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## **Mathieu Pernot and *Les Migrants*: Voicing the Silence and Exposing French Neo-colonial History and Practices.**

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This chapter examines photographer Mathieu Pernot's work on Afghan migrants between 2009 and 2012. His photographic series, *Les Migrants*,<sup>1</sup> transcends the artistic discipline of photography and re-inscribes the story of the Afghan refugees within a neo-colonial and global context in which France plays a major role. I argue that the series of photographs goes beyond mere political statement and creates an historical and critical text that resonates with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *savoir engagé*.<sup>2</sup> This narrative technique juxtaposes the photographs with the narration of two migrants Mathieu Pernot met in Paris in 2012 and discloses the convergence of two sides of French history that are rarely viewed together: French immigration policies and French foreign interventions. The permeability of these two historical narratives via the unaltered voices of the two Afghan migrants – Jawad and Mansour – provides the reader with an insight into French neo-colonial practices as an institutional keystone of the 'republicanised' neoliberal order.

### **Voicing the Silence**

Between 2009 and 2012 Pernot produced his series, *Les Migrants*, a collection of photographs of Afghan illegal refugees sleeping on benches and on the ground near Square Villemin in Paris, from which they had been expelled. Pernot's photographs were inspired by

an image of four bodies that he had seen in a magazine. The caption for this image stated that they were Afghan and sleeping away from ‘prying eyes’. It is the evocation of corpses that caught Pernot’s eye and which he sought out in *La Jungle* in 2009.

*Les Migrants* does not appear to be a book of photography; instead the reader is immediately confronted with the familiarity of an old-style French jotter – *le cahier* – and associates the work with the French school environment. This feeling is immediately shaken by the unfamiliarity of the language in the narration. The reader goes through ten pages of narration in Farsi without seeing any page numbers, captions, or indication of what the book is about, before viewing the first photograph. The story of the protagonists is stripped down to the essentials and the reader, like the migrant, enters the world of the unknown, complicated by a foreign language. The photographs trace and narrate the story of the migrants and unveil the violence they have endured during their journey to Europe as their status is progressively criminalised and dehumanised. The images are juxtaposed against the narration of the journey of Jawad and Nawar; we find its translation towards the end of the book, disclosing a double enunciation in which their experience is linked to immigration legislation and foreign policies, two distinct, yet interrelated, components of French and European history.

The first photographs that appear within ten pages of the narration are those of *La Jungle* near Calais, where Pernot first goes to meet refugees. Pernot does not encounter them there because they have in fact been expelled from the open-air refugee camp, *La Jungle*, in October 2009.

It was the 1990s Serbo-Croatian conflict that unleashed the first wave of refugees who ended up taking shelter in the woods on the northern coast of France. Their situation quickly became untenable and in 1999 an old warehouse used during the building of the Channel Tunnel was transformed by the NGO *La Croix Rouge* into a centre for refugees, called *Sangatte*. It was planned for 200 refugees, though in fact 67000 go through the centre in three years and 1500 people daily. As a symbolic measure to announce the end of illegal immigration into France, then Home Secretary, Nicolas Sarkozy, closed the centre on 5 November, 2002. In his analysis of the ways in which the refugee camps evolve from a spontaneous answer to the emergency of migration to a zone of control in order to prevent further scattering of refugees, Bertrand Cassaigne argues that *Sangatte* was closed because it became too visible and made the refugee question too pressing.

[...] tout est fait comme si les camps réveillaient la peur et la mauvaise conscience et qu'il fallait cacher la réalité, mais en même temps du coup les enjeux de ces migrations. On souhaite donc les rendre moins visibles. Sangatte était trop visible. On a préféré qu'il se disperse dans des regroupements inorganisés à l'entour de Calais.<sup>3</sup>

After the closure of Sangatte, the migrants sought refuge in the nearby forests, which became known as *Les Jungles*. On 22 October, 2009, immigration minister Eric Besson closed the camps and expelled the 276 migrants (who were mainly from Afghanistan), 135 of whom were minors. Thus, when Pernot goes to Calais, he finds the former sites of *Les Jungles* empty of migrants, yet the photographs that Pernot takes witness their stay in the woods. We see the remains – plastic bags, clothes, the remnants of shacks and sleeping bags. Shot in 2009, the photographs are reminiscent of Jean Révillard's previous work, *Les Jungles*.<sup>4</sup> Révillard's collection of photographs also portrays the traces of the migrants,

mainly their shacks, in *La Jungle* near Calais, yet these shacks are still standing. The site had not been emptied and the shacks still inhabited. Révillard's use of flash photography places the emphasis on these abodes almost as a metaphoric effect in order to discuss the migrant question. Pernot's series on *La Jungle*, meanwhile, is less explicit because the habitations are no longer standing; only the remains are still visible. The traces reveal the passage of human beings, but their presence is elusive. The images of the woods are unsettling and create an atmosphere of anxiety resembling something akin to forensic photography.

The notion of traces is crucial for Mathieu Pernot; from his work on Gypsy communities<sup>5</sup> to his work on migrants, he traces the history of mostly nomadic (by choice and often by force) people who are silenced within the grand narrative of French national history. This concept is particularly reminiscent of historian Carlo Ginzburg's notion of 'le paradigme de la trace indicielle' as a practice of writing history to open up diverse interpretations and to refuse a closure of meaning. As opposed to the Galilean paradigm, the 'indicielle' methodology is based on clues (*indices*), which 'diachronically enable [us] to seize a deeper reality, one we are unable to reach otherwise'.<sup>6</sup> The realities explored in this book via the juxtaposition of photographs and Jawad's narration appear to be double: the living conditions of migrants in France and their journey that brought them to France.

Pernot uses the traces of the migrants' presence in *La Jungle* as clues to weave the narratives together, thus providing an alternative representation that debunks a number of the myths about migrants reinforced in the mainstream media. Media coverage of the presence of Afghan refugees in central Paris between 2009 and 2012, for example, is very revealing.<sup>7</sup> Although their living conditions are often commented upon, they are never fully explored and the connection with France's foreign policy and the presence of French troops in Afghanistan since 2001 is rarely mentioned, let alone questioned. These narrative clues force the reader to

think critically and to engage actively with the book's content. Such a tool ironically echoes new methods of control of by state authorities over any individual led by the ever-growing need for complete identification and classification of all members (legitimate or not) within society. As Ginzburg notes,

It can be said that the individual, born in a religious context (*persona*), acquired its modern, secularized meaning only in relation with the State. Concern with an individual's uniqueness – as taxpayer, soldier, criminal, political subversive and so on – is a typical feature of developed bureaucracies. [...] It is in this context that we can understand the persuasive influence of the model based on clues – the semiotic paradigm.<sup>8</sup>

Following their traces to Paris, Pernot photographs the refugees near Square Villemin (colloquially known as Little Kabul) from where they have been expelled again. In 2012, Pernot met Jawad and Mansour, Afghan asylum seekers in Paris and gave Jawad some school exercise books for him to write down the story of his journey from Kabul to Paris. Hence the narration in Farsi that opens the book and its translation in the final pages. The aesthetics of written Farsi divert the reader from the horrific story of their journey.

### **A systemic violence**

Jawad's narration uses the first person but clearly represents a familiar story among Afghan refugees. A long journey characterized by fear, thirst, hunger and sorrow is symbolic of every

migrant's journey to Europe. Jawad's narration also gives the reader a cartographic sense of the journeys of young Afghans; from camps to prisons, from Turkey, Greece, Serbia, Hungary, Austria, Germany, back to Hungary, Austria, Italy and France. It creates an assemblage of harsh, punitive and disciplinary places where people are imprisoned as soon as they enter a country. These places, though varied in the form they take – detention centres, camps, prisons etc. – share the same objective: to keep 'illegal' foreigners confined and away from the wider society. They represent the most visible cog in the process of tracing and identifying migrants in order to facilitate sending them back 'legally' to their country of origin. The treatment of the migrants within the camps is barely an improvement on what they suffered during the journey: 'Dans le camps on devait faire la queue just pour pouvoir manger une banana, une pomme ou une poire'.<sup>9</sup> From each place to the next, the migrant – whether he/she is a refugee, in exile, an asylum seeker or an undocumented migrant – progressively loses a legal status via a process of criminalisation.

In France, these include detention in one of the *Centres d'accueil pour demandeurs d'Asile* (CADA), *Centres de rétentions*, or, worse, incarceration in a standard prison<sup>10</sup>. As Jérôme Valluy observes:

Ces sites peuvent être définis juridiquement ou relever de « régimes » d'exception ; refléter une banalisation politique et technocratique de la mise à l'écart des migrants ou bien une extension des « zones grises » de non droit à l'intérieur même des Etats de droit.<sup>11</sup>

In the same analytical vein, Bertrand Cassaigne remarks that refugee camps are always the result of an illusionary policy of control<sup>12</sup>. Although camps used as a form of detention had existed in France's former colonies for centuries, refugee camps<sup>13</sup> also have a long history in

French territory as of the Third Republic in response to migrations provoked by conflict<sup>14</sup>. They were then and are nowadays an emergency reaction to contain a flow of migration. Unlike the status of the people hosted in these places and as Jawad's narration reminds us, they do not provide refuge. A number of these places, like *Le camps militaire du Larzac*<sup>15</sup>, *Le Centre de la Rye au Vigeant*, *Le camps militaire des Tourelles* amongst others, have been used during different waves of migration: Russian, Jewish, Colonial, post-colonial<sup>16</sup>. They represent, as Jawad and Mansour's narration highlights, the need to erect a border zone, a containment space, when national frontiers have been transgressed. In conjunction with these emergency places, since the end of the Franco-Algerian War, the French state began to use the practice of containment as a step towards a legalised deportation within new structures: the *Centres de rétention*. For example the *Centre d'Arenc* in Marseille was used as such for a decade before it was revealed to the public in 1974. Ever since, these places have been gradually legalised. The progressive legalisation of the containment of refugees was paramount for the July 2006 law with which Nicolas Sarkozy unearthed and legalised the 1930s concept of *immigration choisie*. This law allows the French state to choose who it values as immigrants while simultaneously deporting all immigrants in infraction of the law – *la reconduite forcée à la frontière*. This repressive apparatus is thus immediately reinforced by the more regular use of the penitentiary system. According to Marc Bernardot most foreigners arrested in France are in jail due to an *Infraction à la législation sur les étrangers* (ILE) and they represent around 20% of the prisoners in France. Such treatment of refugees is indicative of the shift towards a more bureaucratic and repressive state.

Perhaps the most shocking aspect of Jawad's journey is his passage through these transitory spaces of circulation, which entails the progressive criminalisation of his status and

is made official via successive layers of bureaucracy. The evolution of the vocabulary is testament to these changes: forty years ago such people were refugees. Since the 1980s ‘asylum seekers’ has become an administrative category to which ‘false asylum seekers’ was then added in the 1990s. Hence the creation of new camps that deal with the different categories (Centre Provisoires d’Hébergement (CPH) and Centres D’accueil pour demandeurs d’Asile (CADA)).<sup>17</sup> Jawad explains:

On m’emmène alors au commissariat et me présente un document écrit en Dari dans lequel il est indiqué que je suis un criminel, je leur demande pourquoi ils me considèrent comme un criminel alors que je n’ai rien fait de mal. Ils me répondent que le fait d’être entré en Allemagne sans papiers constitue un crime. Comme je n’ai pas le choix je signe ce document. Ma situation empire chaque jour d’avantage. En Hongrie, je signais un papier pour manger une pomme et en Allemagne, je signe un document pour reconnaître que je suis un criminel. Après les formalités administratives, la police m’envoie dans une prison très dure.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of this cycle of criminalisation Jawad’s journey takes him from camps to real prisons:

We were brought to the judge who fined us all 70 euros and sentenced us to ten days in prison. Arriving at the detention centre, we were told to get undressed in front of everyone and then to undergo a body search, which I found really difficult to bear. I spent ten days in prison, locked up with murderers and drug mules. There was a head count three times a day. Those ten days felt like a hundred years to me.<sup>19</sup>

Jawad's journey embodies the tension between circulation and confinement and reveals the tragic reality of population displacement legitimized by layers upon layers of bureaucracy. As Chowra Makaremi notes:

Les pratiques de détention et d'expulsion des étrangers au sein des Etats occidentaux renvoient en effet à des processus d'entrave institutionnalisée de la circulation et à des dispositifs de confinement, qui reconfigurent ensemble la question politique de la gestion migratoire. [...] Cette dimension supplémentaire, qui est celle du mouvement, implique ainsi une approche dynamique du confinement, non plus seulement en termes d'« enfermement dans », mais également en termes de déplacements au sein d'un espace parallèle, à la marge.<sup>20</sup>

Once labelled a criminal, the migrant loses any identity and becomes *L'ennemi de l'intérieur*.<sup>21</sup> The criminalisation of their status is concomitant with a form of systemic violence whereby the migrant progressively loses his/her humanity.

The varying layers of bureaucracy, such as legislation for seeking asylum are employed to justify and rationalise the expulsion of an individual. Under the Dublin II agreements, adopted in 2003, refugees have to seek asylum in the first European country they enter, hence the reason why Jawad is treated as a criminal. But the bureaucratic layers also underline the tensions between national policies and cooperation practices at the level of the EU and the tensions linked to the integration of Europe within the Schengen space as of 2007. Consider, for example, the new European steer on the concept of 'return' that allows for 'illegal immigrants' to be detained for a maximum of 18 months (whereas previously in France it was 32 days). This law was passed by the European parliament on 18 June, 2008

and is also applicable to pregnant woman and children. This new means of control – containment and expulsion – has had a serious impact on the rights of refugees who have been treated as undesirables and disposed of *legally*. It also discloses the advent of new global security order in which every human being has to fit a specific category and in which migrants are kept marginalised and practically invisible until they fall in the category of the criminal. After having been arrested by the French police, Jawad says:

Je pense alors que nous sommes réfugiés sans pays. Les agents nous passent les menottes, mains derrière le dos, et nous font monter dans une voiture avec gyrophare et sirène. Dans la ville, les passants doivent penser que les policiers ont arrêté des gens dangereux, alors que nous sommes que des réfugiés!

According to Mathieu Bietlo, these spaces fulfil a specific function in the post-modern era that is closely linked to the security praxis of the neo-liberal order:

le fonctionnement réel et symbolique des camps s'inscr[it] dans un schéma de société plus global : le néolibéralisme sécuritaire. La société de contrôle sécuritaire succède à la société disciplinaire de Foucault : les mécanismes sécuritaires sont à la mondialisation et à la production post-fordiste, ce que les disciplines étaient à l'intégration nationale et à la production fordiste.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, parallel to the adoption of stricter and more precise legislation since 2001 and the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, a hardening of the way in which refugees are treated has become increasingly evident and as a result refugees have been progressively classified as

‘illegal immigrants’. According to Loïc Wacquant in his sociological study of the punitive nature of the neoliberal era, the normalisation of the penal institution is doubled by a profound discrimination against its targets. Wacquant argues that despite the rise of corporate criminality since the 1990s, only the lowest classes of society experience the direct consequences of this punitive turn. Clearly Wacquant’s analysis of the ways in which the poorest are punished can be extended to migrants. For him, this ‘socio-ethnic selectivity’ is the result of ‘state crafting’ and represents a pillar of the neoliberal order that is cleverly legalised via heavy bureaucratic machinery.

Following in the steps of Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, Wacquant argues that the bureaucratic apparatus, Bourdieu’s *champs bureaucratique*, has operated a colonisation of the welfare component of the state by panoptical and punitive logic which Wacquant sees as a *re-masculinisation* of the state:

La priorité désormais accordée aux devoirs sur les droits, aux sanctions sur le soutien, la rhétorique rigide des “obligations de la citoyenneté” et la réaffirmation martiale de la capacité de l’Etat à enfermer les “populations à problèmes” (allocataires d’aides et délinquants) dans un rapport hiérarchique de dépendances et d’obéissance envers les managers d’Etat présentés comme les protecteurs virils de la société contre les membres qui tournent mal [...].<sup>23</sup>

The migrants are punished for their own living conditions which require help and assistance. Jawad concludes his narration with his arrival in Paris and the living conditions they have had to endure: ‘Dans cette ville, nous demandons l’asile et nous dormons dans des cartons. Notre situation est très mauvaise’. The only way to justify such treatment in a

‘democratic society’ is to banalise the violence they endure and to reify these people from their history.

### **The Banality of violence**

The everyday violence that sums up the lives of such migrants takes two forms in Pernot’s work: the writings and the photographs. It is conveyed directly via Jawad’s narration of the journey and conveyed also in the *cahiers* written by Mansour. The *cahiers* were used by Mansour for his French lessons and published alongside the photographs.

The *cahiers* exhibit a language of survival, translated from Farsi, which exposes very real problems with everyday communication. The weaving of the brutality of the lists of words, the narrative of exile by Jawad and the violence of the photographs represent a constant reminder of their dreadful condition: ‘J’ai peur, j’ai mal, je cherche un travail, je prie pour son père, j’ai un peu de fièvre, je tousse beaucoup, je respire mal, il est mal, faux-papiers’.<sup>24</sup> Yet the publication of the unaltered narration of their journey also gives them their voice back, explaining why they are in Paris and what they went through to get there. Reading the translation at the back of the book gives the reader an a posteriori perspective on the photographs reviewed thus far.

Halfway through the book appears the first photograph of an Afghan refugee, by which point the reader has probably found the translation of the narration from Farsi and he/she knows part of their story. The peculiarity of these photographs is their banality; anyone who lives in a big city must recognise the similarity these images have with homeless

people seen and ignored during the early morning commute to work. The bodies are wrapped up in whatever material the migrants have to protect themselves. The level of intimacy, in both Jawad's narration and Mansour's French lessons that allows the reader to see how global and geopolitical dynamics affect the individual sits awkwardly with the anonymous bodies in the images. Pernot confides: 'Invisibles, silencieux et anonymes, réduits à l'état de simple forme, les individus se reposent et semblent se cacher, comme s'ils voulaient s'isoler d'un monde qui ne veut plus les voir'.<sup>25</sup> Pernot's photographs were inspired by an image of four bodies that he had seen in a magazine. The caption for this image stated that they were Afghan and sleeping away from 'prying eyes'. It is the evocation of corpses that caught Pernot's eye and which he sought out in *La Jungle* in 2009: 'C'était une image violente, une photographie de guerre. Les corps paraissaient morts et leur façon d'occuper l'espace semblaient annoncer la figure tragique du charnier'. Pernot thought that 'la meilleure image à faire était celle de leur sommeil, de cet ailleurs que l'on ne connaîtra jamais et qui constitue sans doute leur dernière échappée. Je n'ai pas voulu les réveiller. Je n'ai rien vu des migrants'.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the most brutal sense one gets from the photographs is not the despicable living conditions the images disclose but the fact that the readers are already familiar with the content. The recognition of the familiarity and banality of these images that could originate in any large city similarly hints at the structural violence conveyed in the photographs.

This violence becomes gradually more uncomfortable and the images of the final pages increasingly suggest the notion of the body as a corpse echoing the term 'charnier' used by Pernot in his introduction to the book. Towards the end of the book they are wrapped in plastic and resemble abandoned corpses following a lethal accident, a murder or deadly encounter on a battlefield. Similarly, they evoke the dead bodies and casualties caused by the

ongoing war in Afghanistan since 2001. The bodies become the site of narration and re-connect the migrants with their history and the reasons for the journey, from which they are almost always reified.

This tension between life and death produces the extreme violence of the photographs, but the initial shock comes from the fact that we as reader/viewer are already familiar with such images. According to Slavoj Žižek, “one of the things alienation means is that distance is woven into the very social texture of everyday life. Even if I live side by side with others, in my normal state I ignore them.”<sup>27</sup> In the case of these images, our alienation goes so far as to only realise our indifference when confronted with them compiled in an art book. Just as the photographs of Abu Ghraib torture represent “a direct insight into American values”<sup>28</sup>, Mathieu Pernot’s photographs of these Afghan migrants provide the reader with a direct insight into French neo-colonial culture and practices. They create a semantic link between their situation in exile and their history in Afghanistan, a photographic violence that finds direct roots and meaning in their everyday life as well as in France’s intervention in Afghanistan. Yet it is the normalisation of violence that allows for this semantic link to be broken and which helps to overlook the treatment these migrants receive in ‘democratic societies’ like France.

The relationship between foreign interventions and domestic affairs is also echoed in Hannah Arendt’s study, *On Violence*. For Arendt, there is a correlation between the violence used in international relations as a threat and that used in domestic affairs as a means of oppression: ‘The more dubious and uncertain an instrument violence has become in international relations, the more it has gained in reputation and appeal in domestic affairs’.<sup>29</sup> Arendt establishes a clear link between the different forms of coercion and in the case of

Afghan refugees, violence links the two narratives that in the dominant ideology are overwhelmingly kept separate: immigration policies and foreign interventions.

French military interventions or *OPEX* have not declined since 1997 but their affiliation to corporate interests is now legitimized by the endorsement these operations receive from bigger structures such as the EU, the UN or NATO. Between 1997 and 2015, for example, the French government undertook a total of 28 interventions, which fall under four different categories: unilateral interventions, interventions under the EU banner, interventions under the UN banner, interventions under the NATO banner.<sup>30</sup>

France has been in Afghanistan since 2001 as a support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) although France was not part of the North Atlantic Treaty at the time. There were three distinct operations: Opération Pamir under the auspices of NATO as participation in the ISAF *Force Internationale d'Assistance et de Sécurité* and Héraclès, Epidote (in charge of the instructing the Afghan army) and Arès as participation in OEF under American leadership.

It is striking that in conjunction with a hardening of immigration policies and practices at the European level between 2007 and 2010, as discussed above, the number of French troops present in Afghanistan doubled to a total of about 4000 soldiers by 2010. From 2012 the number of soldiers in Afghanistan decreased while other military interventions were launched in Mali and the Central African Republic. The correlation between the international scene and the domestic practices developed in Arendt's analysis on violence is clearly exemplified in the case of the Franco-Afghan relationship, whether in Afghanistan or in France.

As a direct consequence of the military occupation of Afghanistan, 2011 was a record year for asylum seekers' requests in the EU: 28,015 were from Afghan citizens. In France the same year there were 57,337 requests and 37,600 were rejected.<sup>31</sup> Between 2001 and 2014 fifteen powerful corporations invested in the reconstruction of Afghanistan (among them Airbus, Thalès and Bouygues). As Tony Chafer notes, the Chirac-Jospin cohabitation (1997-2002) represents a milestone in reassessing French interests in its former colonies and takes new directions marked by a focus on business links and a new policy of cooperation.<sup>32</sup> This coincides with the creation of *Le Mouvement des entreprises de France* (Medef) in 1998. This union of the corporate world in France has developed an international branch and holds meetings with different countries with which they can develop investment and cooperative relationships – especially in countries under French military control such as Mali, the Central African Republic, Iraq, Haiti and Afghanistan. The scale of natural resources present in Afghanistan explains the interest the Medef shows in this part of the world: oil, gas, fossil fuels, minerals (iron in particular) and precious and semi-precious stones. The need for natural resources, coupled with the French government's geo-political strategy of seeking to reintegrate into NATO, explains the support given to Operation Enduring Freedom led by the Americans in 2001.

The military occupation of Afghanistan is never directly addressed in this book but the constant shift between the individual and personal narrative to the anonymous bodies of the photographs creates a space that allows the reader to see how global and geopolitical dynamics affect the individual. The reader has to look for the translation in order to fully understand what the book is about. The violence of the photos and the brutality disclosed by Jawad's narration bring together the two historical narratives of immigration and French foreign interventions which are usually divorced from each other for the purposes of political

and ideological manipulation. The merging of these two elements of French history gives Pernot's book a coherence and political engagement. But it also pushes the reader towards a metatextual form of reading, allowing for a more critical interpretation of media stories, which are habitually reified and isolated from their historical context. For Genette, 'Metatextuality' discloses 'the *critical* relationship par excellence'.<sup>33</sup> In this sense, Pernot is no longer merely a photographer but becomes an historian. As Michel de Certeau reminds us, 'faire de l'histoire' c'est une pratique'.<sup>34</sup> He continues, 'en fait, l'écriture historique - ou historiographie - reste contrôlée par les pratiques dont elle résulte; bien plus, elle est elle-même une pratique sociale'.<sup>35</sup> For de Certeau, the reading of the trace is essential to the relevance of the event. In his discussion of May 1968, he notes: 'un événement n'est pas ce qu'on peut voir ou savoir de lui mais ce qu'il devient (et d'abord pour nous)'.<sup>36</sup> Like the historian who chooses which material to include and discard, Pernot chooses who and what to photograph and how to photograph the person or object. There is an obvious tension between the subject and the photographs disclosed by the historiographical narrative practice. Yet in Pernot's book, the narration is plural and reinserts the unaltered voices of the subject themselves as the principal narrative voices. The space between the narrative voices allows for the reader to engage with the work and to connect all the voices together.

In *Contre-feux 2*, Pierre Bourdieu laments the phenomenon of 'Think Tank conservatives' – the thinkers, historians and academics who justify and facilitate the production of neo-liberal ideology<sup>37</sup>. Bourdieu argues that in order to question the tradition of the welfare state such think tanks have had to organise a symbolic counter-revolution and to produce a *doxa paradoxale* in which traditional conservatives come to be viewed as progressive. According to Bourdieu, only a new type of committed scholar can oppose this neo-liberal apparatus. These new universalists have to be able to think beyond the frontiers in

order to make visible these manipulations and they have to re-establish the clear links that have been lost between their profession and the public. Bourdieu talks most specifically of *savoir engagé*, or, ‘scholarship with commitment’.<sup>38</sup>

Pernot’s work should be read as ‘scholarship with commitment’ in that it allows the reader to reconnect two aspects of French history, in order to understand the ways in which social democracies justify and legalise the treatment and disposal of the most vulnerable. Jawad and Mansour’s text and the photographs collated in Pernot’s book should be viewed as historical documents; Pernot claims his approach to be *monumentaire* or *documental*.

Ultimately, his work transcends the artistic production and discipline. It forcefully provides a historical counter-narrative and critical text that re-inscribes the story of refugees within a neo-colonial and global context. It subverts the dominant republican ideology and forces the reader to assess critically the situation of these people within and outside French borders, re-thinking the notion of ‘peace-keeping operations’ and ultimately reassessing their status as human beings. Jawad’s own description of his experience of living in France as a refugee is perhaps the most illustrative and powerful of the entire work: ‘Des fois je regrette de ne pas être un chien car en Europe la situation des chiens est meilleure que celle des étrangers comme nous’.

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<sup>1</sup> Mathieu Pernot, *Les Migrants*, (Paris: GwinZegal, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Contre-feux 2, Pour un mouvement social européen*. (Paris: Éditions Raisons d’Agir, 2001), pp. 35-41.

<sup>3</sup> Bertrand Cassaigne, ‘Ouverture’, *Revue Projet*, 308, (2009), 38-40.

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<sup>4</sup> Jean Révillard, *Jungles, Abris de fortune aux abords de la Manche*, (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Mathieu Pernot, *Un camps pour les Bohémiens*, (Paris: Actes-sud, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, 'Clues: Roots of a Scientific Paradigm', *Theory and Society*, 7/3 (1979), 273-288.

<sup>7</sup> For example: 'Les Afghans du square Villemin iront dormir ailleurs', *Libération*, 19 August, 2008.

2009) ; 'Exilés afghans Terminus: Jardin Villemin', *Nouvel Observateur*, 15 June, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Ginzburg, 'Clues: Roots of a Scientific Paradigm', 288.

<sup>9</sup> Pernot, *Les Migrants*, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> C. Makaremi and C. Kobelinsky, 'Editorial. Confinement des étrangers : entre circulation et enfermement', *Cultures & Conflits*, 71 (2008), 7-11.

<sup>11</sup> J. Valluy, 'Introduction : L'Europe des camps. La mise à l'écart des étrangers', *Cultures & Conflits*, 57 (2005), pp.3.

<sup>12</sup> Bertrand Cassaigne, 'Ouverture', *Revue Projet*, 308, (2009), 39.

<sup>13</sup> The definition of camps here is not understood as *concentration camps* even less as *extermination camps* but more as a space of confinement and control imposed upon the migrants. See Marc Bernardot for extensive definitions. Marc Bernardot, *Camps d'étrangers*, (Paris: Ed du Croquant, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Denis Peschanski, *La France des camps, l'internement, 1938-1946* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002).

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<sup>15</sup> Marc Bernardot, 'Etre interné à Larzac : les Algériens dans les centres d'assignation à résidence surveillée, 1958-1962', *Politix*, 69, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Marc Bernardot, 'Les camps d'étrangers, dispositif colonial au service des sociétés de contrôle', *Revue Projet* 308, (2009), 41-50.

<sup>17</sup> Since 2004 the coordination of these places is no longer left to France Terre d'Asile (FTDA) but to the Office des Migrations Internationales (OMI) which became in 2005 l'Agence Nationale de l'accueil des Etrangers et des Migrations (ANAEM) recently attached to the ministry of labour.

<sup>18</sup> Pernot, *Les Migrants*, 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Pernot, *Les Migrants*, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Chowra Makaremi, 'Confinement des étrangers: entre circulation et enfermement', *Cultures & Conflits*, 71 (2005), 8.

<sup>21</sup> Mathieu Rigouste, 'L'ennemi intérieur, de la guerre coloniale au contrôle sécuritaire', *Cultures & Conflits*, 67 (2007), 157-174.

<sup>22</sup> Mathieu Bietlot, 'Le camp, révélateur d'une politique inquiétante de l'étranger', *Cultures & Conflits*, 57 (2004), 221-250.

<sup>23</sup> Loïc Wacquant, 'Foucault, Bourdieu et l'Etat penal à l'ère néolibérale' in Daniel Zamora (ed.), *Critiquer Foucault*, (Bruxelles: Editions Aden, 2013), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Pernot, *Les Migrants*, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Pernot, *Les Migrants*, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> 'J'ai pensé que la meilleure image à faire était celle de leur sommeil, de cet ailleurs que l'on ne connaîtra jamais et qui constitue sans doute leur dernière échappée. Je n'ai pas voulu les réveiller. Je n'ai rien vu des migrants.'

<sup>27</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Violence*, (London: Profile Books, 2008, 2009), pp.51.

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<sup>28</sup> Žižek, *Violence*, pp.150.

<sup>29</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*, (New-York, Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc, 1969, 1970), pp. 11.

<sup>30</sup> There have been ten unilateral interventions, two of which took place in Afghanistan – operation Héraclès and Arès – while there were others in Chad, West Africa, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Lebanon, Colombia, Libya and Mali. Since the 1980s there have been four on-going interventions, such as Opération Épervier in Chad and Opération Héraclès in Afghanistan, launched in support of the American intervention, ‘Enduring Freedom’, Opération Serval in Mali (facilitated by Opération Épervier in Chad) and that has merged with MINUSMA and Opération Corymbe in West African since 1990. There were also five interventions under the EU banner, (Macedonia, the East-Africa great lakes region, Bosnia, Chad and CAR), four under the NATO banner (Bosnia, Kosovo, Operation Pamir: participation in the ISAF Force internationale d'assistance à la sécurité (Isaf) in Afghanistan and Libya), and nine interventions under the auspices of the UN, two of which that are on-going: in Haiti – Carbet in 2004 and MINUSTAH and others in the Ivory Coast, Western Sahara, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Congo, Kosovo, Liberia.

<sup>31</sup> Republic of Congo : 31.4%, Afghanistan 13.9% , Guinea 11.3%, Angola 7.2%, Russia 2.7%.

<sup>32</sup> T. Chafer, “Franco-African Relations: No Longer So Exceptional?” *African Affairs*, 101 (2002), 343-363.

<sup>33</sup> Gérard Genette. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Michel de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'Histoire*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), pp. 95.

<sup>35</sup> de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'Histoire*, pp. 103.

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<sup>36</sup> Michel de Certeau, “Prendre la Parole” in *Etudes*, juin-juillet 1968 and in *La prise de parole et autres écrits politiques*, (Paris: Le Seuil coll “points”, 1994), pp. 51.

<sup>37</sup> Bourdieu, *Contre-feux 2*, pp. 35-41.

<sup>38</sup> Bourdieu, *Contre-feux 2* pp. 40.