



# Remembering French Algeria: Pieds-Noirs, Identity, and Exile

*Amy L. Hubbell*

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Colonized by the French in 1830, Algeria was an important French settler colony that, unlike its neighbors, endured a lengthy and brutal war for independence from 1954 to 1962. The nearly one million Pieds-Noirs (literally “black-feet”) were former French citizens of Algeria who suffered a traumatic departure from their homes and discrimination upon arrival in France. In response, the once heterogeneous group unified as a community as it struggled to maintain an identity and keep the memory of colonial Algeria alive.

*Remembering French Algeria* examines the written and visual re-creation of Algeria by the former French citizens of Algeria from 1962 to the present. By detailing the preservation and transmission of memory prompted by this traumatic experience, Amy L. Hubbell demonstrates how colonial identity is encountered, reworked, and sustained in Pied-Noir literature and film, with the device of repetition functioning in these literary and visual texts to create a unified and nostalgic version of the past. At the same time, however, the Pieds-Noirs’ compulsion to return compromises these efforts. Taking Albert Camus’s *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* and his subsequent essays on ruins as a metaphor for Pied-Noir identity, this book studies autobiographical accounts by Marie Cardinal, Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous, and Leïla Sebbar, as well as lesser-known Algerian-born French citizens, to analyze movement as a destabilizing and productive approach to the past.

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