

# **FR325 Week 7**

# Today

1. techniques of coercive governance in the penal colony (*Papillon*) and at Mettray (*L'Enfant criminel* and secondary literature)
2. background to the Algerian War of Independence

# 1. Consolidation

## Small-group discussion

Identify and analyse (a) techniques of coercive governance and (b) modes of prisoner resistance documented in *Papillon* and *L'Enfant criminel* and secondary literature on Mettray under the following headings:

- the daily timetable and allocation of work
- hierarchical organisation and discipline
- inhuman and degrading treatment, including, for example, ritualized humiliation
- architecture and design
- racism, misogyny, heteronormativity
- other

# Techniques of coercive governance and prisoner resistance in *Papillon*

- rigidly fixed and full timetable (35)
  - BUT possibility of transfer to other sites or duties
- hierarchical governance and discipline
  - exploitation of prisoners' violent tendencies (36)
  - systemic violence
  - BUT competitiveness can undermine? (39-40)
- 'interior design' (35)
- ritualized humiliation
  - use of nakedness (37, 38)
  - BUT the 'plan'

- the rule of silence:
  - ‘Silence absolu obligatoire’ (46)
  - altercation with Tribouillard (38)
  - as particular feature of La Réclusion (280, 287)
    - obsessive aspect: guards and prisoners in slippers (281)
  - BUT the prisoners’ so called ‘téléphone’ (38-9)
  - Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (1895)
- ‘side-punishments’ (administrative measures, or omissions, which have a punitive effect):
  - lack official status as punishments but punitive nonetheless
  - Julot to wait to see a doctor with broken arm (40)
  - poor conditions lead to deaths (45)
  - production of mental illness (302-3) and suicide (294), especially in La Réclusion
  - systematic production of physical illness and malnutrition (300, 369)
  - BUT feigning (acting) of amnesia turns this to advantage (296-7)
- general function of acting, feigning or ‘role-playing’ in resistance

- ‘Profiling’ of the ‘incorrigibles’
  - La Relégation as preventative measure
  - Sanchez, ‘Les “incorrigibles”’
  - critiqued in text (51)
  - as juridical concept developed 1881-5
    - qualified Third Republic’s belief in progress (Sanchez, 73)
  - note especially policing of petty theft and vagrancy (Sanchez, 73)
- ‘Inhuman and degrading treatment’
  - violence ubiquitous and usually without official status
  - 11 days handcuffed (41)
  - the poisonous centipedes (side-punishment)
  - the use of La Réclusion especially to promote mental illness and physical weakness (side-punishment)
- heteronormativity, misogyny and racism (ethnocentrism)
  - heteronormative figurings
  - erotic colonizer fantasy of ‘going native’
  - Cf. Bizet, *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (1863)
  - sexulized colonial conquest
  - BUT: parts of penal colony seem to tolerate gay relationships

# 2. Background to The Algerian War of Independence (1954-62)

- invasion 1830
- euphemisms:
  - ‘événements’ (1954)
  - ‘opérations de police’ (1954-5)
  - ‘actions de maintien de l’ordre’ (1956-7)
  - ‘opérations de rétablissement de la paix civile’ (1957)
  - ‘entreprises de pacification’ (1957-62)
  - ‘le drame algérien’ (newsreels throughout the conflict)
- Statute of 1947:
  - extension of mainland as 3 *départements*
  - Governor General
  - Algerian Assembly
    - 120 members from 2 electoral colleges, each with an equal share:
      1. full French citizens (colonizers) + about 58,000 ‘Muslim’ citizens (native Algerians, the colonized)
      2. 1,300,000 ‘Muslim’ voters (colonized)
    - in 1948 population 860,000 French colonizers and 7,700,000 native Algerians

- 30 October 1954 (3 hrs, 70 targets, 2000 arrests, torture)
- riots of 25-25 August 1955; 123 killed and 12,000 native Algerians killed in reprisals
- Les Pouvoirs Spéciaux (March 1956)
- le quadrillage
- The Battle of Algiers (1956-7)
- De Gaulle:
  - 1 June 1958 Head of Government; develops new constitution
  - 8 January 1959 president of new Fifth Republic
  - threat of military coup: 22-25 April 1961, Michel Debré)
  - OAS (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète)
  - Evian Accords
  - independence of Algeria declared 3 July 1962

# 'La torture d'État'

- Torture as most extreme expression of state power (Vidal-Naquet)
- Purpose of torture?
- Ancient Greece to Church in Middle Ages
- Cesare Beccaria (1764 treatise)
- 1948 UN Assembly Declaration
- 1987 UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT)

- As affront to Republican and Enlightenment values
- ‘Out-sourcing’ of torture during WW2 to ‘gestapistes’: ‘infection’ model
- Madagascar uprising 1947
- French Indochina (1930s and 1946-1954)

# Torture in the Algerian War

- Varieties of torture practised
- Aftermath of insurrections of 31 Oct / 1 Nov 1954
- François Mauriac, 'La Question' (15 Jan 1955)
- Pierre Mendès France: 'horribles excès, qui ont parfois été commis, qu'on a exagérés par moments, j'en convins, mais auxquels il faut mettre fin, partout et rapidement' (Jan 1955, cited in Vidal-Naquet, 30)

- Secret reports (Wuillaume & Mairey)
- Scale: from 60,000 troops (1954) to 500,000 (1956)
- 1957: General Massu and the utilitarian defence of torture
- 1957: Commission de sauvegarde des droits et libertés individuels (1957)
- After Challe Plan (1959) under Fifth Republic torture conducted by specialist units outside normal chain of command
- Amnesty of 14 April 1962 to all involved in counter-insurgency work in Algeria