# The French Colonial Mind, Volume 2

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Published by University of Nebraska Press

Thomas, M. & Thomas, M..
The French Colonial Mind, Volume 2: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism.
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012.
Project MUSE., https://muse.jhu.edu/.

# 2

## Losing Their Mind and Their Nation?

### *Mimicry, Scandal, and Colonial Violence in the Voulet-Chanoine Affair*

BERTRAND TAITHE

This chapter explores afresh the story of the "infernal *colonne*" led by two French colonial army officers, Voulet and Chanoine, across West Africa in 1898–1899.[1] Accumulating some eight hundred slaves along their way, this roving column behaved increasingly brutally, revealing much about the forms of violence that marked colonial conquest. Ever since their deaths on 15 and 16 July 1899, respectively, Captains Voulet and Chanoine have left a controversial imprint on colonial memory. If we add to these two names that of their French victim, Colonel Klobb, whom they murdered on 14 July when he attempted to arrest them, one arrives at a complex colonial triptych. Voulet and Chanoine were to be arrested by Klobb to answer for a long trail of devastation that stretched from the outpost of Say, a border town of French colonial Soudan, to the environs of the sultanate of Zinder.[2] Ultimately, both captains were killed by their own soldiers soon after Klobb's murder on 14 July. Their crimes and grizzly fate illustrate contradictions central to republican colonialism at the end of the nineteenth century. As an event the "Voulet-Chanoine Affair," including the crimes committed before 14 July 1899, has variously been portrayed as a *fait-divers*, an incident symptomatic of a complex and menacing pathology of empire, or as a window upon widespread but hidden practices. For the Parisian authorities it was a scandal at a moment when the French army could least afford it.

The scandal arose not only from the mutiny of French officers against their superiors but also from how these men allegedly justified their acts. Hours after killing Colonel Klobb, Paul Voulet reportedly declared: "I do not regret anything that I have done, I am an outlaw, I renounce my family, my country, I am no longer French, I am a black chieftain. . . . What I have just done is nothing more than a coup. If I were in Paris I would be the master of France." Turning to his second in command, Captain Julien Chanoine, Voulet continued, "as a matter of fact, you were even more compromised than I was. I have read the papers of the Colonel, they were accusing you even more than us all [*nous tous*]." Chanoine then responded in a "failing yet cavernous voice": "I am going to the bush, I am following you, long live freedom! [Moi je prends la brousse, je te suis, vive la liberté!]"[3]

Written by Joalland, then lieutenant of artillery and fourth in command in the Voulet expedition, this central section of the survivors' account has shaped the way the Voulet-Chanoine story has been told ever since. The anecdote was then reported to the two consecutive inquests that took place between 1900 and 1902. Written conveniently by survivors attempting to salvage their honor (although one should note the *nous tous* that is the singular admission that crimes had been more widely shared than is otherwise admitted), it made Voulet and to a lesser extent Chanoine entirely culpable for Klobb's murder. By association, it assigned full responsibility for every other crime to the commanding officers. Conveniently, it also left room for a postdiagnostic of insanity, which the only doctor of the mission, Dr. Henric, never seemed to have noticed prior to the events. Beyond homicide, and at the origin of this internecine killing, the manifestations of this madness were dual: the renunciation of French identity and civilized deportment; and its flip side, the "naturalization" of the war chieftains into native warlords. They had gone native. By a swift rhetorical device, Joalland and every single French writer, commentator, or filmmaker thereafter excised Voulet and Chanoine from the *geste Coloniale*.[4] Their story became an African story framed and told according to African narrative tropes infused with irrationality. Did they not choose to have Griots singing their praise, comparing them to the African king Samori Touré?[5]

African scholars beg to differ from this Conradian analysis. So, too,

this chapter considers the Franco-African "affair" in its context of the Dreyfus affair and the various ways in which it has been interpreted before concluding with an alternative postcolonial reading of the events that takes into account how it has been remembered by Africans themselves. Four aspects of this story are examined: First the scandal itself. It highlights the tensions arising from colonial violence in late nineteenth-century France and, in particular, in the work of Paul Vigné d'Octon and Georges Clemenceau.[6] Second I reflect on how this violence unfolded, and third I move on to how it was explained, taking note of how a psychiatric perspective on the colonial mind evolved to cover the acts committed by the mission. Fourth I consider how the narration of this story over time reflects the variable threshold of cruelty associated with the civilizing mission.

## *The Scandal*

The Voulet-Chanoine Affair was protracted and not easy to conceal. The main protagonists were public figures in colonial circles. Voulet had been hailed a modern hero for his conquest of the Mosse and his energetic intervention in the affairs of the Naba speakers of Ouagadougou.[7] He had written authoritative accounts that were published in various periodicals including the *Revue Générale des Sciences Pures et Appliquées*.[8] His profile was that of a scholarly man of action. His subordinate and perennial associate, Julien Chanoine, had been an assiduous correspondent of the Société de Géographie.[9] Chanoine was the son of an influential general who briefly became minister of war in 1898 before he resigned over the Dreyfus affair. He was known largely thanks to his father's political connections, but his own exploits in the Gurunsi region south of Ouagadougou were also well publicized.[10]

The last expedition they led, which was launched using Comité de l'Afrique Française and Ministry of Colonies funds in April 1898, coincided with several other initiatives that taken together became a larger plan for a three-pronged attack on the "kingdom" of Rabah of Burnu (Rabah Zubayr or Rabih Fold Allah), near Lake Chad.[11] The mission had other secret, more ambitious though vaguer aims. Voulet was originally under instruction to push beyond Chad toward the Nile to meet Marchand's roving *colonne* and hopefully create the trans-African colo-

nial landmass dreamed of by Ministers Gabriel Hanotaux and Théophile Delcassé.[12]

By 1898 the principal West African states to the west of Chad were either defeated, in severe decline, or facing takeover. The greatest opponent of France in the region, Samori Touré, was on the run but was captured in 1898. The king of Dahomey had been deposed, the sultanate of Sokoto in what is now northern Nigeria was in decline, and the minor sultanate of Zinder was unlikely to defend itself against a well-armed and disciplined colonial force.[13] The military colony of Soudan, east of Senegal and north of Dahomey, stood at the pre-Saharan frontier of France's growing West African Empire. Traversing the Sahara, the Lamy and Foureau mission was due to meet Voulet and Chanoine in the city of Zinder.[14] From Zinder they would march against Rabah, linking up with yet another mission coming from French Congo.

Yet, less than a year after the finances for the Voulet-Chanoine mission were secured, a Paris government telegram to Dakar requested the governor-general to send someone to investigate the mission's high-profile leaders, placing them under arrest if need be. The man sent after Voulet was the commander of Timbuktu, Lieutenant-Colonel Klobb. Departing a full eight months after Voulet, his small and mobile unit nevertheless managed to catch up with Voulet in what would prove a fatal encounter on 14 July 1899. Klobb, as we have seen, was murdered by Voulet, who, allegedly at least, proclaimed himself an African chieftain, as did his associate Chanoine. Both men would soon discover how fragile self-appointed monarchies tend to be. Their Senegalese soldiers, by then in open revolt, shot Chanoine a day later. When Voulet returned to camp in the early hours of the following morning, he too was killed by a sentry. Subordinate officers Pallier and Joalland then assumed command of the mission with the support of their African noncommissioned officers.[15] As a reward for these troops, the new mission leaders led their force to Zinder to pillage the city. The French then deposed and executed the sultan of Zinder in conformity with Voulet's instructions before splitting into three forces: a large column composed of irregulars, rebellious soldiers, and a substantial group of women and children walking back to French Soudan; a small garrison awaiting the Foureau-Lamy expedition; and a fast-moving and relatively small unit led by the second-in-

command, Captain Joalland, and Klobb's assistant, Lieutenant Meynier. This smaller unit advanced toward Lake Chad following the spirit if not the letter of the original instructions given to Voulet.

What had gone wrong, and how did the Voulet expedition become scandalous? First of all, the Parisian political context is central. This mission, directed and financed from Paris, was linked to the political climate of the Fashoda climbdown and the last throes of the Dreyfus affair.[16] There were many who doubted the reliability of the army in the republican polity. Their fears were compounded by the hyper-nationalistic welcome given to returning Commandant Marchand. For some on the far right, Marchand represented a model leader for France who might inherit the populist support of General Boulanger. In Marchand the anti-republicans saw a providential man apt to seize power from the corrupt republic. Voulet and Chanoine seemed to be made of the same stuff. Far from being lost in Africa, the mission leaders were in regular correspondence with Paris, using a secret code specific to them to send telegrams direct to the minister of colonies and to the pro-colonial press. This tenuous linkage was maintained until the *colonne* reached the borders of French Soudan, then set precariously at Say.

The mission was extremely large by West African standards. It had a cavalry of irregular Hausas, which, with the addition of captives, seems to have grown in size as it proceeded. It had a field gun with smokeless shells and rapid-fire weapons. Walking in the middle of the long procession of porters was an entire herd of animals, which served as load carriers and as a meat reserve. Beyond the tirailleur units recruited in Bambara and Mosse territory, the so-called *races guerrières* of Soudan described by Joe Lunn, one finds what Joalland described as the "impedimenta": the women and children in tow who met the domestic requirements of a West African force on the march.[17] By the time that the force reached Zinder, this part of the mission had grown to about eight hundred women and children, most of them captives. Revealingly Voulet referred to this segment of the mission as his "horde." All in all, about eighteen hundred men and women marched under the French flag, but regular soldiers made up only a small fraction.

The number of load carriers, fixed at about eight hundred by Chanoine at the end of his muscular recruitment drive in Mosse territory

was, in fact, never static. A high mortality rate, which reached nearly 20 percent at the outset, combined with desertions and executions, depleted the ranks. New captives were constantly brought in to plug the gaps. Such a large column also exacted terrible demands on the land it traversed. Voulet estimated the mission's daily water needs at forty tons. Satisfying this most basic requirement in the Sahel presented a major challenge. Following its original guidance the mission soon found out that it could not reconnoiter the official June 1898 borders established between French and British colonial territory. This artificial borderline had drawn a neat semicircle north of Sokoto, but this left the French without sufficient water supplies.[18] Voulet decided, as a result, to limit his communications with Paris and contravene his written orders by crossing into the north of British-claimed Sokoto territory following the itineraries of earlier French travelers, Cazemajou and, in part, Parfait-Louis Monteil.[19] Going south before going east, Voulet's mission met increasing resistance after traversing the Soudan-Dahomey border. This was partly a result of the constant politico-military tension in this notoriously unstable region, which since the late fifteenth century and the collapse of the Songhai imperium had never experienced a hegemonic power and was exhausted by constant wars.[20] But the further the mission went east the more the mission faced the consequences of repeated droughts, which ravaged the whole West African continental landmass in the 1890s.

## *The Road to Atrocity*

The list of Voulet and Chanoine's crimes began in earnest in Sansané Haoussa, a small village on the Niger. It was here that the *colonne* reunited when the group that had sailed down the river met with the porters recruited (often violently) by Chanoine in the Mosse region. Reaching this village was something of an achievement since the river had never been navigated by such a large expedition. In Sansané Voulet and Chanoine massacred a number of women and children, all of them slaves. The alleged uncooperativeness of the villagers was cited as explanation for these killings. Similar massacres were perpetrated after the forcible seizure of any fortified Tata (fortress) or following any resistance. Voulet and Chanoine have left a number of texts that reveal

how their colonial minds justified such cold-blooded killing. Chanoine placed their mission in the context of an African and Muslim political system based on fear and duplicity:

> We, the civilized, in our immense pride, believe all the blacks prostrated before us in deep admiration and we think that they take us for gods or supernatural beings; that's what comes from the stories of travelers who have not travelled much and who tell lies or who have not seen or understood or who think that they will seem more interesting if they write that they were taken for gods or wizards. Hence all these sentimental theories which go so well with the government's miserly policies and which make so many of our enterprises fail from lack of weapons and ammunitions.
>
> In reality, most blacks are not much impressed by our science, it is God's will; but what they are surprised by is our immense naivety and our imperturbable trust in their lies . . . this great parenthesis brings me to my conclusion: when one fools the chief one despises him, in Muslim land submission is made of fear; one does not fear those one despises and as one hates the master, the cursed Christian, one is always near revolt, whether openly or not.[21]

According to this logic fear would build respect and respect loyalty.

Voulet agreed. The reports he filed from January to April 1899 repeatedly referred to the need to rule without fear of opposition, stating even that "the locals are only just beginning to take us seriously."[22] Both officers sought to earn admiration and prestige through a mixture of fear and rewards intended to secure devotion and loyalty.[23] This accorded with French respect for the immense dedication of the soldiers of the Muslim kingdoms they had defeated. El-Hajj Umar Tall and Samori were widely seen as bloodthirsty brutes whose soldiers were willing to die for them nonetheless. Voulet and Chanoine's perspective on colonial war was the direct continuation of Bugeaud's and Faidherbe's guidelines on expeditionary *colonnes* and a strategy adapted to local warfare.[24] They had not gone native; rather, they were applying to the letter a philosophy of colonial war based on mimicry of local warfare and adaptation to local conditions. Chanoine, who has left the most extensive

documents on the matter, was like many others in French Soudan and saw no harm in aping their former enemies.

Added to this philosophy were the constraints of limited means and urgent political imperatives. Furthermore, Voulet and Chanoine were adapting their practices to the rhetorical moral constraints of their age. Voulet thus insisted that a humanitarian war had to be short and brutal in order to impose a durable peace and cooperation at minimal cost. The high levels and methods of conquest violence were designed to shock. In a sense Voulet exemplified what Foucault described as the embodiment of sovereign power when he chose to exhibit bodies on trees, heads on sticks, or piles of corpses half-eaten by wild animals left at the entrance of the abandoned villages.[25] Village burnings, which according to Voulet and Chanoine's diaries were often accidental in the early days, became systematic and were used as beacons by the commanders of the various parts of the mission (it had become so large that it was in effect split into three to four sections).

Moreover, some of the column's soldiers had previously served with Samori. Voulet and Chanoine assumed that these men could relate to empire building, raids, and extreme violence. Through bloody example, power could be displayed brutally but infrequently. Since neither man believed in the innate qualities of their African subjects, they understood African politics as being of a primitive monarchical type. Within this economy of violence Voulet and Chanoine sought to compete with the loyalty and respect granted to their enemies, local chieftains, and Tuaregs:

> The black population will never become ours until they are certain they have been freed forever from their savage oppressors. This deliverance can only come from the power of our weapons. A fighting spirit [esprit de lutte] is no longer in their soul, which has been shaped to accept all tyrannies. Never will the Songhai emerge by themselves from the most servile submission to combat their masters (the Tuaregs).[26]

These lines, written by Chanoine as he was crossing the Mosse territory on his way to Say in late 1898, articulated two central concerns

shared by many officers in Soudan: French methods of war had to be decisive to win over the local people, and African subjects had to be coerced brutally into supporting the French so that their eventual moral renewal would follow from utter subjection.[27] Pallier's report, endorsed by all the members of the mission in August 1899, associated Voulet and Chanoine's methods closely:

> A number of women and children were massacred on his [Voulet's] order [in Birnin Konni] but, except for Chanoine, our attitude at the Sansané Haoussa massacre had made our feelings clear; during subsequent meals our freezing cold attitude had irritated Voulet, who complained about us to Chanoine, who responded: "you are wrong to tell them off, they are not used to it, they'll understand when we are attacked that these people are hostile, [then] they will come round."

Pallier then argued that "his usual theory was that by taking terrifying measures one would deter resistance and prevent even more bloodshed."[28] Although Pallier and his colleagues were at pains to distance themselves from Voulet and Chanoine, this is not borne out by the evidence. Pallier, like Joalland and the other officers and NCOs talked of the "moral sufferings we had to endure." He nevertheless defended or qualified some of the practices attributed to his superiors. For instance, in other passages of the report, Pallier did not condemn the mission's brutal practices: "Tirailleurs had orders to bring back the hand not of the porters but of enemies killed in their raids, in order to check their stories because they habitually exaggerated their successes enormously."[29] Clearly, Voulet and Chanoine sought absolute victory and total submission. They understood any attempt to temporize or negotiate as tantamount to rebellion. This explains, but does not justify, their extreme brutality toward villages that reluctantly surrendered a portion of what the conquerors demanded. The best-known example was the destruction of Birnin Konni during which several thousand people were massacred after the capture of the fortified city.

While there is wide-ranging evidence from diverse sources indicating that imperial conquest was brutal, the reality of its violence was always

minimized or censored in the French media and in much subsequent historiography. A good example of this self-censorship lies in the disparity between the original manuscript and the printed memoirs of Sergeant Ernest Bolis, who served in the French foreign legion between 1889 and 1905. Bolis's manuscript account relates without compunction that wounded prisoners were scalped and beheaded. The memoir version comments negatively on the scalping, and the wounded are described as already dead. He makes no mention of the beheading.[30] His manuscript also describes the beheading of men and the crushing of women's heads under elephants' feet during the Tonkin campaign of 1892–93.[31] Both are excised from the printed version. Similar editing out is to be found in published accounts for which we have a draft text. In the public domain the conquest was narrated in gallant terms, as a test of the French race and the gentlemanly qualities of its officers and soldiers. In an international system in which colonialism played a central part, unexpurgated accounts were always liable to enter the public arena, threatening to become a source of anti-French propaganda. It took extraordinary acts to go beyond acceptable norms of *à la guerre comme à la guerre*.

What distinguished the Voulet mission was its relentlessness and duration. Even though people fled before it, the long list of raided villages included towns of between three and ten thousand inhabitants. In every case "all the villages, all evacuated were burnt, the few individuals we met were taken prisoner." Guides who lost their bearings or refused to show the way were executed. In the village of Tibiri, Voulet executed those of the chief's female dependents who had fled. On 1 July, in the village of Karankalgo, Chanoine had 150 women and children massacred in reprisal for the village's attempt to defend itself. In other instances captives were used as spies. Chanoine wrote a short note to Voulet on 1 April 1899: "you have entire families captive; send the father [as a spy] and promise to free the rest of the family on his return as a reward; then you will need to send two from each to check the results."[32] Increasingly the *colonne* raided with the express purpose of sustaining itself economically by gathering slaves. Yet the large number of captives became one of the column's logistical nightmares. Unable to provision them, the *colonne* diverted further, conducting ever more raids and gathering yet more slaves in the process. Slaves were also the principal victims of its violence.

The account of events at Sansané Haoussa reflected the economic reality of slavery, highlighting Voulet's targeting of slaves in his reprisals: "The women were not all old said [the chief] many had only had one child . . . and one man was a freeman from Sansané Haoussa. The tirailleurs skewered them with their bayonets until they had all fallen then they cut their throats." These orders emanated from Mamadou Koulibaly, Voulet's interpreter.[33] A report from a Lieutenant Salaman, filed in May 1899, described his visit to the village in these terms: "On 15th February, I arrived in Sansané Haoussa where I found the remains of about one hundred beheaded bodies—1300 meters from the village, 300 meters from the river—the ground was covered with the bones scattered and torn by the hyenas, a blood trail thirty meters [long] and a meter across was still visible. A communal grave contained the bodies of the freemen (forty I was told) buried on the chief's orders. I could not find out the reasons for *these rigorous measures*."[34] The "rigorous measures" described were, in fact, exaggerated since the freemen were not killed by Voulet, and it appears that, in the early massacres at least, he took care to select slaves as victims, regarding them in the same way as he regarded the punitive destruction of other assets. Indeed, most claims registered against the expedition by village chiefs along the Niger were primarily for compensation for lost income.

The captives' role within the mission's hierarchy was complex. Many of the slaves were female, and sexual appetites played a role in the mission's internal violence and disciplinary breaches. Conquest army officers promoted the values of hyper-masculinity and homosocial loyalties.[35] In the words of André Mévil in an 1899 article published in *l'éclair* and subsequently reprinted in nationalist magazines, Soudan "was a tough school where the more robust constitutions are forged. A great people needs schools like these."[36] The army was not composed of warrior monks, and masculinity was displayed by constituting a family *à la mode du pays*, in this case composed of sexual slaves. Both Voulet and Chanoine took "wives," as did their officers.[37] The officer in Say who was a friend of Pallier asked him in a letter whether he had managed to "break in" his new companion.[38] French NCOs had their own spouses selected among the captives whom they guarded jealously. Sexual tensions between the soldiers and the NCOs resulted in at least two execu-

tions of serving tirailleurs after the racial divide between white officers and black troops was traversed by competition over access to women.[39] In a sense the sexual dynamics of the mission reveal it as a microcosm of colonialism.[40] Far from monolithic, the *colonne* replicated the traits of imperial hierarchy in a highly hostile environment.

### *Recording Violence and Atrocity*

To the latent or open hostility they met after the crossing of the Niger, Voulet responded with extreme brutality and crossed some threshold that defined his *colonne*'s behavior as intolerable. When does violence become an atrocity? None of Voulet's techniques were new. Only two years earlier he had burned part of Ouagadougou in reprisal actions that won universal approval from the Paris media and military hierarchy. By 1899, in contrast, the military had a weakened political position in Paris, and the sensationalist press had a growing appetite for leaked reports of colonial violence. Occasionally images came out too. A set of pictures exposing the summary execution of unarmed enemies and including a photograph of a pile of heads artistically arranged had been publicized, controversially to be sure, in *L'Illustration* in April 1891 to the great embarrassment of the French government.[41] Johannes Barbier, a Lyonnais photographer had brought back these grim mementos and had them published. But the officer responsible had only to respond to a meek enquiry letter, and the story was duly buried. Within Soudan, censorship was then applied more consistently and efficiently. Increasingly dual standards became part of the colonial way of fighting and ruling. In spite of a strident antislavery campaign in Europe, taking captives was deemed part of African warfare French style. One of the most renowned colonizers of Soudan, Archinard, had been involved in public distributions of captives to the troops. The killing of uncooperative porters was reprehensible but also relatively commonplace, as was the very public style of their execution. The *colonne* dispatched to the Kong against Samori two years before Voulet's arrival was a case in point.[42] While this was well known to the few people genuinely concerned or interested in Soudanese affairs, few of these incidents had become well known in France before the end of the 1890s. Journalists were seldom allowed access to information, let alone to details, and civilians were not welcome as eyewitnesses.

Yet the context was fast changing. First, the civilizing mission was now central to the army's last-ditch attempt to promote its mode of governance and maintain its last "private" colony in Soudan.[43] The colony's governor favored a more developmental model of colonial pacification, akin to the Gallieni doctrine practiced in Madagascar. For instance, Colonel de Trentinian was keen to promote mechanized modes of transport to replace human portage. The first phase of a railroad line was built, admittedly with forced labor but also employing wage laborers. Grand development schemes of *mise en valeur* were elaborated for a colony that was still in the making. The pro-colonial lobby led by Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, Auguste Terrier, and their associates of the Comité de l'Afrique Française promoted French pacification of these new territories and dreamed of a fertile Niger valley that they portrayed as the "French Nile."[44] Voulet's methods were thus already at odds with the dreams of his supporters, but his practices had a track record in delivering cheap and rapid conquests. Nonetheless, from the date of its departure from France to that of the dispatch requesting Voulet's arrest, the mission's political support in Paris melted away. Chanoine's father had resigned in unusual circumstances that infuriated his parliamentary colleagues and ended a long list of anti-Dreyfusard war ministers. African policy faced more critical scrutiny, and Fashoda demonstrated the weakness of the colonial master plan defended by Gabriel Hanotaux.[45] Finally, the Dreyfus affair stirred lively interest in the rights of individual citizen and their defense.[46] Perhaps more importantly, it undermined the moral high ground previously used to protect military ventures from unwelcome scrutiny.

For their part Voulet and Chanoine made several errors of judgment. First, they alienated their Soudanese army colleagues, Klobb among them. Trading on the autonomy accorded by their original instructions from Paris, they were tactless and arrogant in their dealings with administrators who struggled to satisfy their disproportionate demands. The resident in Say was especially aggrieved, having been working with only a handful of soldiers and two French associates to parley his neighbors into quietly accepting French overrule.[47] Here, as in many other areas of the empire, French control was wafer thin, and Voulet's demands stretched the limited authority his peers had imposed over the newly

conquered territory. The only reports favorable to Voulet came from Dahomey, where the mission's methods seemed in keeping within this recently and violently conquered colony, a fact confirmed when the Voulet *colonne* "pacified" Dahomey's rebellious northern regions. Due to poor communications between Soudan and Dahomey, Voulet and Chanoine's friends in this latter colony failed to provide sufficient evidence in time to clear their name in the spring of 1899.[48] Until its arrival at Say the mission was careful to feed pro-colonial media in France, but its reports became less frequent in the spring 1899, and the silence allowed their opponents to become more vocal.[49] More importantly the mission was divided, riddled with tensions among Frenchmen, among Frenchmen and Africans, and among Africans themselves.

A disgruntled Lieutenant Péteau was the whistleblower who brought the mission to the attention of the Paris press. Péteau was a colonial officer who had seen most service in Tonkin rather than Africa. Increasingly uneasy with the mission's leadership, he was dismissed over a personality clash.[50] Sent back to Say, the lieutenant realized that his career was at risk and that he might even face a court-martial. To avoid the censorship applied to all official correspondence, he wrote denunciatory letters to his fiancée describing Voulet's acts of violence in emotional terms.[51] His fiancée passed on the letter to her parliamentary deputy, who leaked it to Paul Vigné d'Octon, the most notorious critic of colonial violence in the National Assembly. Vigné then wrote it up in Clemenceau's newspaper.[52] Embarrassed, the minister of colonies reacted feverishly, sending two partially contradictory telegrams requesting a full enquiry and Voulet's arrest. Aware that Péteau's dismissal might provoke a scandal, Voulet and Chanoine attempted to respond, but much of their crucial correspondence sent en route never reached its destination and was discovered only after their deaths.

Without the intervention of the whistleblower Péteau, it seems unlikely that the column's excesses would ever have reached the media or the archives. Those men closest to the earliest abuses, such as the murders committed immediately on the colony's borders, were reluctant to commit witness testimony to paper, a typical response being, "I will be happy to make some things known to you that I do not want to write down."[53] It took Voulet's conflict with the administrators in

Say to trigger an official record of his actions, sent as a confidential report to Kayes, the capital of French Soudan.[54] Yet in Kayes this highly critical report remained buried until Péteau leaked information to the press. Similarly, it is unclear that the Crave report following a visit on the tracks of the *colonne* in February 1899 would have come about had Voulet survived and succeeded in his mission. In fact, the administrative process worked in contrary fashion. When Paris sent a telegram asking for an officer to be sent after Voulet, the administration opened a file intended to prove that it knew of Voulet's activities and was building up a case against him. On 28 April 1899 de Trentinian wrote in the margins of a report: "the Voulet mission horrors, who can tell me more about them? Send to bureau politique."[55]

The wider context of international rivalry also bears emphasis. A German colonial officer had recently been tried for sadistic behavior in Togo,[56] and events in German Southwest Africa had tarnished Germany's colonial reputation still further. Rumors of atrocities in Congo abounded, the echo of which can be found in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* published in early 1899: a novel whose plot strikingly resembles the Voulet-Chanoine Affair. The French press was re-examining its attitudes to the military and in the wake of the Dreyfus affair had become more open to antimilitaristic viewpoints. When news of Klobb's death reached Paris in late July 1899, Alfred Dreyfus faced a military court for the second time in Rennes in a famously flawed trial. Indeed, Julien Chanoine's father was appearing as a witness for the anti-Dreyfusard legal team when the rumor spread that his son had murdered a superior officer and might have become a renegade warlord rampaging Africa. The anti-Dreyfusard press leapt to Chanoine's defense, claiming that he was victim of scurrilous accusations, orchestrated by Jews, Freemasons, and other army haters, intended to discredit his father.[57] Until October 1899 the French government had to assume in contingency plans that the mission might have turned into a private army that had to be contained or even militarily defeated.[58] Only in October did confirmed and certain news of the deaths of Voulet and Chanoine bring an end to this excruciating embarrassment on the international stage.[59] The event required explanation nevertheless, and the only valid explanation seemed to be insanity.

## *Psychiatric Stories*

Remarkably, considering that it was generally assumed that Voulet and Chanoine had succumbed to depression or to a form of mania, there is no medical case to investigate. Henric, the doctor who traveled with them and survived the mission, seems to have made few diagnoses. Neither in his field reports nor in the inquest did he produce any evidence of the men's insanity. Rather, the diagnosis of psychiatric disorder was one imposed by "common sense," and all military authorities rallied to it as a convenient way out. For the nationalists, the officers' loss of moral fiber was insanity indeed. It resembled the wanderlust afflicting monomaniacs. Friends, associates, colleagues, and even enemies of Voulet and Chanoine chose to blame their insanity on Africa. Their form of madness even had a name: Soudanite.[60] In many ways this myth has stuck to the Voulet-Chanoine legend. Yet from a medical viewpoint it is a myth since Soudanite was not a genuine pathology prior to the affair, but a loose term coined to describe the social tensions dividing the region's colonists. As the first French female visitor to Soudan expressed it:

> The soldiers call *Soudanite* a disease, which consists of avenging one's ennui by being malicious, impatient, quarrelsome. Every year—it is forbidden to duel on the front—comrades, divided by this so-called *Soudanite* take the boat back ready to cut each other's throat on their return to France. Sea air and the joy of their return cure them. When they arrive in Bordeaux and have their last meal together the enemies have forgotten to meet on the field! One might think that this is specific to the officers. Not at all. Not only are civilians equally prone to it but even simple privates! The Captain commanding the *cercle* of Bakel told me that in his fort he had seven soldiers from various arms and occupying different roles and that these seven men who were close friends initially had ended up living separately and not communicating except when on duty. "Yes Madam they were cooking seven separate meals eaten at seven separate tables!" . . . I am inclined to think that *Soudanite* reigns in Kayes, and once again, I can explain it without excusing it: "We are bored!"[61]

In its original form, then, Soudanite connoted the social divisions and bickering, the jealousy and petty squabbles of an isolated society remote from the metropolis. A few years later the "disease" re-appeared, in light of the Voulet-Chanoine Affair, but this time in more terrible guise:

> fever, dysentery, anaemia; for them, absinth and deadly spirits, the despair of interminable isolation, agony or the disorder of the senses and brain. They are not obsessed with ranks like their officers; they are not savages like their indigenous comrades; but the excess of suffering and the feeling that so much pain heroically withstood are of no use to the motherland fill them with a dark anger. They grow accustomed to slaughter. Human life loses its worth in their eyes.[62]

The left-wing author of these lines added that when transposed to France, this colonial disease lent itself to violence against workers, as in the famous repression of strikers at Fourmies on 1 May 1891.[63] For Vigné d'Octon, Voulet's and Chanoine's Soudanite was a consequence of the bloodlust of uncontrolled African sensuality—a theme he had already developed in his autobiographical novels.[64] For others, like the official who published his denunciation of the Soudan administration under the pseudonym Jean Rode in *La Revue Blanche*, Soudanite was the product of a specific promotion-obsessed and hysterically violent military culture.[65] In this light Soudanite was the systemic insanity of the military in colonial context rather than the individual neurosis of individuals. Thus the so-called diagnostic reveals absolutely nothing of Voulet's or Chanoine's psyche but is more explicitly indicative of the "psychological turn" in French politics at the turn of the century.

Furthermore it was the parallel between Klobb's killing and a coup d'état that won most attention. Voulet seemed the counterrevolutionary type, the authoritarian military disconnected from the republican polity. There were several ironies here. For one, Voulet was the product of Parisian colonial plotting rather than the infamous Soudanese empire builders. For another, it was Chanoine's father who had attempted to block re-examination of the Dreyfus case in the name of discipline, of law and order. Klobb's murder was thus seen as indicative of an

army at odds with the nation and sensitive to, if not yet conquered by, ultranationalistic arguments. The same year Paul Déroulède romantically attempted a coup at Félix Faure's funeral. Ultimately the Voulet-Chanoine Affair contributed to the end of the military colony of Soudan in 1899.[66] Crucially, this diagnosis of military dysfunction was deployed to explain Klobb's death rather than the acts committed along the way and for which all the French officers of the mission had to answer. The rebellion against Klobb hid the original criminal case against them: the atrocities committed along their journey that were not so easily reducible to a *coup de sang*.

## *Conclusion*

Whether psychotic or neurotic, the actions of Voulet and Chanoine are still seen as singular excesses. Even critics of colonialism have largely explained the mission's violence by stressing the absolute agency of two delusional men. There is a gap between the now commonplace denunciation of colonialism as a system based on violence, as a third totalitarianism of the West in Hannah Arendt's phrase, and the detailed understanding of the individual cases of violence. Marc Ferro, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, and a multitude of scholars have denounced the violence as part of a broader historiographical trend, labeled *la repentance*, which conflicted with recent attempts to sanitize the colonial past.[67] Among the plethora of terrible events that took place over the colonial era, incidents such as the Voulet-Chanoine Affair merely demarcated the outer limits of violent norms.

This chapter, which set aside as incidental and ahistorical the madness theory, has sought to set the story more squarely within other reflections on violence and politics in colonial conflict. The Voulet-Chanoine scandal was a product of French politics rather than a revelation of French practices in Africa. What the Voulet-Chanoine Affair says most convincingly about the French colonial mind is that it was fundamentally unstable, divided between ancient modes of production of space, of people (captives) and modern projections of power and republican values promoted by anti-republican soldiers. The affair revealed a divided nation lancing its boils abroad and channeling its inner violence through the greatest military expansion of its history. In Mosse terri-

tory as elsewhere in the new colony, violence was accepted practice, and instances of "exemplary" punishments abound. Anthropologists such as Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan have argued that this era marked a radical break for the people of the Niger River.[68] Others saw in it the continuity of centuries of violent rulers sometimes backed by terrifying divinities. In this account the notions of masculinity embodied by hard men conformed to a mythology linked to the Songhai kingdom much admired by Voulet and Chanoine.[69] Paul Stoller suggests that the violence corresponded to forms of monarchy in the fifteenth-century Songhai kingdom led by the empire builder Sonni Ali Ber. Songhai kings could be transposed to Voulet and Chanoine (themselves almost one entity), while Voulet and Chanoine's soldiers routinely compared them to Samori. From this game of mirror violence emerged new mimicries, which expose the dreadful symmetry of the Voulet-Chanoine story.[70]

How conscious were Voulet and Chanoine of what they were doing? About as conscious as educated soldiers could be in their context of an anthropological and geographical void. They had read the racialist anthropologist Broca and combined this knowledge with older forms of imperial fantasies. They traveled with copies of Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars* as well as older travel accounts such as that by Mongo Park, who detailed the past glories of Songhai civilization. They thought they knew something profound about the African mind-set and had adapted theirs to counteract and challenge their African foes. In this they were not deviant in the least from mainstream colonial thinking. They embodied a form of violence that is always found in the confrontation between the self-appointed civilized and so-called barbarians; one that always reflects badly on the barbarians since it is because of them that the "civilized" claim to outdo the barbarians in brutality. The tragic ironies of the Voulet-Chanoine Affair have universal meanings precisely because they have been and are endlessly reiterated in every colonial and neocolonial war since.

## *Notes*

Bertrand Taithe has published a monograph on the Voulet Chanoine affair for Oxford University Press. Thanks are due to colleagues in Manchester, the London IHR, and Hull University who responded to this paper and to col-

leagues in Exeter who gave helpful feedback. In particular many thanks to Martin Thomas for his help and support in this project.

1. A *colonne* was a French colonial war formation that temporarily combined resources from the cavalry, infantry, and artillery. The *colonnes* were set up to be mobile and yet have considerable firepower. Developed in Algeria under General Bugeaud, the *colonnes* were in continuous use throughout the expansion of the empire. In order to make clear that I am referring to this specific arrangement I have chosen to use the French term.

2. French Sudan (henceforth Soudan) was a territory distinct from what is now called Sudan (which was then known as British Sudan). It covered the territories of present-day Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali. At the onset of the story none of these territories were yet fully controlled by the French military, and many wars were fought in the 1890s in order to control them. For details, see, for instance, Lieutenant Gatelet, *Histoire de la conquête du Soudan Français (1878–1899)* (Paris: Berger Levrault, 1901).

3. General Joalland, *Le Drame de Dankori: Mission Voulet-Chanoine, Mission Joalland-Meynier* (Paris: Argo, 1930), 84–85. This is the text that was read in the Chamber of Deputies by Minister of Colonies Decrais on 30 November 1900. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted. Also see later accounts such as General Octave Meynier, *Mission Joalland-Meynier* (Paris: Collection les grandes missions coloniales, 1947). Also Arsène Klobb, *Dernier carnet de route au Soudan Français* (Paris: Flammarion, 1905); *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Afrique Occidentale française de 1895 à 1899, correspondance du capitaine Chanoine pendant l'expédition du Mossi et du Gourounsi—correspondance de la mission Afrique Centrale—Annexe rapports officiels du Lt Gouveneur du Soudan*, Jules Chanoine, ed., n.d., n.p. On the Voulet mission see the account of Muriel Mathieu, *La Mission Afrique Centrale* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1995), originally a 1975 University of Toulouse doctoral thesis.

4. See, for instance, Antoine Tshitongu Kongolo, "L'étonnante aventure de Blackland," in Jules Verne, *L'étonnante Aventure de la Mission Barsac*, 2 vols. (Paris: Harmattan, 2005).

5. Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts et conceptions Songhay-Zarma* (Nubia, 1982), 224–30.

6. Paul Vigné d'Octon had served as a medical officer in the navy and had experienced some of the atrocities of the conquest. On his return he launched a successful literary and political career, making him the most constant critique of colonial policies if not colonialism in general. Hélia Vigné D'Octon, *La Vie et l'oeuvre de Paul Vigné D'Octon* (Montpellier: Imp de Causse, n.d.,

c. 1950), 53. Vigné d'Octon is now most famous for his denunciation of colonial exploitation in colonial Tunisia, published under the title *La sueur du burnou* (1911), which is still in print (Paris: Les Nuits Rouges, 2001).

7. In fact, Voulet's clumsy interventions created a dynastic problem that took a generation to appease. Jeanne-Marie Kambou-Ferrand, *Peuples Voltaiques et Conquête coloniale, 1885–1914, Burkina Fasso* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), 353–80; Yenouyaba Georges Madiega and Oumarou Naro, eds., *Burkina Faso, cent ans d'histoire, 1895–1995* (Paris: Karthala, 2003); Samuel Salo, "Le Moog-Naaba Wogbo de Ouagadougou (1850–1904)," in Madiega and Naro, *Burkina Faso*, 631–57.

8. Lieutenant Voulet, "La Jonction du Soudan et du Dahomey, 1896–7," *Revue Générale des Sciences Pures et Appliquées* 8 (1897), 893–902; Ned Noll, "Le Mossi, la Mission du Lieutenant Voulet," *A Travers le Monde* A3 (1897), 257–60.

9. The Société de Géographie found it difficult to refer back to the events. See Baron Hulot, "Rapport sur les progrès de la géographie en 1899," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* 1, 1 semestre (1900), 202–5.

10. See, for instance, "Missions Politiques et Militaires: Les Français au Gourounsi," *A Travers le Monde* A4 (1898), 21–23.

11. The French financial control office, the Cour des comptes, later queried the financing of the mission in 1902: Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer (hereafter CAOM), Missions, 11, 7 January 1902. *Question Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, "L'expansion française vers le Tchad," vol. 8, 15 December 1899, 169–72.

12. The earlier drafts of the instructions were much clearer in that particular direction; see CAOM, Afrique III, 37, 32, "Projet d'instruction," approved by Delcassé.

13. For a narrative see Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 100–111.

14. Foureau, *D'Alger au Congo par le Tchad* (Masson, 1902; reprint, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990).

15. The position of Pallier and Joalland was a pragmatic one since they had authority only through the colonial army itself. Henri Brunschwig, *Noirs et Blancs dans l'Afrique Noire Française ou comment le colonisé devint colonisateur, 1870–1914* (Paris: Flammarion, 1974).

16. J. F. V. Keiger, "Omdurman, Fashoda and Franco-British Relations," in *Sudan: The Conquest Reappraised*, ed. Edward M. Spiers (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 162–76; "Le Livre Jaune sur Fachoda," *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales* 5 (1898), 273; see also M. J. L. de Lamessan, "L'évacuation de Fachoda: Ses véritables causes," *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales* 5 (1898), 321–30.

17. Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857–1960* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 1991); Lieutenant Gatelet, *Histoire de la conquête du Soudan Français, 1878–1899* (Paris: Berger Levrault, 1901), 2–10; Joe Lunn, "'Les Races guerrières': Racial Preconceptions in the French Military about West African Soldiers during the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34:4 (1999), 517–36; Charles Mangin, *La Force Noire* (Paris, 1910); Éric Deroo and Antoine Champeaux, *La Force noire: Gloire et infortune d'une légende coloniale* (Paris: Tallandier, 2006); J. Malcolm Thompson, "Colonial Policy and the Family Life of Black Troops in French West Africa, 1817–1904," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23:3 (1990) 423–53.

18. Lieutenant Colonel Monteil, *Les Conventions Franco-Anglaises des 14 juin 1898 et 21 mars 1899* (Paris: Plon Nourrit, 1899), 12.

19. Cazemajou was murdered in Zinder; Monteil survived and brought back a detailed itinerary; see Lieutenant Colonel Parfait-Louis Monteil, *De Saint Louis à Tripoli par le lac Tchad voyage au travers du Soudan et du Sahara pendant les années 1890–91–92* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1894). Monteil had chosen to visit Sokoto. Since then Sokoto had been claimed by the British even though it is unclear that the sultan fully appreciated that situation until 1901. See H. A. S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 240–41.

20. Idrissa Kimba, *Guerres et sociétés: Les populations du Niger occidental au XiXe siècle et leurs réactions face à la colonisation*, Etudes Nigériennes 46 (Niamey: Institut de recherches en sciences humaines, 1981), 78–79.

21. Chanoine, *Documents*, 290–91.

22. CAOM, Afrique III, 37, 1. Voulet to Ministre des colonies, Sansanne Hawsa, January 1899.

23. CAOM Afrique III, 37, 29, Voulet to Ministre, 9 July 1898.

24. Parfait-Louis Monteil, *Vade Mecum de l'officier d'infanterie de marine* (Paris: L. Baudoin et Cie, 1884) 162; Voulet had publicized his organizational skills and had published on the best means of setting up a colonne. Voulet, "La Jonction du Soudan," 895–96.

25. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (1977; new ed., London: Penguin, 1991) intro. and chap. 1.

26. Capitaine Chanoine, "Mission Voulet-Chanoine, de Dienné à Sansanné-Haoussa," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de France* 20 (1899), 234.

27. As Alice Conklin points out, the concept itself was recent: see Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), chap. 1.

28. CAOM, Mission 110, Rapport Pallier, 15 August 1899.

29. CAOM, Mission 110, Rapport Pallier, 15 August 1899.

30. Sergent Ernest Bolis, *Mes Campagnes en Afrique et en Asie, 1889–1899*, ed. Claude Gassmann (Strasbourg: Gassmann, 2001), 5–7, 32–33.

31. Bolis, *Mes Campagnes*, 46.

32. CAOM, Mission 110, Papiers Voulet, Chanoine to Voulet, 1 April 1899.

33. CAOM, Mission 110, Rapport politique de Say, March 1899. The role of the interpreter is always crucial in episodes such as this one. It reflects a power relation well studied in Emily Lynn Osborne, "Circle of Iron: African Colonial Employees and the Interpretation of Colonial Rule in French West Africa," *Journal of African History* 44:1 (2003), 29–50.

34. CAOM, Mission 110, Rapport du Ltnt d'artillerie de Marine Salaman au Lt Gal, flotille du Niger, lettre T 106, Segou, 8 May 1899.

35. See Robert Aldrich, "Colonial Masculinities," in *French Masculinities: History, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

36. Mévil, reprinted in *Question Diplomatiques et Coloniales* 8 (1 September 1899), 110.

37. The surviving evidence is obviously more discreet on the matter, but the archives contain a few letters that cast a faint light on the domestic arrangement of the mission Voulet: CAOM, Mission 110, Rapport Joalland, Mafoita, 25 July 1899.

38. CAOM, Mission 110, Letter to Pallier from Captain Angeli in Dosso, no date, February 1899.

39. CAOM, Mission 49, 350 Conclusions rapport Laborie.

40. For a controversial discussion of what sexual tensions entail see Greg Thomas, *The Sexual Demon of Colonial Power* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007). The theme is, of course, central in Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask*. See also Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

41. The event took place in Bakel in April 1897. CAOM, Soudan II, 2, Report from Ambassador Waddington; Report from de Lamothe on the events; notes sent to Captain Roix.

42. The campaign was highly controversial because of its cost and lack of success. As a result, Monteil lost all the credit he had accumulated during his travels to Chad a few years earlier. Lt Col. Parfait-Louis Monteil, *Une page d'histoire coloniale, la Colonne de Kong* (Paris: Henri Charles Lavauzelle, 1904). See the Archives Missionnaires d'Afrique, diaire de Ségou.

43. For a detailed account of civil-military relations in Soudan see A. S. Kanya Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan: A Study in French Mili-*

*tary Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 245–62; see also Richard L. Roberts, *Warriors, Merchants and Slaves: The State and the Economy in the Middle Niger Valley, 1700–1914* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 152–64.

44. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *Le Sahara, Le Soudan et les Chemins de Fer Transsahariens* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1904); Finn Fuglestad, *A History of Niger, 1850–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 49–51; Robert Cornevin, préface to Maurice Delafosse, *Haut Sénégal-Niger* (1908; reprint, Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1972), 6–8.

45. Roger Glenn Brown, *Fashoda Reconsidered: The Impact of Domestic Politics on French Policy in Africa, 1893–1898* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970); Marc Michel, *La Mission Marchand, 1895–1899* (Paris: Mouton, 1972); Gabriel Hanotaux, *Le Partage de l'Afrique: Fachoda* (Paris: Flammarion, 1909); Guy de la Batut, *Fachoda ou le renversement des alliances* (Paris: Gallimard, 1932), 195–96; Paul Webster, *Fachoda: La bataille pour le Nil* (Paris: Edition du Felin, 2001).

46. See, inter alia, William D. Irvine, *Between Justice and Politics: The Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, 1898–1945* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

47. CAOM, Mission 110, exchange of letters with Delaunay, 31 January 1899.

48. CAOM, Afrique III, 38bis, 22 November 1899, report from Dahomey, Ltnt Viola and Cornu.

49. Chanoine, "Mission Voulet-Chanoine," 221–35, 79–84.

50. CAOM, Afrique III, 37, 89, Kiladi, 2 February 1899, to General de Trentinian.

51. The fragments of the final report on the mission led by Commandant Laborie in 1899–1900 showed that Péteau had himself masterminded two massacres: CAOM, Mission 49, 149 Rapport du ministre Doumergue.

52. Of course, the issue is not whether Clemenceau should be regarded as a genuine anticolonialist; see Jean-Pierre Biondi, *Les Anti-colonialistes (1881–1962)* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1993), 27.

53. CAOM, Afrique III, 38, 75 bis, report of Cmmdt Crave, December 1898.

54. CAOM, Afrique III, 38, 9, rapport du chef de bataillon Crave.

55. CAOM, Afrique III, 38, 75bis, report Grandeyere & Crave.

56. L. H. Gann and Peter Duigan, *The Rules of German Africa, 1884–1914* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1977); Dennis Laumann, "A Historiography of German Togoland, or the Rise and Fall of a 'Model Colony,'" *History in Africa* 30:2 (2003), 195–211; Kenneth Mackenzie, "Some

British Reactions to German Colonial Methods, 1885–1907," *Historical Journal* 17:1 (1974), 165–75.

57. *Le Petit Journal*, 6 October 1899.

58. CAOM, Afrique III, 38, 65. Doubt persisted until the receipt of Pallier's full account on 14 October 1899.

59. CAOM, Afrique III, 38, 15, note ministère des affaires étrangères, 26 August 1899.

60. Variants were then developed; see Dr. Marie, "La folie à la légion étrangèr," *Revue blanche* 26 (1902), 401–20; Dr. Louis Catrin, *Aliénation mentale dans l'armée* (Paris: Rueff, 1901); Marius Antoine Cavasse, "Les dégénérés dans l'armée coloniale," Thèse de la faculté de médecine, Bordeaux, 1903. See also Jean-Marie Lundy, "Mémoire de criminologie appliqué à l'expertise medicale: Le Traitement pénal dans l'armée Française sous la troisième république," Thèse de doctorat, Université René Descartes, Droit Medical, 1987, 34.

61. Raymonde Bonnetain, *Une Française au Soudan, sur la route de Tombouctou, du Sénégal au Niger* (Paris, 1894), 160.

62. Urbain Gohier, preface to Paul Vigné d'Octon, *La Gloire du Sabre*, 4th ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 1900), vii.

63. Odile Roynette-Gland, "L'armée dans la bataille sociale: Maintien de l'ordre et grèves ouvrières dans le Nord de la France (1871–1906)," *Le Mouvement social* 179 (April–June 1997), 33–58.

64. Paul Vigné D'Octon, *Chair noire, preface de Leon Cladel* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1889). His foremost success was *Terre de Mort, Soudan, Dahomey* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1892), a novel that traced the sexual and physical decay of the colonial officer in the outposts of Africa. See Jennifer Yee, "Malaria and the Femme Fatale: Sex and Death in French Colonial Africa," *Literature and Medicine* 21:2 (2002), 201–15.

65. Jean Rode was, in fact, a civilian administrator named Eugène Bouton, as revealed by Vigné D'Octon in the parliamentary debate of 30 November 1900 on the Voulet-Chanoine Affair. His article had been published in the fall of 1899: "Un regard sur le Soudan," *La Revue Blanche* 20 (1899), 321–30.

66. "La dislocation du Soudan Français," *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales* 8:1 (October 1899), 137–38.

67. Marc Ferro, ed., *Le livre noir du colonialisme, xvie–xxie siècle: De l'extermination à la repentance* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2003); Dimitri Nicolaidis, *Oublier nos crimes: L'amnésie nationale, une spécificité française?* (Paris: Autrement, 1994); Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, *La Fracture Coloniale* (Paris: Découverte, 2005); Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Françoise Vergès, *La République coloniale* (Paris: Pluriel, 2003).

68. J-P. Olivier de Sardan, *Les Societes Songhay-Zarma (Niger-Mali): Chefs, guerriers, esclaves, paysans* (Paris: Karthala, 1984), 152–55.

69. Jean Rouch, *La réligion et la magie Songhay: Anthropologie Sociale* (Brussels: Université de Bruxelles, 1989, 72–73; Dongo was notorious for his violence, notably the killing of entire villages; his role was to be the God of Thunder. On healing see Rouch, *La réligion et la magie Songhay*, 306, and Rouch, *Les Hommes et les dieux du fleuve, essai ethnographique sur les populations songhay du moyen Niger, 1941–1983* (Paris: Artcom, 1997).

70. Paul Stoller, *Embodying Colonial Memories: Spirit Possession, Power and the Hauka in West Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995); also see Adeline Masquelier, "Road Mythographies: Space, Mobility and the Historical Imagination in Postcolonial Niger," *American Ethnologist* 29:4 (2002), 829–56, at 830.