

2 Between the Hammams of Maghreb and the Basements of Paris: French Productions

Pornography is a site of both entertainment and pleasure. Yet, the pleasure that it induces is profoundly structured, not only by ideological constructs of sex and ‘race’, but also by political triumphs and insecurities. Nowhere is this more evident than in what Cervulle and Rees-Roberts have termed as ‘gay ethnic pornography’: “a term widely used in French gay sexual culture to designate the particular genre of porn involving non-white men.”¹ *Mektoub Fantasie Arabe* (ca. 1920) is considered as the first example of European gay ethnic pornographic film.² The film was produced in France, but similar productions soon followed in other European countries. *Mektoub Fantasie Arabe* tells the story of curious French tourist Dickie, who sneaks into the emperor Abd-el Zob’s palace and ‘unexpectedly’ experiences polysexual encounters that include penetration by Abd-el Zob and his guards.³ However, it is possible to chart the phenomenology of ethnic pornography long before the *Mektoub Fantasie Arabe* from 1920, perhaps starting from Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt in 1798 that is followed by the French conquest of Algiers in 1830, and the establishment of protectorates in Tunisia in 1881 and Morocco in 1912.⁴ In his instructive survey *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, Robert Aldrich argues that the dynamics around colonial idea as:

One is indeed the emblematic flight from the religious and social demands of Europe (even tolerant and naughty fin de siècle Paris) to search overseas for wealth, warm climates, enchanting landscapes and cultures, and some sort of self-realization. Colonialism manifestly aided such journeys.⁵

1 I employed the terminology “gay ‘ethnic’ pornography” from the essential and inspiring work of Maxime Cervulle and Nick Rees-Roberts. See Maxime Cervulle, and Nick Rees-Roberts. “Queering the Orientalist Porn Package: Arab Men in French Gay Pornography.” *New Cinemas* 6, no. 3 (2009), 198. See also: Cervulle, Maxime. “Erotic/Exotic. Race and Class in French Gay ‘Ethnic’ Pornography”. In *Post/Porn/Politics: Symposium/Reader: Queer-Feminist Perspective on the Politics of Porn Performance and Sex-Work as Culture Production*, edited by Tim Stüttgen. Berlin: B-Books, 2009, 180–193.

2 Some of the movies I mention are only available to internet users on xHamster today. *Mektoub Fantasie Arabe* (ca. 1920) is one of them. According to Wikipedia, “xHamster is a pornographic media and social networking site headquartered in the Cypriot city of Limassol. xHamster serves user-submitted pornographic videos, webcam models, pornographic photographs, and erotic literature, and incorporates social networking features. xHamster was founded in 2007.” See: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3815774/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024). See also: <https://de.xhamster2.com/videos/mektoub-circa-1920-gay-bisex-from-nexus79-13563082> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

3 Joseph Allen Boone provides a deeper insight regarding *Mektoub Fantasie Arabe* in his work *Homosexualities of Orientalism*. See: Boone, 2014, XVII.

4 Aldrich, Robert. *Colonialism and Homosexuality*. London; New York: Routledge, 2003, 329

5 Aldrich, 2003, 337.

Long before the emergence of the pornographic film industry, remarkable examples from French literature and arts, including painting and photography, testify to the pornographic potentials of the colonial relationship in the S.W.A.N.A. regions. The novels of Henry de Montherlant, Roger Martin du Gard, André Gide (and even post-1920 literature such as Jean Genet and Tony Duvert) and the memoirs and paintings of François Augiéras explored the assumed proximity of North African and Arab men to homosexuality not only as a sexual fantasy but also as a social construct.⁶ These literary examples documented the tropes of colonialism and Orientalism connected to sexuality and society's memories. Gay ethnic pornography, as a subgenre, is shaped by literature and historiography that orchestrate ethnicities and their attached social and cultural codes. The narrative of this genre relies on the dynamics, such as economic power, mobility, and sociocultural difference, that have become discrete sociopolitical markers. These elements simultaneously create a space for commonalities and polarizations, making gay ethnic pornography a rich field of study.

Gay ethnic pornography mainly employs two stereotypes of foreignness: while one presents a racialized animality of the ethnic subject, the other works as a triumphant debasement through humiliation and fetishization. These two types of foreignness have been represented in gay ethnic pornography throughout time and across media. However, a critical approach is needed to account for which communities are at stake when it comes to pornographic depiction in diverse media forms. In addition to these considerations, this genre has been dominated by European white middle-class men until the porn industry became inclusive of people of color from Europe in director and producer positions. This shift happened only after the 2000s, when gay ethnic pornography reached its peak as a popular genre in the mainstream porn industry. To understand the motives of the pre-2000s gay ethnic pornography in the film industry, it is important to look into how this phenomenon moved from the S.W.A.N.A. regions to France and how it first became a social and cultural issue. It is also key to understand how this phenomenon became re-localized as a marketing strategy.

This chapter aims to understand the power dynamics embedded in racial and sexual commodification, and class exploitation, and the ways in which these dynamics inform the porn industry's marketing strategies and media coverages in France. Combining this literature review with discourse analysis, I aim to explore different aspects of exoticization and eroticization of the colonial subject to understand the tensions of ethnic difference embedded in pornographic representation, and what that

⁶ In literature examples of ethnic pornography, French writer Tony Duvert becomes the only one who realizes the post-colonial potential of such erotic tension. In his book, *Diary of an Innocent* (1976), he also points out the discrimination that the Maghrebi man is experiencing in France, besides his joy of having sex with them. *Diary of an Innocent*, translated into English in 2010, could be one of the few literature examples of gay 'ethnic' pornography that recognizes the post-colonial social potential of racialized sexuality towards Arab men.

can tell us about the operations of a gay male gaze. Unlike the other topics covered in this book, the French context of gay ethnic pornography has been dealt with by different scholars at different times. Therefore, the literature review in this chapter leads me to broader discussions rather than a detailed presentation of historical facts that are already included in the works of the scholars this book refers to. In contrast to a conventional historiographical examination, the subsequent two chapters delve into specific examples that have yet to receive extensive scrutiny or analysis within academic discourse. Consequently, their references are limited to a select number of scholarly works. The primary objective of this study is twofold: firstly, to furnish a foundation for dialogue by shedding light on underexplored aspects, and secondly, to establish connections between French gay, ethnic pornography and its counterparts in German and Eastern European contexts. This approach widens the scope of investigation within the field. It offers a nuanced understanding of the interplay between cultural and geographical factors in producing and receiving such material.

2.1 Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR) and Maghrebi Men

By 1960, almost one million Algerians had migrated from Algeria to Europe – mainly to France – making Algerians the largest ethnic minority in France.⁷ This was followed by the independence of Algeria in 1962, and, as Todd Shepard states in *Sex, France, and the Arab Men*, the erotic fascination with Algerians was infused with hatred and fear. 1962 was also the year when the *homophile* movement became more and more visible in France.⁸ The October 1964 issue of the popular far-right magazine *Europe Action* bore the headline “Soon There Will Be One Million of Them” and the cover image showed a group of Algerian men photographed from a distance without any visible female figures. The independence of Algeria was perceived as a hypermasculine threat against the ‘gentle’ French society.

The gendered crisis of virility created a new kind of representation for North African Arab men in France, in which racial dehumanization and triumphant debasement were thrown into a mishmash of sex. French erotic cinema of the period was late in reflecting this change due to legal restrictions. Since there was a legislative ban on showing and producing porn movies in France, most attempts at erotic narratives

7 Here I refer to *Europe-action* 22 (October 1964), front cover. The headline of the magazine stated: “Soon There Will Be One Million of Them.” See also: Aldrich, 2003, 329.

8 Shepard, Todd. *Sex, France, and Arab Men, 1962–1979*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017. The reason why I chose to describe the word *homophile* is based on the fact that it was the prior version of the LGBTI+ movement from today. The primary organizations and media that supported and represented sexual minorities from the 1950s to 1960s worldwide are collectively referred to as the *homophile* movement.

were integrated into non-erotic dramas as highly romanticized depictions of human sexuality. In addition to this, “the legislative changes that made the legal production and distribution of all pornographic films in France possible began after Giscard d’Estaing’s election in May 1974.”⁹

This moment also coincides with gay rights movements growing stronger alongside other social movements. For instance, on Wednesday, March 10, 1971, Ménie Grégoire hosted a radio program on the national broadcaster RTL titled “Homosexuality: This Painful Problem” with Father Guinchat, a priest, and André Baudry, the head of France’s only ‘homophile’ organization, as guests.¹⁰ This historic program, where homosexuality was discussed openly on a popular French radio station, was disrupted by a group of activists who would later call themselves the FHAR (*Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire*). This group was registered with the police as a humanitarian anti-racist front, in order to avoid censorship and being shut down. The FHAR intervention provided the issue with much more visibility than the radio program would have ordinarily generated. On April 23, 1971, almost two months later, FHAR released a manifesto in the Maoist newspaper *Tout!*.

The manifesto plays a central role in the discussions of gay ethnic pornography because the FHAR members betrayed anti-racist impulses by fetishizing Arabs while reproducing conventional middle-class white male rhetoric. This text is not fully available online, but this study on gay ethnic pornography will allow the reader to reach the complete text of the manifesto of FHAR, for the first time in English. Considering the importance of accessing this text, this book will be quoting the manifesto. Following this, the book will feature the column by FHAR in the newspaper and the manifesto to discuss the general view towards Maghrebi, Arab men. The discourse of FHAR explicitly addresses the discussion of sexualization through an assertive political ground. The manifesto speaks volumes on the issue of sexualized Arab migrant bodies and the questionable solidarity of politicized intellectual French gay communities.¹¹ The initial publication of “Trois Milliard de Pervers,” however, remains embedded into a sense of mystery, given that a French court seized all available copies and ordered them to be destroyed, in addition to fining the designated director of publications, Guattari: 600 francs for affronting public decency. As a result, very few people are said to have been able to see the original publication that, apart from Guattari’s introduc-

9 Callwood, Dan. “Anxiety and Desire in France’s Gay Pornographic Film Boom, 1974–1983.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2017, 31.

10 As it is explained in Michael Sibal’s article, “The homophile movement – which disliked the word ‘homosexual’ for stressing sex rather than love – was predominantly middle-class, conformist and politically and socially conservative.” See: Sibal, Michael. “L’arrivée De La Libération Gay En France. Le Front Homosexuel D’action Révolutionnaire (Fhar).” *Genre, sexualité et société* 3, 2010, 265 and 267.

11 See: *Appendix* for the entire manifesto

tion, has never been reprinted until 2015.¹² Here, I would like to add the remark of Sophie Thomas on the position of FHAR:

Note on FHAR: In France, this evolution has been different. The revolutionary movement, the FHAR, was launched with a political agenda right from the start. There was no conjunction of marginal homosexual movements with political movements: the problems of homosexuality were immediately posed as political questions. This Maoist movement – formed around the journal *Tout!*, the edition of May '68 – refused not only to accept that homosexuality: was an illness or a perversion, but advanced the view that it concerned a normal sexual life. Similarly, the women's liberation movement, the MLF (*Mou'l Jement de libération des femmes*), argued that feminine homosexuality was not only a form of struggle against male chauvinism, but also a radical questioning of all dominant forms of sexuality.¹³

FHAR's published manifesto and the intervention on the radio show could be considered the first social criticism of the fascination with and the fetishization of the North African and Arab males in France issued from intellectuals and activists of middle-class French society. Outside their 'revolutionary' view on the hyper-sexualization of immigrant men in *Tout!*, FHAR also released two further publications, *Le Fléau Social* and *L'Antinorm*, which aimed to contradict the gay liberation movements of the time from a radical perspective.¹⁴ During their events and parades, they carried banners with slogans such as "High School Boys Are Cute" or "Down With The Dictatorship of Normal". Their statements and banners show that what conservative media as well as parts of the more assimilative forces in the Gay Liberation movement saw as perversions was what they carried as a badge of honor.¹⁵ As they put it in *Tout!*, 'these over 343 bitches' will speak for both themselves and the Arabs. In the following issue of the *Tout!* (May 17, 1971) the newspaper demonized sex workers and pornography, positing

12 See: Felix Guattari, ed., *Trois Milliards de Pervers: La Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités* (La Bussière: Acratie, 2015). Guattari's "Liminaire" was reprinted in French in Felix Guattari, *La révolution moléculaire* (Fontenay-sous-Bois: Encres/Recherches, 1977), 110–19; and in its English translation in Félix Guattari, "Thee Billion Perverts on the Stand," Gary Genosko, *The Guattari Reader*, 185–192.) Gary Genosko mentions that in 2002 a partly censored copy of "Trois Milliard de Pervers" surfaced on the website of the French journal *Critical Secret* but access was password protected. The omitted parts concerned 32 pages under the title "Pédophilie"; see Gary Genosko, "Busted: Félix Guattari and the Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités," *Rhizomes* 11/12, 2005/2006; (accessed February 1, 2020); available from <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue11/genosko.html#4>. (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024). See also: Guattari, Félix, Cathy Bernheim, Gilles Chatelet, Michel Cressole, Fanny Deleuze, Gilles Deleuze, Catherine Deudon, et al. *Recherches. N°[12] [Mars 1973], Trois Milliards De Pervers. Grande Encyclopédie Des HomosexualitéS*. Paris(73 rue Buffon): Recherches, 1973.

13 Guattari, Felix. *A Guattari Reader / Pierre-Felix Guattar*, edited by Gary Genosko. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, 187.

14 McGrogan, Manus Christian. "Tout! in context 1968–1973: French radical press at the crossroads of far left, new movements and counterculture." Thesis, University of Portsmouth, 2010, 7.

15 Hocquenghem, Guy, Scott Branson, and Gilles Deleuze. *Gay Liberation after May '68*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022.

a Maoist perspective of a Trotskyist organization called the *Lutte Ouvrière*. Manus Christian McGrogan describes this article in his work *Tout! in Context 1968–1973: French Radical Press at the Crossroads of Far Left, New Movements and Counterculture*, as an attack on the capitalist understanding of homosexuality that reduces gay sex to pornography and ‘prostitution’.¹⁶

In this particular historical context, this could be considered revolutionary, and even be understood as an empowering text that expressed solidarity with migrant Maghrebi men – at least to a certain extent. However, the article also served as an example of how Western gay ethnic pornography produced anti-racist content without sharing the space with the non-white individuals. Unfortunately, the following issues of the newspaper did not produce the empowering space for the ‘Arab comrades’ as FHAR had intended. Instead, it provided an illustration of how Orientalist tropes were being justified by European men. How the manifestation of FHAR excused French white gay men’s perceived right to engage in sex tourism in the Maghreb is described by Christian Fournier in the *Dictionnaire de la pornographie*, in addition to what Mehammed Amadeus Mack mentions briefly in his seminal work *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture*. Writing on *Tout!* showed pseudo-solidarity, and it did not invite a new discussion on the commodification of North African and Arab bodies. Yet, it did demonstrate how white middle-class men of the post-68 French society are implicated within the discourse of racial and sexual commodification. Later, this illustration will result in the first big hit of French gay ethnic pornography in Jean-Daniel Cadinot’s movies, especially the *Nomades* series.¹⁷

2.2 *Good Hot Stuff* and the United States impact

Before turning to Cadinot’s films, to better understand the historical context, it is also important to note how gay pornography regained prominence on France’s mainstream film market.¹⁸ Following the change in the law on the screening of pornographic films in 1974, Algerian-born filmmaker Norbert Terry recognized the potential market for gay erotic and pornographic cinema and wanted to import to France Jack Deveau’s *Good Hot Stuff* (1975) from the U.S., along with filmmaker Jacques Scandolari, who released the films under the nickname Mervin Merkins. *Good Hot Stuff* is a feature-length documentary focusing on Hand in Hand Films, a gay porn film studio based in New York (USA). The film is narrated by Mark Woodward, a frequent Hand in Hand Films protagonist and famous gay porn star of the era. Hand in Hand Films was a popular gay porn production company during the golden era of porn, from the late

¹⁶ McGrogan, 2010, 173.

¹⁷ See: <https://www.cadinot.fr> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

¹⁸ Callwood, 2017, 28.

1960s to the late 1970s. *Good Hot Stuff* includes excerpts of a 'best of' compilation from the Hand in Hand Films of the time. The last part of the film contains an orgy scene that reminded many viewers of James Bidgood's *Pink Narcissus* (1971). However, it is later confirmed to be an original Hand in Hand Films production, inspired by *Pink Narcissus*.¹⁹

The scene in question has Orientalist overtones: it begins with a belly dance, which turns into a dream sequence where the actors interact with each other only half awake, in a dimly lighted room, almost ecstatic, with belly dancer gears. The headline of the poster reads: "See... The palace of pleasure! The Sultan with his slaves." This emphasis in the marketing confirms the Orientalist stereotype through cinematic representation. The film was shown in six different movie theaters and earned around one million francs at the box office, which can be considered a great success for the period of nascent porn film production immediately after the lifting of the ban on pornographic films.²⁰ It is an important example of how colonial legacies and Orientalism have been instrumentalized in gay pornography. Screening this film to the audiences in France invites new questions, such as did French viewers perceive the film in a particular way? How did the France's former colonial presence in North Africa and the presence of Algerian minorities in France shape the audience's reception?

A year before importing *Good Hot Stuff* (1975) in 1974, Norbert Terry produced a straight porno film, which included the representation of a black woman. The film was called *Couche-moi dans le sable et fais jaillir ton pétrole* (Get Crude in the Desert and I Will Make Your Oil Gush, 1975), and the focus of the film was on the oil crisis. Norbert Terry was already aware of the marketing potential of issues related to the colonial legacies of France and the political climate of that time. With *Couche-moi dans le sable et fais jaillir ton pétrole* (1975) and the import of the *Good Hot Stuff* (1974), Norbert Terry and Jacques Scandelari capitalized on the already prominent global interest in this topic. They since continued their careers in the porn film industry as producers and filmmakers, establishing two different production companies that produced porn films that inspired the first French mainstream gay porn film *Harem* (1984) by Jean-Daniel Cadinot. Following the attention Cadinot received with his films, the dominant narrative of gay ethnic pornography changed its direction from homo-erotic soft-core films to hardcore gay pornography, which later created a whole genre in the European gay porn industry. Following Jean-Noël René Clair and his legacy as a pioneering director of hard-core gay ethnic pornography, Dargos, Studio Replay, and Citébeur film companies continued working in the genre, but from different perspectives. However, one of these companies, Citébeur, stands out, especially because the pro-

¹⁹ This has been discussed during the panel discussion on *Good Hot Stuff* at the Porn Film Festival in Berlin in 2015, where I was personally present. See: <https://pornfilmfestivalberlin.de/en/film-2019/good-hot-stuff/> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

²⁰ Callwood, 2017, 35.

ducer Stéphane Chibikh is of Maghrebi descent. This is relevant because, as Maxime Cervulle states, there is little room for queers of color as autonomous subjects, “rather they appear as erotic bodies in ethnic porn, in productions by the Dargos, Replay, Jean-Noël René Clair studios, or else as suffering bodies called on to confess all on the set of the gay channel Pink-TV.”²¹

2.3 Jean-Daniel Cadinot

Dan Callwood discusses pornographic cinema through the theory of Felix Guattari. He explains:

Guattari called this sort of cinema a “minor art”, “an art that can be used in the service of people who constitute a minority. A major art is an art in the service of power.” Guattari saw the act of depicting explicit homosexual sex as political in and of itself, regardless of the intention.²²

Considering the post-independence shifts in colonial power dynamics, how could pornography work in the service of minorities? Also, what makes porn a minor art that is illicit or, at best, does not evoke the same aesthetic experience as fine art?²³ It is worth unpacking the very specific notion of ‘the minor’ developed by Guattari (and Deleuze). Especially in the French context of gay ethnic pornography, the power relations within the movie shift quite often and unexpectedly. Disregarding Stéphane Chibikh’s ethnic background, his Citébeur productions might be considered as serving both minorities and the mainstream, as the productions themselves actually differ. Because he falsely marketed the ethnicities of the cast, Jean-Noël René Clair is a problematic figure as the way he represented men can be considered exploitative against the background of more recent understandings of representational politics in the history of gay ethnic pornography. For instance, he produced a movie called *Turks/Les Turks* (1997) in which the majority of the cast was Algerian. Secondly, he brought the scene of ethnic pornography to the social housing projects of suburban France and changed the direction of ethnic pornography from the Maghreb to France. Jean-Noël René Clair produced porn films depicting numerous ethnicities and social groups such as ‘Turks,’ ‘Africans,’ ‘Gypsies,’ ‘Balkans,’ ‘Soviet Russians,’ and so on. But perhaps the potential of visualizations is not to be found in the role of the producer, but in that of the audi-

²¹ Cervulle, Maxime. “French Homonormativity and the Commodification of the Arab Body.” *Radical History Review*, no. 100, 2008, 177.

²² Callwood, 2017, 29. The quote is from Felix Guattari’s *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics* (1984).

²³ Two recent publications edited by Hans Maes are devoted to this fundamental question; see: Maes, Hans, and Jerrold Levinson. *Art and Pornography: Philosophical Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. See also: Maes, Hans. *Pornographic Art and the Aesthetics of Pornography*. Publikationsort: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013.

ence: many people might search for ethnic porn because they want to see themselves represented. The trend for ethnic fetishes inadvertently produces representation where perhaps there was none. The question then becomes what the quality of that representation is, and therefore how Jean-Noël René Clair's exoticization of the actors influences the effectiveness of the porn and the production values of the movies.

These considerations also apply to the work of other filmmakers that use ethnicization as a crucial instrument in their films. The productions of Dargos and Studio Replay are an example, as these two specific companies are non-existent in today's digital archives. The inadequate archiving of pornographic materials reminds us of the importance of producing intellectual work around this subject in order to keep the cultural memory of certain groups alive.²⁴ Citébeur is the only company that is still active and producing contemporary examples of gay ethnic pornography. Chronologically, these companies are part of the same lineage when it comes to illustrating the sociopolitical value of gay ethnic pornography in Europe.

When discussing the movies of Jean-Noël René Clair, it is fundamental to also consider the productions by Jean-Daniel Cadinot, since these two pioneers of ethnic pornography represent different approaches towards ethnic fetishization. Although Cadinot's career started earlier, their filmographies demonstrate an artistic dialogue between each other. Jean-Daniel Cadinot is a Montmartre, Paris-born photographer and filmmaker. He began his career with short-length porn films, and he moved on to full-length production with his first major success, *Harem* (1984).²⁵ The film narrates the story of a young Frenchman discovering the mysterious city of Casbah, Morocco. The description on Cadinot's official website goes well with the film's Orientalist patterns almost in the manner of a work of literature:

It all starts at a hammam. In the steamy bath, a French teenager discovers Arab sensuality at its best, like a thunderbolt. But when his young Moroccan leaves the building, he becomes invisible in the kasbah's alleyways. Our young hero sets out to follow him through the busy streets but, too far behind him, he gets lost in the souks where he will discover, in the back rooms of shops, the very particular hospitality of Eastern traders. Among the waves of bronzed men comes an ebony Adonis, probably the most beautiful in all of Cadinot's collection. The play of his white clothes over his black skin gives his scenes an extraordinary sensuality...²⁶

²⁴ I also wanted to analyze the movies of Dargos and Studio Replay; however, they are no longer available. According to Act-Up Paris, these studios, and Pink TV and Menoboy companies played a considerable role in relapsing the HIV epidemic by promoting bareback sex in France and the Maghreb. However, these companies produced films in the early 2000s, and during the transition era from DVD to online streaming platforms, they shut down, and the DVDs are no longer available. See: <http://site-2003-2017.actupparis.org/spip.php?article2440> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

²⁵ The title of the film was translated as *Sex Bazaar* for the audience in the U.S. and UK.

²⁶ See: <https://www.hotcast.fr/de/dvd/detail/13285-sex-bazaar> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

Until here, the text exposes the poetic production of ethnicity of the encounter of French teenagers with Arab sensuality. The following part of the text focuses on how sex tourism is presented as a 'holiday program,' and how wild, audacious, and explicit it is:

Without doubt, it is one of the most dazzling pages in the history of gay eroticism. Cadinot is responsible for the most sensual holiday programme on the subject of Northern Africa. Since these images, there must have been an onslaught of gay charter flights to Northern Africa!²⁷

After the screening of *Good Hot Stuff* (1974) in France, Cadinot created his own version of interracial porn with Arab men recalling the colonial and transcultural exchanges of France in the most homo-Oriental way possible. This is also the first representation of sex tourism (in French overseas colonies) in gay porn filmography. The Maghreb is represented as a labyrinth-like space filled with Arab men. The film presents a hammam scene where Moroccan guys are enjoying each other, and as soon as the French tourist enters the room, they welcome him to join their session.

The social position of the hammam here is important, as it already provides a semi-public setting for homosocial encounters. This setting is often used in the narrative of gay ethnic pornography because at the same time it eroticizes and exoticizes male-to-male contact. The hammam, known as the Turkish bath, is a social place where people cleanse their bodies and mentally relax while socializing. Eve Sedgwick describes homosociality in *Between Men* as explicitly not homosexual, in fact enabled by homophobia. In this sense, a hammam is also a quite homo-social surrounding where men perform massages on each other, or dance for each other, and help each other clean and relax. The same goes for the women as well. This creates a certain intimacy between people who share this isolated space. Hammams are therefore public and private at the same time. This duality creates a sort of a sacred space to perform rituals that would otherwise have been considered immoral to the heteronormative society. So, while this hammam scene points out the versatility of these Arab men, it also points out the fact that this versatility explicitly exists in a steamy closet. As Sedgwick argues in the *Epistemology of the Closet*, this form of discreet intimacy has its own social rules, agreements, and a power dynamic in itself, which relies on maintaining homosocial decency.

Sedgwick further states in her theory of the erotic triangle how homosocial encounters are dependent on male-female-male space structures to ensure that, through the presence of a woman, homosocial relations are not perceived as homosexual.²⁸ This statement expands Edward Said's binary view on Orientalism, in which he argued that the West was portrayed as male/masculine and the Orient as female/feminine. Sedgwickian triangulation of homosociality (male-female-male) functions here to obscure

²⁷ See: <https://www.hotcast.fr/de/dvd/detail/13285-sex-bazaar> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

²⁸ Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Gender and Culture. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, 21.

homosexual desire. A transnational masculine concept (as an alternative to Orientalist masculine and Occidental feminist) would help translate this triangulation to a revised version of Orientalist male erotica.²⁹ Although there is no actual male-female-male triangle in such a hammam concept as Sedgwick suggested, in the hammam scenes of Cadinot films, femininity is mainly represented by the Orientalist tourist who is perceived as being 'properly gay' by the global West. By 'proper gayness', I mean the closeness of ethnic actors to aligning with the stereotypical understanding of how an openly gay person can look or act – such Western perception, by default, positions non-white actors as 'not gay enough' in discourse, either visually or theoretically.

The ability of North African and/or Arab men, especially black men, to be sexually versatile is often neglected in French gay ethnic pornography. Rather, these men are often cast according to a rigid binary: either as 'aggressive' tops or 'needy' bottoms who need the hand of a white man. This might have its origins in the myth that homosexuality was introduced to the rest of the world by European people, as it happened with the concept of heterosexuality. This differs from the Orientalist idea that associates sexual deviance and promiscuity precisely with the non-European. Therefore, the underlying logic of the hammam scene comes from a straightforward Orientalist idea of the bathhouse as a site of sexual disinhibition that contrasts with the stereotype of Christian-European propriety. This reading of the hammam scene offers a discussion on how homosexuality is being perceived within black and brown communities.

Frantz Fanon discusses the concept of homosexuality within the black communities in a more instructive way. In the narrative of gay ethnic pornography, it is quite apparent that these two affirmations have been instrumentalized to commodify black and brown men as a tool for empowerment and redemption for people of color themselves.

Many non-white people might search for ethnic porn because they want to see themselves represented, and the representation here possibly enables access for the colonized subjects. However, it has to be taken into account that these films have not been produced with an audience of minority ethnic groups in mind, who, nevertheless, have perceived the movies and felt 'seen' by them due to the limited access to means of representation. Sexual positions and preferences can be helpful in under-

29 In their analysis of Sedgwick's triangulation, Maxime Cervulle explores the concept of the heterosexual performance as a "troubled body double" in JNRC Films. Cervulle argues that this fantasy of heterosexual performance "possesses the audience through an epistemological privilege over the actor." This interpretation of Sedgwick's work also applies to earlier examples, such as Jean-Daniel Cadinot's films, which create a similar tension through implications and the overlapping fantasy of 'discreet' escapades of homosocial coincidences. See: Cervulle, Maxime. "Erotic/Exotic. Race and Class in French Gay 'Ethnic' Pornography". In *Post/Porn/Politics: Symposium/Reader: Queer-Feminist Perspective on the Politics of Porn Performance and Sex-Work as Culture Production*, edited by Tim Stüttgen, Berlin: B-Books, 2009, 183 and 184.

standing whose desire is aimed to in order to be lured by such choices. Versatility as a sexual position helps to sustain resemblance, as viewers of different preferences can identify with the actors on screen, although the narrative limits the desire of Maghrebi men.

Outside the versatility the Arab men were allowed in the hammam scene, in the rest of the scenes in *Harem* that included sexual intercourse, the roles are more rigid. All Arab men who show interest in the young French tourist do so in the active sexual role. The tendency in gay ethnic pornography to assign preferences to the characters on the basis of ethnic stereotypes is familiar from another pornographic film sub-genre (interracial porn) which is especially prominent in the United States of America, where white men are paired with African American or Latino ones. In U.S. interracial porn, most of the time, the black or Latino man penetrates the white man. In his work *Pleasures of the Orient: Cadinot's Maghreb as Gay Male Pornotopia* (2011), Jaap Kooijman asks how the “conventions of American interracial gay porn can be connected to European-made gay porn situated in the post-colonial Maghreb.”³⁰ He answers this question with the affirmation of Nikos Papastergiadis: this perspective would fit the ‘ideology of conquest through sexual penetration’, which runs parallel to the ideology of white superiority.³¹ Fanon provides an example where a sadomasochistic dialectic is at play: “There are, for instance, men who go to ‘houses’ in order to be beaten by ‘negroes’: passive homosexuals who insist on black partners.”³² The drive behind these two sub-genres of mainstream gay porn are connected and function in a similar way, since this is about a reversed master narrative and the role of sex in playing out a colonial subconscious. Later on, in this chapter, the same ideology will manifest itself in reverse, where being penetrated will symbolize the migrant ‘invasion’ of Europe. Assigning the role of the penetrating, dominant, macho male to Maghrebi men both maintains a colonial logic of the Other as savage and posits a kind of post-colonial settling of scores with the former master.

Twenty years after *Harem*, in 2004 Cadinot revisited North Africans with a similar film called *Hammam*, showing that the popularity of the theme had not declined. In fact, a new generation was ready to be told the same old story. The portrayal of the sexual dynamic that had not changed despite the wide integration of North African communities in France in the intervening years. In *Hammam* (2004), Cadinot took his lens outside the Maghreb and showed for the first time in his movies North

30 Kooijman, Jaap. “Pleasures of the Orient: Cadinot’s Maghreb as Gay Male Pornotopia”. In *Indiscretions*. Leiden: Brill, 2011, 102.

31 Papastergiadis, Nikos. “Tracing Hybridity in Theory.” In *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, translated by Homi K. Bhabha, 257–281. London: Zed Books Ltd, 2015, 260.

32 Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1st ed., New ed. New York: [Berkeley, Calif.]: Grove Press; Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2008, 177.

African descendants in France as working-class. The protagonist, Marco, meets an electrician, Haythem, who comes to fix the electricity in Marco's building. They have sex, and Haythem asks Marco to deliver a letter to his father in Morocco. Following this scene, the story continues in Morocco. Haythem's inclusion in the narrative can be considered as Cadinot's late recognition of how the ethnic pornography trend became a hit with Maghrebi communities in France. Haythem makes the first move to attract the attention of the white gay man who hired him. Maxime Cervulle discusses Haythem in this scene, and states that the "Arab male is put down to biology, therefore reinforcing standard racial typologies that reduce non-white people to their bodies."³³ Gay ethnic pornography will turn this motive into a strategic marketing tool and use it often as a caricatured reality in introductory dialogues.

Besides Haythem (representative of a gay guy descending from a working-class Maghrebi), it is hard to find examples of French citizens of Maghrebi descent in Cadinot's narrative. After *Hammam*, Cadinot continued producing interracial porn films. Subsequent directors of this genre, however, aimed to change the focus from North Africa to the banlieues and housing projects of France, where the socio-economic class was mobilized as an engine of desire as much as the ethnic background of the performers.

2.4 Cadinot's Wave in France and the United States

Cadinot's exploitation of Maghrebi men and the concept of gay sex tourism was followed by later porn film producers in France and the U.S. These later productions, however, did not depict the cultural sphere; instead, they used the Maghreb as a film set for an Orientalist porn theme. Compared to the Cadinot productions, the following examples defused the dynamics around gaze while positioning Maghrebi men in empty hotel rooms or using found footage of the Maghreb, in which none of the actors appeared. These movies point to a timeline after Cadinot and before Jean-Noël René Clair productions, where no French-Maghrebi actors were depicted in France. Therefore, the Maghrebi men who took part in those productions represent neither Maghrebi men from the Maghreb nor Maghrebi-French men from France. While Cadinot films showed these actors socializing in the Maghreb, which allows the audience to build cultural references, the following productions trapped these men in isolated settings, consisting only of their bodies and some interior decoration that signifies an Orientaly decorated household which should therefore be perceived as Maghrebi. The fact that the Maghreb theme is provided by decoration and by Maghrebi actors meant that these films were produced more easily, thus reducing the cost of production. Therefore, these in-between-era productions offer more of an illustrated or, so to say, decorated way of Maghrebi-men erotica.

³³ Cervulle, 2009, 187.

Following Cadinot, Gay French Kiss made *Escapade en Algérie* (Escape from Algeria) in 2002, directed by Hocine. *Escapade en Algérie* is one of the most Cadinot-esque films produced in the same era. Protagonist Michael joins his friend who visits his cousin in Algeria, and a few more so-called Céfrans will join them during the visit. Céfran is a French term to describe 'white' French people. The term Céfran is used for the first time in the film Gay French Kiss not only to define who they are but as an element to capitalize on the 'white' identity in an Arab-themed French production. Similar to Arab men being eroticized in French gay porn movies, in the films of Gay French Kiss, Caucasian identity was also marketed, which suggests that the Cadinot-wave in the gay porn world has created an interest in the 'white' French men in the gay porn market. Additionally, from the first examples in the early 2000s, affected by Cadinot, their films were more scripted until 2010. The late productions of Gay French Kiss, however, produced their films in a less scripted way, which is closer to the style of JNRC. *Escapade en Algérie* was the only example of an Arab-themed movie of Gay French Kiss.

Like Gay French Kiss, MenoBoy Body Prod and Alexander Pictures companies produced Maghrebi-themed porn productions. MenoBoy is a gay porn studio based in France that began making videos in 2003 under the direction of Ludovic Peltier. MenoBoy joined Studio Presse in 2017, a prominent gay porn film network that currently distributes French gay porn production houses, including the films of Cadinot and JNRC. MenoBoy's online platform offers 560 videos ready to stream from their line of DVDs. Overall, MenoBoy presents various French men from different ethnicities and backgrounds; however, the first productions of the company mainly focused on the Maghrebi theme with North African and Arab men, to follow the trend that Cadinot created. MenoBoy produced several films, such as *Le Riad* (The Riad) in 2012 and *Plaisirs Cachés d'Orient* (Hidden Pleasures of Orient) in 2015, which has a special focus on Maghrebi. Similar to the late Cadinot productions, MenoBoy filmed interracial porn, depicting Arab men having sex with each other. Both films' plot is based on the story of French tourists exploring the streets of the Maghreb and their encounters with locals. Besides French tourists seeking adventure, MenoBoy also shows sex between locals. The movies of MenoBoy are less scripted compared to the films of Cadinot; however, set design, music, and marketing strategies are pretty similar.

The set design of the MenoBoy series seems less staged compared to the high production values of Cadinot films. These productions recreate the sex tourism fantasy in the Maghreb but with a reduced visual impact. For instance, in *Plaisirs Cachés d'Orient* (Hidden Pleasures of the Orient) (2015), there is a hammam scene that could have taken place in any European hotel spa, looking completely different than the authentic hammams presented in Cadinot films. Almost ten years later than the actual Cadinot productions, the MenoBoy series with a Maghreb focus turns the genre into more of a caricature, eliminating elements of authenticity and turning it into a loosely Orientalist set that impacts the verisimilitude and targets an audience for whom such rudimentary resemblance would be enough to build ethnic fantasy.

Starting from Cadinot, who shot his films in the Maghreb and informed his audience visually and culturally, the following JNRC productions moved to a hard-core level and introduced the Beur element (non-white migrant men from France) to the ethnic genre. Following JNRC, Citébeur came up with the Maghrebi-French stereotype from France and took Cadinot's and JNRC's Maghrebi men parody-style aesthetic to a new level, reflecting the fear and fascination towards Maghrebi men in France. While these three different directors/production houses represent three different histories and positionalities regarding Maghrebi men and the colonial history of France, MenoBoy revived Cadinot's nostalgia through a rudiment approach. Perhaps the vague nostalgia that MenoBoy stirred reintroduces the Cadinot-style sex tourism to a new generation of porn audience who cannot access Cadinot films' easily while teasing the core audience of Cadinot. The demand for these MenoBoy series, three decades after Cadinot's *Harem* (1984), demonstrates that desire towards Maghrebi men outside France is real. Despite Citébeur's French-Maghrebi banlieue parody, such sex tourism narratives show a resistance towards perceiving Maghrebi men as the gay Other.

MenoBoy movies don't depict outside scenes like Cadinot did, and most of their films, such as *Plaisirs Cachés d'Orient* and *Le Riad*, have been filmed in the same location. The later examples of MenoBoy changed its direction from Cadinot style to catch the zeitgeist of its time. These latter productions focused on Maghrebi men living in the ghettos of France, close to the aesthetic Citébeur has created. However, the movies of MenoBoy did not engage with the aesthetics of poverty and socio-economical codes that Citébeur committed to representing fully.

Unlike Gay French Kiss and MenoBoy, Body Prod, established by French director Hervé Bodilis, produced examples of gay ethnic pornography while using the slang that JNRC originated in the gay porn world, such as 'Beur.' He started as a photographer, continued as a gay porn filmmaker, and later continued his career with heterosexual porn films. Hervé Bodilis produced hundreds of gay and straight porn films co-produced by one of France's most known adult TV channels: Dorcel TV. Hevré Bodilis produced the Casbah series where he introduced the Maghrebi men following Cadinot's legacy. Best of Special Petit Beurs from 2009 is one of the most famous productions that Body Prod ever created together with Dorcel TV. The film is a compilation of solo, duo, and group scenes of Maghrebi young men. Furthermore, Maghrebi men are being filmed in front of a camera while masturbating or having sex; this compilation includes a scene where one of the actors is jerking off while riding a donkey. Bestiality here is orchestrated with the codes of anti-civilization. Hypersexuality of non-white men is also visible in other examples of gay ethnic pornography, like the German-Turkish productions, which will be analyzed in the second chapter.

Comme des Anges (Like Angels) is one of France's understudied gay production houses. *Comme des Anges* was built in 1996 and one of their first productions, *Derrière La Dune* (Behind the Dune) from 1996 is one of the first productions that followed the footsteps of Cadinot. Although this film does not mention Maghreb or North African Arab men, the vacation theme near the dunes hints at the Cadinot tradition these

studios followed. Additionally, there is only one Arab actor in the film, Jassim, who appears in the hotel scene. The sex scene in the dunes happens between French Caucasian men on a carpet accompanied by Oriental music in the background. However, their later productions shifted what previously occurred in the repertoire of MenoBoy. In the last productions of Comme des Anges, the Arab theme moves to the metropolises of France ten years after Citébeur. Between 2014 and 2015, Comme des Anges released a four-part series called *Thugs and French Arab Boys*. Like Citébeur productions, the *Thugs and French Arab Boys* series showed French men, mainly Maghrebi and Black, as 'bad boys' and their sexual encounters in the ghettos, abandoned buildings, basements, and cruising parks. Comme des Anges changed its name to Costla Production (Costla Prod) since the movies after *Derriere La Dune* (Behind the Dune) were mainly focused on young French men. Although the early work of Comme des Anges distantly referred to Cadinot's cinema, later productions followed the same strategies of exploiting poverty and ethnic identities, just as Citébeur did. These productions have repeated the Cadinot style of homo-Oriental erotica with an increased dose of hardcore pornography scenes and less of a storyline. Besides keeping the legacy of Cadinot alive, these productions introduced more up-to-date plots that portray North African men who live in France and visit the Maghreb as a tourist or expatriate. This plot twist of picturing Maghrebi-French men as a visitor to North Africa was not the case in the films of Cadinot. Additionally, unlike Cadinot's films, these current alternative productions include North African and Arab-only cast members that challenge the power dynamics fueled by the issues of sex tourism. In these Cadinot-inspired productions, Maghrebi men are also portrayed as middle-class expatriates who visit the Maghreb for leisure and are accommodated in resorts. This shifting position of Maghrebi men from locals to expatriates makes the class issues more apparent while helping to reveal the means of sex tourism in a neo-colonial setting. Such scenery does not represent the self-ethnicized desire of a migrant or expatriate; however, it highlights the potential for further analysis.

In addition to French productions, I would like to mention a U.S.-based production house that followed the footsteps of Cadinot, including hiring Maghrebi actors. Although these U.S.-based porn productions circulated in Europe as well, their way of representing Maghrebi men provides an outsider perspective and offers comparable data considering the French productions that mainly targeted France but circulated globally. Therefore, analytically speaking, these productions from the United States contribute to the overall discussion by considering their handling of ethnicity in gay pornography and thus following the legacies of colonialism.

Alexander Pictures, for instance, is based in San Diego, California, and was founded by Russian producer and director Alexander Matunine. Although Alexander Pictures is not from France, they wanted to join the trend that Cadinot had created. The France-based Dark In productions distribute Alexander Pictures films within Europe. Before the Arab-themed movies, Alexander Matunine also produced a series called *Bananas From Brazil* and *Seeing What Happens*, where he introduced Brazilian

men to the U.S. market. Following Brazilian examples of ethnic pornography, Matunine joined the Cadinot-wave and produced two series that eroticize and Orientalize Arab men through the generic settings of prison and sex tourism. Alexander Pictures filmed *Arabian Prison*, *Arabian Men 1&2*, *Arabian Fantasy*, *Arabian Desert Camps*, and *Arabian Fever* between 2006 and 2015. Alexander Pictures tried to join the Cadinot-wave and enlarge their audience by catering to the French market as well, which led to the production house becoming part of the French gay porn film network Studio Presse and GayArabClub. Compared to the Raging Stallion company, which produced Arab-themed U.S. productions, Alexander Pictures produced their films exclusively with Arab actors. Although most of their productions targeted an international audience, some films followed U.S. mainstream porn themes, such as sex in prison. For instance, *Arabian Prison* is a 110-minute film comprising five short films that depict different prisoners and their sexual encounters. Since prisons are a government-organized environment with a supposedly neutral dress code, Alexander Pictures relied on the skin colors and variety of *taqiyyas* that the actors wore in order to exoticize them. However, the inmates, played mainly by Maghrebi actors, wore the orange jumpsuits often used in the U.S. prison system.

These productions came out 15 years after the first original Cadinot productions. Although these productions were not the high-end productions that Cadinot did, they still managed to keep the Orientalist fantasy in the French and international gay porn scene alive. However, none of these production houses has managed to change the narrative or observe the political shifts as JNRC and Citébeur productions did. Because of that, these productions carried Cadinot's legacy with a low budget and repetitive perspective that doesn't leave much room to discuss the re-Orientalization of post-colonial France. Still, these productions and their legacies were left out of the existing debates on French gay pornography.

Whereas Cadinot-style gay pornography shows a socialization of the characters and depiction of urban spaces, the production houses that followed, such as JNRC, reduced these elements to indoor scenes and less socialization, which led to storylines becoming more of a parody and an imitation. Compared to the symbolism-loaded scenarios of Cadinot, JNRC offered a new portrayal of Maghrebi men where their bodies, the interior design, and short interviews became the signifiers of their exoticization. While Cadinot's Orientalist 'sex-tourism scenarios' directly referred to the tropes of colonialism, Maghrebi men from France in temporary housing pointed out another version of such representation. While these two directors were not active at the same time (JNRC started producing ten years after Cadinot began), their work represents a continuity of the colonial gaze. These two directors also followed two different methodologies of shooting their films, allowing for a comparison that helps demon-

strate the instrumentalization of ethnic desire. An article published in *Gay Times* magazine in 2016 described Cadinot's shooting method:

He would script a scenario, then throw it open to the performers, adapting his ideas to take account of their personal tastes, and allowing them to control the actual sex scenes. In this way he could fuse his own interest, his predilection for certain settings and ambiances, with a level of freedom and participation for the actors.³⁴

According to this anecdote, freedom given to actors existed during the sex scenes; however, the rest of the production was designed by Cadinot himself. However, in the movies of JNRC, since the plot factor was reduced to only an interior performance, actors were not given the freedoms they had in Cadinot's films, and control of the sex scenes was part of the directorial method – especially as there were few other film aspects to direct.

The same *Gay Times* article also mentioned that the utopia-like depictions of the Maghreb were Cadinot's criticism of the Christian church.³⁵ While presenting a critique of the Christian church, Cadinot did not take into account Orientalism. Instead, as Jaap Kooijman suggests, “constructing the Maghreb as an exotic place of unconstrained and excessive sex, conform[s] to the colonial discourse of homoerotic Orientalism.”³⁶ However, in the hard-core films of JNRC, such critique is replaced with the direct depiction of migrant male bodies and their temporality. While Maghrebi men become an exotic comfort destination for white French tourists, the actors of JNRC point out the ambivalent desire towards migrant Maghrebi men. Such coloniality stands outside the frame of sex tourism and brings it to more current and political events that became part of the ethnic desire. Therefore, the transition from Cadinot-to-JNRC-style cinema helps unpack French coloniality and how such coloniality shapes contemporary sexualities and the desire between men.

2.5 Jean-Noël René Clair and the Politicization of Hardcore Pornography

Cadinot relied heavily on the romanticized elements of the Orientalist narrative. Unlike Cadinot, Jean-Noël René Clair removed the picturesque description and replaced it with candid images of migrant men during sex. Such replacements complicated and contrasted with the migrant men's stereotypical depiction in front of the camera, considering the tropes of Orientalism and colonialism attached to the previous examples of gay pornography. But, at the same time, such a replacement revealed the discussions of gaze and ethnicity relations of gay pornography from a

³⁴ Thrower, Stephen. “Vive Cadinot.” *Gay Times*, London, England, no. 369, 2009, 54.

³⁵ Thrower, 2009, 54.

³⁶ Kooijman, 2011, 109.

post-colonial context. Cadinot's revitalization of the phenomenon of ethnic pornography in France influenced the other directors, who applied his strategies to more hard-core pornography. Jean-Noël René Clair, for example, decided to take the genre to a new level, recognizing that he no longer needed to travel to North Africa to make a porn film that would sell in France. Jean-Noël René Clair was born in Tübingen, Germany, and raised in France. He directed and produced over eighty gay porn films achieving global renown within the business. He maintained Cadinot's legacy of hard-core porn and expanded his repertoire by several ethnicities in addition to North African and Arab men. His movies were titled in a very literal way that explained what the audiences were about to see. Some examples include *Africa Sex*, *Gypsy Sex*, *Studio Beurs 1–4*, *Turk*, *USSR*, *CCCP*, *Balkan Connection*, *Légionnaires*, *Militaries*, *Studio Banlieue*, *Tropics*, *Black Blancs & Beurs*.³⁷ Besides the titles being highly scandalous, JNRC also hinted at how he will be changing the narrative of gay ethnic pornography by using terms such as *beur* and *banlieues*. Although he contributed to the Cadinot style narrative of gay ethnic pornography with his earlier films such as *Tropics* or *Africa Sex*, he was the first one, except Cadinot's soft-porn exploitations, to narrate the sexual tensions within the French banlieues in France, especially in Paris.

Jean-Noël René Clair substituted the lack of the storyline of his films with the PR materials, such as DVD Jackets or the text on his official website (<https://www.jnrc.fr/>). To analyze his movies, this book also relies on these PR materials since they are complementary elements of his hard-core style to fetishize his models. Following JNRC, most hard-core porn studios applied the same PR strategies that function as part of the scenario. For example, Citébeur, EricVideos, and BravoFucker implemented the same written strategies to strengthen their visual images. In this context, ethnic fantasy functions through a pornographic package with visual and textual material for arousal. These PR texts can be considered as literary forms of pornography: along with the movie, they constitute a certain fantasy, as these texts help the audience build an ethnic fantasy by reviving the tropes of Orientalism. In his PR materials, Jean-Noël René Clair often uses two themes: being a discreet male who identifies as heterosexual but secretly engages in homosexual sex, and being a bisexual man who enjoys fucking both men and women.

Discreetness or implied bisexuality is a constant element in the films of Jean-Noël René Clair, which has been adopted by other directors and producers of the genre. In terms of marketing, Jean-Noël René Clair employed discreetness to sexualize and exoticize his characters. For example, the back cover of the *Gypsy Sex* DVD states: "Halit is a straight dude from Kosovo who has a thing for submissive boys. Nothing excites him more than a young male avidly working on his big schlong. He loves to fuck their mouth before taking their ass. A young ass with a tight hole feels so

³⁷ See: <https://www.jnrc.fr/en/dvd> (Last Access Date: 03.04.2024).

good!”³⁸ and the text on the web page for *Gypsy Sex* continues: “Another great find from JNRC! Masculine to the max, elegant, charming and very sexual. The dude in this video is straight, but he loves to be watched. And that includes guys as much as girls. He knows his thick cock and big set of balls are going to have your mouth watering with desire!”³⁹ Before discussing the ethnic and socio-economic elements of JNRC’s films, I would first like to discuss the role of straightness in the gay film narrative and its position in the ethnic pornographic film narrative.

The privileged status of straight performance is part of a global trend in gay porn. The motivations behind the commodification of straight men’s performance are numerous. Straightness can be used to frame a ‘bring them to the dark side’-narrative, as Susanna Paasonen describes the ‘gay-for-pay’ genre in her inspiring article.⁴⁰ Often there are also economic and moral reasons. For instance, in the *Czech Hunter* movies, the point of view of the audience is that of the guy holding the camera, whose sexual preference is never made explicit.⁴¹ He picks up a straight guy in public somewhere in the Czech Republic and offers him money to have gay sex. This is a naive version of male sex work in Eastern Europe that serves as a mockery of poverty. In reality, nobody knows if these cast members were gay or straight. Still, the bisexuality of these men is crucial to the script’s taboo-breaking roleplay.

The U.S. version of the ‘gay-for-pay’ narrative is built on the moral side of heterosexuality and the instrumentalization of gay sex, rather than a prank. The *Baitbus* website, for instance, created a narrative where straight male performers were randomly picked up from the street and offered to have sex with a female porn star for money. One of the requirements for this script was that the male performer had to be blindfolded. While expecting an interaction with a female porn star, he found out that it was a gay man who touched him and appeared to be upset about this prank scenario. However, he comes around to the pleasure of the gay interaction, and, considering the money, continues filming with the gay performer until he comes. These two versions of ‘gay-for-pay’ narratives both instrumentalize sex work: on one hand, that it is somehow shameful (and therefore hot in a porn context) to be a sex worker, and on the other hand, the internalized homophobia that produces an illusion of straight men with an unapologetic desire for gay men.

38 See: <https://www.jnrc.fr/en/dvd/detail/5264-gipsy-sex> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

39 See: <https://www.jnrc.fr/en/dvd/detail/5264-gipsy-sex> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

40 Paasonen, Susanna. “The Literal and the Hyperbolic: Mapping the Modalities of Online Porn.” In *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography*, 0: The MIT Press, 2011, 150.

41 Czech Hunter is the only gay porn production company that is still actively making gay porn films in the Czech Republic. Czech Hunter is also one of the first porn production companies that marketed “gay-for-pay” as a profitable sexual strategy. The gay-for-pay narrative of Czech Hunter productions brings a new perspective on sexualization of worker-class white men in the Eastern European context.

Combining straight performance, ethnicity, and socio-economic background, JNRC creates an alternative fetish for the middle-class white male. When he wanted the audience to desire gypsies, he went ahead and added the element of straightness to the gypsy man in question, so that he might appeal to a wider audience. In a JNRC production, the audience is not introduced to the straightness as they would be in, say, 'gay-for-pay' movies. In the JNRC narrative, the straight reality of hunter gays and/or sex workers does not exist, although straight men are mostly introduced as working-class, migrant men of color. The general presumption that gay people are statistically more likely to climb the social ladder of class than their straight counterparts, live in cities, and are more materially wealthy, complicates the narrative.⁴² Although internalized homophobia undoubtedly still exists, a new gay superiority towards straight men can be identified, which sees them not as 'normal,' but as animal-like and brutish.

In JNRC's films we do not see white middle-class bottoms waiting to be penetrated by Arab men as we did in Cadinot. In the so-called new perspective of JNRC, marginalized communities interact within their own social circles. Their performance of heterosexuality and socioeconomic status are enough to make them desirable, and do not need the additional element of mixing classes and/or ethnicities. In Cadinot's narrative, the encounter between European men and non-European black or brown men was presented as if the men of color were seen through the eyes of the white man. Although Cadinot used discreet or straight-acting characters in his films for the (post) colonial affiliations of their body-image, he also instrumentalized them in the construction of a binary between liberated white gay men and repressed Arabs. In *Imperial Leather* (1995), Anne McClintock states:

...before the era of high Victorian imperialism, Africa and the Americas had become what can be called porno-tropics for the European imagination – a fantastic magic lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears.⁴³

A hundred years later, such projections translated into a post-colonial marketing strategy in JNRC's films that included the white French men through pornographic fantasy. State control, class difference, and ghettoization was translated into new forms of racial animalization, fear of the other, and fear of the immigrant in the narratives of post-colonial French gay pornography. JNRC separates the Other, the immigrant, conventional use of their person of color actors, and focuses on the context of the military in his commodification of heterosexual officers in the French army.

⁴² Heaphy, Brian. "Gay Identities and the Culture of Class." *Sexualities* 14, no. 1, 2011, 59. See also: Lunbeck, Elizabeth. "The Narcissistic Homosexual: Genealogy of a Myth." In *History and Psyche: Culture, Psychoanalysis, and the Past*, edited by Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor, 49–67. New York: Palgrave Macmillan U.S., 2012.

⁴³ McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. New York: Routledge, 1995, 22.

The first military theme of the JNRC Films appears in *Legionnaires I* (1995) which includes solo jerk-off scenes of ‘masculine’ and mostly white French soldiers. Following *Legionnaires I* and *Legionnaires II* (1995), JNRC recognized the market potential in praising the nation state, militarism, masculinity and its troubled relationship with gay sex. On JNRC’s website, the text for *Bidasses* (1996) states: “French straight soldiers and military contractors show their big dicks.” The text continues: “We have invited over a young soldier named Tommy. He is gay and dominant. He needed to shoot a load, so we filmed him jerking off his fat dick. He loved flirting with the camera, knowing that he was going to be watched by loads of guys who’d love to suck him off!” Here, the written text on the DVD jackets functions as a supplementary element that adds to the contextualization of the visually represented scenes. Tommy, for instance, is not appropriately introduced within the plot of the film. Additionally, this text mentions that Tommy is a white, gay soldier, which helps us both to understand the narrative and to analyze these movies. The text on the DVD jackets foregrounds those narrative details, making them easily searchable ‘key words’ for the film and helping to categorize it. For that reason, these paratexts are part of the context (in which the film’s overall narrative gains meaning) and experience of consuming pornographic films. JNRC movies employ the aforementioned mix of sociopolitical concepts, thereby illustrating a very particular sociopolitical tension in France from the perspective of middle-class white men. Almost every movie he made later on became the basis for a sub-genre in the mainstream porn film industry. Like the hammam in *Cadinot*, the military is also a homo-social space, although, contrary to the hammam, it does not constitute a semi-private sphere but is suffused with patriarchal state pressure on young males to ‘serve their country’. In JNRC’s repertoire, *Bidasses* stands out as one of the few movies that focuses on white males’ fantasy. This gives it a certain potential for subversive self-ethnicization. The mid-1990s were also the period where an Eastern European white male was allowed to be sexually commodified by a middle-class or wealthy males from the West.

JNRC Films released compilation movies such as *Casernes* (1999) and *Outrage* (1997), which included scenes from *Bidasses* and original footage that was recorded for the movie itself. The paragraph about *Casernes* on JNRC’s website states: “Welcome to the barracks. Frenchmen, *rebeus*, Russians, Turks: all the males are there to meet you in the intimacy of their room where they will masturbate hard and spit liters of spunk. A stunning 3-hour-long film that celebrates virile masturbation.”⁴⁴ JNRC makes it obvious that he added the French men to the mix of ethnic varieties as a marketing strategy, to increase the potential customer base, but this does not enable working-class white men to gain power through assumed sexual liberation and self-discovery as it does for people of color in France. The screen time and the depiction of white men in JNRC Films is far more limited, compared to the people of color depicted in

44 See: <https://www.jnrc.fr/en/dvd/detail/21761-casernes> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

those videos. Even the scenes where these white actors masturbate have less of a visual introduction, where the audience can see their faces, compared to similar scenes depicting Maghrebi men. This just illustrates the fascination toward the phallus using all the clichés that come with ‘manhood’. The coming to manhood is often achieved in the films of JNRC through militarist desires or inaccessibility of sex.

One of these clichés is the bellicose nature of men, and consequently the coming to manhood is often achieved in the films of JNRC through militarist desires: following *Bidasses*, JNRC Films continued to produce military-themed porn movies, before his focus shifted towards the banlieues and the housing projects of suburban Paris. One of these movies particularly stands out as groundbreaking in terms of JNRC Films fully realizing the potential for the triumphant sexualization of post-cold-war Eastern Europe. In *Outrage* (1997), Eastern European soldiers enjoy an inflatable black male doll in their tent. Up until that point, JNRC movies had focused on French army recruits and football players from France, but with *Outrage*, *USSR*, and *Balkan Connection* (all released in 1997) he changed his direction to the East, though maintaining his interest in the spheres associated with homosocial (and often toxic) masculinity.

The audience is not informed of why they are watching French and Serbo-Croatian speaking soldiers. Considering the position of France during the Balkan War, this film points to the complex relationship between France and Yugoslavia and the countries that declared independence after it has been bombed by NATO. Yugoslavia was also one of the first European countries that supported Algeria during the Algerian War and, after the collapse of Yugoslavia, France engaged in a diplomatic friendship with Serbia. The fact that the film points to the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia is evident in the presentation of flags that belong to the member nations of NATO. However, the previous triumphs and insecurities regarding the Yugoslavian narrative were implemented by means of the director’s multi-culturalist approach, which turned the film into a war parody, not pointing to any of the historical and political facts. Despite the movies that put Maghrebi men in the center of the narrative, in *Balkan Connection* (1997), JNRC pictured a more mixed group of cast members, hinting at his understanding of the NATO. However, such a setting, instead of focusing on the power relationships interconnected to militarism, it rather focuses on the ethnic backgrounds of the cast members. What is being fetishized here is perhaps not the ethnic difference as such, but the typical 1990s idea of a ‘new multi-culturalism.’ Multiculturalism developed as a reaction to the culture wars that originated in the Western world, specifically in the U.S. in the 1980s and 90s following the civil rights movements in the 1950s, and then by ongoing migration that divided Western societies. As Jeff Chang points out, “One side of the multiculturalism movement confronted overwhelming whiteness in institutions of power and fought to open up positions of power to the outsiders. The other saw an ocean of negative images and tried to reverse the tide with

their own visions.”⁴⁵ The idea of new multiculturalism transformed not only the U.S. but also Europe. Such multiculturalism found its representation in gay pornography as well, which makes sexuality an asset to analyze culture wars and their possible meanings.

Considering the previous films of Jean-Noël René Clair, other than French men or Russian soldiers, men of color are portrayed as either discreet bisexuals or straight men who engage in gay sex due to a lack of interaction with women. However, in such a NATO setting, the audience is also encountering black French soldiers who are not described as discreet heterosexuals or bisexual men because, when portrayed within a nationalist or militarist setting, JNRC does not seem to have a problem representing their homosexuality overtly and in a less ‘discreet’ fashion. But when it comes to exploiting black men from Maghreb or France, the dynamics change, and they are pushed into more heteronormative settings. In *Outrage*, the audience is introduced to several different military barracks, some with French-speaking and some with Serbo-Croatian speaking soldiers, but only the latter are often drunk, and portrayed as aggressive machos. However, the inclusion of the black blow-up doll in the French barrack hints at a new direction for JNRC Films in terms of how racial difference and black bodies are portrayed in French gay porn. Besides JNRC’s attempt to represent black French soldiers alongside the white ones, he applied the previous mechanism of racialization through hostility and fascination with the soldier speaking the Serbo-Croatian language. JNRC’s reformatory attempt is reflected in the storyline that takes place within the NATO barracks in Eastern Europe, putting both black and Eastern European bodies in a position that shifted between hostility and admiration for the ethnic pornographic gaze.

The comparison of a director’s style across different productions often neglects the nuanced changes in production conditions within the pornographic film industry, which have undergone substantial evolution over time. These transformations are evident in technological advancements, shifts in distribution channels, and economic imperatives. Within a sector deeply entrenched in economic criteria, it becomes imperative to contextualize the emphasis on a director’s perspective. Directors, akin to brands, wield considerable influence, with their names serving as signifiers of a specific aesthetic or thematic approach. For instance, JNRC Films strategically employs the name of Jean-Noël René Clair as a brand for its studio-based gay porn films. However, behind the polished appearance of these productions lies a stark reality often characterized by meager budgets and limited resources, particularly when compared to mainstream U.S. counterparts.

Such discrepancies are manifest in the shooting locations of these films, often set in unconventional spaces such as the homes of migrant men, two-star hotels, or other

45 Chang, Jeff. “On Multiculturalism: Notes on the Ambitions and Legacies of a Movement.” *GIA Reader* 18, No. 3, 2007, 80.

social spaces frequented by marginalized communities, including gay individuals. These spaces, transformed into impromptu studios, not only reflect the economic constraints faced by the production teams but also inadvertently contribute to the documentary nature of these films. The absence of a proper production team and financial resources leaves directors grappling with numerous challenges, forcing them to adopt a more hands-on approach to filmmaking. In this context, directors may feel compelled to foreground their names, leveraging them to assert authorial control and distinction amidst the constraints imposed by the production environment.

Moreover, the lack of financial resources shapes the physical production conditions and influences the thematic and narrative choices within these films. Directors may be compelled to explore narratives that resonate with their personal experiences or those of the communities they represent, thereby imbuing the movie with authenticity and sociocultural relevance. However, it is essential to recognize that while economic constraints undoubtedly influence the production process, they do not necessarily dictate artistic merit or the potential for critical engagement. Instead, they serve as contextual factors that must be considered alongside broader sociocultural and economic dynamics shaping the pornographic film industry. Hence, a comprehensive analysis of production conditions is indispensable for elucidating the multifaceted interplay between directorial styles, economic imperatives, and the evolving nature of pornographic cinema.

2.6 Banlieues: Poor but Sexy!

One year after the release of *Outrage*, JNRC Films released their new movie series called *Studio Beurs* (1998), establishing the term *beur* as a marketing tool across French pornographic cinema.⁴⁶ As Denis M. Provencher explains in the introduction to *Queer Maghrebi French*, the term *beur* is used for a ‘second-generation French citizen of Maghrebi descent.’⁴⁷ JNRC Films recognized the erotic potential of the ghettoization of French cities such as Paris and Marseille. *Studio Beurs* offers a series of solo scenes where we see *beur* men enjoying themselves in front of the camera. The series was recorded in Jean-Noël René Clair’s studio rather than on-site or in the banlieues; therefore, many aspects of the aesthetics are similar throughout the entire series and can thus be disregarded. The second of the JNRC film series to focus on *beur* men is *Studio Banlieue* (2003), which explicitly refers to the Arab banlieueards of France. The film’s meta-text states: “It’s 3 o’clock in the morning. JNRC is driving in the night, looking for someone. Moments later he finds him, and brings him back to the studio. A young

⁴⁶ See: <https://www.jnrc.fr/en/dvd/detail/5285-studio-beurs-1-2> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

⁴⁷ Provencher, Denis M. *Queer Maghrebi French: Language, Temporalities, Transfiliations*. Contemporary French and Francophone Cultures. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017, 13.

Arab dude, good looking and confident, hung and horny. The guy is rock hard in front of the camera, dying to shoot his load!”⁴⁸ As Mehammed Amadeus Mack mentions in *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture*, JNRC’s 3 AM shift almost constitutes a type of ‘social work’, helping to fulfil the urgent desires of Franco-Arab men by having them ejaculate on camera.⁴⁹ Like *Studio Beurs*, *Studio Banlieu* includes mostly solo performances, except in its final scene which stages an Arab guy named Khalid’s first gay sexual experience. Although JNRC realized the sexual tension latent to the collective imagination around France’s Arab minority, he did not go deeper into their social and financial background outside of presenting them in France instead of the Maghreb.

After producing a handful of films focusing on Maghrebi men from France, JNRC came up with various locations that diversified his films to include ethnic and racialized subjects. However, these films brought the issue of authenticity to his porn films. Previously, based on the titles of his films, he built a career on a documentary approach toward Maghrebi-French and Eastern European men: he shot beurs and called the movie *Beurs*, and the same goes for Turks and Africans. His works from the early 2000s are a valuable tool for analyzing how he handles the issues of ethnicity and also allow a better understanding of his earlier works. In his later productions, JNRC visited Africa to produce new films following the trend set by Cadinot. *Men of Africa* (2000) – later the title was changed to *Africa Sex* – is one of the first movies he claimed to have filmed on location in Senegal, though it is hard to confirm this information since the audience is not shown any outdoor location. In the movie *Turk*, there is no Turkish-speaking cast, and while the description on the JNRC website states that the movie was shot in Turkey, similar to *Africa Sex*, it is hard to confirm whether this was indeed the case. In addition to this ambiguous information, which raises questions about the significance of fictional/shifting ethnicities in gay pornography, the same text specifically lists a Pakistani cast member for the movie *Turk*.

Porn film producers often claim the authenticity of their subjects as part of their marketing strategy. For example, most studios producing ethnic pornographic films, like JNRC Films or Citébeur, often mention that the cast members are 100% Maghrebi. Although pornography represents real sexual encounters between humans, when it comes to social hierarchies, socioeconomic classes, religion, occupations, taboos, and clichés, it often employs fiction. What does it mean to fake a Turkish identity in a gay porn movie? What does it mean to promote a Pakistani identity in a movie where Turkishness and the sexuality of Turkish men are what is being commodified? Collin O’Neal worked with Latin American, Turkish and Arab cast members indiscriminately in his movie series *World of Men* (2006–2009) and *Tales of The Arabian Nights* (2010). *World of Men: Turkey* (2008), for instance, has no Turkish cast, although the aim of the

⁴⁸ See: <https://www.jnrc.fr/en/dvd/detail/5248-studio-banlieue> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

⁴⁹ Mack, 2017, 226.

movie is to commodify the sexuality of Turkish men. The protagonists of the movie are Armando, Orlando, Axel Ryder, Jean Franko, Hani, and Adrian, and none of them are Turkish. Directors are quite aware that they are selling a fantasy: therefore, anyone who comes aesthetically close to the stereotype of Turkish men in the West will do and becomes automatically Turkish in the pornographic realm. The Pakistani character also suggests that the aim of the movie is not to document authenticity with regard to the actors. The reason that the nationality of the Pakistani actor is mentioned in the promo text is simply that it fits the demographics of the film by representing men of color.

In pornography, the authenticity of the cast members is a matter of performance as well as marketing. In an ethnic pornographic context, the issue of authenticity shows similarities with far-right generalizations about ethnic minorities by replacements of ethnic actors in gay porn from one ethnicity with another, thus implying that they are the same. In some cases, such as Francois Sagat (Citébeur productions), or Axel Ryder (Collin O'Neal productions) white actors are even employed to represent Maghrebi or Turkish men. For parts of the audience, such replacements could be unrecognizable, as it happened in the case of Francois Sagat because of his muscular features and hairy body. However, it helps to understand how the issues of authenticity translate the hegemonic view on sexualized ethnic minorities in Europe. Although Jean-Noël René Clair seeks to establish authenticity of ethnic minorities in his movies, he disregarded them as potential audiences. JNRC knows his audience well, which consists mostly of middle-class white French gay men, who are not looking to identify with the characters in the films. On the contrary, they identify with what they do not find in themselves and thereby develop a sexual interest that is triggered by the politics of that time in Europe as well as by the collective subconscious. Maxime Cervulle also pointed out, “paradoxically, there is a kind of realism in pornographic performance that declares its own performativity.”⁵⁰ Similar to the ethnic misrepresentations in the productions of JNRC Films, Cazzo Films, and Raging Stallion Studios – a more recent Paris-based porn production company – Citébeur, introduced Francois Sagat to global porn stardom as an Arab man from France called Azzedine in the 2005 movie *Wesh Cousin 5: Relax Man!*. In fact, Sagat is a Caucasian French man, though his tattooed scalp and the Turkish or Algerian flag tattoo on his back contributed to the ‘ethnic drag’ he enacted in his debut for Citébeur. After receiving threats from ‘weird extremists’, he decided to modify the back tattoo, citing a lack of interest in politics and explaining that he had not intended it to be a reference to Turkey or Algeria, but to fashion designer Alexander McQueen’s Eye Collection.⁵¹ Whether the actors are interested in politics or not, the power of representation remains, just as Francois

⁵⁰ Cervulle, 2009, 183.

⁵¹ Julien Sauvalle’s interview with François Sagat for *Out.com* published on January 27, 2017. See: <https://www.out.com/popnography/2017/1/26/francois-sagat-gay-porn-sex-symbol-interview>. (Last Access Date: 03.04.2024).

Sagat will be desired through his cross-racial porn film personas, regardless of his actual ethnicity.

Francois Sagat's rise to porn stardom brought extra attention to the Citébeur company one year after its launch. This was also the time when JNRC Films recognized the sexual potential of the working-class aesthetic with productions such as *Studio Banlieue* (2003). Citébeur joined the race and released their first movies in which banlieusards and *beur* characters were fetishized on the grounds of their ethnic and class affiliations. In her inspiring work, *Skin Flicks on the Racial Border: Pornography, Exploitation, and Interracial Lust*, Linda Williams discusses the term *racialized sexuality* coined by Abdul JanMohamed.⁵² Williams makes a parallel between the hypersexualization of black bodies in gay male porn, and the 'hysterization' of white women's bodies in hetero-male porn, asking the question "What happens when the racialized body becomes the subject of pornography's unique brand of confession?"⁵³ In response to this question, Williams suggests that *racialized sexuality* is not necessarily as silent as Abdul JanMohamed proposes, and claims that "phobic fetishization works in the service of fueling a pleasure that has become more complex, a pleasure that serves more than white former masters."⁵⁴

Prior to Citébeur, director and producer positions were dominated by white middle-class French citizens like Cadinot and Jean-Noël René Clair. Stéphane Chibikh challenges this stereotype by looking into the power dynamics behind gay ethnic pornography from different angles. Can it be that Chibikh represents a whitewashed Maghrebi man who replicates JNRC with a slightly different aesthetic and approach? Or is it possible that he is trying to change the power positions in pornography by gaining access to them, and using racialized sexualities as a tool for redemption? While it might be possible to answer this question affirmatively, what is important here is that his movies made assumptions like these possible in the first place due to the way he presented the banlieues and their corresponding stereotypes. However, Citébeur is the porn studio that most explicitly affiliates itself with the housing projects of French suburbs. Citébeur is a combination of the words *Cité*, which means housing project and *beur*, an often-derogatory term for second-generation French citizens of Maghrebi descent.⁵⁵ Citébeur also introduced other slang terms to further sexualize *beur* males from the housing projects such as: 'wesh', 'lascars', 'cousins', 'rebeu', and 'racaille.' As Maxime Cervulle mentions, 'racaille' (English: rabble; mob, or ordi-

52 JanMohamed, Abdul R. "Sexuality on/of the Racial Border: Foucault, Wright, and the Articulation of 'Racialized Sexuality'". In *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to Aids*, edited by Domna Stanton. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1992, 94–116.

53 Williams, Linda. *Porn Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, 272.

54 Williams, 2004, 279.

55 See: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/french-english/cite> (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

nary people) was used by the former Minister of the Interior and later president Nicolas Sarkozy to describe the banlieue riots in 2005.⁵⁶

Citébeur uses the tagline ‘Arab gay porn’ prominently displayed next to its name on the website. Citébeur has partnerships with thirty-four other web pages all around the globe that focus on interracial or ethnic gay porn. Some of these include but are not limited to GayArabClub, BoLatino, Cadinot.fr, JNRC.fr, HarlemSex, MachoFactory. The continued popularity of these sites is questionable, as Citébeur was the only production company still active in 2021. Especially in the age of self-distribution and marketing, with platforms such as OnlyFans or JustForFans, as well as the established pornographic streaming platforms such as Pornhub, partnerships such as those with Cadinot or JNRC Films could only function as legacy-building projects, or as a way of mobilizing a stigmatized, whitewashed and almost racist pornographic network. It also functions as an archive of knowledge and sexual history that is often ignored or not deemed worthy by film and media institutions.

The issue of archiving gay pornography needs further research, although this book aims to provide chronological data regarding the production houses that focus on the subgenre of gay ethnic pornography. However, a comprehensive survey would be complicated to compile by the fact that most of the films discussed in this study targeted a niche audience. As a result, the life expectancy of the porn films relies on film collectors or the archival work of their producers. After forty years, access to these movies has become an issue not only limited to the audience, but also to academics and artistic workers who have difficulty accessing these productions. Central to these productions is that they centralize Middle Eastern, mostly Arab male characters (and subject positions) which, in the context of Europe’s mostly white male pornography, are often ignored. The partnership of ethnic pornographic film companies creates an unintentional archive of racialized sexualities that can be used as an historical and post-colonial resource. At the end of his article *French Homonormativity and the Commodification of the Arab Body*, Maxime Cervulle asked an important question, “How might we borrow Sam Bourcier’s productive term ‘living archive’, the auto reflexive and performative nature of which would allow us, as Michel Foucault suggested long ago, to archive the silences, the gaps, and the absences to resist the hegemonic regime of the current gay culture that seeks to normalize the history of sexual minorities, and doing so, produces a white past and white future?”⁵⁷ This question is still valid and may well be applied to European gay ethnic pornography.

⁵⁶ Cervulle, 2008, 182.

⁵⁷ Cervulle, 2008, 178.

2.7 Citébeur: Contemporary French-Maghrebi Gay Pornography from Paris

While Jean-Noël René Clair changed the geographical direction from the Maghreb to the Maghrebi men in the banlieues of Paris, Citébeur was certainly the company that paid specific attention to the representation of these men, including second and third generation diasporas in France. Therefore, it also provides an insight into the analytical framework of pornography by showing generational migration and their representation. While Citébeur reproduces some of the issues discussed before, it also reflects how the hegemonic Western gaze sexualizes and socializes these men. In doing so, Citébeur has produced some of the most controversial content of post-1980s gay pornography in Europe, which is what keeps the company alive. Its controversial aspect is based on its distinctions from previous examples, which did not rely on a ‘banlieue aesthetic’ besides the fact of putting Maghrebi men – mostly naked and assuming they live in the banlieues – in front of the camera. The founder, their narrative, language, fashion, side productions, cast, and even the porn star personas of the company interrupted the silence of ethnic pornography and allowed them to sexualize marginalized social and economic positions, and to re-define the erotic repertoire of post-colonial Europe. With forty years’ activity in the business, Citébeur is by far the oldest gay porn film production company in Europe and has achieved a kind of cult status in the gay porn industry.

While marketing the former series that they produced as DVDs, Citébeur has moved most of its content to online platforms. Despite the competition of porn streaming giants such as Xhamster, and Pornhub, and self-distribution on-demand platforms like OnlyFans and Just4Fans, Citébeur has maintained its strong presence through their website www.beuronline.com and the Beuronline app. Beuronline.com states:

Meet other gay Arab, black, white, Latino, Asian men... Our goal is to promote multicultural friendship & love in respect of all people regardless of their origins or skin color. Bisexuals and straight men interested in gay encounters are also welcome... Beuronline allows you to discreetly meet with other gay or bisexual men.⁵⁸

Beuronline app already has more than half a million members on their platform, and this kind of cross-marketing system helps them keep their business going in the digital era of online media consumption.

The visual language of the app welcomes users with characters from their graphic novels, showing that Citébeur offers the full porn media package including a social networking app, published graphic novels, and adult films. Few merchandise strategies in the porn industry match what Citébeur has been offering. In 2019, Men.com collaborated with Tom of Finland in a multilateral approach that included

58 See: www.beuronline.com/home (Last Access Date: 17.03.2024).

Tom of Finland inspired movies, and product placements from the Tom of Finland Online Store.⁵⁹ However, though the Men.com's collaboration with Tom of Finland is the closest kin to Citébeur's expansive strategy, let's assume that it only managed to capture the attention of leather fetish enthusiasts within the gay community, who would not normally visit Men.com due to its lacking fetish content.

Since Citébeur speaks to a niche category in gay pornography, it is a less obvious candidate for collaborations than the more broadly targeted Men.com. On the other hand, Citébeur offers graphic novels similar to the style of Tom of Finland. The focus of Tom of Finland is on oversized penises and vintage muscle-hunk, leather cruising boys, meanwhile Citébeur's character is the banlieue and migrant man who speaks ghetto slang, has a tendency to criminal activity, and likes using firearms and violence. John Mercer defines the homoerotic prototype as 'the idealized object for the gay reader'.⁶⁰ Tom of Finland and Citébeur play with similar signifiers of the macho male. However, Tom of Finland comes out of California's fetish community in the 70s, while Citébeur built on the early 2000s.

These graphic novels provide the context that Citébeur imagines for their films, even though the audience could only see to a limited extent in the hardcore sex scenes. Most of them feature characters with armed guns, practicing physical and verbal abuse, using homophobic slurs and ghetto slang. Perhaps the caricaturizing aspect of the comic enables producers to go 'further' with their politically incorrect rhetoric. One of the main problems of ethnic pornography is authenticity, but in the graphic novels the producers have no such concerns. Nevertheless, the nostalgic medium of Citébeur actually adds to its authenticity. Two of these comics, *Le Gang* (2012), and *Le Gang Is Back*, have been translated into English and were published by the Berlin-based gay publishing house Bruno Gmünder. *Le Gang* is a two-part series and tells the stories of macho Franco-Arabs and their 'celebratory' violent acts that enhance their sexuality while propagating the criminal migrant stereotype that is widely familiar in the Western media.

These two publications complement each other and convey the general message of the Citébeur production company. Citébeur differs from earlier examples of French gay ethnic pornography, in that it glorifies the figure of the troubled migrant man, typically propagated by the media in Western Europe. The narratives tend to center the Franco-Arab male gaze, and even the commodified and submissive white male figure. With Citébeur, Stéphane Chibikh managed to create an outlet for one type of Franco-Arab gay men that functions almost as a badge of pride. Prior examples had relied on repetitive victimization and silencing of these subjects' sexuality. However, in

⁵⁹ Tom of Finland is a cult gay leather fetish homoerotic artist, created by Touko Valio Laaksonen. See: Ferguson, Michael. "Tom of Finland." *Journal of Homosexuality* 66, no. 6, 2019, 857–862.

⁶⁰ Mercer, John. "Homosexual Prototypes: Repetition and the Construction of the Generic in the Iconography of Gay Pornography." *Paragraph* 26, no. 1–2, 2003, 289.

Citébeur videos, the audience does not see a victimized Arab male image, although they embody the image of the debauched working-class migrant male, they also represent powerful figures while owning the ‘negativity’.

According to the producer of Citébeur, glorification of banlieue aesthetics is also a way to communicate and negotiate a desire between Maghrebi French men and white middle-class French viewers. However, such negotiation or double-sided sexualization is not apparent in the Citébeur’s movies. In the July-August 2003 issue of the mainstream gay magazine *Tétu*, Maury cites Stéphane Chibikh for emphasizing the mutual attraction between white French men and *beurs*, and that he finds it realistic to reflect this double-sided sexualization in pornography.⁶¹ Chibikh reproduces the negative outlet of Franco-Arab male; however, he also acknowledges the commodification of white men within the Franco-Arab community, and its functions within the dynamics of masculinity. Most of the white male cast is portrayed as submissive bottoms who are ‘used and abused’ by aggressive Franco-Arab machos throughout the narrative. As Mohammed Amadeus Mack remarks, ‘the eroticization of difference’ is a two-way street: in this case, both sides are trapped within heteronormative structures, as the assimilated Maghrebi men represent the ideal homosexual, who is also shaped by the norms of heterosexuality.⁶² What the films do, rather, is to open up a space for the underrepresented, where a reversal of the white gaze in pornographic representation takes place.

In the complete world of Citébeur, the perceived character traits of men are augmented not only by firearms, attitude, or the use of slangs to signify their socio-economic status: their poverty is also highlighted by a particular style of fashion that further compliments their sexualization. Gabriel Ojeda-Sagué notes that “the bodies and styling in Citébeur scenes are meant to reference, mimic, and embody a virility supposedly composed by the socio-economic condition and racial designation of the characters depicted.”⁶³ The style depicted in Citébeur movies has strong references to the British *chav* and migrant men’s streetwear in Europe. This depiction, in part, communicated a working-class aesthetic. Although subjects of this sub-category are ethnically white, they are fetishized based on their class affiliation. Such exoticization overlaps in gay ethnic pornography, except that chavs are, to a certain extent, not often portrayed as socially dangerous or criminal. Chavs are young working-class men predominantly associated with Northern England. They are known to wear matching jumpers or sports jackets and sweatpants, chain necklaces, baseball caps, white tank tops, and white socks. This might sound similar to the street style of hoods and ghettos in the U.S.; however, the chav aesthetic is in no way flashy. In the Citébeur movies, chav style appears as the dress-code of the banlieues and has a slightly different voca-

61 Maury, Louis. “Cantique de la racaille,” *Tétu*, July-August 2003, 36.

62 Mack, 2017, 235.

63 Ojeda-Sagué, Gabriel. “The Whiteness of François Sagat.” *Porn Studies* 8, no. 1, 2021, 109.

bulary. In the context of Citébeur, such aesthetics are elevated through the contemporary representations of the French-Maghrebi twist, including the fake products of high-fashion brands representing upper-class fashion. Some sportswear clothing frequently appeared in chav porn, such as Adidas or Nike, replaced with fake Gucci. Both the upper and middle classes could purchase Adidas and Nike. Still, owning the fake Gucci, which is a good-enough-fake to not be recognized as one, and turning it into an object that signals an identity, demonstrates the protest against class difference by reassessing the codes of the upper class through fake sweatpants. Overall, these elements help the sexualization of banlieue aesthetics together with the social stigmas and stereotypes that are attached to migrant men by the hegemonic view. The aestheticization of stereotypical migrant fashion is not limited to the French context. In German productions, such technique has been used in gay pornography, orchestrating the style of young Turkish men from the late 90s and early 00s. Street Boys produced the *Turkish Cum Guns* series, which has similar fashion expressions as Citébeur. However, in the German context, such distinct aesthetics were borrowed from the U.S.-American Hip-Hop movement by the second generation of migrant Turks as a response to the NSU (*Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund*, National Socialist Underground) movement and growing Neo-Nazism after the generational labor migration.⁶⁴ Fashion expressions in pornography help reveal how sexualization operates with codes of culture and, in an ethnic context, point to how ethnicization works with the cultures of class and its aesthetics.

Citébeur responded to the tropes of colonialism and Orientalism already present in *Mektoub, fantasie arabe* from 1920: the starting point of gay ethnic pornographic film history, only from the peripheries of Paris, almost 40 years after the Algerian independence. Citébeur challenged the general discourse of pornography that internalizes the discourse about the victimization of the less powerful caused by mainstream pornography. Through the diverse range of ethnicities represented in European pornography, Europe eroticizes itself in lieu of the anticipated whiteness of the audience. French citizens with immigration background or migrant men created their own sphere of erotics, emancipating themselves from the victimhood that the general discourse around pornography had confined them to. They created a space for their pleasure by way of an unapologetic, glamorized post-colonial banlieue virility.

2.8 The Citébeur Wave and the ‘Dangerous Maghrebi’ Fashion

Similarly to the wave Cadinot films have created, Citébeur has been followed by international and French porn companies that have altered the representation of Maghrebi

⁶⁴ Byrd, Brenna Reinhart. “Stylized Turkish German as the Resistance Vernacular of German Hip-Hop.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Hip-Hop*, edited by Justin A. Williams. Cambridge Companions to Music, 292–300. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 295.

men from French ghettos. Like the examples that followed Cadinot, the productions following Citébeur have transformed the codes of ethnic pornography and made it close to the so-called chav category, where the signifiers of the working-class are reduced to a particular fashion aesthetic. These alternative productions, such as Eric Videos, used the codes that Citébeur had initiated and turned them into a vocabulary that consolidates the stereotypical narrative of Maghrebi men from France. Unlike Citébeur itself, the engagement of the productions that followed it remained limited to the fashion style and aggressive behavior of the actors, placing these examples into an in-betweenness of category. Some movies from these production houses can still fall under ethnic or interracial pornography. However, the way that the ethnicities are represented in those productions can be considered as 'blackfacing', since some of the characters promoted as Maghrebi were performed by white French and Spanish actors. The authenticity issue pointed out earlier when discussing the films of JNRC has evolved into an approach where ethnicity becomes an element that can be attachable through fashion, style, and behavior. This kind of approach eliminates the resemblance or even relatability to a possible ethnic audience, as it represents the social issues of working-class or migrant communities as pleasure elements for the white middle-class audience.

The trope of the 'dangerous Maghrebi' that Citébeur coined remained consistent in other examples of French gay porn that followed: Balaclava masks, chain necklaces, guns, and sweatpants became the signifier for Maghrebi men. While Citébeur was blooming, the other production houses, such as Eric Videos or Brute De Sexe, also attempted to produce their own version of gay ethnic pornography by adopting an aesthetic similar to Citébeur but did not limit their repertoire to Arab and North African men only. Eric Videos used a similar banlieue fashion in most of his films to cater to sneaker and sports fetish. Sneaker and sports fetish in the European pornographic context is also linked to the working-class aesthetics of British gay pornography.⁶⁵ Looking at the films on the Eric Videos web page, they categorized their movies according to their themes, and the 'Arab Guy' theme is one of the largest on their web page. Like Citébeur, most of their films were shot in cruising parks, basements, abandoned houses, or in the banlieues. In the movies of Eric Videos that show only white men, the locations are often rooftops or studio apartments, which does not communicate a lot about the background of the actors. In their 'Arab Guy' themed videos, kidnapping, stalking, or rape are regularly used to stir cultural tension, similar to what Citébeur did. Regardless, their way of marketing videos does not reveal much about the video's content, rather than that it is a hardcore bareback porn film.

The earlier Arab-themed porn films of Eric Videos were solo performances where the actors jerked off watching hetero porn magazines. In these solo performances,

⁶⁵ The owner, producer, and director of Eric Videos also has an OnlyFans account where he sells his adult content to his followers. However, he does not appear in his company's films.

Eric Videos either entirely blurred their actors' faces or had them wearing balaclavas. Eric Videos doesn't give catchy titles to their films; instead, they use sentences that describe the video. In their first examples of Arab-themed videos, tags explicitly stated that the Arab men are watching heterosexual porn films and jerking off while watching. In the first movies, the actors' faces were blurred or they were wearing balaclavas. In the movies of Eric Videos, the focus is on hard-core bareback sex, which intentionally does not leave space for dialogue or interviews with the actors that audiences used to see in the previous examples of gay ethnic pornography. However, in those earlier films that blur the actors' faces entirely, the actor is performing a non-scripted performance that creates intimacy, like the movies of JNRC Films. Later Arab-themed films were mainly built on cruising, gang bang, kidnapping, and rape scenarios that interrupt voyeuristic intimacy and move to a *Citébeuresque* way of representing Arabness through pornography. Besides Arab-themed videos, Eric Videos have categories divided by age, settings such as garden, basement, terrace, or kitchen, as well as categories such as ethnicities, hair, and skin colors.

These cruising, rape, and kidnapping role play scenarios are not only limited to the Arab-themed videos, although they appear more frequently in this context. The videos locate the narrative at the beginning of each film, which turns out to be a narrative that builds up on agreeing to bareback sex. Therefore, Eric Videos is clearly targeting the similar audience group who might be attracted by *Citébeur* or JNRC Films but also like to check the extensive portfolio that Eric Video presents. Looking at the other categories, Eric Videos also represented Latino and Black men in similar ways, that also resonate with the representational strategies employed in Arab-themed porn movies.

French productions of gay ethnic pornography have critical importance, since these examples show interest towards an ethnic Other from various approaches that help understand the relationship between gay sexuality, colonialism, and Orientalism both inside and outside of Europe. While earlier examples focused on the gay sex tourism between France, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco pointing to the direct relationship between colonialism and the perception of homosexuality, later productions showed how such relationships function in a post-colonial setting where Maghrebi men are represented through class and the experience of generational migration. Additionally, some productions help to understand how such colonial relationships and the mechanisms of Orientalism function between East and West Europe through politics and economics. The various geographical contexts displayed in French productions help connect how directors and producers from other European countries, such as Germany or Sweden, engage with the history of colonialism and Orientalism through filming gay pornography.

Like fashion, pornographic cinema captures the *zeitgeist* of its time. Ironically, porn is so mainstream, yet the stigma of morality remains attached to it. Despite pornography not generally being considered a respectable field of study, it has a vital role in generating an archive of a nation's shifting cultural environments and the opera-

tions of raciality/coloniality, gender, and sexuality within them. French gay ethnic pornography of the last decades is of critical importance in this regard because they represent a radical shift in the contemporary aesthetics of gay pornography, owing to the fact that some of the producers and directors are of Maghrebi descent. In addition, it sits harmoniously with a network of examples of gay ethnic pornography from Germany and Eastern Europe, which will be explored in the next two chapters.