysts for improvements such as the electricity and water supplies, the creation of public gardens.

It appears that, for these authors, the arrival of women and the consequent feminisation of the settler community in Indochina marks the beginnings of an artificial, consumerist society which spelled the ruin of the earlier, more authentic and creative masculine society. The idyllic era of the aristocratic and heroic *broussard* was thus corrupted, polluted and undermined by the combination of materialism, inferior colonial personnel, the sheer number of metropolitan immigrants from an 'undesirable' social class, and women who were unwilling or incapable of performing the duties required of a benevolent French patriarchy.

7. A Renewed Sense of Mission

The assessment that these writers presented of the situation in Indochina in the 1930s was one which viewed the civil disobedience of the indigenous populations as a response to colonial mismanagement rather than a legitimate protest against French presence. Their criticism of certain aspects of French colonial policy in Indochina was not, therefore, formulated as an attack on the the fundamental justice of the entire system, but as a spring-board for future action. By pinpointing the various, and numerous instances of colonial mismanagement and abuse, Viollis and Roubaud provided a challenge to the authorities to right these problems. Heirs to the humanitarian view of French colonialism, and concerned for the suffering of the Indochinese, they thus envisaged remedying the unrest with reformist measures. Roubaud stated:

Il ne faudra point céder à la révolte, et, lorsque l'apaisement sera établi, que nous devons nous rappeler nos promesses, les réaliser sans brusquerie⁴⁹.

Furthermore, the reformist agenda present in these texts underwrote the view that Indochina continued to remain a field for French action, an area for development. The 'catastrophic Orient' becomes a realm which is understood to be culturally apart, 'out there', contained and localised, but demanding the intervention of a technologically and morally superior benefactor. Viollis, for example, here describes the degeneration, degradation, sickness and pollution of the indigenous populations in depersonalised terms:

Dans un immense enclos, entouré de barrières de bois, 3 à 4000 créatures humaines, vêtues de loques brunes, sont si entassées et pressées qu'elles ne forment plus qu'une seule masse, agitée de remous, hérissée de bras de sarment, noueux et desséchées, qui tendent des corbeilles de jonc. Dans chaque être toutes les tares, toutes les déchéances: faces bouffies ou décharnées, dents absentes, prunelles éteintes ou chassieuses, plaies ulcérées. Sont-ce des hommes, des femmes, ont-ils vingt ans, soixante ans ? On ne sait pas. Plus d'âge, plus de sexe, rien qu'une mortelle misère qui, par des milliers de bouches noires, pousse d'horribles cris d'animaux⁵⁰.

It is a portrayal which recalls Sarraut's assertion that without French intervention, the Indochinese would have remained abandoned to misery and abjection, decimated by famine and disease in the midst of unexploited wealth⁵¹. Viollis' description is clearly a restatement of a discourse of abjection which qualifies territories without, or lacking adequate Western intervention, as chaotic and unstable.

Viollis' portrait also reveals an element of fear and loathing which can be attributed to the coloniser: the moral and physical degradation of the natives is clearly

⁴⁹Roubaud, op. cit., p. 285.

⁵⁰Viollis, op. cit., p. 56-7.

⁵¹See Sarraut, op. cit., p. 117.

fixed and located as *ailleurs*, and the natives themselves are inhuman, an animal-like Other. At a time when the value of Western 'civilisation' was being called into question, and the Indochinese nationalists were testing the authority and strength of French rule, it became doubly important to emphasise the superiority of French morals, culture and technology. If the superior qualities of the metropolitan French settler in Indochina were not asserted, if the boundaries and limits of difference were not upheld, then the risk of defilement and contamination would further threaten the French position in Indochina. The impulse to reform and to remedy suffering can thus be viewed as a renewal of the French colonial mission: Viollis and Roubaud were not appealing for the right of the Indochinese to govern themselves, but for a reinforcement of French 'civilising' action in Indochina.

Throughout their texts, these writers refer to the 'devoir' and 'responsabilité' that the metropolitan French settlers in Indochina were no longer fulfilling: Viollis' criticism of women settlers ends with the assertion that '[elles] ne sont pas à la hauteur de leur tâche qui pourrait être si belle'. The preoccupation with these moral and humanitarian duties indicates not simply a desire that French colonial rule be perpetuated, but that France's civilising mission be intensified. Roubaud noted:

La France n'a pas achevé l'oeuvre indochinoise. Toutefois, par ses propres bienfaits, le bienfaiteur se crée des devoirs. La France n'a pas fini. Il ne faut pas qu'elle soit arrêtée dans son travail généreux par l'ingratitude de quelques-uns et l'égoïsme de quelques autres⁵².

The vilification of the newer members of the settler community (above: 'l'égoïsme de quelques autres') enabled Roubaud and Viollis to envisage the redemptive return of the aristocratic *colon*, whose authority and stature would ensure that the lines of difference between colonised and coloniser were re-drawn and

⁵²Roubaud, op. cit., p. 284.

reinstated⁵³. Their texts can therefore be read as reaffirmations of the hierarchies and disequilibrium of traditional French colonial ideology.

At face value, the conclusions Challaye reaches in his additional, updated comments to his visits to Indochina differ from Roubaud and Viollis in that he openly criticises the concept of colonisation itself (from a pacifist and Marxist standpoint⁵⁴). However, having stated in his conclusion that

Les avantages de la colonisation ne suffisent pas à compenser les injustices, les violences, les crimes de toute sorte qu'elle entraîne (...) Il faut mettre fin à ces maux. Il faut étendre aux peuples dits de couleur le droit à la libre disposition d'eux-mêmes, travailler à la libération des colonies⁵⁵

Challaye then goes on to say

Il faut admettre que cette évolution révolutionnaire se fera par étapes⁵⁶.

Not only does Challaye qualify his assertion in such a way as to mitigate his criticism of colonisation, the very language of his criticism is impregnated with colonial ideology. The 'étapes' he envisages are reformist measures, not designed to overthrow French rule, but to ameliorate the condition of the indigenous peoples. His plea for the end of colonisation is made using vocabulary which itself suggests the colonising act: 'étendre aux peuples...le droit'. Furthermore, his comments on the Indochinese peoples reinforce the notion of French colonialism as bestowing 'les lumières de la civilisation' on an ignorant population:

Ils comprennent avec une rare vivacité tout ce qu'on se donne la peine de leur expliquer⁵⁷.

⁵³This class-based criticism also perhaps reflects the negative feelings about a debased post-1918 France and its new modern classes.

⁵⁴See Challaye, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-207.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

Even Challaye, in spite of his Marxist rhetoric, thus subscribed to the view that Western culture was innately superior and therefore of value to populations implicitly viewed as inferior. While his restatement of the French civilising mission is markedly less overt than that of Viollis and Roubaud, he nevertheless endorses certain key concepts of colonial ideology: he reinforces notions of evolutionary hierarchies, and implies that ultimate emancipation will be achieved only through the continuing assistance of a French colonising presence.

8. Conclusion

The ideal of colonialism and the repressive or abusive face it presented to these writers in the wake of the Yen Bay uprising were reconciled through the myth of *autrefois* and the vilification of the settler community. There were striking similarities between the 'official rhetoric' of colonialism and the future (redeemed) situation of Indochina envisaged by these writers. Both parties remained convinced of the enlightening potential of France's *mission civilisatrice*, and emphasised that this philanthropic work had yet to be completed; both were equally insistent that distance and hierarchy between coloniser and colonised should be reasserted in order that French authority be maintained. The revalorisation of the *colon* in official texts, was mirrored in Viollis' and Roubaud's nostalgia for the heroic and aristocratic *broussard*, and their repudiation of the contemporary settler community.

The travel journalism of the 1930s thus not only presented a case for the perpetuation of French colonial presence in Indochina, it did so by adopting the rhetoric and ideology which underwrote official versions of France's *doctrine coloniale*. Far from legitimising the Indochinese nationalists' demands through their portrayals of colonial abuse, and thus introducing an anti-colonial perspective to the

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 18.

Indochinese debate after Yen Bay, these writers remained firmly convinced that the legacy of French civilisation was of value to overseas populations, and that the slippage from this ideal was temporary and simply attributable to the incompetence or inferiority of the incumbent administrations.

Conclusion

1. France and Empire

At the turn of the century it was important that France construct for herself a new national identity which would acknowledge and promote the fact that she was an imperial nation with the second largest Empire in the world. The desire to establish this firm idea of imperial identity is most clearly demonstrated in the state's promotion of colonial education in metropolitan primary schools. School manuals from this period however, demonstrate an ideal of Empire which is riven with contradictions. The imperial and colonial ideal is undermined by unresolved tensions surrounding France's conception of herself as an imperial power.

This thesis shows that this confusion over imperial identity prevailed in France until the eve of the Second World War. France's was an empire without an emperor. The nation's Republican ideology and culture, and the legacy of the 1789 Revolution, conspired against the practice of empire to create an incoherence within the nation's own rhetoric of Empire. This fundamental incoherence is exemplified by France's perception of her relationship with, and role in Indochina.

The ideal of French colonialism depicted in school manuals, both at home and in Indochina, and reiterated in official rhetoric of empire, presents the French nation as a unificatory agent, rallying diverse and dispersed fragmented territories to her greater self. In keeping with the principles of 1789, imperial France was presented as the epitome of generosity and protective benevolence. The founding principles of French national identity under the Third Republic, its Republican heritage and humanitarian *génie*, were perceived as being extended wholesale to its Empire.

This consistent universalising discourse, epitomised in the French policy of assimilation, and perpetuated through many colonial practices under the guise of association, demonstrates a profound discomfort with diversity. The interplay in the colonial arena of notions of alterity and similitude, a concept which has underpinned much recent postcolonial criticism, led in the case of France and Indochina to an ambivalence which bisects their entire colonial relationship. Accorded a special status, yet simultaneously indistinguishable from France's other colonial possessions, valued yet debased, Indochina epitomises the metropole's colonial ambivalence.

Where one might have expected a radical change in perceptions of the colonial role, following the move away from assimilatory practices to association, the examination of French colonial urbanism in Indochina showed that many of these sites of conflict and inconsistency remained, and were even exacerbated. The work of the architect/urbanist Ernest Hébrard in Indochina reveals that the shift in French colonial thinking and policy which was supposed to have been engendered by the shift from assimilationist to associationist 'native' policies was less dramatic than historians have tended to portray. The respect, tolerance and the reformist attitude of association were in fact consistently undermined by the seemingly almost irresistible French propensity for the universalising and homogenising policies normally associated with assimilation.

This thesis showed that faith in the value and humanitarian nature of the nation's *doctrine coloniale* was strong. The *Exposition coloniale* of 1931 provides the most prolific and impressive demonstration of French confidence and belief in Empire. Viewed as marking the apogee of Empire, key themes of French colonialism, or what might be termed the 'principles' of French colonialism which had been elaborated in the first decades of the century, were in parts reworked and refined by the many commentators and partisans of French colonialism who found in the *Exposition* an international forum for the expression of their views. These key concepts constituted a trinity of values or attributes which French

colonialism was thought to embody: *devoir*, *responsabilité*, and *générosité*. Thus an ethical basis for an essentially exploitative project was edified, drawing directly upon the Republican ideology and revolutionary heritage of the French nation. French colonial action was viewed as harmonising, liberatory and fraternal. The *mise en valeur* of the colonies, the application of metropolitan values of progress, development and technological aid which were brought to bear, was perceived as an act of altruistic generosity and fraternal sharing. *La Plus Grande France* functioned as both protective and nurturing mother, and constructive and edifying father to her colonial offspring. Emphasising the global significance and value of French colonialism, the *Exposition* showed that ideas of Empire had acquired an international, rather than simply national meaning for France.

Where one might finally have expected an insistent and consistent *remise en question* of the French colonial ideal in the early to mid-1930s, one finds instead a reiteration and commendation of these principles of colonialism. Elements of disquiet, unease or uncertainty about the current practice of colonialism had begun to emerge in the 1930s. These concerns remained consistently circumscribed however, by the belief that French colonialism was of inherent value, and that any contemporary slippage from this ideal was simply attributable to the incompetence or inferiority of the incumbent administrations. Indeed, the mid-1930s witnessed the reassertion of notions of metropolitan superiority and control, the reiteration of discourses of hierarchy and differentiation.

On the eve of World War Two belief in Empire was thus strong in metropolitan France. Official rhetoric, colonial policy and cultural interpretations of French colonialism all supported the reinforcement of the accepted version of the colonial ideal, and the perpetuation of French colonial rule in Indochina. This faith in the enlightening, nurturing and value of French colonialism was later to be demonstrated in the lengths to which the metropole went to sustain colonial rule

in Indochina in spite of growing nationalist demands and agitation, a costly war, and growing distaste for colonialism, both at home and abroad.

2. France and Indochina

Once the conquest and pacification had been accomplished, Indochina was to be remodelled as a French territory - *l'Indochine française* - through the rigorous exclusion of cultural and political influence from neighbouring Asian cultures, and the gallicisation of indigenous history, culture and political institutions. A hybrid territory made up of diverse regions, cultures and traditions, Indochina was perceived as being made a coherent whole through the homogenising and unificatory action of the French nation.

In both educative and official works, Indochina was consistently imagined as weak and chaotic in her pre-colonial state: a void space bereft of the light of knowledge and civilisation. Colonisation consisted of the deliverance of the colony from this state of nothingness. Colonial Indochina was thus presented as having gained stability and security, prosperity and progress, and increased her prestige and stature through association with imperial France. French colonialism in Indochina was presented as a mutually beneficial project, as opposed to one which France desired in order to shore up her prestige.

The innate superiority of the French nation and its colonial representatives in Indochina is clearly asserted throughout metropolitan discourses of colonialism, reinforcing the grandeur of the French nation. Thus although the French colonial presence in Indochina is perceived as generous and altruistic, and although the colonial ideal examined in a variety of cultural media asserts the liberatory and protective nature of French colonialism, it also reveals that in order for colonial rule to be maintained Indochina must remain in an inferior position vis-a-vis the metropole. *La Plus Grande France* is imposed upon Indochina in restricted cultural terms, but the equality which the term suggests remains shrouded in hierarchical discourses of French superiority. Colonial practices reveal that this

extension of French civilisation is both severely limited in political terms, and authoritarian in character.

This dual narrative of French colonialism is borne out in French colonial policy. Metropolitan educational aims in Indochina during the 1920s and 1930s sought to create a body of able indigenous workers who could fulfill the economic demands of the colonising nation, whilst attempting to limit the aspirations of the indigenous peoples by reducing, if not entirely removing the intellectual content of school manuals. Similarly, colonial urban policy was viewed as a means of asserting an inviolable image of the imperial nation. These desires were reflected in the imposition of hegemonic metropolitan value systems over local architecture, and in the refusal to acknowledge the cultural specificity of the component parts of the Indochinese Union. The ghettoisation of indigenous populations and the application of a policy which rigidly preserved the 'primitive' features of indigenous cities, demonstrates that French colonial urbanism was less interested in the global implementation of progress and development than it was in the maintenance of a veneer of metropolitan social, cultural, political and technological superiority.

These discrepancies between colonial practice and imperial rhetoric are repeated in the ambiguous duality of metropolitan perceptions of Indochina. In spite of the proliferation of discourses which posited Indochina, alongside France's other colonial possessions, as backward, inferior and weak territories in need of metropolitan aid and guidance, Indochina was concomitantly accorded a special status, and a more elevated rank.

Indeed, if the Franco-indochinese relationship can be summarised through a series of antitheses, then perceptions of Indochina appear equally paradoxical. France's colonial role in Indochina is imagined as generous yet self-seeking; liberatory yet authoritarian; modernising, yet encouraging the maintenance of Indochina in a 'primitive' or 'traditional' state. The relationship was simultaneously perceived as reciprocal and impositional, fostering development and yet a

hindrance to autonomous cultural and political growth. Fraternal towards and respectful of Indochina, imperial France sought also to express her superiority and control over her colonised peoples. Indochina was France's 'pearl', advanced, worthy, accorded special status. Indochina was nevertheless chaotic and weak, inferior and needy. Indochina was a showcase of success, but also a site of disaster. Indochina was singled out and praised, but she was also denied specificity, both internally and in relation to France's other colonial possessions. Praised and held up as a shining example of the value of French colonialism, Indochina was simultaneously diminished, commodified and debased.

These dual narratives of success/disaster, value/ambivalence were manifest not only in the textual accounts of the relationship, but were most striking in the visual discourses of the *Exposition coloniale de Vincennes*. The exhibition demonstrated the importance of Indochina to the French nation and Empire. Indochina overshadowed the nation's other colonial possessions, but more importantly, was seen to rival Britain's 'jewel in the crown'. Central to Indochina's 'special' status as *perle de l'Extrême-Orient* was Angkor Wat, a marvel unrivalled by the architectural features of any of France's other colonial possessions. A symbol of French ideals of protection and *mise en valeur*, Angkor Wat nevertheless also functioned as proof of metropolitan superiority over decadent and inferior native populations. Displayed to advantage and held up for admiration, Indochina was nonetheless debased and commodified, its populations simultaneously applauded and reprimanded.

Mirroring the successive stages of the official representation of the Franco-indochinese relationship, fictional representations further compound the ambivalence of the metropole towards her South-East Asian colony. Although Indochina was represented as an exciting arena full of future potential, it was also viewed with a combination of fascination and repulsion, desire and disgust. Indochina was at once a territory which encouraged unbridled licence, and testing ground for metropolitan morality. A domain for male action *par excellence*.

Indochina was feminised and sexualised, desired and repudiated. Often positioned simply as a backdrop to male action, Indochina functioned as a physical embodiment of the application of the principles of *mise en valeur*, and the colony's modernisation similarly functioned as a testimony to masculine values. This confident view of French colonialism in Indochina is mitigated by a later view expressing an almost involuntary sense of unease with Empire. Demonstrating an increased sympathy for native culture, and its attractions for Western man, this later view is altogether less certain of the values of progress and development lauded in earlier work.

This sense of uncertainty or unease is most fully expressed in journalism of the 1930s. However, the ideal of colonialism and the repressive or abusive face it presented to these writers in the wake of indigenous rebellion were reconciled through the myth of *autrefois* and the vilification of the settler community, thus revealing striking similarities between the 'official rhetoric' of French colonialism and the future (redeemed) situation of Indochina envisaged by these writers. Both parties remained convinced of the enlightening potential of France's *mission civilisatrice*, and emphasised that this philanthropic work had yet to be completed; both were equally insistent that distance and hierarchy between coloniser and colonised should be reasserted in order that French authority be maintained.

The travel journalism of the 1930s thus not only presented a case for the perpetuation of French colonial presence in Indochina, it did so by adopting the rhetoric and ideology which underwrote official versions of France's *doctrine coloniale*. Far from legitimising the Indochinese nationalists' demands through their portrayals of colonial abuse, and thus introducing an anti-colonial perspective to the Indochinese debate after Yen Bay, these writers remained firmly convinced that the legacy of French civilisation was of value to the Indochinese.

3. Indochina Revisited

To conclude this thesis, it is interesting to note that many of the discourses of French colonialism, the ideals of Empire, and their application to Indochina, remained constant until the end of the colonial relationship on the battleground of Dien Bien Phu. Whilst the anti-colonial voice, so marked in its absence from the views of the Franco-indochinese relationship which have here been under examination, had been swelling during the nine years of war between France and Indochina, the *fin du rêve indochinois* was nevertheless marked by visual and textual discourses which alluded frequently to the tenets of colonialism which had sustained French rule in Indochina for some ninety years.

The front covers of Paris Match depicting the French retreat from its Indochinese Empire provide an ambiguous conclusion to the period of French colonisation in Indochina¹. From the 20 March to the 15 May 1954, this popular magazine published 144 photos of the battle, of which five were front covers (in the space of nine weeks). These photographs, providing perhaps the most enduring image of Indochina for the French popular imagination, convey the confusion with which the French press viewed events in Indochina. Dien Bien Phu, represented 'la tragédie des blessés', but was not 'une blessure tragique'. Dien Bien Phu was presented as an epic battle, but one with a vanquished hero. The reality of Dien Bien Phu was clearly humiliating - for the French Army, and for France as an imperial nation. This humiliation was mitigated however, through an attempt to demonstrate that although France had lost control of Indochina, her imperial principles, the values of *la mission civilisatrice* - generosity, protection and an innate sense of national and racial 'aristocracy' - remained undiminished.

¹The significance of the Paris Match photography is the subject of my conference paper: "Heroes and Martyrs: the Changing Mythical Status of the French Army during the Indochinese War", (Group for War and Cultural Studies, University of Westminster, February, 1997), forthcoming.

They were epitomised by the steadfastness of the French troops, the courage of Geneviève de Galard, the torment of Colonel de Castries.

If, as Barthes noted of the African colonial soldier saluting the tricolore in a later Paris Match front cover, 'il est la *présence* même de l'impérialité française'², then what these photographs signify is perhaps 'la présence d'une impérialité française souffrante', but I would add, 'pas encore mourante'.

Indeed, it remains to be seen whether the colonial image of Indochina, and the perception of France's role there, will ever be seriously challenged; if the current environment in France which has been reassessing the nation's colonial past in relation to North Africa, will extend its scholarly gaze to Indochina. The early 1990s appeared to offer an opportunity for re-examination, with the release of three films which, perhaps for the first time in the history French cinema, focused entirely upon Indochina: Jean-Jacques Annaud's L'Amant, Pierre Schoendoerffer's, Dien Bien Phu, and Régis Wargnier's, Indochine³.

However, each film is replete with colonial nostalgia, and provides a romanticised image of Indochina which owes more to the tenacity of the colonial ideal than it does to the current environment of postcolonial critique. Indeed, these films reveal the extent to which the myths and images of both French colonialism and of Indochina which prevailed during the period of consolidation still have currency today.

The most striking adaptation of the French colonial *doctrine* to the contemporary screen is embodied however by Wargnier's Indochine. In it, Catherine Deneuve plays the role of Eliane, a wealthy plantation owner who has

²Barthes, R., Mythologies (Paris: Seuil, 1957/1970), p. 214.

³Wargnier, R., Indochine, 1991; Annaud, J.-J., L'Amant, 1992; Schoendoerffer, P., Dien Bien Phu, 1992. For comments on the release of these films see: Andreu, A., "Pierre Schoendoerffer: 'Oui cette bataille a été une histoire d'amour!'", L'Événement du jeudi, 27 February - 4 March 1992, pp. 91-92; Andreu, A., "Cinéma français: la reconquête de l'Indochine", L'Événement du jeudi, 16-22 April, 1992, pp. 112-113; Ramirez, F., and Rolot, C., "D'Une Indochine à l'autre", Cinéma, 2, November 1992, pp. 40-55.

adopted an orphaned child of royal indigenous friends. Deneuve's character figures as *Marianne*, the Republic. Her androgynous figure reflects the ambiguous gendering of the imperial nation: *la mère-patrie*, Eliane nurtures her adopted child but disciplines her plantation workers. The character of Eliane embodies the qualities and roles of colonial France towards Indochina: she is the adoptive and protective French mother, the narrator, teacher and guide; the authoritative *civilisée*, the exploitative consumer; the Republic; colonial France. Camille, the adopted daughter, represents Indochina, *la fille adoptée de la France*: an indigenous orphan, she is the subject of narration, and the object of metropolitan desire; her disorderly behaviour warrants control and guidance; the innocent and endangered student, she needs protection and nurture.

In Wargnier's film, Camille finally breaks from the control of both her physical and metaphorical adoptive mothers: Eliane and France. The question remains however, whether the France of the postcolonial era can finally break loose from this romanticised view of Indochina and of Empire which remains mired in the grip of a tenacious and pervasive nostalgia for the nation's *doctrine coloniale*.

PAGE
NUMBERING
AS ORIGINAL

Bibliography

General Background

Anderson, B., Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1991).

Barthes, R., Mythologies (Paris: Seuil, 1957).

Benjamin, W., Reflections (Translated by E. Jephcott), (New York: Schocken, 1986)

Bhabha, H., "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism", in Barker, F., et al, The Politics of Theory (Colchester: Essex Conference of the Sociology of Literature, 1982), pp. 194-211.

Bhabha, H., (ed), Nation and Narration (London: Routledge, 1990).

Bhabha, H., The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994).

Boyarin, J., (ed), Remapping Memory: The Politics of Timespace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

Citron, S., Le Mythe national: l'histoire de la France en question (Paris: Etudes et Documentation internationales, 1987).

Clifford, J., The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, Art (London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Cointet, M., Histoire Culturelle de la France 1818-1959 (Paris: SEDES, 1989).

de Certeau, M., L'Invention du quotidien 1: arts de faire (Paris: Gallimard/folio essais, 1990).

de Certeau, M., Giard, L., and Mayol, P., L'Invention du quotidien 2: habiter, cuisiner (Paris: Gallimard/folio essais, 1994).

de Gaulle, C., Discours et messages pendant la guerre: juin 1940 - janvier 1946 (Paris: Plon, 1970).

Dirks, N., (ed), Colonialism and Culture (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

Fanon, F., Peau noire: masques blancs (Paris: Seuil, 1952).

Faucier, N., Pacifisme et antimilitarisme dans l'entre-deux-guerres 1919-1939 (Paris: Spartacus, 1983).

Foucault, M., Surveiller et punir (Paris: Gallimard /Collection tel, 1975).

- Girardet, R., Le Nationalisme français: anthologie 1871-1914 (Paris: Seuil/Points histoire, 1983).
- Harvey, D., The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).
- Hazareesingh, S., Political Traditions in Modern France (Oxford: OUP, 1994).
- Hobsbawm, E., (ed), The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: CUP, 1983),
- Jenkins, B., Nationalism in France: Class and Nation since 1789 (London: Routledge, 1990).
- Landry, D., and Maclean, G., The Spivak Reader (London: Routledge, 1996).
- Lebovics, H., True France: the Wars over Cultural Identity 1990-45 (London: Cornell University Press, 1992).
- Lethève, J., La Caricature et la presse sous la Troisième République (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961).
- Lowe, L., Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
- Mackenzie, J., (ed), Imperialism and Popular Culture (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).
- McClintock, A., Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (London: Routledge, 1995).
- Pratt, M-L., Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (London: Routledge, 1992).
- Rabant, J., L'Anti-militarisme en France 1810-1975: faits et documents (Paris: Hachette, 1975).
- Said, E., Orientalism (London: Routledge, 1978).
- Said, E., Culture and Imperialism (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993).
- Schwab, R., La Renaissance orientale (Paris: Payot, 1950).
- Schwartz, W., The Far-East in Modern French Literature 1800-1925 (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Revue de la Littérature comparée, 1927).
- Spurr, D., The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).
- Thomas, N., Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994).

Todorov, T., Nous et les autres: la reflexion française sur la diversité humaine (Paris: Seuil/Points essais, 1989).

Young, R., White Mythologies: Writing, History and the West (London: Routledge, 1990).

Background on French Colonialism and Anticolonialism

Abrams, L., and Miller, D., "Who were the French Colonialists ? A Reassessment of the *Parti Colonial* 1890-1914", Historical Journal, vol. 19, 1976, pp. 685-719.

Ageron, C-R., "La Perception de la puissance française en 1938-1939: le mythe impérial", Revue française d'Histoire d'outre-mer, no. 69, 1982, pp. 7-22.

Ageron, C-R., "Les Colonies devant l'opinion publique française (1919-1939)", Revue français ed'Histoire d'outre-mer, no. 77, 1990, pp. 31-73.

Ageron, C-R., Anticolonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914 (Paris: PUF, 1973).

Ageron, C-H., France colonial ou parti colonial ? (Paris: PUF, 1978).

Albertini, R., von, European Colonial Rule 1880-1940: The Impact of the West on India, Southeast Asia and Africa (Translated by J. Williamson), (Oxford: Clio Press, 1982).

Aldrich, R., Greater France: A History of French Overseas Expansion (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

Andrew, C., "The French Colonialist Movement during the Third Republic: the unofficial mind of imperialism", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series, vol. 26, 1976.

Betts, R., Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory 1890-1914 (London: Columbia University Press, 1961).

Betts, R., Tricouleur: the French Overseas Empire (London: Gordon and Cremonesi, 1978).

Betts, R., France and Decolonisation 1900-1960 (London: Macmillan, 1991).

Biondi, J-P., and Morin, G., Les Anti-colonialistes 1881-1962 (Paris: Laffont, 1992).

Brunschwig, H., Mythes et réalités de l'impérialisme colonial français 1871-1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1960).

Césaire, A., Discours sur le colonialisme (Paris: Editions Présence africaine, 1955).

- Gide, A., Voyage au Congo, retour du Tchad (Paris: Gallimard, 1927).
- Girardet, R., L'Idée coloniale en France (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972).
- Grimal, H., La Décolonisation 1919-1963 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965).
- Histoire, special issue: "Les Temps des colonies", no. 69, 1984.
- Knibiehler, Y., and Goutalier, R., La Femme au temps des colonies (Paris: Stock, 1985).
- Knight, M., "French Colonial Policy: The Decline of 'Association'", Journal of Modern History, vol. 5, 1933, pp. 208-224.
- Marseille, J., Empire colonial et capitalisme français: histoire d'un divorce (Paris: Albin Michel, 1984).
- Marseille, J., L'Age d'or de la France coloniale (Paris: Albin Michel, 1986).
- Meyer, J., Tarrade, J., Rey-Goldzeiguer, A., Thobie, J., Histoire de la France coloniale dès origines à 1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991).
- Pervillé, G., De l'Empire français à la décolonisation (Paris: Hachette, 1993).
- Priestley, H., France Overseas: A Study of Modern Imperialism (London: Cass & Co., 1966).
- Schneider, W., An Empire for the Masses: the French Popular Image of Africa 1870-1900 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982).
- Semaines sociales en France, Le Problème social aux colonies: XXIIe session 1930 (Lyon: Chronique sociale de la France, 1930).
- Sherzer, D., (ed), Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone World (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).
- Sorlin, P., "The Fanciful Empire: French Feature Films and the Colonies in the 1930s", French Cultural Studies, ii, June 1991, pp. 135-151.
- Thobie, J., Meynier, G., Coquery-Vidrovitch, C., and Ageron, C.-R., Histoire de la France coloniale 1914-1990 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990).
- Woolf, S., "French Civilisation and Ethnicity in the Napoleonic Empire", Past and Present, no. 124, 1989, pp. 96-120.

Background on Indochina

- Brocheux, P., and Hémery, D., Indochine: la colonisation ambiguë (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 1995).

- Crozier, B., South-East Asia in Turmoil (London: Penguin, 1965).
- Daniel, V., La Francophonie au Vietnam (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992).
- Descours-Gatin, C., and Villiers, H., Guide de recherches sur le Vietnam: bibliographies, archives et bibliothèques de France (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1983).
- Duras, M., Un Barrage contre le Pacifique, (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).
- Duras, M., L'Amant (Paris: Minuit, 1984).
- Franchini, P., (ed), Saigon 1925-45: de la 'Belle Colonie' à l'éclosion révolutionnaire ou la fin des dieux blancs (Paris: Les Editions Autrement/série mémoires, no. 17, 1992).
- Garnier, F., Voyage d'exploration en Indochine (Paris: Hachette, 1873).
- Hall, D., History of South-East Asia (London: Macmillan, 1960).
- Hémery, D., Ho Chi Minh: de L'Indochine au Vietnam (Paris: Découverte Gallimard/Histoire, 1990).
- Lacouture, J., André Malraux: une vie dans le siècle (Paris: Seuil, 1973).
- Lacouture, J., Ho Chi Minh (Paris: Seuil, 1977).
- Lancaster, D., The Emancipation of French Indochina (Oxford: OUP, 1961).
- Meyer, C., Les Français en Indochine 1860-1910 (Paris: Hachette, 1996).
- Noury, J., L'Indochine en cartes postales: avant l'ouragan 1900-1920 (Paris: Publi-fusion, 1992).
- Pluvier, J., South-East Asia from Colonialism to Independence (London: OUP, 1974).
- SarDesai, D., South East Asia: Past and Present (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).
- Simon, P., "Portraits coloniaux des Vietnamiens (1858-1914)", in Guiral, P., and Temime, E., (eds.), L'Idée de race dans la pensée politique française contemporaine (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1977).
- Van, N., Viet-nam 1920-1945: révolution et contre-révolution sous la domination coloniale (Paris: L'Insomniaque, 1995).
- Yeager, J., The Vietnamese Novel in French: A Literary Response to Colonialism (Hanover: University of New Hampshire Press, 1987).

The Franco-indochinese War (1945-54) and Decolonisation

- Ageron, C-R., La Décolonisation française (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991).
- Ageron, C-R., "Vichy, les Français et l'Empire", in Azéma, J-P., and Bédarida, F., Vichy et les Français (Paris: Fayard, 1992).
- Benot, Y., Massacres coloniaux 1944-1950: la IVe république et la mise au pas des colonies françaises (Paris: La Découverte, 1994).
- Betts, R., France and Decolonisation 1900-1960 (London: Macmillan, 1991).
- Boisanger, C. de, On Pouvait éviter la guerre d'Indochine (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1977).
- Dalloz, J., La Guerre d'Indochine 1945-1954 (Paris: Seuil, 1987).
- Dalloz, J., Dien Bien Phu (Paris: La Documentation française, 1991).
- Ferrandi, J., Les Officiers français face au Viet Minh 1945-1954 (Paris: Fayard, 1966).
- Folin, J. de, Indochine 1940-1955 (Paris: Perrin, 1993).
- Gettleman, M., (ed), Vietnam: History, Documents and Opinions on a Major World Crisis (Middlesex: Penguin, 1965).
- Hammer, E., The Struggle for Indochina (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954).
- Isoart, P., (ed), L'Indochine française 1940-45 (Paris: PUF, 1982).
- Kolko, G., Vietnam: Anatomy of a War 1940-75 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986).
- Lancaster, D., The Emancipation of French Indo-China (London: OUP, 1961).
- Le Monde dossiers et documents, "Les Guerres du Vietnam", no. 179, July-August 1990.
- Michel, M., "De Lattre et les débuts de l'Américanisation de la guerre d'Indochine", in Revue française d'Histoire d'outre-mer, no. 72, 1985, pp. 321-334.
- O'Ballance, E., The Indo-China War 1945-1954 (London: Faber, 1964).
- Ruscio, A., Dien Bien Phu: la fin d'une illusion (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986).
- Ruscio, A., La Guerre française d'Indochine 1945-54 (Bruxelles: Editions complexe, 1992).

Ruscio, A., "French Public Opinion and the War in Indochina 1945-1954", in Scriven, M., and Wagstaff, P., (eds), War and Society in Twentieth-Century France (London: Berg, 1991).

Ruscio, A., "Dien Bien Phu: du coup de génie à l'aberration, ou comment les contemporains ont vécu l'ultime bataille de la guerre française d'Indochine", in Revue française d'Histoire d'outre-mer, no. 72, 1985, pp. 335-347.

Sorum, P., Intellectuals and Decolonization in France (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977).

Tiet, Tran-Minh, Problèmes de défense du sud-est asiatique (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1967).

Yacono, X., Les Etapes de la décolonisation (Paris: PUF/Que sais-je?, 1982).

Filmography

Annaud, J-J., L'Amant, 1992.

La France au Temps des Colonies, (Collection Alain Decaux), (TF1 Entreprises, 1994).

Schoendoerffer, P., Dien Bien Phu, 1992.

Wargnier, R., Indochine, 1991.

Articles

Andreu, A., "Pierre Schoendoerffer: 'Oui cette bataille a été une histoire d'amour!'", L'Événement du jeudi, 27 February - 4 March 1992, pp. 91-92.

Andreu, A., "Cinéma français: la reconquête de l'Indochine", L'Événement du jeudi, 16-22 April, 1992, pp. 112-113.

Krop, P., "Dien Bien Phu: les vraies raisons du désastre", L'Événement du jeudi, 27 February - 4 March 1992, pp. 88-91.

Ramirez, F., and Rolot, C., "D'Une Indochine à l'autre", Cinémathèque, 2, November 1992, pp. 40-55.

Discography

Chansons exotiques et coloniales (Paris: EPM, 1995).

La Guerre d'Indochine 1945-54 (Paris: Cassettes Radio France, 1991).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Franchini, P., Les Guerres d'Indochine (Paris: Pygmalion, 1988).

Norindr, P., Phantasmatic Indochina: French Colonial Ideology in Architecture, Film, and Literature (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

Robiquet, P., Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry, tome 5: Discours sur la politique extérieure et coloniale (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897).

Chapter 2: Colonial Policy and Education Policy

Primary Sources

Ancel, R., and Maurel, G., Premières notions d'histoire de France (Cours élémentaire, 1ère année), (Ligugé: Saint-Martin, 1896).

Barthélemy, P., (Gouvernement général de l'Indochine, Direction de l'Instruction publique), L'Enseignement du français à l'école franco-indigène (suivi de l'arrêté du 7 juillet 1927 comportant les nouveaux programmes), (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1927).

Bibliothèque d'Orientation professionnelle (Guide des carrières), Les Carrières dans le corps des administrateurs coloniaux (Paris: Carus, 1931).

Bourotte, B., La Pénétration scolaire en Annam (Gouvernement général de l'Indochine - Direction générale de l'Instruction publique), (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1930).

Bruno, G., Le Tour du monde par deux enfants (Cours moyen), (Paris: Belin, [n.d.]).

Ce que tout candidat colonial doit savoir avant de s'expatrier (Marseille: Société anonyme du "Sémaphore de Marseille", 1932).

Conférences publiques sur l'Indo-Chine faites à l'Ecole Coloniale pendant l'année scolaire 1907-1908 (Paris: Imprimerie de la Dépêche Coloniale, [n.d.]).

Crouzet, P., L'Enseignement dans les colonies françaises depuis la guerre (Paris: Armand Colin, 1924).

Cultru, P., Leçon d'ouverture du cours d'histoire coloniale (fondé par les gouvernements généraux de l'Indo-Chine et de Madagascar, 23 janvier 1906, Université de Paris, Faculté des Lettres), (Besançon: Jacquin, 1906).

Dao Van Minh, Premier livre de lecture française (Conformément aux programmes officiels et à l'arrêté du 7 juillet 1927, cours préparatoire et cours élémentaire, ouvrage adapté par la Commission des manuels scolaires pour les écoles franco-indigènes de l'Indochine), (Haiphong: Thuy-Ky, 1929).

Exposition Coloniale internationale Paris 1931, Indochine française, Section des services d'intérêt social, Direction générale de l'Instruction publique, Les Manuels scolaires et les publications pédagogiques de la Direction générale de l'Instruction publique (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1931).

Ferrand, L-H., Géographie de la France et de ses colonies (Cours moyen, préparation au certificat d'études), (Paris: Cornély, 1904).

Foucart, G., and Grigaut, M., La Géographie au brevet élémentaire: La France et ses colonies (Paris: Delagrave, 1909).

Gaffarel, P., Lectures géographiques et historiques sur l'Algérie et les colonies françaises (Paris: Garnier, 1888).

Gallouédec, L., and Maurette, F., La France et ses colonies (3ème année, conforme aux programmes de 1920), (Paris: Hachette, 1922).

Gouvernement général de l'Indochine, Direction de l'Instruction publique, Plan d'études et programmes de l'enseignement primaire supérieure franco-indigène: réglementation du diplôme d'études primaires supérieures franco-indigènes (Arrêtés des 26 décembre 1924, 16 janvier 1925, 13 mars 1926, 1 juin 1926, 23 novembre 1926), (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1928).

Gouvernement général de l'Indochine, Direction de l'Instruction publique, Enseignement primaire et élémentaire franco-indigène et certificat d'études primaires franco-indigènes (Arrêtés du 17 juin 1927), (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1933).

Gouvernement général de l'Indochine, Direction générale de l'Instruction publique, La Cochinchine scolaire: l'enseignement dans le pays le plus évolué de l'Union indochinoise (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1931).

Guiot, J., and Mane, F., Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours (Cours élémentaire des écoles primaires; troisième édition), (Paris: Delaplane, 1912).

Hardy, G., Géographie de la France extérieure (Les Manuels coloniaux, collection dirigée par M. Georges Hardy, directeur de l'école Coloniale), (Paris: Larose, 1928).

Josset, E., A Travers nos colonies: livre de lectures sur l'histoire, la géographie, les sciences et la morale (Cours moyen et supérieur), (Paris: Armand Colin, 1901).

Lavisse, E., Histoire de France (Cours moyen, préparation au certificat d'études primaires), (Paris: Armand Colin, 1912).

Le Rôle et la situation de la famille française dans nos colonies (Paris: Editions du journal des coloniaux et l'Armée coloniale réunis, 1927).

Loubet, L'Enseignement en Indochine en 1929 (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1929).

Mane, F., Géographie élémentaire de la France et de ses colonies (Classe de 7ème, enseignement classique, certificat d'études primaires), (Marseille: Laffitte, 1905).

Manuel élémentaire à l'usage des officiers et sous-officiers appelés à commander des indigènes coloniaux dans la métropole: Fascicule no. 1: Indochinois (Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle, 1926).

Mariol, H., Abrégé de législation coloniale: préparation aux grands concours de l'Administration coloniale (Paris: Larose, 1927).

Méthode de langage français et annamite destinée aux écoles de l'Indochine (Cours élémentaire), (Quinhon: Imprimerie de Quinhon, 1923).

Nguyen Duc Bao, Pour nos jeunes écoliers: lecture courante et expliquée (cours élémentaire et cours moyen, 1ère année des écoles franco-annamites), (Hanoi: Tan Dan Thu Quan, 1925).

Pham-Dinh-Dien, and Vu-Nhu-Lâm, Manuel d'histoire d'Annam (Conforme au programme d'études de 1930, à l'usage des élèves des cours moyens et supérieurs et des candidats au certificat d'études primaires franco-indigènes), (Nam-Dinh: Imprimerie My Thang, 1931).

Rogeaux, C., Lanier, L., and Laborde, A., Cours de géographie méthodique: La France et ses colonies, notions générales, les cinq parties du monde (Cours élémentaire et cours moyen, 1ère année, 212ème édition, complètement refondue conformément au programme de 1923), (Paris: Belin, 1926).

Sarraut, A., La Mise en valeur de colonies françaises (Paris: Payot, 1923).

Trevey, X., "L'Ecole coloniale", Revue politique et parlementaire, no. 17, 1898, pp. 577-591.

Secondary Sources

Altbach, P., and Kelly, G., (eds) Education and Colonialism (London: Longman, 1978).

Altbach, P., and Kelly, G., (eds) Education and the Colonial Experience (2nd revised edition), (London: Transaction Books, 1984).

August, T., The Selling of Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda 1890-1940 (London: Greenwood, 1985).

Barnett, A., "Cambodia will never disappear", New Left Review, no. 180, 1990, pp. 101-125.

Girardet, R., "Les Trois couleurs", in Nora, P., Les Lieux de mémoire I: La République (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

Manceron, G., "Images et idéologies: l'Europe, l'Afrique et le monde arabe dans les manuels scolaires d'hier et d'aujourd'hui", in Blanchard, P., et. al., L'Autre et nous: scènes et types (Paris: ACHAC, 1995).

Nora, P., "Lavis, instituteur national: Le Petit Lavis, évangile de la République", in Les Lieux de mémoire I: La République (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

Semidei, M., "De l'Empire à la décolonisation à travers les manuels scolaires français", Revue française de science politique, vol. 16, 1966, pp. 56-86.

Chapter 3: Colonial Urbanism in Indochina

Primary Sources

Abbatucci, Dr., "Aperçu sur les stations climatiques des colonies tropicales françaises", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), pp. 12-16.

Bénard, C., Au service de l'Indochine: l'oeuvre de Maurice Long 1919-1923 (Paris: Larose, 1931).

Brébion, J., "La Naissance et les premières années de Saigon, ville française", Bulletin de la Société des Etudes indochinoises, vol. 2, no. 2, 1927, pp. 63-138.

"Ernest Hébrard en Indochine", Urbanisme, no. 12, 1933, pp. 169-172.

"L'Urbanisme en Indochine", L'Architecture, vol. 36, no. 7, 1923, p. 97.

Hébrard, E., "L'Architecture locale et les questions d'esthétique en Indochine", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), pp. 32-34.

Hébrard, E., "La Conservation des Monuments anciens et des vieilles villes indigènes de l'Indochine", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), pp. 25-26.

Hébrard, E., "L'Habitation en Indochine", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies, vol. 2, 1935, pp. 58-62.

Hébrard, E., "L'Urbanisme en Indochine", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux, vol. 1, (La Charité-sur-Loire: Delayance, 1932), pp. 278-289.

Léger, M., "L'Habitation coloniale du point de vue médical", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), pp. 39-46.

Lyautey, Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar 1894-1899 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1933).

Marrast, J., "Dans quelle mesure faut-il faire appel aux arts indigènes dans la construction des édifices?", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), p. 24.

Marrast, J., "L'Habitation coloniale", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), p. 38.

Monsarrat, G., "L'Organisation administrative et la législation urbaine et rurale aux colonies", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), pp. 98-102.

Pavrel, G., Hygiène colonial: comment on doit vivre aux colonies (Paris: "Colonia", 1912).

Pineau, L-G., "Le Plan d'aménagement et d'extension de Dalat", La Vie Urbaine, no. 49, 1939, pp. 29-49.

Pouyanne, A., (Inspection générale des Travaux publics), Les Travaux publics de l'Indochine (Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1926).

Vaillat, L., "L'Esthétique aux colonies", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), pp. 21-23.

Vivier de Streel, M., "Urbanisme et colonisation", in Royer, J., L'Urbanisme aux colonies: vol. 2 (Paris: Editions d'Urbanisme, 1935), pp. 2-4.

Secondary Sources

AlSayyad, N., Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992).

Carr, S., Francis, M., Rivlin, L., and Stone, A., Public Space (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

de Gantès, G., "Du Rôle des 'grands hommes' aux colonies: l'exemple d'Henri de Montpezat en Indochine", Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer, vol. 80, no. 301 (4), 1993.

Harvey, D., Social Justice and the City, (London: Edward Arnold, 1973).

King, A., Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy: Cultural and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System (London: Routledge, 1990).

Lafont, P., (ed), Péninsule indochinoise: études urbaines (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991).

Murphey, R., "Traditionalism and Colonialism: Changing Urban Roles in Asia", Journal of Asian Studies, vol. 29, no. 1, November 1969, pp. 67-84.

Parenteau, R., and Champagne, L., (eds), La Conservation des quartiers historiques en Indochine (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1997).

Ross, R., and Telkamp, G., (eds), Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985).

Woodside, A., "The Development of Social Organizations in Vietnamese Cities in the Late Colonial Period", Pacific Affairs, no. 44, 1971, pp. 39-64.

Wright, G., and Rabinow, P., "Savoir et pouvoir dans l'urbanisme moderne colonial d'Ernest Hébrard", Cahiers de la recherche architecturale (villes nouvelles, cités, satellites, colonies: de l'art urbain à l'urbanisme), no. 9, 1981, pp. 27-43.

Wright, G., "Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy", Journal of Modern History, no. 59, 1987, pp. 291-316.

Wright, G., The Politics and Design of French Colonial Urbanism (London: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

Chapter 4: L'Exposition coloniale de Vincennes 1931

Official Discourses

Cartier, H., Comment la France "civilise" ses colonies (Paris: Bureau d'Editions, 1932).

Demaison, A., L'Exposition coloniale internationale 1931 Guide officiel, (Paris: Mayeux, 1931).

Rapport général (présenté par le Gouverneur général Olivier) 9 vols, (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1932-5).

Reynaud, P., L'Empire français, (discours prononcé à l'inauguration de l'Exposition coloniale), (Paris: Guillemot et Lamothe, (s.d)).

Sarraut, A., La Mise en valeur des colonies françaises, (Paris: Payot, 1923).

Sarraut, A., Grandeur et servitude coloniales (Paris: Sagittaire, 1931).

Semaines Sociales de France (Marseille XXIIème session, 1930), 'Le Problème social aux colonies' (Lyon: Chronique Sociale de France, 1930).

The Exhibition

Ageron, C-R., 'Les Colonies devant l'opinion publique française 1919-1939', Revue française histoire d'outre-mer, no. 77, 1990.

- Beautheac, N., and Bouchart, F-X., L'Europe exotique (Paris: Société Nationale des Editions du Chêne, 1985).
- Boudot-Lamotte, E., "Le Musée des colonies", L'Architecture, 46, (7), July 1931, p. 239.
- Boulanger, P., "Des danseuses cambodgiennes aux cavaliers algériens: visions d'empire - les affiches des expositions coloniales de Marseille 1906-1922", in Blanchard et. al., L'Autre et nous: scènes et types (Paris: ACHAC, 1995).
- Breton, A., "Ne Visitez pas l'Exposition coloniale", Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives 1922-39 (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1980), pp. 194-5.
- de Beauplan, R., "Les Palais de l'Indochine", L'Illustration, no. 4612, juillet 1931.
- Deferre, G., (ed), L'Orient des Provençaux: Les Expositions coloniales 1906-1922 (Vieille Charité, CBR, Nov 1982-Fév 1983).
- Hodeir, C., and Pierre, M., L'Exposition coloniale (Brussels: Editions complexe, 1991).
- Hodeir, C., "L'Epopée de la décolonisation à travers les expositions universelles du 20ème siècle", in Le Livre des expositions universelles 1881-1989 (Paris: Editions des Arts décoratifs-Herschel, 1983).
- Hodeir, C., "Etre 'indigène' aux expositions", in Blanchard et. al., L'Autre et nous: scènes et types (Paris: ACHAC, 1995).
- Karp, I., and Levine, S., (eds), Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).
- Leprun, S., Le Théâtre des colonies: scénographie, actrices et discours de l'imaginaire dans les expositions 1855-1937 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1986).
- L'Illustration, Album hors série sur l'Exposition coloniale, no. 4603, 23 mai 1931.
- Norindr, P., "L'Indochinois' dans l'imaginaire colonial français", in Blanchard et. al., L'Autre et nous: scènes et types (Paris: ACHAC, 1995).
- Norindr, P., "Representing Indochina: the French colonial fantasmatic and the Exposition Coloniale de Paris", in French Cultural Studies, vi, February 1995, pp. 35-60.
- Pasquel-Rageau, C., "Indochine: de la gravure à la photographie", in Blanchard et. al., L'Autre et nous: scènes et types (Paris: ACHAC, 1995).

Angkor

"Angkor et dix siècles d'art khmer", Le Petit journal des grandes expositions, no. 284, February/May 1997.

"Angkor: l'art khmer au Cambodge et en Thaïlande", Dossiers Histoire et Archéologie, no. 125, March 1988.

Barnett, A., "Cambodia will never disappear", New Left Review, no. 180, 1990, pp. 101-125.

Dagens, B., Angkor: la forêt de pierre (Paris: Gallimard, 1989)

Fougères, M., "Les Ruines khmères dans la littérature française", Présence francophone, no. 1, Autumn 1970, pp. 71-89.

Mouhot, H., Voyages dans les royaumes de Siam, de Cambodge et de Laos (Geneva: Olizane, 1989)

Chapter 5: Literary Representations of Indochina

Ajalbert, J., Raffin Su-su (Paris: Publications littéraires et politiques, 1911), Raffin Su-su suivi de Sao Van Di, (Paris: Kailash, 1995).

Boissière, P., Fumeurs d'Opium (Paris: Flammarion, 1895), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1993).

Boissière, P., Les Propos d'un intoxiqué (Paris: Michaud, 1911).

Bonnetain, P., L'Opium (Paris: Charpentier, 1886).

Casseville, H., Sao, Lamoureuse tranquille (Paris: G. Cres, 1928).

Daguerches, H., Consolata, fille du soleil (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1906).

Daguerches, H., Monde, vaste monde (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1909).

Daguerches, H., Le Kilomètre 83 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1913), (repr. Paris, Kailash, 1993).

de Pouvourville, A., Le Cinquième bonheur (Paris: Michaud, 1911).

Farrère, C., Les Civilisés (Paris: Flammarion, 1905), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1993).

Farrère, C., La Bataille (Paris: Ollendorff, 1911).

Farrère, C., Fumée d'opium (Paris: Ollendorff, 1911).

Farrère, C., Une Jeune fille voyagea (Paris: Flammarion, 1925).

Groslier, G., Le Retour à l'argile (Paris: Emile Paul, 1928), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1994).

Groslier, G., A L'Ombre d'Angkor (Paris: Emile Paul, 1916).

Groslier, G., La Route du plus fort (Paris: Emile Paul, 1925), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1997).

Harmand, J., L'Homme du Mékong: un voyageur solitaire à travers l'Indochine inconnue (Paris: Phébus, 1994).

Loti, P., Un Pèlerin d' Angkor (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1912), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1994).

Loti, P., Pêcheur d'Islande (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1893), (repr. Paris: Bookking International/Classiques français, 1994).

Loti, P., Propos d'exil (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1887);

Mouhot, H., Voyages dans les royaumes de Siam de Cambodge et de Laos (Paris: Hachette, 1868), (repr. Geneva: Olizane, 1989).

Pourtier, J., Mékong (Paris: Grasset, 1931), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1993) .

Pujarniscle, E., Le Bonze et le pirate (Paris: G. Crès & Cie., 1929), (repr. Paris, Kailash, 1994).

Quella-Villéger, A., (ed), Indochine: un rêve d'Asie (recueil), (Paris: Omnibus, 1995).

Scultz, Y., Les Sampaniers de la Baie d'Along (Paris: Plon, 1932).

Vigné d'Octon, P., Au Pays des fétiches (Paris: [n.p.], 1891).

Secondary Sources

Copin, H., L'Indochine dans la littérature française des années vingt à 1954: exotisme et altérité (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996).

Gidley, M., Representing Others: White Views of Indigenous Peoples (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992).

Hargreaves, A., The Colonial Experience in French Fiction: a Study of Pierre Loti, Ernest Psichari and Pierre Mille (London: Macmillan, 1981).

Hue, B., (ed), Indochine: reflets littéraires, Pluriel 3, (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, Centre d'étude des littératures et civilisations francophones, 1992).

Jourda, P., L'Exotisme dans la littérature française depuis Chateaubriand. Tome II Du Romantisme à 1939 (Montpellier: PUF, 1956).

Laude, P., Exotisme indochinois et poésie (Paris: Sudestasie, 1990).

Lebel, R., Histoire de la littérature coloniale en France (Paris: Larose, 1931).

Lefèvre, K., "Eves jaunes et colons blancs", in Franchini, P., (ed), Saigon 1925-45: de la 'Belle Colonie' à l'éclosion révolutionnaire ou la fin des dieux blancs (Paris: Les Editions Autrement/série mémoires, no. 17, 1992), pp. 111-119.

Le Roman colonial: itinéraires et contacts de cultures, vol. 7 (Paris: L'Harmattan/Publication du Centre d'études francophones de l'Université de Paris XIII, 1987).

Le Roman colonial: itinéraires et contacts de culture, vol. 12 (suite) (Paris: L'Harmattan/Publication du Centre d'études francophones de l'Université de Paris XIII, 1990).

Loutfi, M., Littérature et colonialisme: l'expansion coloniale vue à travers la littérature romanesque française 1871-1914 (La Haye: Mouton, 1971).

Malleret, L., L'Exotisme indochinois dans la littérature française depuis 1860 (Paris: Larose, 1934).

Mathé, R., L'Exotisme (Paris: Bordas, 1985).

Moura, J-M., Lire l'exotisme (Paris: Dunod, 1992).

Riesz, J., "L'Ethnologie coloniale ou le refus de l'assimilation: les 'races' dans le roman colonial entre les deux guerres", in Blanchard, P., et. al., L'Autre et nous: scènes et types (Paris: ACHAC, 1995).

Segalen, V., Essai sur l'exotisme: une esthétique du divers (notes) (Paris: Fata Morgana, 1978).

Chapter 6: Travel Journalism

Primary Sources

Challaye, F., Souvenirs sur la colonisation (Paris: Picart, 1935).

Claudé, P., Oeuvres complètes de Paul Claudel: Tome 4, Extrême-Orient (Paris: Gallimard, 1952).

Dorgelès, R., Sur la route mandarine (Paris: Albin Michel, 1925), (repr. Paris: Kailash, 1994).

Durtain, L., Dieux blancs, hommes jaunes (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

Le rôle et la situation de la famille française aux colonies (Paris: Editions du journal des coloniaux et de l'Armée coloniale réunis, 1927).

Monet, P., Les Jauniers: histoire vraie (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

Roubaud, L., Vietnam: la tragédie indochinoise (Paris: Valois, 1931).

Viollis, A., SOS Indochine (Paris: Gallimard, 1935).

Secondary Sources

Langlois, W., André Malraux: l'Aventure indochinoise (translated from the English by Jean-René Major), (Paris: Mercure de France, 1967).

Leroy, G., and Roche, A., Les Ecrivains et le Front Populaire (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1986).

Raymond, G., "French Culture and the Politics of Self-esteem: the Vietnam Experience", in Melling, P., and Roper, J., America, France and Vietnam: Cultural History and Ideas of Conflict (London: Avebury, 1991).

Robertson, G., Mash, M., Tickner, L., Bird, J., Curtis, B., and Putnam, T., (eds), Traveller's Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement (London: Routledge, 1994).