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The Demands of Glory: Tocqueville and Terror in Algeria

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Abstract: It is now commonplace to acknowledge Alexis de Tocqueville's support for Algerian colonization. Less well understood, however, is why he also endorsed the French strategy of "total war" in the regency. How was Tocqueville's liberalism linked to the specific shape of violence in Algeria? By situating his Algerian writings in the intersecting intellectual contexts of the 1840s, this essay argues that Tocqueville endorsed total war in Africa because of his passion for glory. Far from an aristocratic anachronism, that passion was the product of contemporary scientific debates over voluntarism in France. It was also shaped by the lingering legacies of revolutionary republicanism and Bonapartism which defined glory in terms of national defense. By tethering modern liberty to this conception of glory, Tocqueville provided resources for rationalizing settlerism's exterminationist violence.

A diplomatic kerfuffle provided a pretext for the French to invade Algiers in 1830: two years earlier, the dey of Algiers had swiped the French ambassador with a flywhisk. Behind this flimsy excuse lay the fact that a powerful liberal opposition confronted the Restoration government. Legitimists hoped conquering Algiers would repair the monarchy's reputation in time for national elections. The gamble failed. Within months, a revolution replaced the Restoration government with "Citizen-King" Louis-Philippe's July Monarchy, a liberal regime which promised to synthesize popular sovereignty with royal rule.

Despite its liberal credentials, the July Monarchy did not return Algiers. On the contrary, it appropriated the Bourbon conquest for itself.[1] In 1840, the regime embarked on its quest for settler colonization in earnest. Political leaders appointed a new governor-general to Algiers, Thomas Robert Bugeaud. Thanks to Bugeaud's new and controversial style of "total war," the local population dwindled. During the next decade and a half, France's celebrated Armée d'Afrique exterminated almost half of the local population.

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[1]Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 47–65.

Their numbers fell from 4 million to 2.3 million. It would take a half century for the Algerian population to return to pre-1830 levels.[2]

Alexis de Tocqueville met Bugeaud and his staff during his first visit to Algeria in the summer of 1841. During a lunch in Philippeville, Colonel Arsène d'Alphonse explained to the visitor that "nothing but force and terror, Gentlemen, succeeds with these people. The other day a murder was committed on the road. An Arab who was suspected of it was brought to me. I interrogated him and then I had his head cut off. You can see his head on the Constantine gates."[3] Tocqueville expressed dismay at the colonel's candor towards terror, but even so, he was keen to excuse it. Upon returning to France, Tocqueville would write, "I have often heard men in France whom I respect, but with whom I do not agree, find it wrong that we burn harvests, that we empty silos, and finally that we seize unarmed men, women, and children." Although he found such actions regrettable, Tocqueville nevertheless insisted that "for myself, I think that all means of desolating these tribes must be employed."[4]

On occasion, Tocqueville's excuses for Bugeaud's terror extended beyond reluctant apologies to silent, tacit approval. In June 1845, the Armée d'Afrique chased hundreds of locals into the caves of Dahra. Fleeing families believed the caves offered divine sanctuary. Pressed for time, Colonel Aimable Pélissier commanded his soldiers to block the cave entrance with pyres, asphyxiating and melting the families inside with their livestock. Colonel Saint Arnaud mimicked the tactic in the following months "on grounds that salutary terror would hasten the pacification" of locals.[5] When news of the violence at Dahra publicly broke in France, it provoked widespread denunciation of Bugeaud's tactics within the Chamber of Deputies and across Europe. Tocqueville—France's foremost expert on the Algerian question—nevertheless remained silent in the Chamber and in his private letters.[6]

It is now commonplace to acknowledge Tocqueville's support for the colonization of Algeria. Isaiah Berlin's once proud claim that the paradigmatic French liberal "opposed paternalism and colonialism… no matter how

[2]Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, "Guerre coloniale: guerre totale? Brèves remarques sur la conquête de l'Algérie," *Drôle d'Epoque* 12 (2003): 59–73; Mahfoud Bennoune, *The Making of Contemporary Algeria, 1830–1987: Colonial Upheavals and Post-independence Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 41–42.

[3]Alexis de Tocqueville, "Notes on the Voyage to Algeria in 1841," in *Writings on Empire and Slavery,* ed. Jennifer Pitts (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 56.

[4]Alexis de Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria," in *Writings on Empire and Slavery,* 71.

[5]Cheryl B. Welch, "Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion: Tocqueville on Algeria," *Political Theory* 31, no. 2 (2003): 237.

[6]Welch, "Colonial Violence," 253–34; Melvin Richter, "Tocqueville on Algeria," *Review of Politics* 25, no. 3 (1963): 390.

benevolent" has yielded to a new consensus that, in Jennifer Pitts's words, Tocqueville "embrace[d] imperialism as a kind of national salvation" because it provided a source of greatness, and for Tocqueville, "greatness and liberty were mutually necessary."[7] Indeed, scholars now agree that if Tocqueville's "susceptibility to the notion of national glory as a substitute for political virtue" contradicted other cardinal values he held, it was nevertheless consistent with the overriding importance he placed on politics.[8] Colonialism offered a glorious political antidote to bourgeois society's materialism and mediocrity. During the 1840s, Tocqueville would insist on this claim like a catechism.

Given these frequent observations of Tocqueville's attachment to glory, however, it is surprising that scholars have yet to connect that attachment to the specific shape violence took in Algeria: total war. To be sure, there has been much debate on how best to characterize his apologies for violence. Early critics often took them to be evidence that Tocqueville's "liberalism could not be squared with his colonialism" and that "he betrays his own analysis of the dangers of war."[9] More recent studies have shown them to be consistent with the larger context in which his liberalism took shape, that "it would be a mistake to see the Algerian writings as merely an illiberal moment in Tocqueville's thought."[10]

This essay builds on the work which locates the roots of Tocqueville's colonial writings in his liberalism. Even so, it contends that existing accounts have yet to explain how he could have specifically sanctioned, not only colonialism, but total war. How could the liberal pursuit of national glory have justified a war of extermination? Why should Tocqueville have found in Bugeaud's warfare "a war conducted ably and gloriously"?[11] After all, the path connecting a normative justification of colonialism to exterminationist violence was anything but self-evident during the 1840s. The French initially preferred agrarian settlerism because it was designed to be a pacific alternative to colonialism based on violent chattel slavery. That was why Tocqueville saw no inconsistency in advocating for slavery's abolition while defending colonization in North Africa. Even more, when settlerism turned out to

[7]Isaiah Berlin, "The Thought of de Tocqueville," *History* 50, no. 169 (1965): 204; Jennifer Pitts, "Empire and Democracy: Tocqueville and the Algeria Question," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8, no. 3 (2000): 297, 311.

[8]Pitts, "Empire and Democracy," 298; Cheryl B. Welch, "Tocqueville's Resistance to the Social," *History of European Ideas* 30, no. 1 (2004): 83–107.

[9]Richter, "Tocqueville on Algeria," 396; Roger Boesche, "The Dark Side of Tocqueville: On War and Empire," *Review of Politics* 67, no. 4 (2005): 739.

[10]Pitts, "Empire and Democracy," 316; Margaret Kohn, "Empire's Law: Alexis de Tocqueville on Colonialism and the State of Exception," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 2 (2008): 255–78.

[11]Tocqueville, "First Report on Algeria," in*Writings on Empire and Slavery*, 129.

require violence, it demanded a form of warfare at odds with the traditional type that generated glory: two armies fighting on behalf of sovereigns equipped with equivalent claims to right. From the outset of his program of total domination in 1841, Bugeaud implemented "a new theory of war"—total war—in which the antagonist was no longer an enemy army, but a foreign population.[12] As Tocqueville was aware, there was nothing obviously glorious about such violence. The fact was that the early years of Algerian colonization offered no clear path connecting national glory to total war. That path had to be paved by new arguments. This essay aims to unearth Tocqueville's contributions to those arguments. It tries to understand how his liberalism could be linked to the specific shape colonial violence took in French Algeria—environmental, terroristic, and exterminationist.[13]

In what follows, I argue that one reason Tocqueville could describe Bugeaud's "force and terror" as "a war conducted ably and gloriously" lay in the way colonial war evolved to converge with the specific way postrevolutionary thinkers conceived glory. Premodern glory was often associated with the legislator, statesman, or God. But after the French Revolution, modern glory was exemplified by everyday citizens defending the nation. This transformation was rooted in the concrete experiences and historical memory of the revolutionary wars of liberty (1792–1802) wherein republican French citizens threw back monarchical Europe's allied forces. Shaped by this legacy and its apotheosis in Bonapartist militarism, the glory of citizens came to be associated with what Sudhir Hazareesingh has called "defensive patriotism."[14] For the generation that came of age during and after Napoleon, there was no greater glory than when "the people" rose up in mighty defense of the *patrie en danger*.

Tocqueville's evolving approach to settlerism helped bring colonial warfare closer to this normative representation of violence. Patrick Wolfe has argued that settlerism can either "integrate" or "exterminate" native populations. Rather than describing competing strategies of colonial governance, both articulate a common "logic of elimination" that racializes indigenous populations in ways that undercut their title to the land.[15] Tocqueville, indeed, had

[12]Thomas Rid, "Razzia: A Turning Point in Modern Strategy," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 4 (2009): 617–35; William Gallois, *A History of Violence in the Early Algerian Colony* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[13]Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser, Exterminer: Sur la guerre et l'État colonial* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).

[14]Sudhir Hazareesingh, "Memory, Legend and Politics: Napoleonic Patriotism in the Restoration Era," *European Journal of Political Theory* 5, no. 1 (2006): 71–84; Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Saint-Napoleon: Celebrations of Sovereignty in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[15]Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409.

been an early advocate of peaceful integration between the French and "Moslem civilization" in Africa. Before his first trip to Algeria, he argued that French colonialism ought "to form a single people from two races."[16] However, after 1841 he abandoned integration for extermination by designing culturalist explanations of why integration would fail: "the Arab tribes' passions of religion and depredation always lead them to wage war on us."[17] These explanations attributed integration's failures to the intransigent hostility of the Muslim social state rather than the limited universality of French values. They also made Arabs culpable for undermining the prospects of peaceful integration. The consequence was not only a shift in colonial policy from integration to extermination, but a deflection of responsibility for the war to native society.

Once the indigenous society was blamed for integration's failures, settlerism's violence could be brought closer to familiar images of defensive war. Bugeaud could defend his terrifying "seas of fire" as strategically compulsory: "Gentlemen, you don't make war with philanthropic sentiments. If you want the end, you have to want the means."[18] The Armée d'Afrique could be praised as defenders of a *patrie en danger*, even a glorious reincarnation of the Spartans besieged at Thermopylae. Just as Republicans and Bonapartists had once imagined imperial expansion as a defensive battle against monarchical Europe, Algiers could be reimagined as an oasis of civilized liberty caught in a defensive battle against a hostile Muslim culture. Despite all of its shortcomings—and Tocqueville believed there were many—Algerian colonization could become an occasion to erect a "monument to our country's glory on the African coast."[19]

Tocqueville's justifications for total war thus point to more than a normative contradiction within his liberalism or the insuperable pressures of his geopolitical context. They underscore how an increasingly exterminationist war could be rationalized with resources drawn from liberal republicanism itself. For both Tocqueville and the political culture of which he was a part, colonialism could be assimilated to Napoleonic visions of imperial expansion as glorious defense. France may have been driven to total war by settlerism's implacable "logic of elimination," but what allowed Tocqueville to make peace with that war was his passion for modern glory derived from his own liberal formation. It was a passion, Tocqueville had argued, without which the perils of democratization in France could not be checked.

[16]Alexis de Tocqueville, "Second Letter on Algeria," in *Writings on Empire and Slavery*, 25.

[17]Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria," 63.

[18]Rid, "Razzia," 621.

[19]Tocqueville, "Second Letter on Algeria," 24.

The Psychology of Social Disintegration

In an 1841 letter to John Stuart Mill, Tocqueville wrote,

> I do not have to tell you, my dear Mill, that the greatest malady that threatens a people organized as we are is the gradual softening of mores, the abasement of the mind, the mediocrity of tastes; that is where the great dangers of the future lie. One cannot let a nation that is democratically constituted like ours… take up easily the habit of sacrificing what it believes to be its grandeur to its repose, great matters to petty ones.

Citing a motif of his private writings, Tocqueville complained to Mill that France was relinquishing its "proud attitude," "[consoling] itself by making railroads," and succumbing to an "enervating taste that drags it more each day towards material enjoyments and small pleasures."[20]

The two liberals were intellectual kin. Mill had favorably reviewed both volumes of *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), and his own work drew on Tocqueville's analysis of "the tyranny of the majority." Yet their attitudes diverged sharply on the matter of glory's importance. The Englishman answered Tocqueville's letter with a pointed rebuke: "posterity have a right to expect from men such as you… that you should teach to your countrymen better ideas of what it is that constitutes national glory and national importance."[21]

The dispute points to liberalism's unique trajectory in France. Like their English counterparts, French liberals prioritized "the liberty of the moderns." Benjamin Constant had immortalized the term, and it was vulgarized in François Guizot's infamous prescription, *enrichissez-vous!* Thanks to the French Revolution's shadow, however, French liberals were also preoccupied with mitigating society's dissolution in the age of democracy. In their view, the Revolution had bequeathed to France the twin legacies of political centralization and social atomization. In abolishing the society of orders, the revolution emancipated individuals from the hierarchical bonds of the ancien régime. But it also left citizens with no bonds with which to cohere other than the state. Thus, as Larry Siedentop has argued, French liberals believed that "the growth of state power was intrinsically connected with the atomisation of society."[22] Indeed, Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, a leading Doctrinaire and mentor to Tocqueville, explicitly named this problem the "atomization" of society in a speech to the Chamber of Deputies in 1822.[23]

[20]Tocqueville to John Stuart Mill, March 18, 1841, in *Selected Letters on Politics and Society*, ed. Roger Boesche (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 150–52.

[21]Richter, "Tocqueville on Algeria," 384.

[22]Larry Siedentop, "Two Traditions of Liberalism," in *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 166.

[23]Aurelian Craiutu, "Rethinking Political Power: The Case of the French Doctrinaires," *European Journal of Political Theory* 2, no. 2 (2003): 135.

Vexed by atomization, French liberals were reluctant to accept a vision of society reduced to the equilibrium of competing private interests, as a Mill or Madison might. Instead, they appropriated contemporary scientific developments to argue that liberty required renewing the associational bases of social cohesion and civic-mindedness.[24] To conceptualize "the social," they turned away from natural law theory to anthropological theories of kinship, the comparative historical method, new organic conceptions of society, psychology, and political economy.[25] In other words, the postrevolutionary origins of French liberalism intersected with the invention of modern social theory, and that fact stamped the former with an abiding interest in society's mechanisms of reproduction such as kinship, education, and habits. It also made French liberalism "the first truly sociological idiom" of political theory.[26]

Like his contemporaries, Tocqueville worried about atomization. His visit to America with Beaumont in 1831 provided him his first major occasion to assess its causes and consequences. In *Democracy in America*, he joined Royer-Collard in observing that equality of conditions brought with it *individualisme* or *la société en poussière*. Since the Restoration, socialists such as Saint-Simon had identified individualism as an antisocial, acquisitive disposition fostered by market competition. Tocqueville agreed that material forces were partly responsible for contemporary atomization. He was especially preoccupied with the abolition of primogeniture which altered the form of the social in observable ways.[27]

At the same time, Tocqueville's investigations in America revealed that revolution was not exclusively responsible for *la société en poussière*. French revolutionaries may have abolished seigniorial privileges for individualistic private property on the night of August 4, 1789. They may have passed Loi

[24]Andrew Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 12–15.

[25]Karuna Mantena, "Social Theory in the Age of Empire," in *Empire and Modern Political Thought*, ed. Sankar Muthu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 324–50; Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 56–61; Robert A. Nisbet, "The French Revolution and the Rise of Sociology in France," *American Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 2 (1943): 156–64; Lorraine J. Daston, "Rational Individuals versus Laws of Society: From Probability to Statistics," in *The Probabilistic Revolution*, vol. 1, *Ideas in History*, ed. Lorenz Krüger, Lorraine J. Daston, and Michael Heidelberg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 295–304.

[26]Siedentop, "Two Traditions of Liberalism," 160; Michael C. Behrent, "Liberal Dispositions: Recent Scholarship on French Liberalism," *Modern Intellectual History* 13, no. 2 (2016): 447–77.

[27]Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 55–57, 484. Future citations to this edition will be given in-text and abbreviated as *DA*.

Le Chapelier in 1791 which proscribed voluntary associations as unconstitutional, seditious, and in violation of the rights of man. But unlike France, America had not undergone a social revolution, and it, too, showed symptoms of *individualisme*. In the clarity of its democratic experience, Tocqueville believed he could glean atomization's deeper causes, which connected France and America in a common, providential pattern of history: the equality of conditions and the ascendance of middle-class values such as materialism, petty self-interest, and diffidence to politics and public ventures—in a word, *embourgeoisement*.

It is noteworthy, for example, that Tocqueville's portrait of atomization in America placed the accent on its psychological aspects. For all the analytical importance he assigned to power and property's centrifugal dispersion, it was its impact on the psyche that captured his attention. He worried that man had "withdrawn into himself" and was living "virtually [as] a stranger to that of all others." In such a state, citizens had become isolated, adrift, and deprived of the inner fortitude that genuine moral conviction conferred. Self-interest was reduced from a vector for public concern ("self-interest rightly understood") to atomizing "petty and vulgar pleasures." With the ties between private and public interests snapped, man may live "alongside [his fellow citizens] but does not see them. He touches them but does not feel them." Led only by narrow self-interest, "he exists only in himself and for himself" (*DA* 818). His mind becomes "nothing more than intellectual dust, blown about by every wind and unable to coalesce into any fixed shape" (*DA* 487), or alternately, the "shifting, impalpable dust, on which democracy rests" (*DA* 54). Nor was Tocqueville immune to these effects himself. He complained bitterly about his loneliness and isolation, and believed himself born "too late," having missed the era of great statesmanship.[28] The heights of political passion, such as they were known in the age of Robespierre and Napoleon, had been supplanted by trivial commercial interests. Political life under the July Monarchy had been reduced to a "game in which each person seeks only to win."[29] For all its benefits, the equality of conditions had cheapened the meaning of politics.

Tocqueville's choice to attribute atomization to *embourgeoisement* had roots in a wider French revolt against the sensationalist psychology of John Locke.[30] That fact has not yet received the attention it deserves, even though it helps explain why French liberals departed from their

[28]Roger Boesche, *The Strange Liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 27.

[29]Tocqueville to Gustave de Beaumont, December 14, 1846, in *Selected Letters*, 181–82.

[30]Michael Drolet, "Carrying the Banner of the Bourgeoisie: Democracy, Self and the Philosophical Foundations to François Guizot's Historical and Political Thought," *History of Political Thought* 32, no. 4 (2011): 645–90; Michael Drolet, "Manners, Method, and Psychology: The Enduring Relevance of Tocqueville's Reflections on Democracy," *European Journal of Political Theory* 11, no. 4 (2012): 487–98.

Anglophone colleagues in repudiating the latter's vision of society as an ensemble of private interests.[31] Locke had critiqued the existence of "innate ideas" in *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690). He claimed that all knowledge derived from sensory experience, which language organized and indexed for the purposes of drawing logically consistent inferences. Although Locke's argument would ground British empiricism, its impact was different in France. Whereas the British (and Voltaire) viewed the *Essay*'s argument as a triumph of reason over prejudice, in the 1730s, a Lockean-inspired Newtonianism appeared in the French academies that interpreted the critique of innate ideas differently: if all knowledge derives from sense perception, sensation rather than reason grounds knowledge. This doctrine was called "sensationalism" in France.[32]

Tocqueville was involved with the critique of sensationalism by both temperament and personal filiation. He was acquainted with Victor Cousin, the foremost French philosopher of the mid-nineteenth century and sensationalism's greatest critic. A *normalien*, Cousin had been recruited to the circle of Doctrinaires by Royer-Collard. He later succeeded the latter as a philosophy professor at the University of Paris. He also served on the Restoration's Council of Public Instruction and shaped the philosophical curriculum for generations of students. His lectures on the history of philosophy were considered major events among the educated public.[33]

Cousin criticized Locke's sensationalism for portraying the psyche as something passive and fragmented. A tabula rasa, the Lockean self was limited to reproducing within the mind fragmentary sensations impinging from without. "It is certain," Cousin conceded, that "upon the first examination of consciousness, we perceive a succession of phenomena which, decomposed into their elements, may be traced back to sensation." However, "if everything in man is reduced to sensation, then everything is reduced to enjoyment and suffering; avoiding pain and seeking pleasure would be the sole rule of our conduct. … This system is that of the Sensual school."[34]

[31]Jaume has traced the roots of Tocqueville's analysis, not to French debates in psychology, but to Lemannais. See Lucien Jaume, *Tocqueville: The Aristocratic Sources of Liberty*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). For Tocqueville's analysis of the symbiosis between democracy and capitalism, see Laura Janara, "Commercial Capitalism and the Democratic Psyche: The Threat to Tocquevillean Citizenship," *History of Political Thought* 22, no. 2 (2001): 317–50.

[32]Stephen Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1680–1760* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2010), 11–16, 162–86, 387–420; John C. O'Neal, *The Authority of Experience: Sensationist Theory in the French Enlightenment* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

[33]Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 21–102, 182–232.

[34]Victor Cousin, *Fragmens philosophique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Ladrange Libraire, 1833), xiii; my translation of this and subsequent quotations from this work.

Criticizing sensationalism was no mere philosophical quibble. Its account of the psyche as fragmented and ruled by sensations reinforced the atomization brought about by the equality of conditions. There was a reciprocal relation, in other words, between the psychic and the social: sensationalism was a philosophy of mind symptomatic of an age of democratic disintegration.

For these reasons, mitigating atomism required replacing the Lockean subject.[35] Cousin sought to provide that new postrevolutionary self by "showing that personality, the 'me' is at bottom free and voluntary activity."[36] He encouraged citizens to rediscover voluntarism by remembering that experiences such as the inner will "clearly had no source in perception." They were instead "volitional facts," essentially psychological, "which sensation by no means explains."[37] By discovering this voluntarist self as the starting point of psychology, philosophy could offer a new psychic anchor for modern society. Liberty itself was at stake. As Cousin explained, "To place ourselves beyond the conditions of sense, to will, without regard for its consequences… this is true liberty." If a person could "hold the will within itself" and "let it act without outward manifestation," if they could avoid "marking [their] will with sensual effects," then they would "be completely emancipated from the material world."[38]

Tocqueville was acquainted with Cousin's work. He was only a degree removed from Cousin and his associates. He also held Cousin's writing in high esteem. Years later, he would chastise Arthur de Gobineau for not appreciating his contemporaries, asking, "what better writer than Cousin" was there in France?[39] It is thus not surprising that Tocqueville dedicates several sections in *Democracy in America* to explaining skepticism's deleterious consequences for social cohesion. After all, besides defending the voluntarist *personalité*, Cousin was preoccupied with denouncing the ways sensationalism led to skepticism ("To limit philosophy to observation [of sensations] is, whether we know it or not, to place it in the path to skepticism").[40] In those sections, Tocqueville claimed the sensationalist epistemology of the seventeenth century "destroyed the empire of tradition, and overthrew the authority of the master" (*DA* 485). If individuals believed only what their senses conveyed, they would lose access to "a certain number of ready-made beliefs" without which "men may still exist, but they will not constitute a social body" (*DA* 490). For the social body to cohere, it needed to be "held together by certain leading ideas" that were drawn "from the same source." Readers of *Democracy in America* would have had little trouble

[35]Goldstein, *Post-Revolutionary Self*, 8–11.
[36]Cousin, *Fragmens philosophique*, xvii.
[37]Ibid., xii–xiv.
[38]Ibid., 210.
[39]Tocqueville to Gobineau, September 16, 1858, in *Selected Letters*, 376.
[40]Cousin, *Fragmens philosophique*, vii–viii.

connecting Tocqueville's discussion of skepticism to wider debates over sensationalism's socially disintegrating effects.

Alongside Cousin, François Guizot taught Tocqueville that the psychic and the social were interdependent.[41] Guizot was an esteemed historian, Doctrinaire, and minister of the interior under Louis-Philippe. Known for advocating "liberalism through the state," Guizot and Cousin were close.[42] Together with Royer-Collard, the two intellectuals were involved in the circle of Maine de Biran, a philosopher dedicated to theorizing voluntarism. They worked together as the principal voices of the journal *Le Globe* before it was transferred to Saint-Simonians. Importantly, Guizot also taught Tocqueville. Beginning in 1828—the same year as Cousin's famous Sorbonne lectures on the history of philosophy—Guizot offered lectures on the history of civilization. For two years, Tocqueville traveled from Versailles to Paris each week to attend the historian's lectures. Guizot's *History of Civilization in Europe* was the only book Tocqueville requested upon landing in America. He and Beaumont carried it with them as they traveled, using its categories to frame their observations.

In these lectures, Guizot claimed that civilization was much more than a collection of social facts. It consisted, rather, in "two elements," inner moral development and external social progress. Civilization existed at the intersection of these two domains, just as men (according to Cousin) "live… on the confines of two separate kingdoms [inner freedom and outward necessity], of which we form the mysterious union."[43] The subjective moral life and objective social conditions of peoples were linked such that "wherever the external condition of man extends itself, vivifies, ameliorates itself; wherever the internal nature of man displays itself with lustre, with grandeur; at these two signs, and often despite the profound imperfection of the social state, mankind with loud applause proclaims civilization."[44] Guizot was at pains to emphasize that the "social development and the moral development" of Europe must be seen as "closely connected together," as possessing "so intimate and necessary a relation between them" that they "reciprocally produce" one another. Indeed, that interplay made regeneration possible. Just as Christianity had "regenerated the moral man," equality of conditions had "changed and regenerated society" by altering "his external condition."[45]

Together, Cousin and Guizot's arguments suggested to a generation of liberals in France that the triumph of narrow private interests in France pointed

[41]Melvin Richter, "Tocqueville and Guizot on Democracy: From a Type of Society to a Political Regime," *History of European Ideas* 30 (2004): 61–82.

[42]Lucien Jaume, *L'Individu effacé: Ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français* (Paris: Fayard, 1997); Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le moment Guizot* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

[43]Cousin, *Fragmens philosophique*, 209.

[44]François Guizot, *The History of Civilization in Europe*, trans. William Hazlitt (New York: Penguin Books, 1997; first published 1828), 18.

[45]Guizot, *History of Civilization in Europe*, 18–19, 21.

to more than a deplorable generational mindset. It also endangered the psychological bases of social cohesion itself. As the liberal paper *Le National* put it, "Deprived of all moral unity, profoundly indifferent to the general interest, broken up and reduced to powder like the sand of the seas by the most narrow egoism, the French people is a people in name only."[46] Thus, if Tocqueville critiqued the bourgeois vision of society, it was not because he was compromised by an aristocratic nostalgia.[47] Rather, it was *because* he was a liberal: a thinker eminently preoccupied with the psychological and social bases of modern liberty. To enjoy modern liberty in the age of democracy, Cousin and Guizot suggested, it was not enough to possess its "external" aspects such as a vibrant commercial society. As Tocqueville sought to explain to Mill, one also needed to regenerate "the internal nature of man." One needed glory.

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Guizot had already nominated glory as a countermeasure to social etiolation explicitly. In his 1838 lectures on the history of civilization, the historian explained to his audience, including the enthralled Tocqueville, that even in societies afflicted with disorder, humanity could "[stand] forth in more grandeur and power" if its people enjoyed inner moral development."[48] Tocqueville echoed this appraisal of glory across decades of writing. In an 1837 letter to Royer-Collard, Tocqueville condemned the "almost universal pettiness" that robbed France of its "grandeur" and "brilliance."[49] In an 1840 letter to Gustave de Beaumont, he reminded his friend, "You know what a taste I have for great events and how tired I am of our little democratic and bourgeois pot of soup."[50] Fifteen years later, he was still complaining that however "wealthy, sophisticated, attractive, even impressive" a democracy might be, without an active citizenry, it would not have "great citizens, still less a great nation."[51]

Tocqueville was so keen on greatness that, despite his antipathy to Napoleon's despotism, he respected him. Guizot's appreciation of national grandeur had done nothing to allay his animosity towards the emperor's legacy, and undoubtedly, Tocqueville shared that hostility to "the nonliberal side of [Napoleon's] institutions." But that hostility did not prevent Tocqueville from appealing to the passions the general inspired to revivify

[46]Boesche, *Strange Liberalism*, 46.
[47]Richter, "Tocqueville on Algeria," 364; Boesche, "Dark Side of Tocqueville."
[48]Guizot, *History of Civilization in Europe*, 18.
[49]Tocqueville to Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, August 20, 1837, in *Selected Letters*, 118.
[50]Tocqueville to Gustave de Beaumont, August 9, 1840, in *Selected Letters*, 142.
[51]Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime and the French Revolution*, trans. Gerald Bevan (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 14.

the French psyche. He extolled to Paul Clamorgan the emperor's grandeur, calling him "the most extraordinary being… who has appeared in the world for many centuries."[52] In an unfinished study of the French Revolution, he would add in praise that Napoleon knew how "to direct enthusiasm" to "[make] people die in battle." Unlike Tocqueville's effete generation, Napoleon understood that "high passion [was] always needed to revivify the human spirit, which otherwise decays and rots. It would have never occurred to [Napoleon] to make hearts and spirits concentrate merely on their individual welfare."[53]

At least two reasons explain why Tocqueville comfortably invoked the Napoleonic legacy. First, the American solution to atomization—associational politics—was not available to the French. In *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville showed that associational activity curbed *individualisme* by providing citizens concrete ways of exercising political participation and self-rule (*DA* 67–78). Civic associations such as local townships conveyed self-seeking individuals towards public affairs, so that in pursuing their own concerns, Americans would naturally link their private interests to that of the public, political realm. In contrast, townships in France mitigated individualism by crushing it with a statist vision of the good. Devoid of the American impulse towards limited government, French municipal politics had become centralized, leading citizens to a dull administrative obedience rather than active participatory citizenship (*DA* 75, 98–100). Indeed, associations served altogether different functions in Europe. If "there are peoples among whom the freedom to unite is purely beneficial and a source of prosperity," Tocqueville explained, "there are others who pervert it through abuse." He meant the French, who "still look upon associations as weapons of war." Where American associations offered "schools of liberty," the French saw "freedom of association as nothing more than the right to make war on the government" (*DA* 220–22).

The second reason Tocqueville could turn to the Napoleonic legacy was that its nationalism counteracted the *embourgeoisement* that afflicted French culture. Unlike the realities of imperial rule, Bonapartism's popular legacy idealized voluntarism and public-spiritedness. As Hazareesingh has explained, "Restoration Bonapartism represented a collective French yearning for political unity and social cohesion. … But it also expressed something more subversive: the desire for greater public involvement in the collective life of the nation."[54] Depending on how it was understood, Richard Boyd continues, Bonapartism could "simultaneously appear as anathema and

[52]Tocqueville to Paul Clamorgan, April 17, 1842, in *Selected Letters*, 158.

[53]Alexis de Tocqueville, *The European Revolution and Correspondence with Gobineau*, trans. John Lukacs (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), 149–50.

[54]Sudhir Hazareesingh, "Memory and Political Imagination: The Legend of Napoleon Revisited," *French History* 18, no. 4 (2004): 481; see also Nancy L. Rosenblum, "Romantic Militarism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43, no. 2 (1982): 249–68.

apotheosis of liberalism."[55] Forged from the historical memories of the wars of liberty, popular Bonapartism had grown into a generic language of political dissent that foregrounded voluntarism, virtue, egalitarianism, and selfless sacrifice for the *patrie*. It became "a left-wing code word," even "a manifesto for political freedom and the elimination of privileges associated with the Ancien Régime."[56] Thus, even if Bonapartism continued to name a specific party affiliation, its normative representation of democratic violence appealed across ideological divides because it offered something much more: "a renewable legacy and the basis of a truly national culture."[57]

Underlining Bonapartism's novelty is important. Tocqueville's praise of glory has often been interpreted as an aristocratic "corrective" to his liberalism, even anachronistic.[58] But Tocqueville's occasional appreciation of the Napoleonic legacy urges us to appreciate how modern and liberal his love of glory could be. In Machiavelli, love of *gloria* was typically bound up with the "one man *ordinatore*."[59] In Hobbes, glory belonged to God. In the hands of citizens, it was a source of anarchy, not social cohesion.[60] And glory was typically the possession of heroic individuals in Greek antiquity.[61] But the glory celebrated in revolutionary republicanism and elaborated by Bonapartist militarism was different. The possession of neither the prince, the legislator, nor God, it could now be the property of citizens defending the *patrie en danger*. Battles like Valmy in September 1792 had proved that the age of democracy had earned its own idioms of glory.

Tocqueville was forthright on this latter point. Comparing the public monuments of old Europe with those in America, he observed that American monuments differed from the former in both form and function. Where aristocratic monuments drew attention to the heroic individual or courtly grandeur, democratic monuments praised the greatness of the people qua the

[55]Richard Boyd, "Tocqueville and the Napoleonic Legend," in *Tocqueville and the Frontiers of Democracy*, ed. Ewa Atanassow and Richard Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 265.

[56]Barbara Ann Day-Hickman, *Napoleonic Art: Nationalism and the Spirit of Rebellion in France (1815–1848)* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 116.

[57]Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798–1836* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 7.

[58]Richter, "Tocqueville on Algeria," 364; Boesche, "Dark Side of Tocqueville"; Jaume, *Tocqueville*; Annelien de Dijn, *French Political Thought from Montesquieu to Tocqueville: Liberty in a Levelled Society?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Pitts, "Empire and Democracy."

[59]David Owen, "Machiavelli's *Il Principe* and the Politics of Glory," *European Journal of Political Theory* 16, no. 1 (2017): 41–60.

[60]Tracy Strong, "Glory and the Law in Hobbes," *European Journal of Political Theory* 16, no. 1 (2017): 61–76.

[61]For a brief description of glory's decline after the Renaissance, see Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 9–12.

state. That was why Americans who were otherwise individualistic and self-seeking nevertheless "nurse[d] gigantic ambitions when they turn[ed] their attention to public monuments" (*DA* 536). If public monuments were decorative or ornamental accouterments to royal power under absolutism, in democracies, they were essentially pedagogical instruments of self-awareness. They provided a means for the people to glory in their own agency. In memorializing the state, they paid homage to themselves.

In short, to mitigate *la société en poussière*, French inclinations needed to be guided towards passions "immaterial to a certain degree" and which "[raise] souls above contemplation of private interests."[62] As Tocqueville reiterated in his marginalia on public monuments in America: "in democracies the State must take charge of large and costly works not only because these large works are beautiful, but also in order to sustain the taste for what is great."[63] If France's citizens were to overcome psychological withdrawal, the state would need to foster a taste for glory, even if doing so was economically imprudent, maybe even *because* it was economically imprudent. It needed to encourage its citizens' utilitarian self-interest to grow into a voluntarist self, capable of great public acts. How, then, to "sustain the taste for what is great"? How to seize glory to attach citizens to the public interest? Between the publication of *Democracy in America*'s two volumes, Tocqueville nominated one opportunity: "The future seems to me to be in our hands, and I shall tell you sincerely that with time, perseverance, ability, and justice, I have no doubt that we shall be able to raise a great monument to our country's glory on the African coast."[64]

The Glory of the Armée d'Afrique

There were already hints that Tocqueville might turn to colonization for glory. Discussing the difficulties in finding proper statesmen to stand for election, Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America* that the greatest public monument to the people was the one illuminated by the fires of war and combat:

> a man facing urgent danger rarely remains as he was: he will either rise well above his habitual level or sink well below it. The same thing happens to peoples. Extreme peril does not always impel a nation to rise to meet it; it is sometimes fatal. … In nations as well as individuals, however, it is more common to see the very imminence of danger act as midwife to extraordinary virtues. At such times great characters stand

[62]Tocqueville to Louis de Kergorlay, October 18, 1847, in *Selected Letters*, 192.

[63]Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: Historical-Critical Edition of "De la démocratie en Amérique, "* ed. Eduardo Nolla, trans. James T. Schleifer, 4 vols. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2010), 795 note c.

[64]Tocqueville, "Second Letter on Algeria," 24.

> out as a monument hidden by the dark of night will stand out in the illumination of a blaze. (*DA* 228)

War, Tocqueville suggested, was one place where citizens could undergo the "inner moral regeneration" Guizot had argued was necessary for civilization. Perhaps if the French were "struck by the perils they face," they could awaken to the public interest seemingly forgotten in the midst of decadent economic self-satisfaction.

The year 1840 provided just that opportunity. That year, France commenced the domination of Algeria. Tocqueville and Beaumont immediately made plans to visit Africa to study its society. After some initial delays, Tocqueville left for Algiers with Beaumont from Toulon on May 4, 1841, landing in Algiers three days later. The two traveled the region for a month, interviewing General Bugeaud, his subordinates, and local Arabists.[65] Even before the trip, Tocqueville had drafted a raft of essays criticizing contemporary anticolonial arguments and defending peaceful racial integration in the regency. In 1837, for example, he pondered "how easy it is for the French, who are richer and more industrious than the Arabs, to occupy a large part of the soil without violence. … It is easy to predict a time in the near future when the two races will be intermixed in this way throughout much of the regency."[66] Settlerism based on nonviolent integration was plausible because Arabs were nearly civilized: "These, you will agree, are singular savages. What do they lack… to resemble civilized men entirely?" They even already possessed the institution of private property.[67]

After his trip with Beaumont to Algeria in 1841, however, Tocqueville's attitude towards colonization hardened. Where he had once advocated for settlerism qua integration "to form a single people from two races," Tocqueville now proposed differentiated legal systems and the violent conquest of indigenous populations.[68] He turned his visit's notes into a series of effective reports justifying his new position. Instead of opting for the British strategy of indirect rule in India, Tocqueville now recommended France "replace the former inhabitants with the conquering race."[69] The effort would be two-pronged: domination and colonization. Domination entailed systematic violence, the destruction of indigenous homes and harvest, and systematic raids on Arab communities. Colonization named settlerism's "constructive" prong. Spearheaded by institutions like the *bureaux arabes*, the French state would consolidate the rule of law, centralize

[65]André Jardin, *Tocqueville: A Biography*, trans. Lydia Davis with Robert Hemenway (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988), 321–24.

[66]Tocqueville, "Second Letter on Algeria," 25.

[67]Tocqueville, "First Letter on Algeria," in *Writings on Empire and Slavery*, 7; Tocqueville, "First Report on Algeria," 140, 144–45.

[68]Tocqueville, "Second Letter on Algeria," 25.

[69]Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria," 61.

government, offer language instruction and professional advancement for civil administrators, regulate property titles, and provide capital for new settler families to plow their land. Where other politicians recommended each prong separately or in sequence, Tocqueville insisted the two be pursued concurrently. "Colonization and war… must proceed together."[70] It was a stance he defended, albeit with varying degrees of ardor, even after his second trip to Algeria in 1846 as part of the Chamber of Deputies' delegation.

Tocqueville's evolution from defending integration to defending domination can be partly explained by settlerism's imperative for territorial expropriation. As Wolfe has argued, "territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element."[71] Whatever else settlerism is about, it is about access to land. Thus Tocqueville admitted that however disquieting domination may be, settling French citizens required the expropriation of land, and that meant "domination is the necessary means we must use." Tocqueville conceded, almost as an aside, that he was "quite hostile to violent measures," but reminded his readers that "we must recognize that we shall never manage to possess the land around Algiers without the aid of a series of such measures."[72]

Even so, Tocqueville's justification for abandoning integration went beyond acknowledging the requirements of territorial conquest. Specifically, he defended domination by appealing to the demands of glory, which he believed to be the overriding principle of French geopolitical expansion. Glory, national grandeur, and international prestige were first principles. They expressed values superior to and independent of economic desiderata, "great in themselves."[73] The first sentences of Tocqueville's 1841 memorandum on Algeria were unequivocal on this point: "I do not think France can think seriously of leaving Algeria. In the eyes of the world, such an abandonment would be the clear indication of our decline. … Any people that easily gives up what it has taken and chooses to retire peacefully to its original borders proclaims that its age of greatness is over. It visibly enters the period of its decline."[74] France could not abandon Algeria without jeopardizing its prospects for grandeur. Tocqueville was unambiguous in declaring this reason the "foremost in [his] view" for African colonization. Consistent with his claim that "it would never have occurred to [Napoleon] to make hearts and spirits concentrate merely on their individual welfare," Tocqueville even conceded that if Algeria flourished, it would hurt metropolitan markets. So much the worse, then, for domestic bourgeois interests:

[70]Ibid., 81.
[71]Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 388.
[72]Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria," 65, 87.
[73]Tocqueville, "First Report on Algeria," 167.
[74]Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria," 59.

> I know that metropolitan commerce and industry will protest that we are sacrificing them; that the principal advantage of a colony is to provide an advantageous market for the mother country and not to compete with it. All this may be true in itself, but I am not moved by it. In the current state of things, Algeria should not be considered from the commercial, industrial, or colonial point of view: we must take an even higher perspective to consider this great question. There is in effect a great political interest that dominates all others.[75]

Glory was that "great political interest that dominates all others." This conviction characterized Tocqueville's entire approach to Algeria. France needed "a great theatre for her glory," whatever the economic cost.[76] It was a commitment so unconditional that France could only abandon Algeria "at a moment when she is seen to be undertaking great things in Europe."[77] She could find glory in the African or European theater, but under no circumstance was she to surrender the search altogether.

These passages reveal the great ironies of Tocqueville's liberalism: state centralization at home was to be checked by extraordinary projections of state power abroad. The civic voluntarism and public-spiritedness required to mitigate *la société en poussière* in France depended on shattering the social body in Algeria. Yet it was an irony consistent with Tocqueville's liberalism. It could be seen as an application of Cousin and Guizot's insights to the international arena. By conquering Algeria at whatever cost, France would partake in the greatest source of glory in democratic modernity: "the enslavement of four parts of the world by the fifth."[78] Like the monuments in America, French citizens would be able to discover "self-interest rightly understood" in the monument that was Algiers, its glistening white edifices reflected in the coastal skyline.

* * *

Tocqueville's hardened approach to settlerism raised an obvious problem for transforming Algeria into a theatre for French glory: there was nothing glorious about exterminating indigenous peoples. Tocqueville admitted as much, in both *Democracy in America* when he decried the extermination of Native Americans and in 1847 after Algeria's conquest was an accomplished fact: "Let us not, in the middle of the nineteenth century, begin the history of the conquest of America over again."[79] Indeed, Tocqueville was well aware

[75]Ibid., 71.

[76]Alexis de Tocqueville, "Intervention in the Debate over the Appropriation of Special Funding," in *Writings on Empire and Slavery*, 127–28.

[77]Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria," 59.

[78]Tocqueville to Henry Reeve, April 12, 1840, in *Selected Letters*, 142.

[79]Tocqueville, "First Report on Algeria," 146.

that the notion of glory inherited from Bonapartist militarism placed specific demands on war, namely, that it be waged for national defense and on behalf of persecuted liberty. As numerous historians have shown, Bonapartist culture bound glory indissolubly to the spirit of self-defense.[80] The expansionary wars of liberty were consistently misremembered in France, not as a "quest for world domination, although this was its result, but the revitalization of the national defense force."[81] That was why the Napoleonic armies could be analogized to the example of the Spartans at Thermopylae, as in Jacques Louis David's *Leonidas at Thermopylae* from 1814.[82] David was a Jacobin and a Bonapartist, and in his painting, he depicted Leonidas and the three hundred with Napoleonic visual motifs to suggest a world-historic filiation between ancient Sparta and imperial France.[83] The analogies emphasized how Bonapartist militarism idealized glory, not only in leaders, but also in *volontaires*, the willing conscripts of the wars of liberty. Personifications of virtue, v*olontaires* did not fight wars of aggression motivated by chauvinistic self-interest. They fought defensive wars as citizens called to protect the most public interest of all. It was only in the process of transcending narrow self-interest for the *patrie en danger* that, in a rite of virtue, men seized glory.

From this perspective, colonial warfare in Africa was anything but glorious. Even the Armée d'Afrique acknowledged this fact. In the years following Bugeaud's appointment as marshal, many soldiers died from malnutrition, alcoholism, and exhaustion, but only upwards of a hundred or so soldiers died in combat in any given year. In contrast, the number of Algerians killed, often directly through massacres such as those at Dahra, exceeded tens of thousands. The sheer mismatch in violence was so indisputable that even the label of a "war" seemed farcical.[84] Thanks in part to the normalization of slaughter, rape, and looting, the Armée d'Afrique developed problems with suicide. Jean-de-Dieu Soult, the French minister of war and Guizot's colleague, became sufficiently concerned with the poor optics of French terror in

[80]Alan Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars: The Nation-in-Arms in French Republican Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Hazareesingh, "Memory and Political Imagination."

[81]Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 154.

[82]This painting can be viewed at http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=22495.

[83]Nina Athanassoglou, "Under the Sign of Leonidas: The Political and Ideological Fortune of David's *Leonidas at Thermopylae* under the Restoration," *Art Bulletin* 63, no. 4 (1981): 633–49.

[84]Gallois, *History of Violence*, 14; William Gallois, "Dahra and the History of Violence in Early Colonial Algeria," in *The French Colonial Mind*, vol. 2, *Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism*, ed. Martin Thomas (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 3–25.

Africa that he worked diligently, if in vain, to redact the violence from the regular military bulletins published in metropolitan newspapers.[85]

In such a context, how could colonial total war be squared with the demands of glory? How could Tocqueville describe Bugeaud's terror in 1847 as an example of "a war conducted ably and gloriously"? The Restoration government had solved this dilemma by analogizing the conquest of Algeria to the evangelism of the Christian Crusades. According to Charles X and ecclesiastical leaders, conquering Algiers would be a victory for enlightened Christendom against oriental despotism, a crusade against infidels.[86]

Tocqueville was unsympathetic to these royalist strategies. In *Democracy in America*, he had already criticized the proactive pursuit of military glory as an example of "the coldest, most calculating" spirit (*DA* 320). Thus, Tocqueville came to square the realities of colonial terror with the demands of glory in a different way: he brought it closer to the normative representation of violence inherited from Bonapartist militarism by blurring the lines between colonial aggression and national defense. Specifically, he shifted culpability for the war onto the indigenous population by fundamentally revising his characterization of native society from the late 1830s. Where he had earlier minimized the differences between French and Arab civilization by emphasizing Arabs as industrious owners of private property, he now invoked what Karuna Mantena has called "culturalist alibis" to exaggerate the differences between the two.[87] No longer a civilized people ready to cohabitate with the French in a peaceful *vivre ensemble*, Tocqueville now believed indigenous society was incompatible with French values and responsible for compromising France's best efforts at nonviolent integration. In other words, Tocqueville's shift from integration to extermination turned on a new understanding of native society that transformed total war into a defensive engagement. In these reversals, Tocqueville's arguments were symptomatic of French colonial culture, which was already invoking Napoleonic tropes in poetry, vaudeville, songs, and fiction to recast the Algerian War as a war of national defense.[88]

We can see Tocqueville shift culpability for total war to natives in at least two places. The first is in his treatment of Abd-el-Kader, the local emir

[85]Jennifer Sessions, "'Unfortunate Necessities': Violence and Civilization in the Conquest of Algeria," in *France and Its Spaces of War: Experience, Memory, Image*, ed. Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Daniel Brewer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 33–34.

[86]Kim Munholland, "Michaud's *History of the Crusades* and the French Crusade in Algeria under Louis-Philippe," in *The Popularization of Images: Visual Culture under the July Monarchy*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Gabriel P. Weisberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 154; Sessions, *By Plow and Sword*, 32–40.

[87]Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*.

[88]Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 125–73; Hazareesingh, "Memory, Legend, and Politics."

leading the resistance to French settlement. According to Tocqueville, Algerian society should be capable in principle of peaceful coexistence with the French. Ottoman rule left Algerian society fragmented, and some local tribes appeared receptive to cultivating shared commercial interests with the French. The Kabyles in particular were "a prosaic and interested race who worry far more about this world than the other, and that it would be much easier to conquer them with our luxuries than with our cannon."[89] However, Abd-el-Kader—"a sort of Muslim Cromwell"—had undermined the prospects for peaceful integration. As Tocqueville explained, he was "convinced that before Abd-el-Kader's power developed, it was possible" for the French to rule the region "without exactly waging war but only stirring up the Arabs' passions and setting them against one another."[90] However, Abd-el-Kader was using Machiavellian means to unite the warring tribes to undermine French efforts at settlement.[91] Having manipulated native religious enthusiasm and local networks of power, the emir now "stands at the head of a united army that can fall on those who would betray him, at any moment and upon the least suspicion."[92] Even if a native tribe had wanted to peacefully cohabitate with the French, Abd-el-Kader's new army could coerce and conscript them into the war of resistance.

Thus, by unifying the Muslim tribes, Abd-el-Kader's Machiavellianism was responsible for dashing the prospects of peaceful cohabitation. France now had no choice but to defeat Abd-el-Kader through total war, for only a war that indiscriminately attacked the civilian population and the land which fed them could raise the costs of allegiance to Abd-el-Kader to prohibitive thresholds: "We shall never destroy Abd-el-Kader's power unless we make the position of the tribes who support him so intolerable that they abandon him. This is an obvious truth."[93]

In blaming Abd-el-Kader for integration's failures, Tocqueville was at pains to compare the Muslim Cromwell and French society. But where these comparisons had once served to draw the two societies closer together, they now served to measure the distance between them. For example, in his 1841 "Essay on Algeria," Tocqueville suggested that Abd-el-Kader's centralization resembled not only that of Muhammad and the first caliphs, but also Europe—yet from several centuries earlier:

> Such is the secret of his power; it is not difficult to understand, for what Abd-el-Kader is attempting is not new in the world. These half-savage African countries are now undergoing a social development very much like that which took place in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages.

[89]Tocqueville, "First Letter on Algeria," 7.
[90]Tocqueville, "Essay on Algeria," 69.
[91]Ibid., 64,
[92]Ibid., 67, 69.
[93]Ibid., 71.

> Abd-el-Kader, who has probably never heard of what happened in fifteenth-century France, is acting toward the tribes precisely as our kings, and in particular Charles VII, acted toward feudalism.[94]

Abd-el-Kader's European semblance was one of Tocqueville leitmotifs. The emir "gave [his] battalions a European organization, an organization powerless against our own, but that made him master of his countrymen." His method of nation building was "quite new among the Arabs. … He is the first who took from his contact with Europe the ideas that would make his own enterprise similarly durable." Yet this semblance no longer proved that Arab society was a society of "singular savages," so proximate to French civilization that integration was possible. Instead, it now provided evidence of "half-savage African countries." This descent from "singular savages" (1837) to "half-savages" (1841) provided an alibi for total war.

This reconsideration of the nature of native society is the second place we see Tocqueville deflect culpability for total war from the French. The French could have colonized Algeria peacefully through racial integration, Tocqueville insisted, were they not conquering a population intractably predisposed to violence for cultural reasons. In this argument, total war was provoked, not only by a Muslim Cromwell, but by indigenous "culture" itself, which was "something we can do nothing about for a very long time, perhaps ever."[95] As he explained,

> If, from the beginning, we had said convincingly that we aimed only at government and not at land, it might have been easy to get them to recognize our authority. But that moment has passed. Now, the prejudices that we have brought about are so powerful that we would have trouble making them believe in a change of the system, however real and sincere it were on our part.[96]

If France had deceived indigenous leaders into believing that they sought only peaceful governance, perhaps war could have been avoided. But now that land had been taken, native "prejudices" had been awakened. Even if France wanted a peaceful settler society, Algerians would refuse it because of their warrior ethos.

Tocqueville insisted that this warrior ethos was no context-dependent feature of native society, but a defining quality virtually impossible to eradicate. That was why *any* indigenous leader would find himself compelled to wage war against the French. If not Abd-el-Kader, Algerians would conscript someone else:

> Unlike the Kings of Europe, an emir does not rule over individuals who can be kept down by the social force at the prince's disposal. Rather, he

[94]Ibid., 67.
[95]Ibid., 62.
[96]Ibid.

> governs tribes that are completely organized little nations, which cannot normally be guided except in the direction their passions lead. But the Arab tribes' passions of religion and depredation always lead them to wage war on us. … Such is the natural taste of the populations that surround us.[97]

Thus, the French were forced into waging total war, not only because of Abd-el-Kader's machinations, but also because of something intrinsic to the Arab social state. Their zealotry placed them beyond reasonable discourse. Even if France sincerely sought governance rather than land, Arabs would never permit a French presence. For them, war against the French was expressivist rather than strategic. It articulated their values and religious orientation. Indeed, Arabs were not even retaliating against a French invasion. They were simply playing out their cultural *esprit*. As Tocqueville forced himself to conclude, "To flatter ourselves that we could ever establish a solid peace with an Arab prince of the interior would, in my view, be a manifest error." That was because "the permanent state of such a sovereign would be war with us, whatever his personal inclinations might otherwise be, and whether he were as pacific by nature or as fanatical in his religion as one could imagine."[98] Algerian leaders were personifications of culture. They expressed, but could not alter, the social state of those they ruled. And that social state was intractable hostility to France. Ergo, the French had to wage total war, for as a matter of culture, Arabs were unlikely to ever surrender voluntarily. Since their barbarism stemmed from something below the level of politics or institutions, it was a fact of culture the French could not undo. As Tocqueville admitted, "Domination over semi-barbarous nomadic tribes, such as those around us, can never be so complete that a civilized, sedentary population could settle nearby without any fear or precaution. Armed marauding will long outlast war itself."[99] And so his prescription was domination without end, demanded by Algerian native society rather than French values.

Conclusion: From National Defense to Total War

In the 1841 "Essay on Algeria," Tocqueville asked, "What type of war… can and must [we] wage on the Arabs"? Known for his defense of local liberties and critique of despotism, the liberal answered: total war. Since "the war cannot be won at one blow," no choice remained but to undermine the conditions of life for indigenous communities.[100] France must "ravage the country," and "we must do it, either by destroying harvests during the

[97]Ibid., 63.
[98]Ibid.
[99]Ibid., 81.
[100]Ibid., 68.

harvest season, or year-round by making those rapid incursions called razes, whose purpose is to seize men or herds."[101] These *razzia* not only starved Abd-el-Kader's army, but also robbed locals of their means of subsistence. In this war, civilians were fair game because native society itself was the enemy, and it made all natives potential allies of Abd-el-Kader. Tocqueville admitted that his answer might shock European sensibilities, but he insisted that "if we do not burn harvests in Europe, it is because in general we wage war on governments and not on peoples."[102] In the history of political thought, this is an incredible admission. Although it may be cynically familiar to contemporary critics, in early nineteenth-century France, waging war on an entire people stood far outside the accepted conventions of combat. Tocqueville was justifying a new application of terror, forged in the crucible of the African theater, and which made war on an entire people not only strategically compulsory, but glorious. Here in the colonial theaters of Africa, in other words, lay a precedent for the subsequent "total wars" of Europe's twentieth century.[103]

Five years after Tocqueville first visited Algeria, his position on colonial violence softened. France had largely crushed Abd-el-Kader's power in the intervening years. Although resistance to French settlerism would continue for generations, by 1846–47, Tocqueville believed Bugeaud's war had been successful. Thus, he raised anew the prospect of an integrated colony with the caveat that "it is not along the road of our European civilization that they must, for the present, be pushed, but in the direction proper to them."[104] In a prophetic turn of events, France even fulfilled Tocqueville's call to "raise a great monument to our country's glory on the African coast." In 1840, a small detachment of French soldiers were attacked at their outpost at Mazagran. The metropolitan press exaggerated the skirmish into another Thermopylae, a scene of proud *volontaires* besieged by hordes of infidels.[105] To commemorate "the Siege of Mazagran," the city of Algiers and Louis-Philippe's press collected funds for the construction of a commemorative monument. A commission led by Marshal Gérard, a veteran of the Napoleonic wars, suggested the monument be built on the Champs Elysées to complement other Napoleonic monuments such as the Arc de Triomphe. Lack of funds compelled the state to forgo this grand scheme in favor of a smaller construction, and the result was a commemorative monument in Algeria: a column on top of which stood Victory.[106]

[101]Ibid., 71.

[102]Ibid., 70.

[103]Enzo Traverso, *The Origins of Nazi Violence*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 2003), 47–75.

[104]Tocqueville, "First Report on Algeria," 142.

[105]The Épinal print *Défense héroïque de Mazagran* can be viewed at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b69379674.

[106]Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 166–68.

Looking back with a measure of pride in 1847, Tocqueville tried to summarize France's accomplishments since his first visit:

> Today we can say that war in Africa is a science whose laws are known to everyone and that can be applied almost with certainty. … First, we came to understand that we faced not a real army, but the population itself. … Given that this population would be as hostile to us as they are today, in order for us to remain in such a country, our troops would have to be almost as numerous in times of peace as in times of war, for it was less a matter of defeating a government than of subjugating a people.[107]

"War in Africa is a science," Tocqueville wrote. The reader is reminded of his proclamation in *Democracy in America* that "a world that is totally new demands a new political science" (*DA* 7). It is as if the political science Tocqueville had been searching for since 1831 to mitigate *la société en poussière* had reached its conclusion in Bugeaud's total war. The French had learned how to subdue, not "a real army, but the population itself."[108] They had learned how to "subjugate a people" with a continuous application of violence that would not cease even in times of peace.

David Bell has remarked that an unexpected discovery occurs in the nineteenth century concerning "western attitudes towards war," namely, that "the dream of perpetual peace and the nightmare of total war have been bound together in complex and disturbing ways, each sustaining the other." Tocqueville's Algerian writings suggest that their complex interdependency was no anomaly in the history of liberalism. In Europe, as elsewhere, a link persisted between liberalism's anxieties over political centralization and an enthrallment with total war, or what Bell calls the "powerful tendency to characterize the conflicts that do arise as apocalyptic struggles that must be fought until the complete destruction of the enemy and that might have a purifying, even redemptive effect on its participants."[109] It has been easy for liberal historians of political thought to portray such inclinations as the exclusive possession of the Left or of twentieth-century totalitarianism. And yet, under the July Monarchy, France's most prominent liberal succumbed to just that vision of war. Tocqueville was prepared to appeal to republican and Bonapartist tropes of glory to answer the central dilemma posed by the Revolution to French liberals: how to mitigate individualism and repair the psychic and social bases of modern liberty. But as he translated vision into politics, he found himself an apologist for force and terror.

[107]Tocqueville, "First Report on Algeria," 135.
[108]Ibid., 135–36.
[109]David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 3.