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Crises of Postmemory: Deferred Postmemory in Second-Generation

Novels after the Algerian War

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in French and Francophone Studies

by

Anneka Wylie Haddix

2016

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2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Crises of Postmemory: Deferred Postmemory in Second-Generation

Novels after the Algerian War

by

Anneka Wylie Haddix

Doctor of Philosophy in French and Francophone Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Lia N. Brozgal, Chair

“Crises of Postmemory: Deferred Postmemory in Second-Generation Novels after the Algerian War” examines the role of literature at the intersection of trauma, memory, transmission in the context of Franco-Algerian history. Expanding Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory investigates the relationship between the generation that lives through a traumatic event and the extent to which their traumatic memories can be inherited by the next generation. This theory is based on intergenerational communication and transmission, which often occur to such a great extent that the experiences of the second generation can appear to be dominated by the ‘memories’ inherited from the first generation. This dissertation expands on the idea of postmemory in the context of the Algerian War for independence and its afterlives in France. In this case, the second generation is often met with silence and avoidance from the first generation. Rather than being inundated with others’ memories as Hirsch described, these descendants must

actively seek out the past on their own, often without the intervention of the first generation.

Although delay can be inferred from the name “postmemory” the experiences explored in this project are further removed from the original trauma of the first generation and therefore represent what I term *deferred* postmemory.

The six historically based francophone fictional texts studied in this project are constructed on the collective trauma experienced and retained by the first generation; a trauma, which although unexpressed, marked the second generation through its both internal and external censorship. Moving farther away traditional postmemory with each chapter, this project analyzes how the second-generation uses diverse scaffolds to gain access to the unshared traumatic past of the first generation. Each chapter presents a couplet of texts that engage with the same historical moment or depict the same method for discovering different traumatic pasts. Through testimonial experiences, retracing the first generation’s movements to historically significant locations, and finally visiting and creating archives, the second-generation characters depicted in each text are better able comprehend the first-generation’s traumatic past and its impact on future generations.

The dissertation of Anneka Wylie Haddix is approved.

Dominic R. Thomas

Laure Murat

Nouri Gana

Lia N. Brozgal, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

For my family

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INTRODUCTION

Crises of Postmemory

This project is animated by the overarching question of how postmemory operates in cultural productions that engage with experiences of historical trauma outside of the Holocaust. More precisely, how can it be used to understand the trauma of war and decolonization in Algeria? Unlike the experience of the Holocaust, which is recognized by French law, it was not until 1999 that the conflict in Algeria was officially recognized as a war, and memories of the Algerian War for independence have remained contested during the more than 50 years since its conclusion in 1962.¹ Unlike postmemorial texts that have come out of the Shoah—written by authors of the second generation who feel a visceral and undeniable implication in their parents’ traumatic memories—the primary texts I examine in this project enact what I term experiences of *deferred* postmemory: in contrast to the circumstances of those who are flooded with information about their parents’ traumatic pasts, members of the second generation of Algerians and Algerian immigrants in France have often been haunted by a lack of transmission on the part of their parents.

As defined by Susan Suleiman in her text that inspired this project’s title, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War*, these crises “are moments that highlight the relations between individual memory and group memory, concerning a past event that is stipulated as important by the group at a given time” (5). In her example, as the title suggests, this crisis is World War II; such an engagement with memories can, however, be applied to other moments of collective political and social upheaval. Another theory born out of attempts to grapple with the trauma of the Holocaust is Marianne Hirsch’s notion of postmemory. The driving force of this

¹ The *loi Gayssot* of 1990 made illegal the denial of crimes against humanity and it “outlawed views that have been deemed racist, xenophobic, or anti-Semitic” (Huret et Peretz 300). Nearly

postmemorial relationship is the connection between the first generation that lived a trauma and the second generation that did not witness, but nevertheless, seems to experience it through the shared stories and images from the first generation.

What can be gained from thinking of postmemory within the framework of a crisis of memory? Suleiman underscores the role of communicating the past as a means of creating a cohesive story of the self: “At issue in a crisis of memory is the question of self-representation: How we view ourselves, and how we represent ourselves to others, is indissociable from the stories we tell about our past” (“Edge” 93). Narrative plays an indispensable role in shaping identities, both individual and collective. When transmission of traumatic memories is cut off at the source, the continuity of storytelling is interrupted. This interruption in intergenerational transmission leads to deferred postmemory when the second generation seeks out a full understanding of the prior generation’s traumatic past. Unlike traditional postmemory in which the first generation actively shares its memories, in this deferred case, it is members of the second generation who consciously become storytellers—not just of their own trauma, but also of that of their parents. Although not shared, the traumatic weight of the first generation’s past affects the way the second generation views, represents, and ultimately understands itself. In this project, and in the brief analysis below, I build off this “crisis of postmemory” and apply an expanded and nuanced version of Hirsch’s model to works representing a lack of transmission in the Franco-Algerian context.

On the rainy night of October 17, 1961 an estimated 30,000 Algerian men, women and children left their homes to stage a peaceful protest march through the streets of Paris. While tensions had been steadily rising since the beginning of the Algerian War for independence in 1954, the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) called for this protest in response to the curfew

put in place by the Prefect of police Maurice Papon, and applied exclusively to Français Musulmans d'Algérie (FMA—French Muslims of Algeria).² Before 9:00pm, a mere thirty minutes after the curfew officially began, 3,000 protestors had been arrested and the police's "savage repression" of marchers only increased as the night continued (Rancière 28). As Jacques Rancière describes, "the police cleared the public space and, thanks to a news blackout, made its own operations invisible" (ibid). This resulting invisibility was ensured by the official sealing of archives related to the events of October 17, 1961. This lack of institutional information has not, however, stopped historians and novelists from investigating October 17. The work of novelist, filmmaker and historian, Mehdi Lallaoui represents some of the earliest fictional depictions of the protest.

Lallaoui's 2001 novel *Une nuit d'octobre* revolves around a fictional trial that bears an obvious resemblance to the libel suit brought by Maurice Papon against historian Jean-Luc Einaudi. In reality, Maurice Papon was brought to trial on charges of crimes against humanity for his actions under the Vichy regime during World War II.³ During this trial, and as a result of

² In colonial Algeria, the FLN's initial and "immediate target was French power. [...] The leadership of the new force reflected less concern with political doctrine than with political action" (Lewis 163). Comprised of military and civilian participants, the FLN was active in Algeria and France throughout the Algerian War. For a wider discussion of the FLN, see: Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria: Party Development in a Revolutionary Society*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977 and Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978. "FMA" is a designation that refers to Muslim Algerians living under French colonial rule. This specifically religious terminology shifted between the 19th and 20th centuries, but persisted to set these citizens apart from others in the colony and in France. On such terms, see: Todd Shepard, "La République face aux Harkis: Questions aux historiens" *Les Temps Modernes* 666 (2011), especially pages 58-60 and Patrick Weil "Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale: une nationalité française dénaturée" in *La Justice en Algérie (1830-1962)*, Paris: La Documentation française, 2005, 95-109.

³ This so-called "Papon Affair" is a nearly two-decade long saga that links French collaboration in the Nazi deportation machine to the violent repression of Algerian protestors on October 17,

Jean-Luc Einaudi's testimony, the events of October 17, 1961 and Papon's involvement came to light. Einaudi's editorial describing the trial and Papon's actions during 1961 prompted the former prefect to levy charges of defamation against the historian. Concluding an article published May 20, 1998 in *Le Monde*, Einaudi wrote: "je persiste et je signe. En octobre 1961, il y eut à Paris un massacre perpétré par les forces de l'ordre agissant sous les ordres de Maurice Papon".⁴ Einaudi was ultimately found not guilty: "The court...concluded that although Einaudi's statement was 'on the evidence' defamatory, it was made in the good faith context of a body of serious and well-documented research" and no damages were awarded to the plaintiff (Golsan 27-8). It is this defamation trial that is represented and essentially re-written in Lallaoui's *Une nuit d'octobre*. In the novel, Einaudi is represented as an author named Renucci while Maurice Papon becomes Maurice Crapon. While the fictionalized avatars of real historical figures are at the heart of the novel's trial, the wider narrative follows Dadou and Agnès, characters who were not involved—and indeed hadn't been born at the time of the October events—but whose parents were directly implicated in the march's repression. It is these two "second-generation" characters—of the generation not directly involved in a traumatic moment,

1961. A 1999 defamation suit brought by Papon following accusations of involvement in the "massacre" of Algerians in 1961 Paris resulted in the true extent of Papon's crimes against humanity (and to a larger extent, all those perpetrated by the Vichy regime) being brought to light. This saga is presented and analyzed in detail in Richard Golsan's edited volume *The Papon Affair: Memory and Justice on Trial*, New York: Routledge, 2000.

⁴ This article has been reproduced in *Le Monde's* online archive and is consultable at: http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2011/10/17/archives-du-monde-20-mai-1998-octobre-1961-pour-la-verite-enfin-par-jean-luc-einaudi_1588176_3224.html

but the children of those who were—and their contrasting relationships to the past at stake in the text that drive the intrigue of the story.⁵

Marianne Hirsch, herself a member of the second generation following the Holocaust, has developed a theory addressing the nature of trauma transmitted from one generation to the next. Focusing on what she calls “received memory,” Hirsch’s concept of postmemory “describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up” (“Generation” 106). While one character, Dadou, labors under the weight of inherited memories from his Algerian immigrant father, to which he feels the immense connection described by Hirsch, Agnès suffers the absence of such knowledge.

Dadou, born and raised in Paris, occupies a position very similar to that of Lallaoui himself.⁶ Like Lallaoui, who has made a career of seeking wider awareness of Franco-Algerian history, the second-generation protagonist seeks to uncover and disseminate the truth of the indignities and injustices his family endured as French Algerian Muslims living in Paris during

⁵ Martin S. Bergmann and Milton E. Jucovy have set out to define this generational distinction in Holocaust studies; see their edited volume *Generations of the Holocaust*, New York: Basic Books, 1982. This term has also been discussed in works such as Suleiman’s 2002 essay entitled “The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors and the Holocaust” and in Hass, Aaron. *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

⁶ Born to Algerian immigrants in France and the son of an October 17 participant, Mehdi Lallaoui has both a personal and professional interest in Franco-Algerian history. Along with Benjamin Stora and Samia Messaoudi, Lallaoui founded *L’association Au nom de la mémoire* in 1990. This group has published articles and texts as well as films and radio programs regarding the Algerian War (with a notable focus on the Sétif Massacre and October 17). Lallaoui began his career with his 1986 novel *Les Beurs de Seine*, which was followed by *La Colline aux oliviers* (1998) and *Une nuit d’octobre* (2001)—all three novels treat the aftermath of French colonialism. Lallaoui has also made 20 documentaries with a Franco-Algerian focus.

the colonial era. Dadou is at once mirrored and foiled by Agnès Tardieu as she searches for a basic understanding of this past and her father's past as a Parisian police officer. While both characters have fathers who were closely involved in the events of October 17, their own conception of the night varies based on the amount of knowledge they have received from these members of the older generation and is informed by the different personalities of the two characters. As Agnès learns more about the details of the protest and the violent police response, she discovers significantly more about her own family history. The text's sustained interplay between reality and fiction, past and present, parent and child, highlights the ability of memory, and specifically the memory of trauma, to bridge temporal gaps.

The familial link existing between Dadou and the previous generation's traumatic past is rendered tangible by his attachment to a photograph depicting his uncles who were killed on the night of October 17, 1961. In her discussion of postmemory Hirsch argues, in particular, for the important role of photography in linking one generation to another; she suggests that "family photos, and the familial aspects of postmemory, would tend to diminish distance, bridge separation, and facilitate identification and affiliation" ("Generation" 116). Dadou demonstrates the power of photography through his emotional investment in the past captured in this photo; he sees quite literally, a younger version of himself being held by members of the first generation in the image. This photo is prominently displayed in his father's home among three images of the mountains of Algeria and a photograph of Mecca. The significance of these images is reinforced during the scenes in which Dadou recounts the Crapon trial to his father: the elderly Algerian never speaks, but his eyes remain riveted to the photograph: "Ses yeux étaient rivés de l'autre côté de la pièce, sur la photographie de ses deux frères, posée sur une grand bahut Conforama en lamelles reconstituées. [...] Chuchotant à son oreille, Dadou récapitula à son père les moments

du procès en le tenant par la main. Le vieil homme immobile, le visage des temps de pluie, acquiesçait de la tête de temps à autre” (121). The importance of this photograph in Dadou’s life and its impact on his development is apparent when he shows the same photograph to Agnès while explaining his dedication to spreading awareness of October 17. His presence in the photo, even as an infant, and his recognition of himself in the visages of his lost uncles makes clearly visible Dadou’s connection to this trauma. Employing Hirsch’s vocabulary, he has absorbed the previous generation’s memories of trauma as his own: “En vrai, c’est cette nuit...C’est mon histoire” (136).

The visual representation of the connection between Dadou and his ancestors is emblemized by his relationship with his father. Dadou serves as his father’s connection to both the past and the present, visiting often to inform his father of the progress of the trial. Irene Kacandes has suggested that the inclusion of unspoken or unrevealed dialogues in a novel is one way in which characters can “‘perform’ trauma, in the sense that they can ‘fail’ to tell the story, by eliding, repeating, and fragmenting components of the story” (56). While the reader is not privy to the details of their dialogues, verbal exchanges between Dadou and his father are significant in transmitting both memory and trauma. Through this gap in the narrative, the reader becomes aware of the trauma haunting Dadou’s father, and thus the reader becomes implicated in the story as a witness: “the reader-witness registers gaps and fragments as possible traumatic symptoms” (Kacandes 62-3). These symptoms are once again apparent in Dadou’s father’s refusal to speak about the night of October 17, 1961—in many ways his voice, along with his memories, have been transferred to his son.

Unlike Dadou, Agnès Tardieu was raised without any knowledge of October 17. Despite her father’s indirect involvement as a Parisian police officer during the colonial period and a

family friend's direct participation in the violent suppression of the protest, Agnès knows nothing of that night. Although they find themselves on different sides of history—Dadou's father having marched on October 17 while Agnès's father was employed by the police force that violently suppressed this demonstration—both characters are affected by this trauma. Her lack of inherited memory and trauma is as important as Dadou's abundance of such emotional history. In addition to a failure of familial transmission, the text suggests the failure of the French education system to address this gap in historical knowledge as Agnès remarks to her father: "Tu sais, moi je connais rien de cette guerre d'Algérie. Je suis en troisième année de Droit et je ne connais même pas ton histoire. C'est dingue, non?" (87). Agnès, in employing the possessive "ton" places her father into the larger historical context of the march, while placing herself outside of both his personal history and the wider national history associated with October 17. While overlooked and largely untaught in school, this history is actively suppressed within the Tardieu household. Any connections Agnès attempts to make linking her father to Franco-Algerian strife are quashed yet Agnès is nevertheless drawn to the courtroom in an attempt to fill in the gaps of her knowledge without her father's help.⁷

As a result of her unrelenting interest in the trial and her incessant prodding, Agnès's father does finally agree to address his memories of the Algerian War era. Gerard Tardieu's memories have been so repressed that rather than explaining the past and his involvement to his daughter, he refers her to his cache of saved newspaper articles from 1961—accounts that were often more influenced by governmental control than journalistic accuracy. Even though the newspapers and the reports therein support his (and the state's) version of events, Gerard is

⁷ After the first day of the trial, for instance, Agnès again asks her father about October 17 and the police response—a line of questioning with which he is still uncomfortable: "Il la repoussa et en la dévisageant. —Tu peux pas comprendre, ma chérie... C'était la guerre" (120).

stunned into silence at his daughter's refusal to accept this "truth." Along with an initial refusal to address Agnès's questions, the literal burying of evidence from the colonial era in the family cellar indicates an act of repression on the part of the traumatized generation. This burying of the past can be contrasted with the overt presence of the shadow of October 17 in the lives of Dadou and his father. While the Tardieu family has pushed any recognition of the protest below the calm surface of their suburban home life, Dadou's upbringing included the prominently displayed photograph containing his lost uncles and daily reminders of the trauma of massacre.

While the details of the October 17 protest play a significant role in the novel—as do the Crapon trial and witness testimony recorded in the narrative—the effect of these events on the second-generation characters is the driving narrative force in the text. As a result of Lallaoui's characters confronting the past of their parents, this novel represents the fulfillment of Hirsch's theory of postmemory. Dadou grew up with his father's memories, but Agnès's connection to the Franco-Algerian past is facilitated through her exposure to witness testimony during the Crapon trial. Dadou's experience of the omnipresence of his father's memories of trauma hews closely to Hirsch's classic postmemory, while Agnès's experience is an expanded model of postmemory, which is at the heart of this project: *deferred* postmemory.

Framing the study of post-colonial Franco-Algerian literature through the lens of postmemory, in this case deferred, raises additional questions. Who or what is being remembered? By whom and for what audience? When, where and how are the second generation's connections to the first generation's traumatic past facilitated? What are the effects of delay and deferral in confronting memory? This project explores these questions by expanding Hirsch's concept of postmemory and applying it to twentieth- and twenty-first century Francophone fictional texts.

Typically, when one thinks of postmemory, a present and active first generation comes to mind, sharing their memories with the second generation in order to create a living chain of remembrance. Hirsch has problematized this intergenerational transmission of trauma. She focuses on the second generation's experience with acting out and, in some cases, working through traumas that were not originally their own. As defined in a 2001 article, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," Hirsch states that "Postmemory most specifically describes the relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences they 'remember' only as the narratives and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right" (9). Postmemory is a model used by critics to explore, understand and problematize the cultural productions of the second generation. In postmemory, Hirsch has developed a vocabulary that allows scholars and critics to investigate and account for the way the works of the second generation interact with memories that are not, per se, their own. Hirsch initially developed the concept as a way to account for experiences described by descendants of Holocaust survivors whose own consciousness has been shaped by the experiences of their parents and relatives during the Shoah. Indeed, while numerous other scholars have taken up this approach, its deployment has been almost exclusively limited to the domain of the Holocaust.⁸ In this project, however, I demonstrate how the concept of postmemory can be expanded and applied to cultural productions born out of other traumas—historical events that remain unrecognized and therefore unresolved.

⁸ Several examples of this trend include: Pascale Bos "Positionality and Postmemory in Scholarship on the Holocaust," *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies in German Literature and Culture* 19 (2003): 50-74; Froma Zeitlin "The Vicarious Witness: Belated Memory and Authorial Presence in Recent Holocaust Literature," *History and Memory* 10.2 (1998): 5-42; and Ernst van Alphen "Second-Generation Testimony, Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory" *Poetics Today* 27.2 (2006): 473-88.

The lack of transmission of such traumas within the domestic sphere, as seen in Lallaoui's text, is mirrored and indeed compounded by a lack of transmission at a governmental level. Transmission via the French education system has been either absent or fraught, with school programs only recently beginning to confront the Algerian War and related colonial cultural productions, decades after their occurrence or production.⁹ Although specific memories of trauma may not be shared in this postcolonial context, a traumatic specter and the weight of silence are passed down. This haunting appears as an absence—which is later identified and investigated by the second generation often without the intervention of the first generation. The postmemorial experience of intergenerational transmission is deferred, no longer initiated by the first generation and experienced as latent reception by the second generation. Instead, the deferred postmemorial experience is initiated by the second generation—often as adults—seeking to understand the trauma of their parents or predecessors that has silently infiltrated their lives. Considering postmemorial experiences through the lens of Franco-Algerian history, it is necessary to sketch out a brief history of this colonial period and tease out how this project engages with the official and narrativized accounts of this past and its effects as a traumatic history before then turning to how trauma theory encapsulates postmemory and finally examining how the texts themselves seek to enact deferred postmemory.

⁹ One such example is the *Loi du 23 février 2005* (partially repealed now) that required French textbooks to explain “le rôle positif de la présence française outre-mer, notamment en Afrique du Nord, et accordant à l’histoire et aux sacrifices des combattants de l’armée française issus de ces territoires la place éminente à laquelle ils ont droit” (Loi n°2005-158 du 23 février 2005 portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des Français rapatriés: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=B1EAB37CF96F324AB9B502C3A9>).

Franco-Algerian Colonial History

Unlike historical moments that have been recognized and publically commemorated in France, including the efforts of soldiers and resistance fighters during World War II, the complexity of the history of the French colonial empire and its dissolution has only recently become a topic of interest to scholars and has begun to make its ways to the forefront of French national consciousness.¹⁰ In the historical outline of the twentieth-century Algerian experience that follows, I highlight moments that, in many cases, have not been officially recognized on a national scale in France. Unlike crimes against humanity that are punishable under French law, there has been little legal or historical recourse for those impacted by the Algerian War for independence. The trauma of experiencing seemingly minor historical events is rendered personal in the primary sources that drive this dissertation. While the larger francophone reading audience may not be aware of or acknowledge the experiences of the first generation that lived through the Algerian War, a second generation of novelists has endeavored to understand—and transmit through literature—their predecessors' traumatic history through the representation of experiences of deferred postmemory.

The mid-twentieth century was punctuated by struggles surrounding the end of modern European colonialism and the fight of oppressed colonies to assert their independence. While France's activities overseas were first characterized as civilizing missions, French colonial expansion—beginning with the 1830 conquest of Algeria—was defined by bitter conflicts. The era of New Imperialism, which began immediately following the Berlin Conference of 1884,

¹⁰ While there are indeed monuments dedicated to former French colonial holdings—Mémorial des Guerres en Indochine in the Var and Mémorial national de la guerre d'Algérie et des combats du Maroc et de la Tunisie in Paris, for example—these memorials commemorate the sacrifice of those who died for France during wars for independence rather than providing significant or substantive information on the effects of colonial involvement in these regions and conflicts.

dimmed following the First World War and finally came to an end after the devastation of World War II. France's own colonial ambitions ended primarily as a result of wars for independence fought in Indochina and Algeria, wars that were fought just months apart.¹¹

Following World War II and the loss of French Indochina, the French government desperately tried to retain control of Algeria. After more than a century of French domination in Algeria, anti-colonial sentiment experienced a significant increase during World War II. The massacre of May 8, 1945 in Sétif, Algeria has been cited as a turning point in this colonial relationship.¹² A parade celebrating Germany's military surrender afforded the burgeoning anti-colonialists an opportunity to demonstrate against the French presence in Algeria. French authorities fired on protestors when an Algerian flag was displayed and deadly clashes between protestors and authorities ensued.¹³ The scale of violence employed by the French in responding

¹¹ The French colonial empire in South East Asia included modern-day Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The region, called Indochina, was under French control from 1887 to 1954. Several revolts were led against the French during the colonial period and the final conflict between the Viet Minh, a communist army, ended in French defeat at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. A few months later, on November 1, 1954, the FLN began overt attacks on French military and civilian targets in France's North African colony, Algeria. On these conflicts see: Vaïsse, Maurice, ed. *L'Armée française dans la guerre d'Indochine (1946-1954): adaptation ou inadaptation ?* and Alexander, Martin S. and J.F.V. Keiger, eds. *France and the Algerian War (1954-1962): Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*.

¹² This uprising and series of reprisals from both Algerians and French resulted in over 100 French deaths and thousands of Algerian deaths. See once again: Alexander, Martin S. and J.F.V. Keiger, eds. *France and the Algerian War (1954-1962): Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*. The impact of this event has been highlighted in a 1995 film by Mehdi Lallaoui and Bernard Langlois entitled *Les massacres de Sétif: un certain 8 mai 1945*, in Rachid Bouchareb's 2010 film *Hors la loi*, and in Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*.

¹³ While some historians have suggested that the Sétif massacre—which included gruesome attacks perpetrated by both Algerians and French—began the Algerian Revolution, Algeria's fight for independence officially began with the transformation of the Catholic holiday Toussaint into a day of mourning: the Algerian nationalist group Front de liberation national (FLN) led attacks on European military and civilian personnel. See: Shaun Gregory "France and the War on Terrorism" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15.1 (2003): 127, Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson

to the demonstration at Sétif can be seen as a precursor to the extreme French response to the peaceful protest march in Paris on October 17, 1961.¹⁴

Throughout the conflict growing in Algeria, the French government was reticent to employ the word “war,” opting instead for terms such as “events.” These lexical choices are not lacking in importance because at this time Algeria was a department of France, and declaring a war would have been tantamount to acknowledging a secessionist movement or a civil war among French departments. While fighting was mostly contained to Algerian soil, attacks did reach French soil when the FLN opened a so-called second-front in mainland France in 1958.¹⁵ The Algerian War for independence officially ended as a result of the Evian Accords, with a cease-fire taking effect March 18, 1962. Following a referendum to approve the Evian Accords that was accepted nearly unanimously, Charles de Gaulle declared Algerian independence on July 5, 1962—eight years after the conflict erupted. This prolonged confrontation, with rumors of torture levied against both sides, has marred and continues to impact Franco-Algerian relations.¹⁶ The events of this conflict remain contentious, as many archives are only partially open to researchers in France and unavailable to researchers in Algeria. Per French law, these

“The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 16.3 (1972): 391, Martin Alexander and J.F.V. Keiger, eds. *France and the Algerian War (1954-1962): Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*, 2002, especially Chapter 1.

¹⁴ Joshua Cole suggests that Sétif, October 17 and the attack at the Charonne metro station “had been so frequently evoked in both France and Algeria by politicians and commentators that their names had become a kind of shorthand for evoking the violence of the colonial period” (109).

¹⁵ One such event, though not an attack, is the October 17, 1961 demonstration. Hutchinson has investigated the motivation behind FLN-led attacks in the colony and the metropolis alike and suggests that “their activities in metropolitan France against police and economic objectives created an ‘incontestable psychological shock’” (“Concept” 386) as described in the FLN journal *El Moudjahid*.

¹⁶ For a further discussion of torture in this project, see my Chapter 1.

archives should be unsealed 50 to 75 years after their creation depending on the nature of the information recorded; however, this gap in information has not deterred the scholarly and creative pursuits of both French and Algerians in the years following the conflict.¹⁷ The ongoing obfuscation of information echoes France's policies of governmental intervention and censorship in place during the Algerian conflict.¹⁸ As a result of such intervention, many events integral to the war and its resolution are neither well known nor well recognized in the metropolis.

Thinking Trauma, Writing Trauma

Hirsch's concept is important for understanding trauma and is the basis of my notion of deferred postmemory, but it is equally important to situate her work in the field of trauma studies. Indeed, trauma studies can be traced to the late nineteenth century and the work of psychologist Pierre Janet and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Janet's work on the specificity of traumatic memory and Freud's focus on the processes of "working through" such experiences have laid the foundation for contemporary scholarship and trauma theory. Their vocabulary and conceptual frameworks have been redeployed and reinterpreted, in both literary and historical scholarship, by critics such as Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra and Anne Whitehead, who inform this project's framework.

¹⁷ Present law stipulates that based on the potential impact (both personal and national) of the information contained in currently sealed archives, more time should elapse between their creation during the era of the Algerian War and their declassification. While some historians dispute the validity of these concerns, the French government has maintained restricted access to official archives: "Le but des autorités françaises est de faciliter l'accès des chercheurs français et algériens aux archives, en évitant l'instrumentalisation de ce dossier à des fins politiques", indiquera enfin la chancellerie française" (Boureni).

¹⁸ The accessibility of traces of this history, as they are contained in French archives, can also prove problematic. Some archives relating to the Algerian War are available for consultation, but others remained sealed per the *Loi du 15 juillet 2008*.

Trauma studies experienced a boom in the late twentieth century. Before the turn to literary and historical investigations of trauma at the close of the twentieth century, most of the study in this area had been in the field of psychology. The work of Freud and Janet on traumatic experiences and how they are or are not integrated into one's consciousness significantly contributed to later movements in trauma studies. Both Freud and Janet investigated the victim's attachment to trauma, and Janet's distinction between traumatic memory and narrative memory is especially fecund for postmemory.¹⁹ While narrative memory can be integrated into the consciousness of the individual, traumatic memory remains, as described by van der Kolk and van der Hart, unintegrated and "dissociated from conscious awareness and voluntary control" (427). Janet describes traumatic memory's effects: "the subject is often incapable of making the necessary narrative which we call memory regarding the event: and yet he remains confronted by a difficult situation in which he has not been able to play a satisfactory part" (Janet 663). In discussing Janet's conception of traumatic memory, Freud suggests that as a result of repressing a traumatic memory, one is "obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience" (18). Despite an interval of over a century, Freud and Janet's views on trauma and remembering still inform the work of trauma theorists today.

Cathy Caruth has noted that there is often a delay in victims' understanding of traumatic events. After an interval, those who experienced a traumatic event are more willing, more able,

¹⁹ The contrast between traumatic memory and narrative memory lies in the way such a memory is integrated into the consciousness of the individual who experienced it. To clarify this difference, one can turn to Janet's own explanation, cited in van der Kolk, Hopper and Osterman's 2001 study: "[people who experience 'vehement emotions'] are unable to make the recital which we call narrative memory, and yet they remain confronted by [the] difficult situation" (Janet 1919/1925 661)" (24). The authors of this investigation in Janetian memory studies go on to explain that "this results in 'a phobia of memory' (Janet 1919/1925 661) that prevents integration...of traumatic events and splits these traumatic memories from ordinary consciousness" (24).

to speak about their experiences. Delay may be at the heart of increased interest in trauma studies witnessed in the late twentieth century, a moment that marked the fortieth anniversary of World War II and thus perhaps signaled a readiness on the part of victims and society to begin “understanding” the traumas of the Shoah and other conflicts. Anne Whitehead has also taken up the work of Janet in her study *Trauma Fiction* (2004). Her focus on the distinction of traumatic memory and narrative memory is described in the context of fictional works portraying traumatic events. Like Janet, Whitehead underscores the repetitive nature of traumatic memory: “Traumatic recollection is characterized by the striking paradox that while its re-enactments are disturbingly literal and precise, they nevertheless remain largely unavailable to conscious recall and control” (140). Janet’s hypothesis that in narrativizing traumatic experiences one can break the hold of the ever-repeating and static traumatic memory, is likewise discussed by Whitehead in her study of such narratives: “If the novels describe the conversion of traumatic memory into narrative memory, the question arises as to whether the forms of the novels retain the impact of trauma and are marked by its disruptions and discontinuities” (143). Just as trauma is affected by its being written down, the written record—in Whitehead’s case fictional texts—are also impacted by the trauma they describe. The symptoms that crop up in trauma writing retain and reflect the disruptive effect of the trauma itself; according to Whitehead: “Novelists have frequently found that the impact of trauma can only adequately be represented by mimicking its forms and symptoms, so that temporality and chronology collapse, and narratives are characterized by repetition and indirection” (3).

Writing trauma has also been examined by Dominick LaCapra in his aptly titled study *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001). Like Whitehead and Caruth, LaCapra views writing as “a prime, if not privileged, place for giving voice to trauma” (190). While a “privileged”

medium, writing trauma is also highly problematic for LaCapra due to its disruptive and destabilizing effects:

Writing trauma is a metaphor in that writing indicates some distance from trauma (even when the experience of writing is itself intimately bound up with trauma), and there is no such thing as writing trauma itself if only because trauma, while at times related to particular events, cannot be localized in terms of a discrete, dated experience. Trauma indicates a shattering break or cesura in experience which has belated effects. [...] It involves processes of acting out, working over, and to some extent working through in analyzing and ‘giving voice’ to the past—processes of coming to terms with traumatic ‘experiences,’ limit events, and their symptomatic effects that achieve articulation in different combinations and hybridized forms. (186)

This conception of trauma as a “break or cesura” evokes once again Janet’s view of traumatic events as un-comprehended, dissociated and un-inscribed in the consciousness of the person who experienced them. LaCapra’s view of the process of “writing trauma” recalls Whitehead’s discussion of trauma fiction, whose formal style can tend to mirror the symptomatic remains of the trauma itself.

The writing of trauma, in its appropriation of the stylistic effects of trauma’s impact on one’s consciousness can be compared to another form of traumatic “working through”: testimony.²⁰ Testimonial literature and first-person accounts of traumatic experiences are often

²⁰ The concept of “working through” appears in some of Freud’s earliest work and, according to Walter A. Stewart, “was intended to describe the work and time required by the patient to overcome his tendency to repeat a pattern of instinctual discharge” (477). This pattern reveals the negative impact of repetitive, traumatic, repressed memories, which is overcome by the process of working through (Ornstein 389).

closely associated with other cultural productions that seek to address to trauma.²¹ Several of the stylistic nuances that are present in written interventions with traumatic memories are also visible in testimonial representations of trauma. Shoshanna Felman and Dori Laub have worked extensively on the study of testimony and its possibilities for both speaker and listener. The relationship and responsibility that exists between witness and audience is at the heart of their work and impacts the efficacy of transmitting traumatic experiences: “Testimony is the narrative’s address to hearing; for only when the survivor knows he is being heard will he stop to hear – and listen to – himself” (Felman and Laub 70-1). Testifying and being heard can produce catharsis, but while it can—under the right circumstances—produce a “working through” for the victim, it is not without consequences for the listener. Felman and Laub have underscored the potentially problematic nature of the relationship between witness and listener: “the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself” (Felman and Laub 57).²²

In “partially experiencing” the witness’s trauma, the listener is placed in a precarious position. Indeed, LaCapra suggests that witnesses must engage in “empathic unsettlement,” but he says, “a difficulty arises when the virtual experience involved in empathy gives way to vicarious victimhood, and empathy with the victim seems to become an identity” (47). One must

²¹ While testimony itself is not the main focus of this project, instances of testifying are represented in many of the primary works—including several courtroom scenes in Lallaoui’s novel discussed above and in filmed testimonial interventions related in Leïla Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge*.

²² Anne Whitehead has also investigated the exchange between witness and listener: “Other trauma theorists have responded with caution to Laub’s understanding of the role of the listener. Geoffrey Hartman is wary of what he considers to be Laub’s ‘positive view’ (1996: 165, n.10) of secondary trauma. Kali Tal is critical of what she regards to be an appropriative gesture on Laub’s part, which makes no distinction between the primary trauma suffered by the victim or survivor and the secondary trauma suffered by the testimonial audience (1996: 56-7)” (34-35).

avoid over identification to prevent the listener from appropriating the witness's trauma as his or her own. I would argue that the relationship between speaker and listener is analogous to the relationship between text and reader and that the experience of reading about trauma presents the same dangers of over-identification and appropriation. Such over-identification can also be seen in the experience of inherited trauma.

Beyond testifying to a traumatic event, the very nature of this experience can impact its effect on the person who lived through it. In an extended discussion of absence and loss, LaCapra describes the differences between each experience and the problems of conflating the two. According to LaCapra, loss is derived from a specific historical event; absence, on the other hand, cannot be situated on a historical level and is not related to a discrete event. While these two phenomena incarnate different types of lack, difficulties arise when they are misunderstood or combined:

When absence and loss are conflated, melancholic paralysis or manic agitation may set in, and the significance or force of particular historical losses (for example, those of apartheid or the Shoah) may be obfuscated or rashly generalized. [...] [T]he conflation of absence and loss would facilitate the appropriation of particular traumas by those who did not experience them, typically in a movement of identity formation which makes invidious and ideological use of traumatic series of events in foundational ways or as symbolic capital. (64-65)

While loss can be tied to a specific event, absence remains less distinct. As such, it can be transmitted and experienced by those who did not directly experience it. LaCapra has described the spectral nature of absence as it appears in the past: "The past is misperceived in terms of sheer absence or utter annihilation. Something of the past always remains, if only as a haunting

presence of symptomatic revenant” (49). The haunting nature of absence figures into Anne Whitehead’s reading of Cathy Caruth’s work on belatedness. As described by Whitehead, “Caruth’s notion of belatedness also raises the question of the duration and extent of the period of delay in trauma. Theories of trans-generational trauma suggest that affect can leak across generations; that a traumatic event which is experienced by one individual can be passed on so that its effects are replayed in another individual one or more generations later” (14). The concept of belatedness suggests the possibility of an intergenerational transmission of trauma, which is at the heart of Hirsch’s theory of postmemory.²³

Having grown out of the warnings of an over-identification and risks of appropriation of another’s traumatic experience, Hirsch’s theory of postmemory suggests that the trauma of one generation can indeed be felt by a later generation. Her groundbreaking work on postmemory brings to light the relationship between the generation that lives through a traumatic event and the extent to which their trauma and traumatic memories can be inherited by the next generation. Indeed, Hirsch uses the term “postmemory” to define “the familial inheritance of cultural trauma (“Surviving Images” 9). Through what Hirsch describes as “projection, investment and creation” (“Generation” 107), the second generation internalizes the memories and experiences of their familial predecessors.

This theory is rooted firmly in the preservation and communication of experiences; Hirsch explains:

Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before,

²³ Hirsch directly engages with the concept of belatedness and Cathy Caruth in her 2001 article “Surviving Images: Holocaust Photography and the Work of Postmemory” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14.1 (Spring 2001): 5-37.

experiences that they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right. (“Generation” 106)

This familial engagement through which one generation’s trauma is transmitted to the next is at the center of Hirsch’s definition of postmemory. While intergenerational communication often occurs within a familial context, it is impossible to consider either generation without cultural context. Necessarily, larger connections and experiences inform the understanding of a family’s (and often, a parent’s) personal history; as Hirsch states: “family life, even in its most intimate moments, is entrenched in a collective imaginary shaped by public, generational structures of fantasy and projection and by a shared archive of stories and images that inflect the transmission of individual and familial remembrance” (“Generation” 114). As discussed in the context of Lallaoui’s text, the role of photography in linking one generation to another is central in postmemory; Hirsch suggests that “family photos, and the familial aspects of postmemory, would tend to diminish distance, bridge separation, and facilitate identification and affiliation” (“Generation” 116). Although Hirsch’s main element of transferal is generally visual, other artistic productions can provide access to the memories of previous generations. Written narratives and oral transmission can allow subsequent generations to grasp the trauma that was endured often before their birth. Within postmemory, the members of the second generation are exposed to the memories of the first generation without necessarily seeking them out; as a result of such exposure, the second generation accepts and experiences the memories of the previous generation to such an extent that they become dominated by a narrative that is not precisely their own. In the case of deferred postmemory, however, there has been no latent transmission of memories. Rather, the second generation—sensing a lack—engages in a search for

untransmitted memories and traumas that the previous generation was unwilling or unable to convey to the second generation.

While the original focus of Hirsch's study revolves around the experiences of those who lived through the Holocaust and their immediate descendants, the theory of postmemory is based on "the workings of trauma, memory, and intergenerational acts of transfer, a discussion actively taking place in numerous important contexts outside of Holocaust studies" ("Generation" 104). Hirsch herself has spoken of the need for these theories to find purchase outside of Holocaust studies and be in dialogue with other contexts of trauma and memory transference: "Nor do I want to restrict the notion of postmemory to the remembrance of the Holocaust, or to privilege the Holocaust as a unique or limit experience beyond all others...Although it might be generalizable to other contexts, however, the specificity of the Holocaust as an exemplary site of postmemory deserves notice and comment" ("Surviving Images" 11). One such context beyond the Holocaust, rife with unresolved trauma, is the history of colonial relations and the still evolving relationships that exist between the former colonizer and those colonized.²⁴

The memories of the Algerian War and struggles related to decolonization have marked the French consciousness both in the metropolis and abroad. Confronting such moments in the past has been difficult within larger French society and—as numerous scholars have pointed out—has a tendency to activate other historically traumatic moments as well; the work of Michael Rothberg and Max Silverman has been emblematic in this regard. The latter's recent

²⁴ While investigating the applicability of postmemory to this specific area is of particular interest to myself, recent scholars have used Hirsch's concept of postmemory in the realms of Korean American literature (Chu "Science Fiction and Postmemory Han in Contemporary Korean American Literature") and Eastern European Cultural Productions (Meerzon "Dancing on the X-rays: On the Theatre of Memory, counter-memory, and Postmemory in the post-1989 East-European Context").

text entitled *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* creates a direct link between the representations of the trauma of World War II and those of the disruption of colonialism and its decline. With a focus on “the history which returns” (3), Silverman highlights the psychic relationship between “parallel histories...overlapping realms of history, memory and imagination” (18). Such a layering of historical moments lends itself to the concept of postmemory, which suggests that it is through the work of subsequent generations that earlier histories can be fully understood “by those who were not there to live it but received its effects, belatedly, through the narratives, actions and symptoms of the previous generation” (Hirsch “Surviving Images” 12). Based on the relationship between these “overlapping realms of history” as Silverman calls them, I propose that Hirsch’s model of transgenerational exchange can be a fruitful way to approach literature surrounding the Algerian War for independence and the generations that have followed in France.

Narrativizing History: Fiction, Faction, Function

Former colonial subjects and their descendants have interacted with this troubled history through various political and cultural productions. One such area is in the novel, which provides space for the intermingling of historical events and fictional stories. Working in the post-colonial Algerian context, Mireille Rosello has found that the novel can serve as a counterpoint to the national history written by the French government. In the Franco-Algerian case, the use of censorship—both at a national, legal level and on an independent societally instituted level—has

kept the full extent of the two nations' entwined histories from public knowledge.²⁵ She underscores the weight of this doubled censorship: "The silence of ordinary people may be the most damning type of historical comment, and that type of missing archive may be even more problematic to reconstitute because it was not caused by any single clearly identifiable cause—that silence is a mixture of confusion, incomprehension, and fear, sometimes a form of deliberate indifference coupled with either powerlessness or cynicism" ("Remembering" 191). Beyond silence's impact in failing to record and discuss events as they were occurring, the weight of silence can be seen to infiltrate future generations' memories of the past both on a personal and societal level. In response to this lack of official historical record, Rosello highlights the growing place of personal writing in questioning national memory. She states: "Fiction can reveal some of the dysfunctionalities of national memory. But other types of writing (autobiographies, testimonies, interviews) may also succeed in conjuring up the ghosts of stories that were never told. For the war did not only silence articulate voices, it also foreclosed certain subject positions and de-authorized certain places of enunciation" (ibid 192). Andreas Huyssen has also underscored the power of writing to solidify, or correct, the past. In his *Twilight Memories*, he links representation and memory, suggesting, "the past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory. The fissure that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation is unavoidable" (3).

²⁵ "On the one hand, the voices of the small minority of intellectuals and witnesses were actively repressed (silence was due not so much to a refusal to talk as to a refusal to listen); on the other hand, partially as a consequence of the official desire to deny the very existence of the war and the methods used to 'pacify' Algeria, there was no ritualized explosion of private heroic stories, no space for the retelling of glorious episodes. Collective memory did not coalesce around similarly constructed renditions of the conflict" ("Remembering" 188).

Placing such weight on the impact of representing one's recollections underscores Rosello's position stated above, which has been echoed by the editors of *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future* (2012). The introduction, presented by all three editors of the volume, argues that representing trauma and memories through writing has been key to their transmission: "...one of the lessons of the past half-century is that the narratives that endure, and that have the greatest chance of transmitting the story to future generations, all possess a significant aesthetic dimension" (2). Unlike previous written interventions with trauma—notably the testimonies compiled immediately following the Holocaust—narrative works, it is argued, can be more successful in capturing the traumatic event and its aftereffects described by the author. The move to narrative, as described in this edited volume, impacts not only what is told but how it is related to an audience so that it will more saliently connect with the reader; "Narrative theory sees questions about the *what* of representation (events, characters, and their settings) as closely related to questions about the *how* (who tells the tale, whose perspective is employed, how the events are ordered, and so on)" (9). These aesthetic choices can impact the reader of the resultant narrative and, like the listener of a victim's testimony, the reader may feel a sense of identification and empathy with the narrative and its author. Narrative's significance is underscored in its potential to affect the reader on an emotional level: "Precisely because it is such a powerful mode of exploration and explanation, narrative can take those involved in its production—author, narrator, character, reader—to a point where the comprehension of experience threatens to disintegrate into fragments" (*After Testimony* 9).

Emerging around the same time as the rise in trauma studies in the United States, *Beur* literature in France began growing as a literary category in the 1980s. Several of the writers

whose primary texts I discuss belong to the category of *Beur* writers, a term which generally refers to the children of North African immigrants living in France.²⁶ Growing up in France as the children of immigrants, these writers experience what Alec Hargreaves has described as a “dual cultural heritage” in which the various facets of their lives “often fit uncomfortably together, and it is no easy task for youths from immigrant backgrounds to reconcile them in a harmonious whole” (“Beur fiction” 661). Because of similar upbringings on a cultural and ethnic level, the works produced by *Beur* writers often share similarities. As outlined by Hargreaves, most *Beur* fiction presents autobiographical elements and experiences, stylistic elements often link these fictional works together as well—specifically the use of slang, which offers the reader insight into the world of the author and his or her characters and “reflect[s] the lack of fixity which is so fundamental to the condition of immigrant youths” (“Beur Fiction” 663). Another aspect of immigrant life that is often presented in *Beur* texts is a tension of identity born out of a feeling of dual allegiances. One arena in which this tension between old and new, traditional and modern is apparent is in school along with the French language employed there. As these authors are generally the children of immigrants, the experience of their parents in France—which often includes a confrontation with the traumatic past of the Algerian War for independence—is also a common theme in *Beur* works of fiction.

²⁶ For information on the *beur* authors on their works, see the numerous texts and articles published by Alec G. Hargreaves, including: *Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction: Voices from the North African Community in France*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1997; “The *Beurgeoisie*: mediation or mirage?” *European Studies* 28 (1998): 89-102; and “Beur Fiction: Voices from the Immigrant Community” *The French Review* 62.4 (1989): 661-668. There is some debate about the term itself and who might fit under this umbrella term. The etymology of the term is derived from the *verlan* of the word *Arabe*, although “a rival school of thought sees the term as an abbreviation of *Berbères d’Europe*.” (Hargreaves, “Beur Fiction” 661).

Testimony, as discussed above, impacts not only the witness but also the listener. Likewise, authors and readers share a two-fold responsibility in telling and learning about a period in history. Narrative therefore can create a link between those who experienced an event first hand and those reading it. When considering testimony, particularly in the legal sense, the need for veracity is paramount. Is the same true of narratives that represent historical trauma? And of fictions that stage acts of testimony? How can an event's impact be altered by its veracity, or its verisimilitude? Ultimately, can the novel transmit history? Is it the role of the novel to transmit history? And if so, what are the stakes, pitfalls, and ethical responsibilities of representing historical events in the context of a work of fiction?

While the capacity of narrative to transmit traumatic events to a wider audience has been established by scholars, the relationship between a fictional narrative and the real history it purports to represent can be fraught with challenges. The question of historical investment in novels has lately been discussed within the context of the genre dubbed “faction.”²⁷ Blending fact and fiction into one narrative has been a polarizing trend as of late, notably in novels concerning governmental intrigue and historical altercations.²⁸ In contrast to testimonial or autobiographical writing, which are presumed to be faithful accounts and invested in their own authenticity, fictional accounts—even if based on real events or people—have significantly more

²⁷ Antony Beevor first applied the label “faction” to a series of fictional works discussed in a 2011 issue of *Le Débat* entitled “L’Histoire saisie par la fiction”.

²⁸ See for example Carol Gluck’s take on the growing discussion surrounding the blending of history and literature in her article “Infinite Mischief? History and Literature Once Again”. Also, for an interesting investigation of this focus in the genre in Nigel West’s article “Fiction, Faction, and Intelligence” in *Intelligence and National Security*.

license in telling their version of the past.²⁹ As Oliver Conolly and Bashshar Haydar state in their 2008 article “The Case Against Faction”: “The author of faction has freedom, at two stages: first at the stage of selecting the story to tell and second at the stage of selecting the facts within those available to him in relation to that story and how to arrange and recount them” (350). In another article published on the subject of faction in *The Guardian*, Antony Beevor considers the wider impact of the growth of this genre in relation to true histories. His article, “Real Concerns” outlines one such issue in relation to stylistic elements of faction accounts in books and movies: “The false impression of verisimilitude is bolstered from time to time by throwing places and specific dates on the screen, as if the audience is about to see a faithful reenactment of what happened on a particular day.” Indeed, he extrapolates that a “faction-creep” has begun that will impact the public’s ability to discern the veracity of the accounts they read: “From selling fiction as truth in books and movies to the big lies of counter-knowledge is not such a big step after all.” Although Beevor argues that “selling fiction” necessarily preceded “the big lies of counter-knowledge”, it is also possible that this step might go in the other direction: “big lies of counter-knowledge” have prompted art to challenge or even expose them. The works discussed by the critics above all rely on the credibility of their accounts to couch fictional elements within stories based, to some degree, on real events and people.

Yet, the inverse of this relationship between truth and fiction exists as well. In more than one primary work discussed in the following chapters, real events and documents are hidden in plain sight within demonstrably fictional works. Unlike fiction and non-fiction, faction is not a genre; rather, it is a critical label. Works of faction exist between genres and indeed between

²⁹ This presumption of authenticity is certainly not an assurance of veracity, as evidenced notably by the scandal surrounding the supposedly autobiographical account of a young boy’s childhood encounter with Nazism in Benjamin Wilkomirski’s *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood, 1939-1948*.

disciplines. The blending of novelistic freedom with historical precision creates narrative works that are more apt to question the recorded history that appears to be transcribed within. This disciplinary breakdown is undermined, or perhaps exemplified, by the fact that each of the six works comprising my chapters are all clearly labeled as *roman*.

Deferred Postmemory in Practice: Chapter Descriptions

Because this study investigates the interaction between multiple generations, each novel examined in the following chapters highlights the ways in which the first and second generations approach the traumatic weight of history and its impact on each generation's identity. Reading these intergenerational transmissions, or lack thereof, through the lens of postmemory allows for this aspect of trauma theory to be tested and expanded not only in scope but also in application. Each of the three chapters that follow moves concentrically further away from Hirsch's original theory of postmemory, in which historical traumas are shared directly from the first generation to members of the second generation. Each novel examined narrativizes the second-generation's discovery of the first generation's past that, unlike in the case of traditional postmemory, had not been shared with them by the first generation. Upon discovery of this past, which almost always occurs after the death of the first generation, the second generation in each novel employs different means to truly access and understand the newly uncovered traumatic history. While this past had affected the second-generation from birth, often with oppressive silences or linguistic distance from the first generation, these inheritors of trauma are only able to work through their familial past once it is put into context with their own situations in contemporary France. These novels interact with the past on a familial and societal level and demonstrate the failure of transmission in both instances. To overcome this lack of transmission, members of the

second generation seek to discover and reconnect with the first generation's trauma past through unique scaffolds.

The first chapter, "Postmemory and Paraliterature: Coincidences and Correspondences in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* and *L'ancienne demeure turque*," considers the integral role that the "famille de circonstance", created through seemingly random encounters, plays in creating and upholding connections to the past. Focusing particularly on the genre of paraliterature (non-canonical literature that often incorporates pulpy plots and characters) allows for the creation of unlikely family units in both novels. In Maïssa Bey's *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*, a first generation French colonial soldier meets the daughter of an Algerian schoolteacher who was abducted and murdered during the Algerian War, and the granddaughter of a French Pied-Noir who fled Algeria after independence. This trio shares a train compartment as they travel south from Paris to Marseille. I read this narrative—in which a perpetrator, the aging former French soldier, crosses paths with the daughter of an Algerian man he killed during the war; alongside Andrée Montero's lesser known text, *L'ancienne demeure turque*, which also presents two unexpectedly linked characters who meet by chance on a train journey. In both of these texts, the first generation characters are haunted by Algerian War era memories they have tried to repress—in the case of Montero's work, this first generation figure is a pied-noir woman forced to flee Algeria after her husband was abducted and presumably murdered before Algerian independence. These long-hidden memories are reactivated upon encountering the specific members of the second generation they meet during their respective train trajectories. While the first generation characters in these texts are in a position to share their traumatic pasts with later generations, they do not have a full picture of this trauma. My analysis shows that the deferred postmemory experience is enacted through "proxies" for the lost figures of the first generation.

These proxies and the role of chance encounters are key in allowing both generations to exchange their respective understandings of the past in order to facilitate a deferred postmemorial experience for the second generation.

The novels I examine in my second chapter, “Mobile Memories: The Past Retraced in *La Seine était rouge* and *Le village de l’Allemand, ou le journal des frères Schiller*,” are further removed from the traditional postmemory model. I argue that the second generation’s connection to the past is created not through intervention from the first generation, but rather through physically revisiting sites that were significant to the first generation. Each text presents multiple characters from the second generation who seem to work together to discover the first generation’s previously unshared past. In the case of Boualem Sansal’s *Le Village de l’Allemand*, these characters are two brothers of mixed Algerian and German descent who grew up near Paris. Rachel, the older Schiller brother, discovers his father’s past as a Nazi chemist immediately following his father’s murder in 1994. Unable to come to terms with this familial and historical secret, he decides not share his discovery with his younger brother, Malrich. It is not until Rachel’s suicide—who had been crushed by the weight of his father’s unpunished war crimes—that Malrich discovers his father’s past and its link to his brother’s death. This narrative presents a combined journal written by both Schiller brothers that details each brother’s visits to sites that were significant in their father’s past in order to understand his role in history. In a similar impulse to retrace a trajectory significant to their predecessors, two members of the second generation in Leïla Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge* walk through Paris to visit locations that were important for protestors marching on the night of October 17, 1961— a group that included several first generation characters in the novel. In contrast to the Schiller brothers’ passive interaction with historical sites, characters in Sebbar’s text write themselves into Franco-

Algerian history by defacing the monuments and meeting sites they visit. In both novels, the second generation is able to experience an element of the first generation's past by visiting sites of personal and historical significance. Unlike in the novels analyzed in the first chapter, the second-generation characters depicted in these works have no guidance from the first generation.

In my final chapter, "Writing Wrongs': Redeploying History in *Mohand le harki* and *Meurtres pour mémoire*," I investigate how archives, both personal and institutional, grant the second-generation access to their predecessors' pasts. A hidden personal archive serves to fill the void left by decades of silence and, later, death in Hadjila Kemoum's *Mohand le harki*. This archive, filled with personal photos and newspaper clippings, is left behind after the main character, Mohand, dies in a standoff with police after he takes a retired French minister hostage in an effort to elicit an admission of French complicity toward the harki soldiers who fought alongside France during the Algerian War for independence. Institutional archives and their accessibility are at play in Didier Daeninckx's text as well. A father and son, both historians interested in French World War II era history, are murdered after visiting the same Toulousian archive—albeit at a nearly 20-year interval. With this family's lineage and links to the past seemingly cut, the local police inspector, Cadin, becomes a proxy second-generation figure and connects the murders to a haunting secret uncovered in 1961. Archives serve to link members of the second generation not only to the histories recorded therein but also to the characters who compiled and consulted them.

Reading these late twentieth and early twenty-first novels together paints a nuanced picture of lesser-known moments in Franco-Algerian history. The texts invite their audience to consider the experiences of the second-generation characters depicted finally understanding historical events that traumatized the first generation, and also the ways in which these incidents

remain at once personal and national. By considering these novels as well as the wider contexts in which they were written and now circulate, this project demonstrates how these texts not only depict deferred postmemorial experiences, but also enact and facilitate such discoveries as well for the wider audience.

CHAPTER ONE

Postmemory and Paraliterature: Coincidences and Correspondences in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* and *L'ancienne demeure turque*

*À celui qui ne pourra jamais lire ces lignes.
À mes fils.*

—Maïssa Bey

Pour Philippe

—Andrée Montero

As evidenced by their dedications, the two female authors discussed in this chapter firmly place their works at the crossroads of the past—the subject of each of text—and the future—its impact on their families or readers. In the case of Maïssa Bey, her two dedications simultaneously reach backwards and also forward. Her first dedication obliquely references her deceased father, while her second speaks to her sons who will be able to read her words and engage with the family's past. Andrée Montero's novel is dedicated to her husband, abducted in Algeria months before independence. The personal significance of all of these dedications may not be clear to the reader without knowledge of each author's personal history; regardless, such epigraphs remind the reader that these are not only novels about the History depicted therein, but also works about the past's effects in the present. This concept is central to Marianne Hirsch's theoretical framework of postmemory, which "describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up" ("Generation" 106). As suggested by the dedications of each text, engagement with the transmission of memories of such traumas is central to these works. Nuancing this experience, though, Bey's novel presents a character from the so-called "post-generation" who lives with huge gaps in the stories about her formative trauma: her father's

arrest and execution during the Algerian War. Likewise, Montero's novel presents a second-generation character who only has a partial understanding of a key moment of his own father's life.

In both of these texts, then, the postmemorial experience of the second-generation character can only be completed by later intervention from another first generation character. Hirsch's original definition discusses the manner in which the first generation's experiences—and experiences of those experiences—can impact the second generation: “To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation” (“Generation” 107). In a variation on this theme wherein the omnipresence of the first generation and the abundance of their traumatic memories permeate the lives of the second generation, the texts by Bey and Montero present a different transgenerational relationship. Rather than implicitly receiving the memories from the first generation throughout their childhood, the second-generation characters presented in these two novels actively seek out more information about these aspects of their families' pasts later in their own lives. In this way, their postmemorial experience is *deferred*. Unlike the passivity with which Hirsch's second generation internalizes the memories of their predecessors, members of the second generation presented in these texts not only search for a deeper understanding of these pasts on their own, but they also contribute to the completeness of these pasts by supplementing the memories of the first generation with what information they did have.

Author of numerous novels, short stories, poems, and pieces of theater, Maïssa Bey is well known for using these genres to question the “discours officiel masculin, rigide et unilatéral” of Algerian history, both recent and more distant (Gans-Guinoune 251). Rather than

an official presentation of Algerian history, Bey's corpus explores her individual history—often more specifically focused on her father³⁰—in dialogue with the larger history of the Franco-Algerian conflict from her perspective as a well-educated, francophone, Algerian woman.

Entendez-vous dans les montagnes (2002) is an intensely personal meditation on the disappearance and death of the anonymous protagonist's father in French Algeria. In this text, whose action takes place almost entirely on a train traveling southbound from Paris to Marseille, three diverse travelers find themselves in one train compartment. Feeling a connection beyond proximity, Jean—an elderly French man—speaks to the Algerian woman in the compartment. Hearing Jean and the unnamed Algerian woman, referred to only as Elle, conversing about the former French colony, the third passenger, a young French woman named Marie, joins the conversation. Each of these characters has a personal stake in the collective history of Franco-Algerian conflict: Jean is haunted by his own military memories of the past, while Elle pushes him to share these memories to supplement her own understanding of her father's past in which he was intimately involved. In contrast to the other characters, Marie has little understanding of the wider history of the Algerian War and no comprehension of its effects on her pied-noir grandfather. Her presence, as a member of the third generation, further complicates the traditional memory transmission structure. Both Jean and Elle have an ownership of this past and very different understandings of it—both of these perspectives will inform Marie's burgeoning conception of the Algerian War.

The transmission of memory—through testimony or images, among other media—is clearly central in creating a space for postmemory, yet this way of engaging with the past has

³⁰ Like *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*, Bey's works such as "C'est quoi un arabe?" (included in *Une enfance d'outremer* 2001) and *Cette fille-là* (2001) revolve around a paternal figure.

been deferred in the case of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*. Jean, unable to confront his memories before encountering Elle, has never shared his traumatic past as first generation survivors are often compelled to do in Hirsch's study. Moreover, Jean's situation is complicated by his status as a perpetrator, rather than as a victim—complex territory not covered by Hirsch in her discussion of postmemory. In another departure from postmemory, both Elle and Marie grew up with only fragmentary understandings of their families' places in the Algerian War. In this respect, then, their engagement with the past is deferred until they encounter Jean on the train. Rather than passively receive the first generation survivor's memories, they are, instead, in a position to press him for more information and, especially in Elle's case, to complete his memories with her own.

Unlike Bey (and her character, Elle), who is an indigenous Algerian, Andrée Montero comes from a different background. Just as Bey's personal history appears to be fictionalized in this text, Montero draws on her own experience in the pied-noir community of French Algeria in *L'Ancienne demeure turque* (2011). The specificity of this experience necessarily informs her work and serves as the basis for the historical context of the novel. The text opens with idyllic memories of her young protagonist, Claire, and her married life at the titular Turkish-style estate in colonial Algeria. This charmed life ends abruptly as Claire witnesses her husband Jean's abduction at the hands of pro-independence Algerians. The reader next sees Claire as a much older woman, now living in Paris, who has never lost hope for her husband's return. In addition to this hope, Claire has also considered that Jean might have been able to escape his kidnappers and start a new life. This dream seems all the more plausible when Claire is struck by the resemblance—more in manners than in physicality—of a young American student to her husband. As in Bey's text, Claire meets this young man, Michaël, on a train. Feeling this might

be a viable link to her past, Claire pursues a friendship with him. Claire is obsessed with this period of her past and yet, she is largely unable to confront it with Michaël. Rather, after noticing a photograph of Jean and Claire in her apartment, it is Michaël who makes the (somewhat improbable) connection between his own father's past and that of this stranger he met on a train traveling to Paris. A photographic link from the past to the present would seem to establish this narrative as a traditional work of postmemory but such an experience is once again deferred. Claire's understanding of this past, which has haunted her for over four decades, is only completed by Michaël's own narrative of his connection to this past. She is in fact unable to ever explain to Michaël why she approached him on the train. Michaël, instead, reveals the connection between Claire's missing husband and his father who eventually sheltered Jean in Texas after fleeing his kidnappers in Algeria.

Although Bey and Montero both address the history of French Algeria and legacies of its colonial period and independence, the critical reception of their publications has diverged widely. Bey's first publication, *Au commencement était la mer*, dates from 1996 while Andrée Montero's began publishing novels in 1962 and to date has written more than ten centered on Franco-Algerian history.³¹ Described as "l'une des grandes voix de la littérature algérienne francophone contemporaine", Bey's work has been studied in numerous literary journals and works of critical scholarship (Yilancioglu 43).³² Montero's work, on the other hand, is virtually unstudied; she is better known as a pied-noir activist than as a novelist.³³

³¹ While numerous publishers have reproduced many of her works in several editions, the book jacket of her 1991 text *L'Algérie source de l'inspiration littéraire depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'en 1962* (Versailles: Editions de l'atlanthrope) cites as her first novel *Jeanne*, published in 1962 while she was still living in Algeria.

³² In addition to scholars cited throughout this chapter, see others such as: Alison Rice, *Polygraphies: Francophone Women Writing Algeria* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia

While it may seem unusual to compare two works of dissimilar renown and quality, the value of this comparison nevertheless derives from their divergent perspectives on similar traumas. Although both authors are inspired by their own pasts in Algeria, the lives they lived there were vastly different, likewise so are their current lives. Although their perspectives are different, both women operate from a dual insider and outsider status in relation to Algeria and its history. As a francophone Algerian woman, currently residing and writing in Algeria, Bey's position as an insider and an outsider is also apparent in her work. A scholar of Franco-Algerian women's writing, Siobhán McIlvanney finds Bey's double positionality reflected in the "hybridity and complexity" of her literary work (196). A third generation pied-noir settler in Algeria, Montero, like her character Claire in *L'Ancienne demeure turque*, moved to France following Algerian independence. Upon her arrival in France, Montero has been heavily involved in pied-noir associations and publications.³⁴ Through activism and testifying about her memories of French Algeria, Montero has remained connected to this period of her past while

Press, 2012); Khédidja Mokaddem, "Les écritures féminines de la guerre d'Algérie: l'exemple de Maïssa Bey," *Synergies Algérie* 5 (2009): 217-225; Leila Keroboubi. "Les stratégies énonciatives dans *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* de Maïssa Bey: L'écriture impersonnelle." *Synergies Algérie* 16 (2012): 59-65.

³³ Although a singular definition of the term Pied-noir and its origins remain contested, Michèle Baussant provides an extended discussion of its history and applications. She asserts that although the term had been in use since the turn of the twentieth century, beginning in 1955, it "came to refer specifically to the French living in Algeria who considered French Algeria as their homeland, and then to French nationals from Algeria" (96).

³⁴ Montero served as president of Le Cercle Algérieniste from 1996-1999 (<http://algerazur.canalblog.com/archives/2010/04/14/16801180.html>). This group is "one of the main organisations involved in the defense of the *Pieds-noirs* with the mission of saving an endangered culture" (Savarese 458). Aside from mentions on pied-noir websites, her work as an author was described in a 2006 article from the French newspaper *L'Express*: http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/la-verite-sur-les-massacres-d-oran_460144.html

integrating into metropolitan French life.³⁵ Considering these two texts and their authors together allows for an investigation of the similarities and differences in the ways members of both sides of the Algerian War for independence have been affected by the conflict.

The autobiographical inspirations of these novels also represent a strong link between these texts. This connection is further solidified by the appearance of the fictional avatar of each novelist in their respective texts: the daughter of an executed Algerian schoolteacher in Bey's novel and the wife of a kidnapped pied-noir in Montero's. McIlvanney has underscored the ability of fiction to allow Bey to engage with her own traumatic past. While she has not specifically studied Montero's corpus, the following analysis of Bey's work is equally applicable to that of Montero:

Bey makes clear that fiction is the sole medium she can employ to confront [her father's] (f)actual death, both due to the quasi-fantasmic figure her father has become as well as to the overwhelming trauma his death represents for her. It is only through the artificially orchestrated—the fictional—that Bey takes a vital first step in an endeavor to imbricate the 'real' autobiographical and historical past with the literary present. (196)

Both novels' scenarios are "artificially orchestrated" precisely to allow for a resolution to each respective trauma that is unattainable in real life. That these novels can perform this cathartic function suggests that the freedom of fiction is an essential tool in confronting traumatic memories. This chapter seeks to understand to what extent these texts render the past accessible, not only to their readers, but also to their authors. Focusing specifically on texts that bring

³⁵ See one such testimony included in Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Les Français d'Algérie: De 1830 à aujourd'hui – Une page d'histoire déchirée* (Paris: Fayard, 2001). An additional testimony related to her husband's disappearance appears on the Cercle Algérieniste's website: <http://www.cerclealgerianiste.fr/index.php/le-memorial-des-disparus/disparus-1954-1963-les-familles-temoignent/disparus-apres-le-19-mars-1962/507-philippe-gomis-aime-montero>

together members of multiple generations linked to the same traumas, I unpack the ways in which the postmemorial model is affected by the presence of second-generation characters with more accessible knowledge of the past than the first generation characters. Finally, I discuss the stakes of historical representation in works classified by some as paraliterature.

Algerian History and Deferred Postmemory in Bey's "huis clos" on a Train

Describing herself as “une enfant colonisée”, Bey is intimately aware of the French colonial project’s impact on her life and her work (Mehta 31). Born in 1950 in Ksar-el-Boukhari, a small town south of Algiers, Bey grew up in a well-educated, French speaking household (McIlvanney 196). As if to solidify the link between the author and her narrative, a photograph immediately precedes the opening of the text and a series of annexes close the text. Descriptions of these documents and images reveal the author’s real name (Samia Benameur). Writing under a pseudonym is not usual, especially as a female, Algerian author still writing and residing in Algeria (McIlvanney 202-203). While the appearance of her family name would seem to confirm the author’s connection to these documents and reinforce the veracity of the narrative, the description below the image of Bey’s father serves at once to reinforce and undermine the autobiographical nature of this work. Although the man pictured wears glasses like those returned to the Bey family after the patriarch’s execution, the inscription contends that this is “la seule photo du père de Maïssa” (Bey 20, 10). Siobhán McIlvanney, however, has studied another image of Bey’s father (included in an earlier work, *A contre-silence* (1998)), the existence of which, then “[contradicts] the previous assertion of the photograph’s unique status, and [points] up the inherently unstable nature of even the most apparently unproblematic ‘autobiographical’ assertion” (198). The connection between author and main character is

likewise mediated by the anonymity of the author's double, the protagonist Elle. The freedom to create this distance is discussed by McIlvanney who cites "the attractiveness of the fictional for a woman writing in Algeria, which has both the safeguard of being 'created', as well as emphasizing the role of representativeness, in that her female protagonists often present themselves as curators of Algerian women's history, as bringing to literary life the forgotten stories of the past" (204). The protagonist, Elle, has indeed held on to Algerian history, specifically her fragmented memories and partial knowledge of her father's torture and execution at the hands of the French army. In the novel, Elle is preparing to depart on a southbound train to Marseille with a new novel to read en route. Two other passengers soon join her in the train compartment: Jean, an elderly French man, and Marie, a young French woman. The entirety of the novel, save for the concluding exchange on the train platform, takes place in this compartment. The narrative centers on the relationship of each of these disparate characters—different in age, nationality and awareness of the past—to the history of French Algeria and the war for independence. Jean, a now retired soldier who served in Algeria, experiences a flood of memories upon recognizing Elle as Algerian. Only later is it apparent that Jean may have been drawn to Elle because he recognized in her eyes those of her father, an Algerian teacher he executed following an interrogation. In a narrative that sometimes feels overly orchestrated and artificial, this journey brings together perpetrator and victim to confront their shared trauma. All three of these travelers bring with them their own understanding of the Algerian War and its impact on their lives. Most involved in the war, Jean has nevertheless been so traumatized by his past as to repress it, never thinking of his actions. Elle, a young child during the Algerian War, has some understanding of her father's death, but is more haunted by what she does not know than what she does. Finally, Marie has the least knowledge of this period, in spite of her

grandfather having lived in Algeria as a pied-noir schoolteacher (incidentally, the same profession as Elle's father). While he only shared positive memories of his time in Algeria, Marie admits that her grandfather has not discussed in detail his life in the colony. As a result, this third generation character is unaware of traumas such as Elle's. Brought together, these characters are in a position to inform one another and complete their individual and collective memories of the trauma of the Algerian War.

The destination of this train seems to reinforce the protagonist's identity as an Algerian woman and perhaps even suggests a vague onward journey from Marseille, further south to Algeria. As McIlvanney suggests in her discussion of this text, Marseille is "the most 'Algerian' of all French towns, acting as a gateway or bridge to the continent of Africa" (207). Just as Marseille serves as a symbolic physical gateway, the train journey itself allows each of the implicated passengers to metaphorically revisit their pasts in Algeria. Elle assiduously prepares for the train's departure, organizing her belongings and opening the novel she plans to complete during the journey. Her solitude is soon interrupted by the arrival of an older French man, followed shortly after by the entrance of the third passenger, Marie, into the heretofore solitary compartment. As is common on journeys, these three passengers have no prior knowledge of each other. Nevertheless, they will soon find themselves in a position of sharing their mixed-memories of a single past. Elle, as a foreigner, mentally notes the way in which she and her traveling companions interact in the shared space of the train compartment. The outer order surrounding Elle—experienced in the train station and in the French towns viewed from the train window, which she describes as a "Rigueur géométrique. Souci de l'ordre. Retirer tout ce qui dépasse" (15)—is similarly present among these travelers. Indeed, when the older French man, Jean, enters the train compartment without greeting or acknowledging Elle's presence, her

thoughts reveal that this is not the first time she has felt invisible in France. The arrival of Marie, the granddaughter of a pied-noir settler in Algeria, prompts a familiar lack of response from the other travelers. As she'd hoped, Marie settles in for an uneventful voyage: "Il lui sera certainement possible de s'isoler... Avec eux, le voyage sera calme, elle en est sûre" (13). This calm, however, is short lived, once Jean takes a moment to examine the woman sitting across from him.

Jean's impetus for speaking demonstrates recognition of his past in Elle. Noting that Elle has been affected by a disruption in the journey, he offers his services as a doctor. He goes on, however, to comment that he is familiar with her country ("votre pays"). While he doesn't mention "her country" by name, he has correctly identified her as an Algerian woman. Elle immediately wonders how he could have known her nationality: "Son pays ? Comment a-t-il su ? Bien sûr, ça saute aux yeux, encore que... mais j'aurais pu être... ce sont peut-être les boucles d'oreilles en argent... pour quelqu'un qui connaît bien la pays, les bijoux kabyles sont aisément identifiables... mais c'est ça, c'est aussi pour ça qu'elle les porte, oui, ne jamais oublier ce qu'elle est, une étrangère" (31). These earrings worn by Elle announce to those whom she encounters that she is Algerian and, likewise revelatory, Jean's apparent recognition of this jewelry as coming from the Kabyle region of Algeria suggests his intimate knowledge of the country. Although her difference is not hidden, instead she seems to wear it as a badge of honor, she appears alarmed that her identity as Algerian—more than perhaps simply a foreigner—is immediately apparent. The evidence of her identity is, however, far more innocuous: Jean explains to Elle that he had merely read her luggage tag, which lists her address in Algiers. In spite of this explanation, both Elle and the reader are left wondering how much he might know about "her country". Elle assumes that her uninvited conversation with Jean will continue like

all the others she has had in France about Algeria: “C’est ce qu’on dit toujours de l’Algérie: quel beau pays! Avec un point d’exclamation et bien sûr verbe au passé!” (35). His comments are apparently not unusual for the protagonist as she attempts to anticipate the rest of their conversation: an inevitable discussion of the turmoil at present and during the former colony’s war of independence. This is, however, not the case.

While Elle is initially unaware of Jean’s motivations for speaking to her about his memories of her country, the reader has a much clearer understanding. Jean’s unspoken thoughts and memories punctuate the narrative as italicized insertions into the text. Before speaking to Elle, Jean reflected on the effect seeing her had on him:

C’est peut-être la fin d’un long assoupissement. Pourquoi à cette heure, tandis qu’il regarde le visage de cette femme silencieuse, ...pourquoi les voix de ces hommes reviennent-elles à ses oreilles, dans une effroyable stridence? [...] Dans ces yeux sombres et dans ce regard qui se dérobe...s’esquisse soudain le reflet de nuits lointaines qui se bousculent dans un charivari des cris et de supplications. (16)

Although she is unaware of her role in making him remember, Elle’s dark eyes transport Jean back to his service in Algeria, to the dark night and dark deeds he lived there. Without knowledge of this internal monologue, Elle anticipates a repetition of her previous banal conversations about Algeria while abroad. What’s more, she has no desire to speak about Algeria because of her choice to leave her homeland in, as the narrator describes, exile:

Elle a fui. Et maintenant, elle ne veut surtout pas qu’on lui parle de son pays. Ni au passé, ni au présent. Elle le regarde sans mot dire. Mais il n’attend pas de réponse. Il continue, comme s’il parlait seul.

—Oui... J’y ai passé plusieurs mois, d’abord comme préposé et puis comme auxiliaire médical, dans une infirmerie. Dans un camp militaire. Un camp spécial. Et puis...” (39)

Just as Elle was unable to grasp his reasoning for beginning this conversation with her, Jean appears unable to understand his intense need to share his past with this anonymous woman. Jean’s difficulty in completing a thought is signaled by the ellipses interrupting his speech and yet he continues to attempt to connect with Elle.³⁶ This need is described: “Il a envie de parler. C’est la première fois. La première fois depuis... Il fixe un point derrière elle, comme s’il fixait un écran et continue à voix basse. Pourquoi a-t-il envie de parler ? Il ne sait pas. Il ne sait pas si elle l’écoute. Peu lui importe” (41). With little encouragement at this point from the women in the compartment, Jean continues to reflect on his past, seemingly unable to stop himself from remembering:

C’est comme si on avait ouvert les vannes pour laisser couler la boue, toute la fange d’un passé qui s’avère soudain très proche et encore sensible. Comme si en passant le doigt ou un palpat une cicatrice ancienne dont les bords s’étaient refermés, croyait-on, on sentait un léger suintement, qui se transforme peu à peu en une purulence qui finit par s’écouler de plus en plus abondamment, sans qu’on puisse l’arrêter. (46)

Relating his memories to mud and muck seems to reinforce the idea that Jean has buried them and that they are deeply unpleasant, dirty even. Additionally, their bitter description suggests that elements of these memories are difficult for Jean to address and discuss. Jean’s memories are also compared to a long-healed wound that, when touched, begins to open again, oozing with infection. In a similar way, once Jean has scratched the surface of his remembrances of the

³⁶ Anne Whitehead, in *Trauma Fiction*, underscores this technique, among others as one way “novelists have sought to represent trauma, or to narrate the unnarratable”, underscores this technique, among others (4).

Algerian War he finds himself unable to halt his recollections—this does not mean, however, that Jean is able to verbalize and transmit all of his traumatic memories.

Although this conversation begins in a one-sided manner, the interaction is not lost on the third traveler in the train compartment. Marie, the young, blonde, French woman, who had been listening to her Walkman, removes her earphones in an attempt to break the tension growing between the man slowly recalling his past and his unwilling interlocutor. Attempting to join the conversation herself, she reveals her own connection to Algeria: “J’ai plein de copains algériens. C’est vrai...ils disent tous que c’est un très beau pays. Mon grand-père aussi. Il en parle tout le temps. Il est né là-bas” (43). At this point, the absurdity of their present situation becomes apparent—if only to Elle, who thinks to herself:

Et voilà! La boucle est bouclée! Une petite-fille de pieds-noirs, un ancien combattant, une fille de fellaga. C’est presque irréel. Qui donc aurait pu imaginer une scène pareille ? Cela ressemble à un plateau télé, réuni pour une émission par des journalistes en quête de vérité, désireux de lever le voile pour faire la lumière sur « *le passé douloureux de la France* » (43)

And indeed, the veil has been lifted. The reader, over halfway through the short text, is now aware of the backgrounds and associated biases of each of the three characters. Each of these characters, then, brings with them some knowledge of the events that connect them: France’s occupation of Algeria and the colony’s independence. Their traveling together, though, facilitates an exchange that deepens and nuances each actor’s understanding of this history.

While both Elle and Jean had some knowledge of this past—as did to a lesser degree, Marie—neither generation possessed a complete understanding of their shared past. Jean’s discussion of the past is, at the outset, unprompted, but as more of his memories are revealed Elle

pressures him recall and admit to darker elements of his time in Algeria—to slog through the mud, so to speak. Throughout much of the text, Jean’s memories of his time spent in Algeria, as a soldier and interrogator, remain trapped, set apart from the text in italicized passages and unshared with Elle and Marie. He does however, confront this past at the pressing of Elle, who shares her own memories of her father, his disappearance and death.

In a scene that occupies the final nine pages of the text and occurs as their journey is drawing to a close, Elle and Jean confront their shared past. In a rapid-fire exchange between the first and second generations, Jean appears reluctant to believe what Elle insinuates about his involvement in her father’s demise:

—Vous l’avez peut-être même rencontré... Vous auriez pu...

—Qui ? Votre père ?

—Il a été enlevé avec son frère, son cousin et d’autres encore... Huit hommes en tout... sortis de chez eux en pleine nuit, par des militaires.

—Beaucoup d’hommes étaient amenés au camp... tous les jours...

—On ne les a jamais revus. Peut-être que... mais non, ce serait trop...

—Vous savez... il y a eu tellement d’arrestations pendant tout le temps que j’étais là-bas. Je le sais... j’étais chargé d’enregistrer les entrées.

—Seulement ça ? Alors vous n’avez rien vu, jamais ? Jamais rien entendu ?

Comptabiliser les entrées et surveiller ceux qui gardaient assez de forces pour essayer de s’enfuir après les séances de torture, c’était votre travail, rien que ça, n’est-ce pas... ? Eh oui... parmi ceux qu’on arrêtait, il n’y en avait pas beaucoup qui ressortaient, ou alors...

—Ceux qui étaient amenés chez nous étaient des suspects. Il fallait prendre le temps de les... de les interroger... pour les besoins de l'enquête.

—Bien sûr, il fallait les faire parler. Mais ça n'avait rien à voir avec vous, bien entendu...

—Personne n'est sorti indemne de cette guerre ! Personne ! Vous entendez !

(69-70)

The use of ellipses and hesitations in speech, along with the italicized memories, reveals Jean's reluctance to admit to his own participation in Elle's father's interrogation and murder.

Additionally, her provocative questions—supposing that he must remember the night of her father's arrest, skeptically accusing him of more than just registering prisoners on arrival, asking if he heard anything and verifying that whatever he may have done was only his duty (“travail”) and nothing more—push Jean to react critically and, without admitting to anything specific, he concedes that he, like everyone involved in the Algerian War for independence, left the conflict changed by his actions. The pauses in his responses may appear to suggest a failure of memory and yet, as Jean confirms, the memories of his actions are intact but difficult to share. In an earlier moment of their conversation, Elle had attempted to extract more information from Jean through a gentler questioning: “Mais, c'est bien loin ça... vous ne devez plus vous souvenir...” to which Jean had replied, “Non. Tout est encore là. Mais vous savez... nous... non... personne... jamais personne...” (60-61). That he remembers his actions is now confirmed (and clear to the reader through the numerous italicized recollections already included at this point in the text), as is his inability to effectively transmit these memories to others. Such memories have also been absent in Marie's experience, despite her grandfather having been present in Algeria concurrently with Jean. Marie doesn't understand why this history isn't taught in schools or

addressed by those who experienced it. Jean explains that staying silent is one way to control how one interacts with (or avoids) this past: “Quarante ans ont passé... on ne peut pas oublier, c’est vrai. Mais... on peut... on peut se taire. On a le droit... c’est peut-être le seul” (62). These ellipses embody the traumatic effects of his actions, which are likewise present in the occasional breaks in their hours-long conversation.

Elle, being intimately connected to Algeria’s past, has a base of knowledge about this period of shared Franco-Algerian history. Marie, the young French woman traveling in the same compartment, on the other hand is less well versed in this aspect of her country’s history. This lack of knowledge in Marie’s case—exemplified by her stunned question: “Et ceux qui refusaient de parler... de dire ce qu’ils savaient. C’est vrai qu’on les torturait?” (71)—allows Elle to demand that Jean share more information. In response to Marie’s question, he admits:

—Oui. Certains. On ne pouvait pas faire autrement. Mais seulement s’ils refusaient de collaborer. Il le fallait pour...

Il s’interrompt juste avant de dire... il allait dire... ‘mater la rébellion’.
[...] Mais ce mot-là... jamais ! On ne parlait jamais de tortures, de sévices... non. C’était des interrogatoires... poussés, certains disaient... musclés. Obtenir le maximum de renseignements. C’étaient ça la formule consacrée.

Interrogatoires poussés parfois jusqu’à... (72)

In seeking information from Jean, Marie employs the word “torture”, which obviously carries significant weight for Jean who is unable to utter it himself either aloud or in his own thoughts. Defining his actions and those of his military colleagues with precise terminology is burdensome for Jean who remembers the vocabulary of his past and the inherent obfuscation in the French military lexicon. This lexical choice is also reminiscent of other dissimulations present in the

French vocabulary related to Algeria, the war of independence, and military tactics employed by the French during this conflict.³⁷ When Jean first evokes his time spent in Algeria, Elle is certain that they will discuss the “événements d’Algérie”, expression consacrée, comme autrefois... Il va les dire ces mots, il va les dire, c’est sûr” (32). This term, used in place of designating the colony’s fight for independence as a war, is indicative of an entire policy of employing neutralized words in place of those that might reveal the true nature of French actions in Algeria. Jean recalls some of this terminology as he, for the first time, seriously reflects on his time in Algeria: “...Les mots surnagent, éclatent comme des bulles à la surface de sa conscience... Maintien de l’ordre. Pacification. Votre mission, notre mission : mater la rébellion ! Par tous les moyens ! Rompes ! Ensuite, tout se confond” (59). Pushed by Marie’s questions and Elle’s information about her own past in Algeria, Jean is forced to face the vocabulary of torture. Once again, however, Jean finds himself unable or unwilling to identify the true nature of his actions. Yet, now that he had begun speaking about his past, inspired by the familiar face of an anonymous traveler, Jean begins to combat this decades-long silence, speaking as much to his companions as to himself.

In contrast, Elle clearly describes her father’s treatment as torture. She also describes the official version of his death, aware of the differences between this version and the reality. Her use of the same descriptors used by the French military indicates her knowledge of the past:

³⁷ The most fundamental example of the French state’s control over vocabulary in this context is the refusal to declare the Algerian War for independence a “war” per se. As William Cohen argues, “If the French state had recognized its activities in Algeria as a war, that would have implied French recognition of Algeria as separate nation” rather than a department of France (“The Algerian War” 220). It was not until 1999, during the presidency of Jacques Chirac that “Parliament passed a resolution recognizing the ‘operations carried out in North Africa’ as the ‘war of Algeria or battles in Tunisia and Morocco’” (ibid 233). See also the June 1999 news coverage of this legislative decision: http://www.liberation.fr/france/1999/06/10/la-france-reconnait-qu-elle-a-fait-la-guerre-en-algerie-l-assemblee-vote-aujourd-hui-un-texte-qui-en_277073

Marie regarde la femme.

—Votre père a...

—Il a été torturé. Avec ses compagnons. Pendant une nuit. Une nuit entière.

Puis exécuté...de plusieurs balles. C'est ce qu'on nous a dit. 'Abattu alors qu'il essayait de s'enfuir.' Version officielle. Reprise par les journaux de l'époque.

C'est ce qu'on appelait la corvée de bois. C'est comme ça qu'on se débarrassait des...

Elle se retourne vers l'homme et le fixe, droit dans les yeux. Elle désigne la jeune fille :

—Vous devez savoir ce que c'est, non ? Expliquez-lui ce qu'était la corvée de bois, expliquez-lui qui ne sait rien de cette guerre, elle à qui son grand-père n'a rien raconté d'autre que ses palpitantes parties de pêche en Algérie. (72-73)

Elle uses the phrase “la corvée de bois”, which refers to the summary execution of prisoners during the Algerian War, but does not define it either for the reader or for Marie.³⁸ Instead, she incites Jean to explain to the young French woman what this phrase means. This knowledge, in spite of being shared by the first generation as well, can only be made whole when combined—Jean is unable to move beyond the dissimulative nature of these words until their impact is made apparent with a concrete example of their use and the impact of such an opaque lexicon. Jean, as

³⁸ Benjamin Stora has defined this term in his historical dictionary, *Les mots de la Guerre d'Algérie* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2005).

representative of the official French version, is confronted with the reality of the effects of his having followed orders, of his having done his “corvée”/duty.³⁹

In the face of Elle’s accusations and insistence that he admit his involvement in torturing and executing prisoners, Jean is rendered speechless and is once again transported back to the night he met Elle’s father. In an extended italicized flashback Jean relives this event:

En moins d’un quart d’heure, tout est terminé. Jean a déchargé les huit corps qui gisent maintenant sur la terre. Claude lui donne une bourrade amicale sur l’épaule. T’en fais pas, vieux, on les retrouvera demain ! Huit fellagas faits prisonniers, abattus dans la forêt alors qu’ils tentaient de s’enfuir au cours d’une corvée de bois. Une belle prise, non ? Tu pourras même ajouter qu’ils n’ont pas répondu aux sommations... si ça peut te faire du bien... Jean remonte dans la jeep et s’installe sur le siège à côté de lui sans répondre. (74)

Unlike Elle and Marie, the reader gains insight into his emotional response to his involvement in her father’s murder. While he is unable to vocalize these emotions, their impact is nonetheless apparent on his face.

Marie perceives Jean’s distress and seems to implore Elle to relent with her questions and accusations. Describing the elderly man, Marie says: “Regardez, il ne peut même plus parler...” to which Elle replies, “Comme tous les autres. D’abord aveugles et sourds, et depuis longtemps...muets...et même amnésiques...” (75). In this description she traces his initial reaction to the experience of war—trying to neither see nor hear what surrounded him—and then his later response—remaining silent and suppressing his memories of the acts he committed.

³⁹ As in the case of *L’ancienne demeure turque*, discussed later in this chapter, the term “corvée” appears in this revelatory scene. Here the de facto meaning as employed during the Algerian War is clear.

This is, as Elle suggests, a common trajectory following trauma, which Ann Stoler has termed “colonial aphasia”. In contrast to mere forgetting or amnesia, “colonial aphasia” is a “disremembering, a difficulty speaking, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things” (125).

Just as the train journey has reached its terminus, likewise, their brief encounter with each other and their shared traumatic past concludes as the train pulls into the station in Marseille. While Jean’s admission remains incomplete regarding Elle’s own family’s past, she is nevertheless affected by her time spent with Jean. Feeling as if a tension has relaxed within her, Elle recognizes this man as her father’s killer while simultaneously seeing the humanity in him. Her long held belief that the man who tortured and killed her father during the war could only be a monster is complicated by her encounter with Jean. Earlier in the text, Elle is described as having attempted to understand her father’s fate by imaging what might have happened on the night of his death and those involved: “Elle a souvent imagine LA scène. [...] Toute petite déjà, elle essayait de donner un visage aux hommes qui avaient torturé puis achevé son père avant de la jeter dans une fosse commune. Mais elle ne parvenait pas à leur donner un visage d’homme. Ce ne pouvait être que des monstres...” (41-42). And yet, confronted with the very human perpetrator obliquely admitting the role he played in her father’s death, Elle must reconcile this more complete image of the past with the partial understanding she had before. While her memories remain troubling, her understanding of her father’s death is rendered more complete after meeting Jean and understanding his own memories and emotional connection to this past.

In a final moment of connection, Jean assists Elle with her luggage—the luggage and its address tag that had first alerted him to her Algerian heritage. “Avant même qu’elle ait eu le temps d’ouvrir la bouche pour le remercier, il dit : —Je voulais vous dire... il me semble...

oui... vous avez les mêmes yeux... le même regard que... que votre père. Vous lui ressemblez beaucoup” (77). Without admitting to any act, with this comparison, Jean reveals that he had met and almost certainly interrogated and then executed Elle’s father. This last portion of dialogue concludes the body of the récit and provides Elle with a certain measure of closure, while simultaneously leaving the reader to wonder what might happen after this revelation. Elle focuses on the time she has left to explore and absorb this knowledge: “Elle a du temps pour lire, pour chercher des réponses. Beaucoup de temps... elle sera ailleurs peut-être. Ce sera un autre jour peut-être. Elle fera d’autres voyages” (76).

As Elle noted, it is an extraordinary coincidence to find three people of diverse age and origin whose lives, to greater and lesser extents, revolve around this Franco-Algerian conflict. Elle commented on the theatricality and absurdity of their voyage: “On pourrait presque en faire le sujet d’une pièce de théâtre, en choisissant un titre anodin, d’une banalité recherchée, par exemple : « *Conversation dans un train* ». Acte I. Les personnages sont en place” (43). In addition to Elle’s imagined stage directions, Bey’s narrative respects the three unities of French classical theater, imbuing the novel with, as McIlvanney describes it, “a sense of dramatic claustrophobia and immediacy” (207).⁴⁰ Like an actor on stage, Jean feels the urge to share his memories of Algeria. Sharing one’s traumatic past, difficult as it may be, is not an uncommon impulse for survivors of a trauma; indeed, Hirsch’s study of this memory transmission is based on such a premise.⁴¹ And yet, the exchange on this southbound train is nuanced by the presence of multiple generations, each with its own personal understanding of the transmitted memories.

⁴⁰ For an extended discussion of the three unities, see McIlvanney, especially 207-208.

⁴¹ The role of testimony in memory transmission is highlighted in Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer’s article “The Witness in the Archive: Holocaust Studies/Memory Studies” *Memory Studies* 2 (2009): 151-170. The use of testimony as “a means of transmission to future generations” has likewise been studied by historian Annette Wieviorka (24).

Receiving Jean's memories—which are discussed above—is impacted by the context into which each member of this audience places them.

Marie, as the granddaughter of a pied-noir, has one conception of these events and her own implication in them. Marie explains that her grandfather often speaks of Algeria: “Mon grand-père ...c’est mon grand-père maternel...il a quitté l’Algérie en...je ne sais plus, après la guerre, comme tous les autres Français. Il n’y a plus jamais remis les pieds. Mais il en parle tout le temps. Il y a aussi les photos...pas mal de photos qu’il n’arrête pas de ressortir quand on vient. J’aurais bien aimé...” (47-48). In spite of his frequent mentions of Algeria and his time as a teacher there, it is apparent that her grandfather has censored himself and omitted some of his traumatic memories of French Algeria—the likes of which Marie learns from Elle and Jean. Her limited understanding of her grandfather's time in Algeria is repeated with her misunderstanding of the exchange between Elle and Jean, which she first views as a conversation about a country she also has an interest in: “La jeune fille s’est rapprochée. Sans vraiment saisir ce qui se passe entre cet homme et cette femme qui semblent discuter paisiblement à la recherche de souvenirs communs, elle écoute; elle a envie d’entendre parler de ce pays qu’elle ne connaît pas mais qui fait partie de son histoire familiale” (47). Initially, Marie having heard her grandfather's memories from Algeria through stories and photographs would seem to align with Hirsch's definition of postmemory in which later generations “grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth” as a result of these types of exchanges (“Past Lives” 661). In Marie's case, though, her grandfather's incomplete memories leave her with more questions than answers about her family's past in French Algeria and what it might mean for her decades later.⁴²

⁴² Amy L. Hubbell has discussed the nature of pied-noir narratives in “The Wounds of Algeria in Pied-Noir Autobiography”. The large majority of this writing, she argues “presents a non-critical and unified view of colonial life that is often overwhelmed with nostalgic recreations of the

Likewise, Elle, as the daughter of an Algerian martyr, is predisposed to understand Jean's recollections in a certain way. Although, until the very end of the text, neither Elle nor the reader is certain of her significantly more personal connection to Jean as the daughter of one of the prisoners he killed during the war, Elle is less removed than Marie from the past at the heart of this triangular conversation. Elle lived through her father's arrest and death under unusual circumstances while in French custody. Not only does she have her own memories—necessarily incomplete and colored by her youth at the time of her father's death—but also she was raised with her community's memories of her father who died, among others, as a “glorieux martyr de la révolution” (38). While she has an understanding of the events that preceded her father's murder because this information was fairly well known during the Algerian War and would have been apparent to her as a child and as she grew up in newly independent Algeria, the key piece in these memories—identifying the person responsible—has haunted her. Elle knows some things (perhaps most things) about this night, but still the lack of complete understanding has haunted her since her father's murder. Discovering the identity of her father's interrogator or meeting someone like him would complete her picture of the past.

Like their nationality and positionality, their preexisting awareness of the past differentiate Elle and Marie, members of the second and third generation after the Algerian War respectively, from those who traditionally embody the role of receivers of traumatic recollections in postmemory.⁴³ Although they each received some information about the past—Marie from

homeland in an effort to smooth over the painful rupture with the past” (59). See also Amy L. Hubbell, *Remembering French Algeria: Pieds-Noirs, Identity, and Exile*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

⁴³ Strictly speaking, because Elle was a child when her father was arrested during the Algerian, she can also be placed into the 1.5 generation. Like Hirsch's conception of the second generation as the “children of Jews who survived the Holocaust in Europe”, Susan Suleiman has

her grandfather and Elle in postwar Algeria—as adults they take advantage of an opportunity to complete these memories. In this way, they are enacting a deferred postmemorial experience: finally understanding the past as adults rather than receiving it as children from the first generation. Jean—the holder of memory par excellence in Hirsch’s view of the traumatized first generation—confronts his past on the train with difficulty, in contrast to those who, in Hirsch’s model, share these memories “so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own rite” for later generations (“Generation” 107). As in the traditional postmemory model, Jean feels compelled to speak with Elle when he sees her. That Elle is not related to Jean, and that he is only beginning to stiltedly share his memories decades after the events, represents a departure from the testimonies that Hirsch typically describes.

Similar to postmemory, this exchange begins as largely one-sided, with Jean pushing to communicate with Elle despite her disinterest in conversing with him. In contrast to postmemory, though, Elle (and to a lesser extent Marie) already knows this history. One point of contention though is the most significant: French use of torture during the Algerian War.⁴⁴ Jean’s specific admission of involvement in the death of Elle’s father is never made aloud as such. His inability to give voice to this traumatic period is apparent and Elle instead reveals information about these tactics. A shocked Marie learns the effect of French torture from the

developed the concept of the 1.5 generation within the context of the Holocaust: they are “child survivors of the Holocaust, too young to have an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have *been there*” (“The 1.5 Generation” 277).

⁴⁴ Revelations about the French military’s use of torture have been levied since during the Algerian War itself. Henri Alleg published his memoir *La Question* detailing his treatment at the hands of the French military in 1958. Debate was once again reignited when the “Appel des douze” (among whose numbers was Alleg) was published in *L’Humanité* calling for the French government “to condemn the practice of torture as a necessary precondition for a process of healing and reconciliation between the French and Algerian peoples” (Macmaster 453). See also *L’Humanité*’s coverage: <http://www.humanite.fr/node/262099>

way these memories have impacted Jean and from Elle sharing her own memories of her father's disappearance and death. Rather than a unidirectional flow of information from first to later generations, the exchange between Jean and Elle also moves from second generation backwards. In meeting Elle, Jean is forced to confront the ramifications of his actions manifested in this troubled young woman. Her brutally explicit descriptions of the actions undertaken by Jean and his military colleagues inform not only Marie but also remind Jean of these events he has attempted to suppress by naming them exactly. In sharing their differing perspectives on a single period, each of the characters traveling together functions to create a more complete picture of the trauma of the Algerian War. During this journey, Elle and Jean each face a moment that has followed them for decades, while Marie is considering it for the first time. Her pied-noir grandfather had told her about his time and work in Algeria, but not in detail and not without difficulty: "...j'ai souvent l'impression qu'il n'aime pas trop qu'on lui pose des questions. Il dit que c'était très dur, oui...et...il n'aime pas trop en parler" (52). His perspective, unrepresented within this narrative, would have differed from that of both Elle and Jean because his memories might align with many pied-noir recollections of this period, punctuated by "a mixture of nostalgic recreations of the past and bitter...injustices suffered during and after repatriation" (Hubbell, "Wounds" 59). This pied-noir perspective is central in the work of one such author, Andrée Montero.

Pied-noir Perspective and Deferred Postmemory

Published in 2011, Andrée Montero's novel *L'ancienne demeure turque* presents themes familiar across the author's oeuvre. As in her other works published throughout the last several decades, this text investigates the place of traumatic memory in the lives of those left in its wake.

Centered on the trauma of the pied-noir Loïs family, this text—like many of her others—draws on the author’s personal experience living in Algeria before and after its independence from France. Born in Rio Salado in the department of Oran, Montero studied law and philosophy before marrying Philippe Gomis. Her life forever changed April 15, 1962 when her husband (to whom this novel is dedicated) and brother were abducted from the family home after she and her children had fled the increasing violence surrounding their property near the small town of El-Ançor.⁴⁵ This event defined Montero’s life in the years following, during which time she remained in Algeria and searched for her husband until she moved to France in 1965. Officially declared a “veuve présumée” in 1964, Montero’s writing is permeated with Phillippe’s absence. Likewise, her distance from Algeria has not stopped her from continuing to be active in pied-noir associations in France. This connection to the past is equally present in her body of work. In several novels and testimonial texts, Montero rewrites painful events from the colonial era—not only a Frenchman’s abduction near the close of the Algerian War, specifically, but also France’s colonial legacy in Algeria, the weight of traumatic memory and the delay sometimes necessary for one to come to terms with this past.

Divided into three sections, *L’ancienne demeure turque* presents a triptych of the past and its afterlives. The only character that features prominently in all parts of the novel is Claire Loïs, a figure that is almost certainly modeled on the author herself. Her husband’s abduction and the details of their lives before Algerian independence make up the majority of the first section of the novel. Moving abruptly to present-day France, the second section of the novel reintroduces the reader to a much older Claire, now living in Paris. In this longest subsection of the novel,

⁴⁵ This information comes from Andrée Montero’s own testimony, published by Le Cercle Algérieniste: <http://www.cerclealgerianiste.fr/index.php/le-memorial-des-disparus/disparus-1954-1963-les-familles-temoignent/disparus-apres-le-19-mars-1962/507-philippe-gomis-aime-montero>

Claire's past interrupts her quiet life when she sees a young American student who reminds her of her missing husband. Michaël, a Texas native studying at the Sorbonne, agrees to meet Claire after she approaches him during a train journey. After a pleasant afternoon spent at Claire's apartment, history seems to repeat itself for Claire as Michaël disappears. Following several months of silence, the American reappears and requests to meet with Claire. At this meeting, which comprises the bulk of the third and final section, he explains his absence (his father's sudden death) and his reason for contacting her again: his connection to her long missing husband, Jean Loïs.

In a conversation that seems to reinforce the familiarity Claire subconsciously recognized in Michaël, he informs her that Jean had met his father in Texas while on a military assignment in the United States. What's more, Jean had been able to flee Algeria—as Claire had suspected—after his abduction and was able to find safe passage to Michaël's family's ranch in Texas where he spent the final three years of his life. This revelation concludes the novel and leaves Claire to ponder how to proceed with her life since so many years had been devoted to searching for and remembering Jean. Although Claire had always hoped that Jean had survived his abduction and fled to safety, her memories of this period of her past were always fundamentally incomplete and clouded by grief. Michaël, too young to have met Jean, grew up in Texas surrounded by his father's fond memories of the Frenchman. Only in combination are these two characters able to reconstruct a clear picture of this traumatic past and its impact on both of their families.

While the novel opens with Claire's memories of her family's life in Algeria, these memories abruptly conclude (for the reader as well as for Claire) as the novel moves to Claire's quiet life four decades later. The second of three sections of *L'ancienne demeure turque* begins

with the first generation protagonist, Claire, traveling alone from the south of France back to her home in Paris. A frequent train rider, Claire spends most of her journey in thought, admiring the French countryside and her fellow travelers in the open car. During this trip, she is struck by the appearance of another traveler, a young man who, in appearance and mannerisms, reminds her of her own son who she has just visited and the husband who helped to raise him. Upon seeing him, the narrator describes: "...quelque chose en elle soudain bascula, et les vieux démons refirent surface" (38). Unable to ignore this young student, she feels compelled to connect with him and the memory that his presence stirs up in her. Motivated by more than mere curiosity, she approaches Michaël with the hopes of seeing further similarities to her sons and perhaps even traces of her long missing husband Jean. Indeed, she hopes that her pull to speak with him may reveal more than a mere resemblance, but also a familial connection: "Allait-elle fantasmer à nouveau, imaginer qu'ils étaient frères, qu'ils avaient le même père!" (39). Certainly, the immediacy of Claire's reaction upon seeing Michaël reveals the extent to which she carries this past with her. And yet, pernicious doubt prevents Claire from admitting her true reason for engaging him in unsolicited small talk about his studies. What's more, her conception of this young traveler is further complicated when he answers her in heavily accented French, revealing his foreignness. When Claire hears Michaël's American accent, her doubts of a connection between her husband, kidnapped in Algeria, and this young man would seem to be confirmed. And yet, in a remarkable turn of events, Michaël is from Texas, precisely where Jean had been stationed during his French military service abroad. Her meeting this young Texan seems to solidify in Claire's mind that there could be a connection between Michaël and the Loïs family, all the more so because she and Jean had often spoke of starting a new life together in Texas:

Par delà des décennies, il semblait toujours lui faire un signe: une forme de main dans un nuage, un rêve où, épisodiquement il apparaissait. Toujours jeune, toujours gai, malgré les épreuves qu'il avait peut-être endurées. Un signe pour lui dire qu'il ne l'avait jamais oubliée, même si, pensait-elle, il avait refait sa vie au Texas ou ailleurs. Au Texas où, lors des conflits avec son père, il voulait s'enfuir et l'emmener. (31-32)

Even this apparent sign from her long lost husband is not enough to push Claire to reveal her suspicions to Michaël, yet she retains hope that the recognition she felt drawing her to him meant that their lives were connected.

In spite of her earlier unease, Claire feels compelled to see Michaël again, leaving him with her card. After having given him this information, Claire is once again besieged with doubt: "Un instant après, défaisant sa valise, elle se reprochait d'avoir donné sa carte de visite à ce garçon, [...]. Mais il ne viendrait pas la voir! Quant à cette ressemblance, un peu troublante il est vrai, il ne fallait pas en tenir compte" (43). Although determined to put this brief exchange out of her mind, Claire is nevertheless haunted by the young man's appearance and the memories of her husband that he conjures in her mind. Indeed, just moments after chastising herself for having invited Michaël to contact her, she once again considers the possibility that Jean could have had other children, among them Michaël: "Elle avait tellement imaginé la vie de Jean après son enlèvement! S'il avait survécu, il y aurait eu d'autres femmes, et pourquoi pas d'autres enfants. [...] Non, à l'heure actuelle, il était peut-être en bonne santé. Il s'entendait bien avec la communauté musulmane autrefois. Il parlait couramment leur langue, et d'une façon ou d'une autre, avait pu s'en sortir" (43). That Jean could have escaped is no fleeting hope for Claire; rather she had been assured of his survival weeks after his kidnapping. In a move that apparently confirms Jean Loïs's pleasant relationship with the native Algerian population, Claire is

approached and informed: “—On ne l’a pas tué mais seulement blessé. Une femme arabe l’a recueilli en cachette et soigné, glissait-on à demi-mot par peur des représailles” (33). Not only did Jean survive his initial kidnapping, he was able to flee Algeria, therefore rendering his escape to Texas all the more plausible (34).

Despite her certainty that Michaël would have no interest in meeting her again, he and his girlfriend, Marie-Pierre, visit Claire in her apartment and, in turn, invite her to meet them a few days later at a café. Their convivial afternoon in her home was interrupted when Claire noticed Michaël’s preoccupation with a portrait of Jean and herself:

Il s’était détourné, gêné, avec un soupir crispé. Et elle avait imaginé que son père, évidemment c’était son père, dans un coin secret de son probable ranch, avait caché une photo d’elle, assez semblable au portrait. Michaël avait dû la découvrir, ou peut-être, tout simplement, le père s’était-il confié à lui. De là sa réaction, cette stupeur qu’il n’avait pu maîtriser à temps. (54)

Now, in addition to similarities in their manners and comportment, Claire saw Michaël’s reaction to this framed portrait as a confirmation that he recognized Jean from his own life in Texas. Somehow Jean had returned to their home in Algeria after his abduction, chosen a photo of her and taken it with him when he fled. Despite his stupefaction at noticing this image, Michaël said nothing at this point to Claire. Regardless, and with no proof, Claire was already convinced of a connection between this young American and her husband, Jean.

After their brief exchange on the train and their pleasant visit at Claire’s apartment, Claire is surprised that Michaël and Marie-Pierre would miss their next meeting that had been set at her apartment. Alone at the agreed upon café, history seems to be repeating itself as Claire once again finds herself abandoned. Neither Marie-Pierre nor Michaël meet Claire at the café

that afternoon and she doesn't hear from either of them until two weeks later when she receives and imploring letter from Marie-Pierre, who has been tirelessly searching for Michaël (69).

During Michaël's absence, which would eventually last months, Claire is more preoccupied with the past and her husband's disappearance than ever. Jeanne, Claire's oldest friend and a fellow repatriated pied-noir, actively discourages this reinvigorated curiosity and implores Claire to forget Michaël.

Having similar ties to the unresolved past of the Algerian War and their flight from the only homes they had ever known in the French colonial holding, both Claire and Jeanne are connected in very real ways to this past. While Jeanne chooses, for her own emotional pragmatism, to look on the past as a distant part of her identity, Claire is unable to separate herself from this period in her life because of the uncertainty of her husband's disappearance. At numerous points throughout the text, Claire describes the effect that Jean's disappearance has had on her and the lack of closure after never finding his body, relating it to something she seeks without ever attaining: "Avec les années, la mémoire de ces faits était devenue une sorte de mirage, un nuage curieux qui flottait devant elle et qu'elle cherchait vainement à rattraper" (31). Although Claire hopes that Jean survived his kidnapping, Jeanne reminds her that if this were the case, he would have returned to her: "si Jean avait survécu, il y a beau temps qu'il serait près de toi et des enfants. Tu sais aussi que tous ceux qui se sont sauvés et ont erré à travers le monde, ont pu rentrer en France" (116). Anathema to Jeanne's belief that the past must remain in the past, Claire's preoccupation with her former life in Algeria is omnipresent even if she would prefer to follow Jeanne's advice to "couper court avec le passé" (45). Claire simply finds this an untenable suggestion: "Mais pour Claire cela était impossible, même si elle le souhaitait. Le présent, aux moments les plus inattendus, était soudain habité par le tenace et vain espoir... écho

lancinant du passé” (45). This invasion of the past into the present begins with her approaching Michaël and reaches an apex when he disappears, seemingly cutting off her only connection to the past.

Having left Algeria in 1965 after searching for Jean, Claire recognizes that she will never return to the land where she grew up. Although Jeanne suggests that Claire could find answers by returning to the scene of her trauma, Claire refuses: “Tu sais bien que je ne reverrai cette terre. Trop de souvenirs et aussi de doutes. Cette disparition n’a pas été nette. Trop de contradictions, trop d’ombres... un voile que je ne tiens plus à soulever. J’ai essayé... en vain” (60). In fact, her memories are so omnipresent that returning to Algeria is unnecessary. It is clear through Claire’s description of the photographs in her house, one of which had caught Michaël’s attention, she needs no reminders of her past: “Mais elles semblaient inexistantes, ces photos, tant elle les avait regardées, tant ses yeux, tant son âme en étaient imprégnés. Elles étaient dans son cœur, inutile d’y porter à nouveau ses regards” (77). Although Michaël had appeared to be a new link to this haunting past, his disappearance would seem to confirm Jeanne’s view of the past, and in turn Claire resigns herself to never knowing what happened neither with Michaël nor with her husband.

As in the case in of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*, in which the unnamed second-generation character reveals key details of the past of which her first generation counterpart, Jean, was unaware, the exchange of memories in *L’ancienne demeure turque* is likewise dependent on the memories of both generations. While their connection began on the train returning from the south of France to Paris, Michaël’s revelation of his knowledge of details pertinent to Claire’s past takes place months after their meeting. After having met on the train—a meeting instigated by Claire’s own belief that there was something familiar, even familial,

about this young traveler—Michaël and Claire’s budding friendship ended almost before it began when he abruptly disappeared after a visit to Claire’s apartment. Although his departure is eventually revealed to have occurred after the sudden death of his father back in the United States, like their unplanned meeting on the train, this unexpected event precipitated Michaël and Claire’s coming together to discover a shared traumatic past. While back in Texas, mourning his father and organizing his estate, Michaël discovered a dated portrait similar to the one he had seen in Claire’s Paris apartment. He described his discovery to Claire upon his return to Paris: “...parmi les papiers de son coffre, j’ai trouvé une photo de John et de vous. Malgré les années... je vous ai reconnue” (123). This revelation confirms Claire’s suspicions that her missing husband (called John by his American friend) had in some way touched Michaël’s life and, in an extended monologue, he explains to her how Jean came to live with his father and his own duty to find and share this past with Claire.

Before Michaël’s return, Claire begins to acutely feel her age and laments that she may never learn what happened to her beloved Jean. As if once again, fate brings these two strangers together, Claire’s murmured regrets are interrupted by a message from Michaël: “Dix-sept heures trente et déjà presque nuit... murmura-t-elle. L’automne est là. Je ne voudrais pas mourir sans savoir... l’hiver approche. [...] Je voudrais tant, avant de partir, connaître la vérité, chuchota-elle.

En tirant le verrou de la porte d’entrée et, en actionnant l’alarme pour la nuit, le clignotement du répondeur attira à nouveau son attention. Qui pouvait l’appeler sur le poste fixe ? [...] Michaël était au bout du fil” (117). After months of waiting with little hope for Michaël’s return, Claire retains hope that there is a connection between this young man and her husband; their meeting

then is set for the very next day. Sitting across from each other, Michaël begins to tell Claire about his connection to her husband:

Oui. Jean Loïs et son père avaient été très proches, disait-il. Ils s'étaient, en effet, connus en 1945 au Texas. C'était lui qui l'avait reçu et hébergé en 1962 lorsqu'il était arrivé d'Algérie sur un cargo. Exact aussi qu'il avait été blessé et laissé pour mort pendant cette guerre, mais que, soigné par une Musulmane, il avait survécu et avait pu s'enfuir. (119)

The narrator describes how Claire performs her duty as a listener to this new information with some difficulty: "Dès qu'il s'était mis à parler, elle avait dû faire un effort pour le comprendre. Son accent ne s'était pas amélioré et ses tournures de phrases s'avéraient nettement anglo-américains" (118). Nevertheless, as a listener, she performs a function as described by Shoshanna Felman and Dori Laub. Her role, while appearing passive in contrast to Michaël's domination of the conversation, allows his testimony to be understood, not only by her but also by himself: "Testimony is the narrative's address to hearing; for only when the survivor knows he is being heard will he stop to hear – and listen to – himself" (Felman and Laub 70-1). Additionally, according to Felman and Laub, "the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself" (Felman and Laub 57).⁴⁶ Claire, as the listener, already had a stake in this past now described by Michaël. She is, during his revelation, experiencing a more

⁴⁶ On the relationship between testimony, trauma and witnessing, see also: Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), and Annette Wieviorka, "On Testimony." *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of memory*, Ed. Geoffrey Hartman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), especially pages 23-32.

complete participation in the event because her understanding of her husband's traumatic past is necessarily more complete after hearing the recollections of Michaël, who indirectly experienced these events. Although he did not personally meet Jean, it is clear that Michaël has an emotional stake in this traumatic history. His own connection to the past through his father no doubt impacts Michaël as he shares his memories with Claire: "Michaël s'était arrêté un instant et avait bu son café. Il hésitait et semblait vouloir en finir. Finir de s'acquitter de cette douloureuse corvée" (121). This responsibility to the past, to find Claire and tell her about Jean's fate, is complicated by the term used above to describe his responsibility: "corvée". While this word neutrally conveys "duty" or "task", used in the context of the Algerian War, during which its meaning was associated with summary executions, is provocative.

In a conversation described as lasting one hour, Michaël relays Jean's life and death in Texas and his own father's hope that his son would connect with Jean's wife. He explains to Claire: "Lorsque je me suis inscrit à la Sorbonne et installé à Paris, mon père a pensé qu'il me serait possible de visiter le beau domaine de John, son ami. L'Algérie n'est qu'à deux heures de vol de Paris. Fais aussi ton possible pour essayer de contacter la veuve de John, et lui dire que son époux repose ici en paix" (122-123). In this exchange, Michaël entirely dominates the conversation while Claire remains stupefied by the new information; in spite of her wanting more information she is rendered speechless (120). Watching her react to what he has just shared, Michaël appreciates the impact of this traumatic past on Claire: "Pour la première fois depuis le début de son monologue, Michaël a eu l'air de ressentir le désarroi de cette femme qu'il avait croisée par un singulier caprice du sort, sans avoir à la rechercher comme le souhaitait son père. Mais ce passé lointain, il y avait si longtemps... plus de quatre décennies... peut-être avait-elle en un sens oublié, s'était-il dit." (123). Despite her distance from this past, Claire had

in no way forgotten it. Instead, she lived with an incomplete understanding of her husband's fate and her own past became almost fixed with his disappearance. Now, decades later, Michaël has connected Claire not only to this past but also to her present situation in Paris. In reflecting on what she has just heard, Claire sees how she must proceed: "Maintenant, il fallait faire face à l'inattendue et dure réalité. [...] Oui, elle devait la saisir à pleine main, cette réalité ; la tenir contre elle comme un châte lourd mais soyeux, qui la protégerait, l'apaiserait, et, cachant ses blessures, la conduirait doucement vers l'hiver. Par Michaël, Jean lui avait son unique et ultime message... par la voix d'un homme jeune, un homme tourné vers l'avenir" (124). It is clear, then, that Claire feels more connected to her husband and the traumatic past surrounding his kidnapping and disappearance than she did before encountering Michaël thanks to his privileged knowledge of this past.

Michaël's relationship to the Algerian War, to Jean, and ultimately to Claire is entirely mediated by his father. Beginning to tell Claire about Jean's time in Texas, Michaël says: "Mon père me racontait souvent cela. Ils étaient vraiment très proches. Ils ne le sont plus maintenant... ou peut-être le sont-ils à nouveau là-haut. [...] Ils ne sont plus en vie, ni l'un ni l'autre" (119). Michael is a member of the second generation in relation to both his father and to his interlocutor, Claire, who is firmly rooted in the first generation. That Michaël's father spoke often of his friendship with Jean fits neatly into Hirsch's concept of postmemory. These memories have certainly affected Michaël's understanding of history and the importance of his place in it.

That his father would have often shared stories of his youth with Jean is not remarkable except in comparison to the relationship Claire appears to lead with her own children. They are minor, unnamed characters in the text and it is unclear if Claire ever reflects on the past with her

family. In contrast to Claire's situation, the connection between the first and second generations in Michaël's family was strong. His father's death seemingly rendered Michaël disconnected from this first generation past but his long held hope that Michaël might find his old friend's widow works to reconnect Michaël with this past shared by his family and Claire's. Indeed, in speaking with Claire, he is at once connecting her to her own family's past—the decades spent wondering and worrying about her missing husband's fate—but also to his own past with his recently deceased father. Although Michaël's father had spoken often of his friendship with "John", there was no way for him to find or contact the Loïs family. Rather, it was Michaël, member of the second generation, who effectively inherited this responsibility from his father. Unlike the traditional unidirectional nature of postmemorial transmission, Michaël was in the position, as a member of the postgeneration, to find Claire and complete her memories of her husband's traumatic past.

In reconnecting with Claire after mourning his father, Michaël is able to combine two incomplete recollections of the past. Having grown up with his father's stories of Jean, Michaël was necessarily only able to comprehend a portion of his history and his time spent in Algeria:

John souhaitait retourner auprès d'elle et de ses enfants, a insisté mon père, mais à l'approche de sa mort, il m'a demandé de le garder ici. Il ignorait où se trouvait sa famille. Je ne sais s'il disait vrai mais j'ai pensé que celle-ci le croyant mort, ne le rechercherait pas. [...] Dès notre première rencontre, lorsque vous m'avez remis cette carte avec votre nom, je me suis demandé si vous étiez la personne qu'il fallait éventuellement contacter... J'ai hésité... (122-123)

With only Jean's last name to connect Michaël to his father's friend's widow, it is no wonder that he would be hesitant to discuss this past with Claire. And yet, this revelation, which is

described as a monologue in the text, is almost entirely dominated by Michaël, who did not experience these events himself. Although Claire had her own, incomplete, understanding of the past—full of the hope that her husband lived and escaped independent Algeria—it was always missing the closure of knowing what ultimately happened to Jean. Only in combination, after sharing what they each knew of the past, can both generations implicated truly understand their shared traumatic past.

The Self in Transit

In both novels, the members of the first and second generations meet on the modern and stereotypically impersonal and isolating mechanical conveyance—the train. The train serves a catalyst, bringing the characters together and setting in motion their mutual self-discovery through the sharing of their respective personal histories. The train is at once both public and private space: requiring a ticket to board controls entry on to the train, but this very ticket may oblige you to share a compartment with a stranger. Michel Foucault has discussed this multifaceted nature of the train in “Of Other Spaces,” citing it as a “heterotopia” or one of several “real places...that are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted” (24). Along with the train, he groups sites of potential connection such as the streets in any given city, but he singles out the train as “an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one goes, it is also something by means of which one can go from one point to another, and then it is also something that goes by” (ibid). Just as the train itself can perform all of these disparate functions for those on or near a train, being a passenger on such a journey is likewise a multifaceted experience.

Is the moving self more fluid and therefore more moldable? The self in transit is a self without the static fixity of his or her everyday environment. On a journey, each character in the novels discussed above is in transit and the self on a voyage is not the self of everyday, the self at home. As Judith Butler has suggested in “Travel as Performed Art,” travelling is means of “self-fashioning” (1368): “movement serves as a medium for bestowing meaning on the self and the social, natural, or metaphysical realities through which it moves” (ibid). These “realities,” then, are not only a “self-fashioning” of the self in transit in contrast to the self at home, but also allow for a definition of the self in relation to others. As a function of sharing the quasi-private space of the train car with unfamiliar travelers, one is more likely to meet and connect with these other selves in transit. Butler confirms that travel “has always included means by which fleeting experiences could be permanently marked or inscribed” (1370). Indeed, the relationships in each story began on a train and in the case of Montero, extend beyond the confines of this conveyance. In both texts, though, the impact of these relationships and exchanges spread far beyond the journey undertaken by the characters. It is precisely these chance encounters on journeys that provide the connection that will ultimately impact each character’s life forever. Beyond understanding the self through a journey, such experiences can provide a means to comprehend one’s place in history: “The representation of the trip as an allegorical miniature of earthly life, or as search for a vantage point from which to grasp and understand life ‘as it really is,’ has long been a master narrative, even for secular travel styles. The search for direct experience of another time through change of place is another—sustained by Western mythologies of history” (Butler 1375). The connections formed on these train trajectories indeed allow members of different generations to recall and share their own perspectives and recollections (whether direct or indirect) of a specific event in order to render it more complete—

“as it really [was]” one might say. As underscored by Adler, “Experiences undergone in the course of travel are bounded from those of home life, its work routines, social relations, and hierarchies of relevance” (1383).

In contrast to connections made on the train, sustained solitude is an equally possible experience on a journey. The train is, in fact, the site where both female protagonists in the texts discussed here generally seek solitude in single seats or closed compartments. This desire is perhaps a function of both women feeling as if they are already foreign, separated from their Algerian selves. Claire uses her train journeys to and from the south of France to familiarize herself with France: “elle aimait regardait les régions qu’elle traversait, afin de mieux connaître ce pays où elle avait échoué depuis plus de quatre décennies... Cette France profonde” (37). Elle, on the other hand, had planned to spend her journey southward absorbed in a new book. While reading in public would seem to almost ensure that one should be left in solitude, there is perhaps another explanation for her choice of diversion. According to Walter Benjamin, in his essay entitled “Kriminalromane, auf Reisen” (“Detective Novels, Read on Journeys”), the train journey is fraught. Necessary in the modern era, but nevertheless defined as an inherently frightening event from which one must find a distraction: “The anesthesia of a fear through another one is his [the traveler’s] salvation. Between the fresh cut pages of the crime novel he looks for the idle, as it were, virginal apprehensions [*Angst*], which could help him to get over the archaic fear of the journey” (381). Scott McCracken, in his study of popular fiction, confirms that “the whole process of purchasing and reading a detective novel on a train acts as a kind of ritual which allows the reader to maintain a workable sense of self throughout the disruptive experience of the journey” (3). Elle does indeed turn to a novel—not a detective

novel per se, but nevertheless a story centering on a significant mystery—to distract her during the train trip, though she does not spend much time reading it.

Elle begins the journey reading *Der Vorleser* by Bernhard Schlink. This book, translated into French in 1996 (one year after its publication in German), doubles through its title and its content Elle's position in relation to history. This text fits neatly, according to German literature scholar Joseph Metz, with "*Vergangenheitsbewältigung* texts: texts that attempt to 'come to terms with' or—as the deeply problematic German expression suggests—'master' the Nazi past" (300). As in *L'entendez-vous dans les montagnes*, Schlink's novel engages with the complicated issues of memory and guilt through one character's relationship with a perpetrator.⁴⁷ The text's effect on Elle is addressed throughout the narrative: "Elle ne se sent pas très bien. [...] C'est peut-être aussi à cause de ce qu'elle vient de lire. De ce qui est raconté dans ce livre, qu'elle a choisi au hasard en passant dans une librairie, non, pas vraiment au hasard, mais pour quelques passages lus en le feuilletant, des questions posées par cet homme qui interroge son père pour comprendre le passé" (19). Her reading brings up her own questions about the past, especially one that she often considers when she sees a man who is about the same age as her father would have been—which occurs when Jean enters her train compartment. She wonders about his age and then, while this question remains unwritten and even unformed clearly for Elle, is no doubt considering if such a man could have been involved in her father's death. If he, like the German soldiers she is reading about, was merely following orders: "Il fait son travail. Il ne hait pas ceux qu'il exécute, il ne se venge pas sur eux, il ne les supprime pas parce qu'ils le

⁴⁷ For more information on the role of the perpetrator as a witness, see Susan Suleiman's recent work: "Performing a Perpetrator as Witness: Jonathan Littell's *Les bienveillantes*" in *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future*. Eds. Jakob Lothe, Susan Rubin Suleiman, and James Phelan (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012) 99-119 and "When the Perpetrator Becomes a Reliable Witness of the Holocaust: On Jonathan Littell's *Les bienveillantes*." *New German Critique* 36.1 (2009): 1-19.

gênent ou le menacent ou l'aggressent" (Schlink 27 in Bey 19). Issues of innocence, culpability and the perpetrator's recognition (or not) of his (or her, in Schlink's text) wrongs are central to Bey's novel. And yet, the presence of two somewhat sympathetic perpetrators—the illiterate Hanna Schmitz in *Der Vorleser* and the haunted physician in *L'entendez-vous dans les montagnes*—has prompted Jane Alison to wonder, "if Schlink's legal drama presents both the Nazi perpetrator and postwar interrogator as victims, then what becomes of the actual victim of the crime?" (164). To put this question into the context of Bey's novel: if Jean and Elle can both been seen as victims of the French colonial machine, what becomes of Jean's literal victim, Elle's father? Although he is clearly omnipresent in Elle's thoughts, within the text he appears relegated to the paratextual images and realia that surround the narrative.⁴⁸

What purpose then does fiction serve beyond mere distraction? As described by Scott McCracken, "popular fiction, from folk tales to fairy tales to popular ballads to modern bestsellers, has always provided a structure within which our lives can be understood. Who we are is never fixed, and in modern societies an embedded sense of self is less available than ever before. Popular fiction has the capacity to provide us with a workable, if temporary, sense of self" (2). This short-lived sense of self may also be related to the way in which such fictions are consumed. As mentioned above, Walter Benjamin's essay celebrates the fixed and temporal nature of such reading conducted during travel. In McCracken's study of popular fiction, he opens his survey with a discussion of Benjamin's essay as it investigates the "roman de gare", a term referring to novels purchased "à la gare" to be read during transit, that are often simple, engaging texts that lack the weightiness and respect of canonical texts: "Benjamin begins by describing the pleasures involved in the act of buying a work of popular fiction in a railway

⁴⁸ A discussion of the problematic nature of these documents appears on page 42.

station, but he goes on to describe the purchase as a kind of ritualized act, made as much in fear as in pleasure” (3). This fear, McCracken argues, is the result of an individual’s experience in a railway station:

According to the sociologist Anthony Giddens, modern society is characterized by large, impersonal, ‘self-referential systems’. These systems, like railways, are ‘largely autonomous and determined by their own constitutive influences’ and within them the self loses its sense of agency and is beset by doubts and anxieties. This is not unlike what happens to Benjamin’s traveller-reader. Caught up in the anonymity of the railway system, the self threatens to fragment into warring factions, and it is into the gap created by the fragmented self that the popular text enters. (3)

This very fear is directly addressed in Bey’s *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*. Reflecting on her isolation, in spite of the arrival of Jean and Marie into her previously empty train compartment, Elle notes her reaction to being enclosed with strangers on this train: “Elle n’aime pas les trains à compartiments. Elle n’aime pas les trains de nuit. La peur est là, présente, qui bat dans son ventre, ne la quitte plus depuis des années, si présente qu’elle est devenue une compagne familière qu’elle n’arrive pas à apprivoiser cependant” (21). What Elle is reading, then, to combat or “anesthetize” her fear is similar in function, if not necessarily in quality or type, to a *roman de gare*. This term refers to novels like those described by Benjamin that are purchased and read over the course of a journey. While the poor quality of such popular texts used to be reflected in the speed and ease of their consumption during a single journey, these works are certainly not limited to train stations or traveling. What’s more, the escapist function of these works associates them with the paraliterary genre.

Bad Literature

The term paraliterature is a critical designation whose definition is almost as diverse as the works that fall under this modern categorization. According to Rosalind Krauss, this diversity is at the heart of the term and the genre it describes: “The paraliterary space is the space of debate, quotation, partisanship, betrayal, reconciliation; but it is not the space of unity, coherence, or resolution that we think of as constituting the work of literature” (37).⁴⁹ This diversity is also reflected in the myriad genres then subsumed under the umbrella-term “paraliterature”: science fiction, fantasy, horror, mystery, crime and detective novels, among others. The term itself sets works it describes apart from literature as such; the Greek preposition *para-* means beside, issuing from, against, contrary to. Completing the word *paraliterature*, therefore, this title is meant to distinguish paraliterary works from those of literature. Paraliterature is not, however, entirely defined in opposition to literature.

Highlighting the wide range of genres that can fall into the category of paraliterature, David Ketterer describes the field as “a complex, shifting middle ground term which covers a proportion of non-canonic writing, a proportion of good writing and presumably the totality of bad writing as it applies to fiction” (14-15).⁵⁰ The value judgment of good and bad writing is inherently linked to the cultural capital of literature in general, in contrast to the economic capital

⁴⁹ For other works that attempt to define paraliterature, see also: Daniel Couégnas, *Introduction à la paralittérature* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), Paul Bléton, “Présentation” *Études littéraires* 30.1 (1997): 7-11, Marc Angenot, *Le roman populaire: Recherches en paralittérature* (Montréal: Presses de l’Université de Québec, 1975), and N. Arnaud, F. Lacassin, and J. Tortel, Eds. *Entretiens sur la paralittérature* (Paris: Plon, 1970).

⁵⁰ This description of the genre comes from a number of critics who “equate paraliterature with bad literature, and reproach it for a lack of verisimilitude, as well as for psychologically unmotivated characters, and even for the superficiality of its style” (Ketterer 91).

of the “bestseller”. While the economic success of so-called bestsellers and works of popular fiction can be inferred from their descriptors, paraliterature can also be considered as lacking in another form of capital—cultural capital. Included in the first issue of *Para-doxa*, Alain-Michel Boyer’s article, entitled “For a Poetics of Paraliterature I,” discusses the place and function of literature in a society: “...literature has a social *value*, it becomes a vital part of the cultural heritage, and is presented as a *tableau* of poets, playwrights and novelists gathered together in textbooks, literary histories, and anthologies, as in a museum where the works on display are those judged worthy of being remembered. This results in the suppression of an entire category of works outside the real of the literary establishment” (58). Excluded from the “literary establishment” of the canon, paraliterature is then often found to be lacking in this “social value.” What then is the effect of this often-derided genre—associated with fantasy and mystery—being used to examine the trauma of the Algerian War? How do we understand the gravity of the history depicted by these somewhat pulpy stories?

The American critic Samuel R. Delany has also examined the social and literary value of works of paraliterature in order to refute this long-held conception of their lack: “On the paraliterary genres—which are viewed as socially second-rate genres—are assumed (incorrectly, I feel) to be subject to definition. One (though it is by no means the only) reason they are assumed to be such is because they are seen as simple, less protean, and, yes, finally less humanly and socially important than other genres” (151). Delany discusses these critical assumptions that have come both from para and literary circles, and highlights two pernicious assumptions: “An example: Paraliterature is just entertainment and is without further value. Another example: Paraliterature has no necessary history that helps us understand and appreciate it” (64).

Beginning with the two assumptions Delany cites above, it is clear that both Bey's récit and Montero's roman exceed the stereotypical limits of paraliterature. Both works are engaging with history precisely through tactics often seen in paraliterary works. The unlikely coincidence that a perpetrator might encounter the daughter of his victim or a young American would be connected to an aging pied-noir through her long lost husband are not so outlandish when placed alongside other paraliterary plots. It is perhaps through their very accessibility that these texts allow their readers to engage with the histories depicted therein.

That paraliterature would be a genre adaptable to postmemorial encounters is perhaps less surprising than it might initially appear. One of the foundational texts of postmemory, *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, with its mixing of images and text cannot neatly fit into the literary canon any more readily than the works discussed in this chapter. Indeed, it was the photographs, rather than the text of *Maus* that, according to Hirsch's own explanation, "elicited a need for a term that would describe the particular form of belated or inherited memory that I found in Spiegelman's work" ("Generation" 107).⁵¹ Likewise, W.G. Sebald's work *Austerlitz* incorporates images into its narrative structure to reach a similar end.⁵² Both of these works, according to Hirsch's analysis "share a great deal: a self-conscious, innovative, and critical aesthetic that palpably conveys absences and loss; the determination to know about the past and the acknowledgment of its elusiveness; [...] the reliance on looking and reading, on visual media in addition to verbal ones; and the consciousness that the memory of the past is an act firmly located in the present"

⁵¹ Such photographs and documents are also present in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* and are significant to the memories described in the text.

⁵² For more on photographs and *Austerlitz*, see: George Kouvaros, "Images that remember us: photography and memory in *Austerlitz*" *Textual Practice* 19.1 (2005): 173-193 and J.J. Long, "History, narrative, and photography in W.G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten*." *Modern Language Review* 98.1 (January, 2003): 117-137.

(ibid 119). At the heart of these texts, and at the base of postmemory, is a familial story, which “anchors, individualizes, and reembodies the free-floating disconnected and disorganized feelings of loss and nostalgia that thereby come to attach themselves to more concrete and seemingly authentic images and objects” (ibid 120). The use of the paraliterary genre allows for the unexpected and improbable familial connections to be established, which in turn set the stage for intergenerational transmissions of memories in which each generation is implicated.

The paraliterary genre provides the creative space for otherwise improbable situations to take place, bringing disparate characters together only to discover that the defining moments of their lives are intimately and intrinsically linked. The second generation’s involvement in these exchanges is what fundamentally separates this transmission from those described in Hirsch’s model of postmemory. That these unrelated characters could be brought together to create a “famille de circonstance” is infinitely more plausible given the other pulpy elements of these novels. These meetings are not always necessary for postmemorial exchanges to take place, rather the second generation may employ any number of other scaffoldings to gain access to the past unshared by the first generation. One such example of accessing the past without the involvement of the first generation is visible in the next chapter of this dissertation: “Mobile Memories: The Past Retraced in *La Seine était rouge* by Leila Sebbar and *Le village de l’Allemand, ou le journal des frères Schiller* by Boualem Sansal.” These texts portray members of the second generation reliving and rewriting the experiences of the first generation by literally retracing their steps in history.

CHAPTER TWO

Mobile Memories: The Past Retraced in *La Seine était rouge* and *Le village de l'Allemand, ou le journal des frères Schiller*

“Sa mère ne lui a rien dit, ni la mère de sa mère.”

Sebbar, *La Seine était rouge*, 13

“Rachel ne m'avait rien dit.”

Sansal, *Le village de l'Allemand*, 23

From the first line of Lëila's Sebbar's 1999 novel, *La Seine était rouge*, it is clear that silence and transmission are at stake. Likewise, silence punctuates Sansal's novel *Le village de l'Allemand, ou le journal des frères Schiller* (2008). Silence and lack of transmission precludes the second-generation characters in these novels from connecting with the first generation's traumatic past to enact a postmemorial experience. In spite (or perhaps as a result) of this silence, members of the second generation seek out knowledge of this past without the intervention of the first generation. In these novels, rather than connecting with the past through the testimonies and stories of the first generation, the second-generation characters visit sites that were significant for the first generation. In experiencing these places—monuments, memorials and gravesites, among others—the second generation better understands the physicality of the memories created there for their parents. What's more, the second generation creates several cultural productions after these visits and personal experiences. In contrast to one of the foundational texts of postmemory, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, which was created as a result of an abundance of memories transferred from the first generation experience to the second generation creator, the cultural productions in Sebbar and Sansal's novels are created to fill the void of unshared memories. Additionally, these cultural productions—graffiti, film, and personal journals—represent the second generation's engagement with their personal history and

demonstrate an overwriting of this untransmitted past with their own understanding and experience of it.

In the case of *Le village de l'Allemand*, the cultural production is a text based on the combined journals of the eponymous Schiller brothers. In *La Seine était rouge*, the two main characters set out to literally leave their marks on key points in Franco-Algerian history as they are memorialized or obscured in the streets of Paris, while a third character films a documentary that incorporates their traces as well as several filmed testimonies from first-generation characters. These resultant works represent tools used by second generation to connect with the traumatic history of first generation; beyond this connection to the past, however, is the search for a connection to the future. In creating such works, the second generation not only links themselves to their own history, but also to their current historical situation and, finally, creates traces for their contemporaries to seek out in order to discover their own potential association to these events.⁵³ In the context of French Algeria, this silence is not only familial but also institutional. In the Franco-Algerian case, the use of censorship—both at a national, legal level and on an independent, societally instituted level—has kept the full extent of the two nations' entwined histories from public knowledge. Cultural productions, like those created in these novels, have long served as a link to unrecognized pasts. In the case of the second-generation characters in these novels, they are attempting to connect with memories and experiences that have never been shared with them. The written articulations and actions described therefore serve to connect them to these elements of the past rather than distance them from it.

⁵³ In his presentation entitled “Quelle(s) problématique(s) de la trace?” Alexandre Serres examines four aspects of the trace: “la trace comme empreinte, marque physique...comme indice, comme ‘petite quantité’, détail...comme mémoire...comme ligne, écriture” (2). Each of these four elements that constitute a trace is present in the novels examined in this chapter.

These cultural productions, created by the second generation throughout or after their journeys retracing the movements of the first generation, also allow for the second generation to enact a postmemorial experience that had not previously been possible for them. According to Hirsch, “postmemory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through projection, investment, and creation” (*Acts of Memory* 8). Typically, the second generation’s connection to the traumatic past of the first generation is mediated precisely by the shared stories from the first generation. Such is the case of Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*, which Hirsch describes as “a survivor’s tale—a testimony—mediated by the child of this survivor through his own idiosyncratic representational and aesthetic choices” (“Family Pictures” 12). In Sebbar and Sansal’s novels, however, the link to the past has been severed by the first generation’s lack of transmission. Members of the second generation, then, have been unable to engage in the postmemorial experience as described by Hirsch, which entails “adopting the traumatic experiences—and thus also the memories—of others as one’s own, or, more precisely, as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one’s own life story” (*Acts of Memory* 9). Not having had this experience as it occurs in traditional postmemory, members of the second generation in these texts encounter a *deferred* postmemorial experience. As adults and without the involvement of the first generation, the second-generation characters fulfill this aspect of postmemory—of adopting the experiences that their predecessors might have lived—by revisiting the symbolic sites of their past. In the case of Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge*, these significant sites are in Paris and are associated with the Algerian War for independence. In Sansal’s *Le village de l’Allemand*, the sites important to the traumatic past of the first generation are found in cities across Western

Europe significant to Nazi expansion and also in the relative safety of North Africa which served as the site of rebirth for the novel's titular German.

In this chapter, I analyze layered levels of intrigue in Leila Sebbar's *La seine était rouge* and Boualem Sansal's *Le village de l'Allemand ou le journal des frères Schiller*. These novels interact with the past on a familial and societal level and demonstrate the failure of transmission in both instances. This failure is overcome by the actions of each novel's main characters— young French men and women, the majority of whom are of Algerian descent. By seeking not only a physical connection to the past but also an emotional connection to the involvement of their ancestors, the protagonists of these two novels re-live, reproduce and reconfigure pasts that were not shared with them by their predecessors.

Paris sous les bombes in *La Seine était rouge*

Beginning in October 1996, *La Seine était rouge* opens with a clear indication of time and place (Nanterre); the name of the one of the primary characters, Amel, is also indicated in the header preceding the first page of the narrative. These indications of the focal character of each section, his or her location, and, occasionally, a date, repeat throughout a narrative that is broken into more than three dozen short sections. The majority of these sections occur in the narrative present of 1996, but there are also several testimonies (in some cases, filmed) pertaining to the peaceful protest and ensuing violence of October 17, 1961.⁵⁴ Understanding this event and its effects is central to the three second-generation characters presented in the text.

⁵⁴ See Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *October 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2006), Jean-Luc Einaudi, *La Bataille de Paris*, Paris, Seuil (1991), and Lia Brozgal, "In the Absence of the Archive (Paris, October 17, 1961)." *South Central Review* 31.1 (Spring 2014): 34-54.

Amel looks to her mother, Nouria, and grandmother, Lalla, to share their memories of the Algerian War and the October 17 march, in which they both participated (although Nouria was just a child at the time). Louis is also preoccupied by this moment in history and is filming a documentary in which he records the testimonies of those involved in the colonial struggle in Paris. His interest is linked to his own family history: Flora, his mother, a close friend of Nouria and Amel's family, was an anti-colonial activist imprisoned during the Algerian War. Finally, Omer is journalist and political refugee, living (with his mother Mina, in Flora's apartment) in Paris to escape the rising violence of the Dark Decade in Algeria.⁵⁵

La Seine était rouge is a text comprised of representations of experiences of first and second-generation characters. A third-person omniscient narrator recounts the main narrative, while testimonial segments (filmed by Louis for his documentary) are presented as direct discourse. From the first generation, both victims and perpetrators contribute to Louis's film and, by extension and transcription, the text. Unwilling to share her memories with her daughter, Amel's mother, Nouria, nevertheless agrees to be filmed and interviewed by Louis. Her memories of October 17 are presented in quoted sections of the text entitled "La mère". This designation reinforces the absence of familial connections that should exist between the first and

⁵⁵ Jane E. Goodman describes this tumultuous period beginning with "the cancellation of a parliamentary election in December 1991 that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS, *Front Islamique de Salut*) was poised to win. The FIS, which had garnered considerable popular support, was subsequently made illegal, and many of its members were rounded up and interned in camps in the Sahara. This accelerated armed guerilla warfare that had already begun between government forces and various Islamist groups, created a climate of fear and instability throughout the country, and resulted in as many as 200,000 dead by the end of the decade" (793). See also: Séverine Labat, *Les islamistes algériens, entre les urnes et le maquis*, Paris: Seuil (1995), Daniel Heradstveit, *Political Islam in Algeria*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (1997), Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: The Next Fundamentalist State?* Santa Monica, CA: Rand (1996), Jennifer Howell "Investigating the enforced disappearances of Algeria's 'Dark Decade': Omar D's and Kamel Khélif's commemorative art projects." *The Journal of North African Studies* 19.1 (2016): (1-22).

second generations, which are, in this case, ruptured by Nouria's inability to directly address the past with Amel. Instead, Amel is left with the filmed traces of her mother, captured by Louis's camera. With this information about the protest, Amel sets off to visit several sites across the city that were significant for the marchers. Unfolding almost in parallel, Nouria describes her journey through the city with her own mother and other protestors in 1961 while Amel undertakes her own journey through the city with Omer and Louis, her movements intersecting with her mother's points of reference.

While the reliance on familial transmission of memories is inadequate, French commemoration of colonial history is likewise found to be lacking. Throughout the city, they see monuments and plaques dedicated to soldiers of other wars and events unrelated to Algeria. In an effort to collapse the distance between their experience and understanding of colonial trauma and that of the first generation, these characters "edit" or affix other monuments dedicated to colonial events over the existing monuments. These acts essentially inscribe a forgotten history upon the existing memorial landscape of Paris.

As the lyric cited in the intertitle above (from the *Suprême* NTM song of the same name) suggests, Paris, graffiti and hip-hop culture are inextricably linked in the present moment and have been for several decades. Graffiti, however, predates the hip-hop movement imported from the United States in the 1980s. The phrase "ici on noie les algériens" (which was graffitied on the Quai de Conti across from the Institut de France) has become emblematic of the events that took place in the streets of Paris on the night of October 17, 1961. No discussion of graffiti within the context of the Parisian streetscape or the Algerian War would be complete without highlighting this simple sentence scrawled in bold, capital letters which appeared several weeks after the massacre of Algerian protesters peacefully marching against the newly imposed curfew

levied against French Algerian Muslims in Paris on the evening of October 17, 1961. This large-scale graffitied phrase, although swiftly removed from the balustrade along the Seine, was photographed and has been deployed throughout the four decades since its creation in newspapers and magazines.⁵⁶ Its power rests not only in its size and location, but also in its anonymity and its inclusive syntax, as underscored in Vincent Lemire and Yann Potin's study of this so-called "militant" icon of an image:

Silencieuse, minérale, la photo est vide de toute présence humaine : les responsables du massacre, les victimes, les auteurs de l'inscription... tous semblent avoir quitté la scène. [...]. Déroulé sur une dizaine de mètres de quais, comme sur une banderole, le slogan "ici on noie les algériens" ne désigne pas seulement un acte de répression mais bien une politique de disparition systématique. Les noyades y sont dénoncées à la fois comme instrument de terreur et comme stratégie de dissimulation de la terreur. Toute la puissance d'évocation et de dénonciation du document repose donc sur la formulation et la syntaxe même du slogan, inscrit in situ, "en présence du lieu même" ; l'article défini révèle la signification masquée du massacre : ce sont bien « les » Algériens, c'est-à-dire l'idée d'une nation algérienne indépendante, que la répression entendait supprimer. (143)

The terror encapsulated in this short phrase—at once an accusation and a memorial—has in some sense been replaced by a much more modest and officially sanctioned piece of remembrance on another Parisian bridge: a plaque inaugurated by then Mayor of Paris Bertrand Delanoë on the

⁵⁶ This inscription has become an integral part of memorial and activist activities surrounding recognition of French actions during the Algerian war for independence. Lemire and Potin have traced how this tag has been preserved and how that photographic trace has been deployed in *L'Humanité* during the 1980s and by the activist association "17 octobre contre l'oubli" during an October 2001 commemoration. The image, as well as the inscription, are central to Yasmina Adi's 2011 film *Ici on noie les Algériens*.

40th anniversary of the massacre.⁵⁷ The ephemerality of this graffiti (although rendered permanent by the camera of journalist and photographer J. Texier) starkly contrasts with such memorials yet, in many cases, graffiti and governmental installations serve a similar commemorative purpose.⁵⁸

Graffiti is often linked to the emergence of hip hop and rap culture in the United States in the latter decades of the twentieth century.⁵⁹ While this art form is not a “mere subsidiary of the hip hop music conglomerate,” Richard S. Christen has suggested a link between the proliferation and aesthetic complication of graffiti from the late 1960s through the 1980s to the growth in the music scene, stating that they “shared a similar method, with each reassembling and reshaping bits from the past into exciting, original forms” (paragraph 8). In her study of the history and contemporary reception of graffiti, Gillian Jain, however, recalls the impact of French Surrealist photographer Georges Brassai in discovering, cataloging and photographing graffiti found in 1930s Paris. Rather than contemporary painted graffiti one might associate with the term today, Brassai’s images focus on shapes carved into wall surfaces, which, for him “represented a

⁵⁷ For a discussion on this commemoration ceremony see Philippe Bernard and Christine Garin “Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle” *Le Monde*. 17 October 2001. http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2011/10/17/archives-du-monde-17-octobre-2001-le-massacre-du-17-octobre-1961-obtient-un-debut-de-reconnaissance-officielle_1588198_3224.html

⁵⁸ For the history of this image’s use and reproduction, see Lemire and Potin’s careful study cited above.

⁵⁹ In addition to the scholars cited in this chapter, see: Françoise Robert l’Argenton, “Graffiti: tags et grafs”, *Communication et langues* 85 (1990): 59-71, Jarmila Mildorf, “Negotiating Deviance: Identity, Trajectories, and Norms in a Graffitiist’s Interview Narrative” in Deborah Schiffrin, et al (eds.) *Telling Stories: Language, Narrative, and Social Life* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press (2010): 135-147, Lynn A. Powers, “Whatever Happened to the Graffiti Art Movement?” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 29.4 (1996): 137-142 and Gregory A. Snyder “Graffiti media and the perpetuation of an illegal subculture” *Crime Media Culture* 2.1 (2006): 93-101.

‘naïve’ impulse towards the creative act, an inherent human urge” (Jein 90). Such a vision of graffiti, according to Jein, “situates graffiti less in terms of a violent gesture than as a sign of an original human desire to make a mark, to inscribe the trace of one’s existence onto the urban landscape” (91). Interestingly, the word from which the term graffiti originates, *graffare* or “to scratch” in Italian, directly links the carvings Brassaï discovered in Paris to the modern art form that now bears this name (Spocter 294, Diallo 2). Some critics continue to view graffiti as primitive in that these productions, according to André Guillain, “construisent le chaos—ses états successifs et ses formes transitoires. Ils le construisent par indiscipline et par accumulation de traces passagères” (51). Beyond the desire to affirm one’s identity with a physical trace, the political implications of graffiti have been especially apparent in France. Ann Williams-Gascon highlights the use of graffiti during several points of unrest in twentieth-century Paris: “the unofficial bills posted during World War II to denounce Nazism and the graffiti taking both sides in the Algerian War set a clear precedent for the high point in graffiti writing which was *Mai 1968*” (116). Additionally, in his study of repeated tags across Paris, Pierre Alventosa underscores the communicative impulse present in graffiti: “En premier lieu, les tagueurs et graffeurs imposent aux autres acteurs leurs productions. Celles-ci sont omniprésentes en ville...dans des lieux les plus visibles possible, en particulier sur les artères principales, sur les voies de communication” (103).

As the forms graffiti may take have expanded, so too has the desire to categorize modern graffiti art. As defined by David Novak, there exist two large categories of graffiti under which several subcategories exist: “Traditional graffiti is concerned with the message and does not emphasize the form. However, graffiti art’s main concerns are stylistic and aesthetic. Graffiti art

itself has four codified forms: tag, piece, throw-up and character” (41).⁶⁰ This categorization and internal codification within the graffiti community has shaped the art form in recent decades. Diallo traces this development in his study of graffiti entitled “From Street Art to Art Galleries: How Graffiti Became a Legitimate Art Form”. As his article’s title suggests, there has been, since the early days of graffiti art, a highly prized aesthetic status in these works—one that has been commodified and legitimized by their inclusion in art galleries.

In an apt description of the medium, Jain suggests that graffiti represents the point at which “the worlds of gallery and ghetto combine” (84). Recent scholarship, as well as popular interest in such graffiti artists as Banksy and Shepherd Fairley, has encouraged an increase in gallery exhibitions dedicated to street art. The Tate Modern, the Brooklyn Museum, The Grand Palais and the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art have each featured major exhibitions of graffiti art in recent years. In the French context, Ann Williams-Gascon has underscored this tension between gallery and ghetto, considering: “Is graffiti vandalism, as the French penal code states in Articles 257 and 434? Or is it art, as implied by the 1991 exhibit at the Musée National des Monuments Français entitled ‘Graffiti Art: Américains et Français, 1981-1991?’” (115-116). Going from the sides of buildings and subway cars to canvases shown in galleries, graffiti’s move changed not only the temporal durability of graffiti but also its cultural value. Being displayed and sold—often for many thousands of dollars—places value (both monetary and in terms of cultural capital) on the piece of work. Displaying graffiti in galleries and museums,

⁶⁰ As defined in Cooper and Chalfant’s study of the graffiti, *Subway Art*, these forms are: “Piece: a painting, short for masterpiece. Tag: a writer’s signature with marker or spray paint. Throw-up: a name painted quickly with one layer of spray paint and an outline” (27). A character is a “[painting] stylistically representing objects and scenes” (Novak 41). Interestingly, according to Novak, society views the different types of graffiti differently: “Tags and throw-ups are generally perceived by the public as vandalism; however, pieces and characters are the most acceptable graffiti art forms in the general public’s perception” (ibid).

while important to graffiti's reception by society at large, has not fundamentally changed the majority of graffiti. Although as discussed above, graffiti has in recent decades made its way into New York and Parisian art galleries, the violence and transgression inherent to the act of such vandalism cannot be overlooked. This violence in fact operates on two levels. First, the characters in Sebbar's novel vandalize monuments of French hegemonic and monolithic history concretizing the transgressive nature of graffiti. Second, the violence associated with these instances of graffiti echo the violence that characterized the police repression of the October 17, 1961 demonstration. In both instances, agency is retaken by those previously dispossessed of it. Second-generation characters in this text are reinserting themselves into, and literally inscribing themselves onto, history. Although graffiti in Sebbar's novel does not reach the gallery, monuments in Paris, on to which these second-generation characters re-write an expanded history, serve a similar function as a gallery or museum space in that they create a specific narrative for the viewing public to interpret. At its core, creating graffiti is an expression of rebellion, power, and presence. Within the diaphanous cloud of paint can be found struggle, identity and agency.

Leaving, then, the sanitized boundaries of the gallery, I return to the streets at the origin of street art. As Jain argues, "Inside the gallery, the semiotic resonance of the museum wall enters into play, and this encompasses much more than the logic of display. Through its structural arrangement the gallery wall provides a topographic order that effectively intervenes in and neutralizes the work's substantive relation to its social context" (102). An urban center and the graffiti that may cover its surfaces are inextricably linked as a result of the social, economic and political conditions that resulted in the creation of such graffiti. The use of public space is often cited as a means of delimiting the territory of the artist or his affiliated group, however

territoriality is not always necessarily at the heart of graffiti. On the contrary, Spocter suggests that “By personalizing urban space with a tag, a throw-up, or a piece, graffiti artists are making known that not only do they exist in the impersonal, anonymous world; but also that they have a voice, spoken through their art” (302). As in Brassai’s time, modern graffiti—and most specifically tags and throw-ups—represent the artist’s desire to leave his or her mark on a part of their city.

The territorial power of graffiti demonstrates the artist’s ability to circulate and control areas graffitied, but also confirms the artist’s agency. Bowen cites graffiti’s doubled power to affirm both of these aspects of a graffiti’s identity:

Graffiti is a spatializing practice in that it both inhabits and creates spaces through the activities of both the writers/artists and the viewers/tourists. The graffiti images are texts to be read, and experienced haptically and bodily. They have emerged as a result of the artists/writer performing the space and leaving behind evidence of existence for others to witness (Bowen, 2010). (Bowen 2013, paragraph 6)

In the case of the graffiti in Sebbar’s text, this spatializing is inherently attached to the site of a given graffiti’s creation and the history associated with that location. The message is not meant to be spread specifically throughout the city, but rather it serves to highlight the multiple histories contained in a particular location in Paris. Graffiti has been construed as most often occurring in marginalized areas of the urban public space, yet in the case of the graffiti in *La Seine était rouge*, Omer spray paints in prominent areas with historical significance—places with weighty pasts that have not only been identified by the French government but have also been sanctioned with its own written confirmation of historical significance in the form of monuments or plaques describing the very significance of the location in question. In a study of graffiti in

Montréal and Warsaw, Ella Chmielewska underscores the link between pieces of graffiti and the locations defaced through “a close reading of inscriptions *in situ*” (145). Such an approach, she argues, “engages with the iconographic, spatio-temporal and linguistic dimensions of wall writing in its specific locale” (145). In examining graffiti in Montréal and Warsaw, she poses the following question: “And does it matter for the meaning of graffiti if the canvas of the wall has a different history?” (145). In the case of the graffiti committed by the characters at the center of *La Seine était rouge*, the answer to this question is a resounding yes.

There are three instances of graffiti writing in Sebbar’s novel, all three of which incorporate red, spray painted letters scrawled across sites of historical significance. This color choice links the vandalism back to the novel’s title, which likewise recalls the bloody repression of Algerian marchers on the night of October 17, 1961. The red paint is also inherently connected to violence, not only that of October 17, but, also that of the act of vandalism and graffiti, which is in essence an attack on the sovereignty of a space and what it represents. The targets of graffiti within the text each hold historical significance in their own right and in relation to the events of October 17. Although only three monuments were defaced in the novel, four sites were visited in an identical manner. At each of these sites, members of the second generation—most often Amel and Omer, physically approach the statue or monument and interact with it in some manner. The act of vandalism is never described explicitly; rather, red graffiti letters seem to simply appear after these young visitors have moved on.⁶¹

The first example of graffiti writing in the novel sets a pattern for subsequent interactions at memorial sites in the remainder of the text. Upon learning that her mother testified to her

⁶¹ Descriptions of the graffiti left by Omer don’t even appear in the present of the narrative. They are, instead, presented as part of Louis’s film when included in the novel. See *Seine* page 30 and 118.

participation in the October 17 protest march through the documentary filmed by another member of the second generation, Louis, Amel seeks more information into her mother's testimony and pays Louis a visit. His apartment building is located adjacent to one of the most (in)famous prisons in Paris, La Santé. While she originally visited Louis to discuss the Algerian War for independence, her attention is quickly turned to another conflict by Omer, who happened to be passing by. This prison, before being used as a holding area for those detained on October 17, held resistance fighters who rose up against the invading Nazi forces in 1940. This fact is celebrated in a white marble plaque affixed to the prison wall, which Omer reads aloud: "EN CETTE PRISON / LE 11 NOVEMBRE 1940 / FURENT INCARCÉRÉS / DES LYCÉENS ET DES ÉTUDIANTS / QUI À L'APPEL DU GÉNÉRAL DE GAULLE / SE DRESSÈRENT LES PREMIERS / CONTRE L'OCCUPANT" (29). Read aloud, the memorialization of these murdered resisters is performed by a group of witnesses. Indeed, as Andrea Mubi Brighenti examines in her study of graffiti and writing in public spaces, "for inscriptions to take place, witnesses are needed" (325). And indeed, this trio discusses a lack of commemoration for another event that took place within the walls of this prison. Omer explicitly states that he wants, through his graffiti, to remind other witnesses of what else happened at this site: "je veux juste rappeler ce qui s'est passé dans ces murs. C'était une autre geurre...Même si vous parliez des 'Événements'...." (29). This backhanded insult to the only *français de souche* in the trio, Louis, makes explicit the reference to the Algerian War.⁶² One page later—though without an indication of any temporal distance—the new graffiti is described:

⁶² I am using the term "Algerian" in this instance because it is present in the novel and in the graffiti discussed here. It is, however, essential to note that the majority of those who marched in protest of the curfew on the night of October 17, 1961 were French colonial subjects and that the national designation "Algerian" was not yet valid due to the territory's colonial status. Instead, such citizens were categorized as "Français musulmans d'Algérie" (de Barros note 1).

Louis filme le mur de la prison, à l'angle de la rue de La Santé et du boulevard Arago, la plaque commémorative fixée sur la pierre et à droite, les lettres rouges bombées:

‘1954-1962 / DANS CETTE PRISON / FURENT GUILLOTINÉS / DES RÉSISTANTS
ALGÉRIENS / QUI SE DRESSENT / CONTRE L'OCCUPANT FRANÇAIS’

La voiture de police qui passe ne remarque rien.

Amel et Omer regardent le film de Louis. Plusieurs fois. (30)

The similar language present in the governmentally sanctioned plaque memorializing French lives lost fighting a German occupier and in the tag painted, presumably by Omer, commemorating Algerian lives lost resisting a French occupying force, serves to create layers of history in one location.⁶³ The physical proximity of these two commemorations—one national and one personal—highlights the importance of physical location behind a graffitist's choice. Another plaque above the large prison doors is also read aloud by Omer: “LIBERTÉ ÉGALITÉ FRATERNITÉ”. While the irony of this inscription created by physical and discursive proximity is not discussed in the novel, a sensitive reader cannot overlook it. The notion of “égalité” within the French judicial system and specifically within the walls of this prison is questionable at best.⁶⁴ That the police officers in the car described above did not seem to take note of the red spray-painted inscription suggests that despite this second generation's attempt to

⁶³ On this layering, see the scholarship of Dawn Fulton, especially “Elsewhere in Paris: Creolised Geographies in Leïla Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*” *Culture, Theory and Critique* 48. (2007): 25-38 and Max Silverman, *Palimpsestic memory: The Holocaust and colonialism in French and francophone fiction and film* Oxford & New York: Berghahn Books (2013).

⁶⁴ Current criticisms highlight the continuing effects of inequality in French prison system. As noted in Andrew Hussey's December 2014 *Guardian UK* article, “It is estimated that 70% of prisoners in France are Muslim.” In the case of La Santé this statistical may have been especially apparent in La Santé a result of its separation of prisoners along racial and ethnic lines: “Until 2000 the prisoners were racially segregated—there was a block for ‘Western Europe’, ‘Black Africa’, ‘North Africa’, and ‘The Rest of the World’.”
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/07/la-sante-prison-paris-visitors-welcome>

draw attention to this significant event in history, the French public remains unwilling to acknowledge it or unaware of its importance.

In another confrontation with history, Amel and Omer once again must be present to experience a second site of national remembrance, La Défense. In a spirited discussion of Louis's film and their personal connections to the events depicted therein, Omer threatens to abandon Amel to her "enquête sentimentale" (54). Such a dispute reminds both character and reader that Amel is learning not only national history, but also her family's personal history through this exploration. Approaching the large Marianne statue at La Défense, Amel reads the plaque aloud:

Amel lit la plaque à Omer qui ne l'écoute pas. Elle lit vite, en sautant des mots, des noms...

'La statue / LA DÉFENSE DE PARIS / inaugurée... / afin de rappeler le courage des Parisiens / pendant le terrible siège de 1870-1871. / A été réinstallé à son emplacement initial... / Elle a été inaugurée le 21 septembre 1983...'

Omer l'interrompt: 'Pourquoi tu me lis ça?' 'D'abord parce que les Parisiens, le peuple de Paris a résisté à l'ennemi, tu as entendu parler de la Commune de Paris? Ensuite, parce que la statue a été le point de rendez-vous des Algériens le 17 octobre 1961. Qui les a défendus quand les flics ont chargé au pont de Neuilly?' (56)

This interaction between Amel and Omer underscores once again the layered nature of French history and the monuments that freeze particular moments in time and in the public consciousness. In contrast to the previous example, this plaque commemorates those who defended their motherland against a domestic incursion. Just as those interred at La Santé had defended France against the arriving Nazi forces, those depicted in the Marianne statue likewise

celebrate the national pride of the French public.⁶⁵ Ironically, this same desire for freedom and national determination contributed to the gathering of Algerians at this very monument during the evening of October 17, 1961. Amel's insistence on this link suggests a connection between French desire for independence and subsequent Algerian desire for independence; this was a country that was instructed, after all, following the French model.

Although Amel and Omer's visit to this monument does not result in its being defaced, Amel's reading of the plaque reveals her attempt to exert ownership over the past and her family's role in it. That she only reads portions of the inscription suggests her inability to fully access the past. If the function of the plaque is to transmit to a viewer or visitor the importance of a given site, can its multifaceted history only be read without the limits of the governmentally sanctioned plaque? Is this monument more open to critique by Amel and Omer because they choose not to read it within the limits of French governmental discourse? Or is Amel's decision to verbally edit this plaque more decidedly subversive? By reading only sections of the plaque, she is herself repressing some portions of French history—rendering fragmentary the official French story. It is also revelatory of how some visitors interact with these memorials to history. The effect of only a portion of the plaque being read is similar for the characters within the story and for the reader. Gaps in historical knowledge that impact Amel remain unfilled for the reader

⁶⁵ This statue was erected to commemorate the defense of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. Dozens of artists proposed designs during a competition organized by the Prefecture of the Seine in 1879. The design proposed by Louis-Ernest Barrias was selected and inaugurated August 12, 1883 during an elaborate ceremony attended by more than 100,000 spectators. While the statue was restored and relocated several times, its installation in 1983 marks its final exposition space. The statue itself is comprised of three iconic elements: Marianne representing the city of Paris dressed and prepared for combat, a young soldier readying himself for continued action, and young girl embodying the suffering public of France (Scicolone 19). The motif of Marianne is again discussed as Amel and Omer see another Marianne statue at the Place de la République. In this instance, Marianne represents the universal rights of man, which are at the heart of the French republic; she wears a crown of laurels and holds the scales of justice (Sebbar 68).

as well. Indeed, by not providing a full transcription of the plaque, the text does to the reader what the first generation has done to the second generation in the novel by providing partial or insufficient historical information.

Just as the previous example examined the ways in which these characters interacted with a memorial site without defacing it, the following discussion presents two adjacent sites only one of which is graffitied. The novel's insistence on the Concorde metro station plays out on several different planes. First, Amel's mother mentions this station during her filmed testimony included in Louis's film. This location, she states, was dangerous for protestors on the night of October 17, as marchers were being beaten by the police in the metro station and in the immediate area. In addition to her recollections of the significance of Concorde, Nouria's testimony is heightened by still images described in the text of the interior of the Concorde metro station. These archival images come from the night of October 17 and indeed show a large police presence detaining Algerian marchers. Following these photographs, the film moves to a modern tour of the metro station, which highlights the letter tiles that decorate the walls and ceiling of this station. Louis focuses on "LOUBLI", "POUVAIT", "DROIT", "DEFENDRE" (87). Lastly, Amel and Omer visit this location. Rather than focusing on the metro station, the narrative depicts their activity at an adjacent location also mentioned by Amel's mother in the film. The Hôtel de Crillon overlooks the Place de la Concorde and the Luxor Obelisk previously mentioned by Amel. This hotel's complicated history—having housed French royals and republicans, and also Nazis—was rendered further problematic by violence on the night October 17, 1961. While no official plaque marks this historical moment, following Amel and Omer's brief visit to the hotel an addition is visible scrawled across the façade of the hotel: "Un employé

de l'hôtel sort du métro Concorde. Il reste un long moment debout devant la façade de l'hôtel. Il lit les lettres rouges en fluo: 'ICI DES ALGÉRIENS ONT ÉTÉ MATRAQUÉS /

SAUVAGEMENT PAR LA POLICE DU PRÉFET PAPON / LE 17 OCTOBRE 1961'" (88).

While the size of the graffiti is not specified—this detail also remained unclear at La Santé—one can assume that it is large if it can be read clearly from the metro station entrance. In naming a perpetrator, specifically Maurice Papon, the second generation seems to be supplying their audience with the necessary information to learn more about this history if they so choose.⁶⁶

Later in the text, Amel and Omer are at the Saint-Michel fountain in Paris's fifth arrondissement. This fountain is adorned with a plaque commemorating the inhabitants of the neighborhood who died during the 1944 Liberation of Paris.⁶⁷ While the characters are not depicted as specifically interacting with this memorial, the narrator sets the scene for the reader: "L'épaule d'Omer cache en partie l'inscription sur la plaque en marbre, au-dessous du griffon en bronze, cracheur d'eau. On peut lire un texte incomplet: 'À LA MÉMOIRE / DES SOLDATS DES FORCES FRANÇAISES / DE L'INTÉRIEUR ET DES HABITANTS DU V ET / ARRONDISSEMENTS QUI SUR CES LIEUX / LA MORT EN COMBATTANT' Sur un rocher, Saint-Michel en guerrier ailé, l'épée à la main, terrasse le dragon, un homme avec une tête de diable" (111). The characters' interaction with this site, which consists of them sitting on the edge of the fountain talking, is cut off by an abrupt cut in the text to 2.5 pages of Noria's

⁶⁶ Mildred Mortimer clarifies Papon's role in two darker moments of France's past: "Having first ordered the deportation of French Jews to Nazi concentration camps in the Vichy era, then serving in Algeria to destroy the FLN, he subsequently ordered the violent repression of the Algerian demonstration" (1252).

⁶⁷ During the Liberation of Paris (August 19-25, 1944), Allied Forces recaptured the city, after it had been under Nazi control since the signing of the Second Compiègne Armistice on June 22, 1940. The city was then re-established as the capital of the French Republic. See Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

testimony about her memories of this location. This filmic interjection (pages 113-115) cuts the reader off from the monument just as Omer's shoulder has seemed to block Amel from "seeing" the past. The reader is returned to the present of Amel and Omer's story on page 115 as the characters walk through the city away from the fountain and the Seine. Once again, the text jumps to Louis's film on page 118 and the last example of graffiti in the novel is described: "Quelques jours plus tard, Louis filme sur le quai Saint-Michel, les lettres rouges: 'ICI DES ALGÉRIENS SONT TOMBÉS / POUR L'INDÉPENDANCE DE L'ALGÉRIE / LE 17 OCTOBRE 1961'" (118). Although there is no mention in the text of the actual, rather than fictional, large-scale graffiti sprayed across another Parisian bridge in the aftermath of the October 17, 1961 demonstration, this choice seems to reference this silent demonstration of resistance. As a bridge this site of remembrance functions as a connector linking multiple areas and populations of Paris. Additionally, the Saint-Michel bridge, like La Défense, served as a meeting point on the night of October 17, 1961. While published in 1999, the novel's second-generation characters would no doubt be interested in the plaque put in place by then Mayor of Paris Bertrand Delanoë during the 40th commemoration on October 17, 2001. This plaque is similar in language and syntax to those defaced in the novel, yet it honors the victims of the Algerian War rather than a moment of pride for France. The plaque reads: "À la mémoire des nombreux Algériens tués lors de la sanglante répression de la manifestation pacifique du 17 octobre 1961". Commenting on the "sobriety" of this inscription, Mayor Delanoë stated, in an article published by *Le Monde*: "'Nous ne sommes ni des historiens ni des procureurs, [...] plus efficace, après les polémiques qu'il y a eu et qu'il y a' de s'en tenir 'à un acte fort dédié à la mémoire'" (Bernard n.p.).

In each of these examples, members of the second generation interact with a historical site significant on a national and personal level. Such interaction with existing monuments, while occasionally obscured, prompts discussion about what is memorialized and which events are overlooked. Although not always the case, often a member of this generation leaves a mark on the site. In re-writing memorial inscriptions, there is—as in the case of most graffiti—“a feeling of self-determination when these young people take control of their fates, even if only in a symbolic sense” (Campos 167). Indeed, with this overwriting of one history onto another, the graffiti and its authors are forcing any potential viewer to see and experience the location and its history differently (Bowen paragraph 11). These locations and the histories memorialized there are in fact different after they have been defaced by second-generation characters in the novel, not only for the general public but also for the characters themselves. In inscribing their history and identities onto the surface of the city, the second generation incorporates their families’ unshared pasts into their present situations. With this creative act, members of the second generation are able to engage in a deferred postmemorial experience.

Parallel Diaries in *Le Village de l’Allemand ou le journal des frères Schiller*

Omer’s graffiti as cultural productions in Sebbar’s text are all extremely and intentionally public and anonymous, unlike Rachel Schiller’s diary created in Sansal’s 2008 novel, *Le village de l’Allemand ou le journal des frères Schiller*, which was personal and specifically intended to be read by one person, his brother Malrich. Nevertheless, the creative impulse of the second generation in each novel to produce and deploy cultural productions as a means of connecting with and working through the traumatic past of their parents is present in both works. Malrich Schiller, the only specified and sanctioned reader of his brother’s journal, feels compelled by

what he learns in reading his brother's writing to share this new knowledge with a wider audience of his peers and compatriots by publishing Rachel's journals with his own commentary. Similar impulses then result in an analogous public "sharing" of the past that is at once personal, familial and collective.

Le village de l'Allemand ou le journal des frères Schiller narrativizes, as do many of Boualem Sansal's novels, the relationship between France and Algeria, and, in a larger sense, between France and the Arab World.⁶⁸ In her analysis of this text, Mireille Rosello suggests that "Le texte dans son ensemble nous invite à établir des parallèles entre éléments temporels et spatiaux qui, lorsqu'ils sont mis en contact, créent des entités historiographiques ou un nouvel imaginaire à la fois historique, géographique et politico-social" ("Guerre" 196). From this description, I will focus on the term "parallèles," because layering and doubling of temporalities, characters, and experiences defines this novel. In more concrete terms, this text presents a familial drama that enacts a reliving and a re-experiencing of another's history. In undertaking a journey—both literal and figurative—of self-discovery, members of the second generation retrace the movements of their predecessors and in so doing repeat their traumatic experiences at a temporal distance. Additionally, this novel presents a deferred postmemorial experience in a form that is often understudied: that of the diary or diary novel.

The novel itself presents the writing of the eponymous Schiller brothers, Rachel and Malrich.⁶⁹ The final, combined diary details each brother's realizations about shared and

⁶⁸ A recent example of this preoccupation can be found in Sansal's *2084: La fin du monde* Paris: Gallimard (2015).

⁶⁹ The Schiller brothers' first names reinforce the hybridity of this text. Their names reflect their diverse lineage, as sons of an Algerian mother and a German father living in France. Rachel's name is the combination of his two first names: Rachid and Helmut. Malrich's name combines Malek and Ulrich.

familial traumas and presents the divergent ways in which Rachel and Malrich incorporate their discovery of their father's past into their own sense of self. Sansal's text opens after Rachel, the older Schiller brother, has committed suicide, and we find his younger surviving brother, Malrich, grappling with what might have driven him to take his own life. The main action of the text occurs after Malrich reads Rachel's diary. This private journal details the murders of the Schiller parents, killed in Algeria by religious extremists, as well as Rachel's shocking discovery of his father's Nazi past (memorialized in a secret cache of artifacts in the familial home in Algeria). Reading Rachel's diary entries, Malrich is also inspired to also connect with this past. The brothers, however, experience very different reactions to learning of their father's war crimes and flight from justice after World War II (Hans eventually settled in Aïn Deb, Algeria). Rachel internalizes the guilt he believes his father should have felt, while Malrich decides to take social action in his own community with his new knowledge of his family's history.

The novel itself presents the writing of both brothers: the diary of Rachel, who ultimately commits suicide in an act of contrition for his father's Nazi involvement, and Malrich's own diary entries commenting on his brother's search for meaning and spiral towards suicide. The driving force of this novel is the connection between multiple pasts—their father's Nazi past, their childhood in a newly independent Algeria, the recent past of Rachel's lengthy search for understanding before his suicide—alongside the present of Malrich's reading and organizing of Rachel's journal. While these pasts are initially disconnected and apparently independent, it becomes clear that the weight of the traumatic past of the first generation—although unshared and, indeed, well hidden from the second-generation—nevertheless impacts the subsequent generation.

While this is a fictionalized and narrativized account, it is presented as an edited and published diary. Formally, Philippe Lejeune describes several conditions that a work must meet to be considered a diary; foremost of these is an indication of time, most often seen in the form of dated entries.⁷⁰ In Sansal's text, at the top of the first diary entry, the date is clearly indicated—and this dating continues relatively consistently throughout the remainder of the novel. These dates serve multiple functions in diary rhetoric and in this novel specifically. The inclusion of dates would seem to support Lejeune's argument that such temporal indications suggest an agreement between the diarist and the future; indeed, he argues that "A diary is turned towards the future, so if something is missing, it is not the beginning, but the end that changes in the course of writing it. [...] To 'finish' a diary means to cut it off from the future and integrate that future in the reconstruction of the past." ("End?" 103). Despite the inclusion of dates, this work is not organized in chronological order, as a diary would normally be. This disjointed organization reflects the way in which Malrich learns piecemeal the elements of his father's past and feels the impact of this traumatic past on his own present in the outskirts of Paris. This organization also underscores the very "joined-ness" of the work as Malrich includes his own reflections, represented in a different typeface, alongside or in between entries written by Rachel. The diary becomes doubled in its narration and in its temporality with Malrich writing in 1996 alongside Rachel's entries from 1994. While not all diary entries are clearly marked with a date

⁷⁰ While Lejeune's work on diary provides the theoretical framework this analysis, other scholarship on diaries is abundant. For example: Diane Ketelle, "Talking to Myself: Diary as a Record of Life Process" *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2.7 (2012): 34-40, Ladd Wheeler and Harry T. Reis, "Self-Recording of Everyday Life Events: Origins, Types, and Uses" *Journal of Personality* 59.3 (1991): 339-54, Thomas Mallon, *A Book of One's Own: People and Their Diaries*, New York: Ticknor & Fields (1984), and Bernard Duyfhuizen, "Diary Narratives in Fact and Fiction" *NOVEL: a Forum on Fiction* 19.2 (1986): 171-78.

or location, the concept of chronology is important in considering the relationship between each brother's entries.

Another of Lejeune's required elements in a diary is a concrete and justified beginning. Before the body of this text begins, Malrich Schiller, the last surviving son of Hans and Aïcha Schiller, provides an explanation for the polyvocal text that follows. According to Lejeune, this is typical of diary writing in which "one way or another, you *mark off* this new territory of writing—with a name, a title, an epigraph, a commitment, a self-presentation..." ("End?" 99). Malrich addresses the reader in two short paragraphs:

Je remercie très affectueusement Mme Dominique G.H., professeur au lycée A.M., qui a bien voulu réécrire mon livre en bon français. Son travail est tellement magnifique que je n'ai pas reconnu mon texte. J'ai eu du mal à le lire. Elle l'a fait en mémoire de Rachel qu'elle a eu comme élève. 'Son meilleur élève', a-t-elle souligné.

Dans certains cas, j'ai suivi ses conseils, j'ai changé des noms et supprimé des commentaires. Dans d'autres cas, j'ai conservé ma rédaction, c'est important pour moi. Elle dit qu'il y a des parallèles dangereux qui pourraient me valoir des ennuis. Je m'en fiche, ce que j'avais à dire, je l'ai dit, point, et je signe :

Malrich Schiller (8)

In this epigraph, Malrich is performing a task similar to Lejeune's *pacte autobiographique*, which serves to confirm "the proper name and its relationship to both author and narrator-main character" even if, in this case, the Malrich is the fictional author of the following text (Kritzman 118). He not only confirms his own identity, but references his brother as well. This address also gives the reader insight into the status of the text that follows as it is conceived by one of its narrator-authors.

Although Sansal's text is justified and dated like a diary, this diary becomes polyvocal and polytemporal. Malrich is writing in the narrative present of 1996—approximately two years after the entries written by Rachel—and often explains, interprets or reorganizes his brother's words and reflections. While the two voices remain distinct—their use of vocabulary, register, and insights reflects each brother's education and socio-economic status as well as their worldly experiences—and they are further differentiated by the use of two different typographical fonts (Rachel's smaller, more compact and sans serif while Malrich's is larger, with serif), there are many pages on which their voices are placed side-by-side appearing to come together physically, thematically and temporally. This editorial layout seems to elide the distance between the brothers and brings them closer after Rachel's death than they ever were in life.

Lejeune also argues that the end of a diary arrives with the death of its author. In the edited volume, *On Diary*, Jeremy D. Popkin asks, "How do diaries end? As Lejeune says in his essay on this topic, [...] 'the diary is virtually unfinishable from the beginning, because there is always a time lived beyond the writing, making it necessary to write anew...' (191). Nevertheless, there is a limit: the author's death will necessarily bring the diary to a close" (Popkin 9). Diaries, therefore, end with death; but this one begins with death twice over. For Rachel, the murder of his parents prompts him to retrace his past and record his journey and findings. For Malrich, Rachel's suicide gives him access to his family's past of which he was previously unaware. Upon his death, Rachel's journal was, per his request, given to Malrich and in reading this journal, Malrich was made aware of his parents' murder, his father's past and the circumstances that preceded and appear to have predetermined Rachel's ultimate decision to commit suicide as an act of contrition to expiate the sins of his father.

Before reading Rachel's journal, Malrich had no knowledge of his brother's suffering or the details of their father's Nazi past. Indeed, the circumstances of their childhood essentially ensured that the Schiller children would know almost nothing of their family's past. Both Malrich and Rachel were born in Aïn Deb and spent their first years in the rural Algerian village, but they were soon sent to live with family friends outside of Paris. This move from Algeria to France effectively cut Rachel and Malrich off from their parents—both geographically and, later, linguistically. Their separation and this language barrier contributed to Hans and Aïcha being unable, or perhaps unwilling, to share their own stories with their sons.

Analogously, although Rachel—based on the enormous amount of time and research he put into investigating his father's past—should have been a resource for Malrich, he was nevertheless unable to share his knowledge with Malrich before his death. Malrich knew nothing of his father's past nor of the intense research his brother carried out before committing suicide; he simply did not know to ask anything of his brother. Rachel, likewise, was unaware of his father's Nazi past before Hans's murder in April 1994—Rachel didn't discover it until he returned to Aïn Deb in the summer of 1994. Rachel's unwillingness to share his newfound knowledge with his younger brother is perhaps more complicated to understand than the Schiller parents' silence. While he expresses an initial desire to share what he has learned about their father, upon his return from Algeria, Rachel is simply unable to burden his brother with the weight of history associated with their father's Nazi past. The brothers met for dinner at Rachel's insistence after his trip to confirm the death of Hans and Aïcha; at this dinner, unbeknownst to Malrich, Rachel intended to tell his brother about the Nazi memorabilia and medals he'd found in their family home. In a letter-like journal entry penned by Rachel and included among context provided by Malrich, the older brother explains his silence at this point:

Le mal est fait quand il est fait et on ne sait pas réparer. [...] Au sortir du restaurant, j'avais tellement honte de moi, de mon silence, de ma lâcheté. Je ne me cherche pas une autre dérobade mais je voulais aussi, vraiment, t'éviter cette souffrance, nos parents sont morts dans des conditions atroces, et ce que je sais à présent, qui me mine au plus profond, t'aurait causé une douleur terrible qui avec le temps t'aurait détruit. Il devenait important pour moi de te tenir loin de moi. Un jour, tu liras mon journal et tu comprendras et sûrement tu me pardonneras, le temps aura passé et fait son œuvre. (43)

In this excerpt, the reader has the first indication that Malrich was, at least by this point, the addressee of Rachel's entries. This entry and Rachel's request that his journals be given to Malrich after his death ensures that the younger Schiller brother will have the opportunity—although this is no guarantee he will act on it—to learn of the family's past through Rachel's journals.

During his peregrinations revisiting the sites of his father's past, Rachel encounters an elderly woman engaging in her own search for her origins. They cross paths at Auschwitz-Birkenau where they each reflect privately on their respective family members' very different experiences at the camp. In a private moment, this anonymous woman tells Rachel about her sister's death in Birkenau, and in turn asks Rachel to share his connection to the camp. Rachel obliquely mentions his father having passed through the camp, saying "mon père...il a fait Birkenau et d'autres camps...il a été sauvé par miracle. Je ne le savais pas, il ne m'a jamais rien dit...je l'ai appris tout récemment...par hasard...après son décès" (249). Although she innocently assumes that Rachel's father had passed through the camp as a prisoner, like her sister, the woman implores Rachel to try to understand his father's silence; she tells him: "je comprends...Il ne faut pas lui en vouloir, on ne peut pas dire ces choses aux enfants. Croyez-

moi, c'est très difficile d'en parler, même avec ceux qui sont passés par là" (249). In his journal, Rachel writes how deeply this chance encounter affected him and how his lie by omission of Hans's role in the Nazi machine had been yet another betrayal of the victims of his father's work. Rachel, then, is aware of the power of silence, having been both on the receiving end of the silence regarding his father's past and later, perpetuating this silence at the very scene of Hans's crimes. In spite of this understanding, Rachel finds himself both unwilling and unable to tell Malrich the truth of their father's past.

Although Lejeune has argued that diaries end with death, for the Schiller brothers, Rachel's death allows his journal to be continued. Rachel's death transfers his diary to his brother, Malrich, and through his diary Malrich learns about the death of their parents, which had occurred over two years prior. Their deaths in Algeria originally provided the impetus for Rachel to reconnect with and uncover the family's past and then serve as Malrich's guide. Their parents' deaths prompted Rachel to investigate, to record his discoveries and then, finally, to give his diary and this new knowledge to his brother. A chain beginning with death and ending in self-discovery is therefore traced in the combined Schiller diary. Although death often solidifies silence and permanently cuts the present off from the past, here death grants Malrich access to a past he had no knowledge of. As a link to the past, Rachel's journal serves both as a practical guide for Malrich as well as providing insight into Rachel's personality—a window that the reader would not have otherwise.

In his own words, cited above, Rachel attempted to justify his silence on the subject of their parents' murders when he met with Malrich after returning from Algeria. Reading his diary entries, Malrich gains more perspective into this decision and admits, that in reading Rachel's diary, he learns of the massacre in Aïn Deb for the first time. Malrich laments "Rachel ne

m'avait rien dit. Moi, je ne regarde jamais la télé et les copains ne savent même pas que ça existe. [...] Ou si j'ai entendu parler du massacre, c'est en passant, je n'ai pas prêté attention. Aïn Deb, l'Algérie, ça ne me disait pas grand-chose. On savait la guerre dans ce pays mais de loin, on en parlait comme de n'importe quelle guerre, en Afrique, au Moyen-Orient, à Kaboul, en Bosnie" (23). Learning of this massacre in which his parents and dozens of people from his home town were killed two years after the event and through his brother's personal writings demonstrates Malrich's extreme disconnect from his roots, and indeed, from the larger world. This disconnect is echoed later in Malrich's inability to fathom the destruction of the Holocaust and his father's role in it. Not only does Rachel's writing give Malrich the facts of the past as it relates to their family, but his words also provide necessary context and insight that allow the younger Schiller to fully grasp what he is learning when he reads it.

Although initially neither son knew of their father's Nazi past, Malrich remained the most reluctant to acknowledge the evidence of his involvement in Nazi activities during World War II. During his return to Algeria, Rachel had discovered a hidden cache of Nazi artifacts that Hans had kept in the family home:

On est intimidé devant un objet que l'on sait plein de secrets. Pour Rachel, l'affaire était facile, il ne s'attendait à rien d'extraordinaire. Toutes les familles en ont de pareils, une boîte à chaussures, un cartable, une mallette, on y range des papiers, des photos, de lettres, de petits bijoux, des porte-bonheur. [...] Moi, je savais par son journal sur quoi j'allais tomber et quelle souffrance m'attendait (46).

This discovery is obviously startling for Rachel, who like his brother, had grown up with the image of their father as an Algerian hero who had fought for the colony's independence and was honored with the title of Si Mourad in his adopted village of Aïn Deb. Confronted with the

volume of evidence—Nazi documents, photographs and medals with his father’s name inscribed—Rachel cannot deny the extent to which his father had been involved in the Nazi machine. Reading in Rachel’s journal about this archive and the Second World War is all new and nearly inconceivable for Malrich, who admits: “C’est bête à dire mais je ne savais rien de cette guerre, de cette affaire d’extermination” (50). Without a base of knowledge about World War II, Malrich has no cultural reference point from which to view his father. He remains much more reluctant to admit his father’s role as a Nazi chemist and SS officer, questioning the weight of the contents of Hans’s personal archive and the utility of investigating this time in his life:

Le fatras disait que mon père était un criminel du guerre nazi, qui aurait été pendu si la justice avait mis la main sur lui et, en même temps, ça ne disait rien, je le refusais, je m’accrochais à autre chose, plus vrai, plus juste, c’est notre père, nous sommes ses enfants, nous portons son nom, c’était un type formidable, dévoué à son village, aimé et respecté de ses habitants, qui a aidé à l’indépendance d’un pays, à la libération d’un people. Je me disais: il était soldat, il a obéi aux ordres, des ordres qu’il ne comprenait pas, qu’il désapprouvait. [...] Et puis, pourquoi remuer le passé, papa est mort, assassiné, égorgé comme un mouton, et maman aussi, et leurs voisins, par de vrais criminels, les plus haineux que la terre ait portés, qui sont là, bien vivants, en Algérie, partout dans le monde... (49-50)

But with Rachel’s explanations, Malrich eventually comprehends the ramifications of his father’s hidden artifacts in an otherwise innocuous box. Malrich underscores the impact of his brother’s writing in shaping his own interpretation of what he learns about his father, stating: “Il avait de l’instruction, il voyait tout du premier coup et il voyait loin. Moi, j’ai besoin d’explications et de

temps pour cadrer les choses dans ma tête. À sa place, le contenu de la mallette ne m'aurait rien dit, sinon la triste réalité: mes parents sont morts assassinés et je ne les verrai plus" (51).

In addition to serving as a link to the experiences of the first-generation and their significance, Rachel's journal gives Malrich insight into his brother's life and later into the choice to take his own life. The brothers, who lived radically different lives in France, grow closer after Rachel's death. At the opening of their combined journals, Malrich admits that he saw very little of Rachel in France: "Rachel, je le voyais peu, je l'évitais, il me pompait avec son prêchi-prêcha. [...] Il avait sa vie, j'avais la mienne. Il était cadre dans une grosse boîte américaine, il avait sa nana, son pavillon, sa bagnole, sa carte de crédit, ses heures étaient minutées, moi je ramais H24 avec les sinistres de la cité" (11). This description of Rachel as successful, educated and able to escape the HLM where Malrich still lived with their adopted guardians, once again solidifies the distance—both social and educational—between the brothers. Confronting this gap, Rachel's journal entries and experience searching for the family's true past render him human in Malrich's eyes. As Malrich reads Rachel's personal thoughts and reflections on their newfound shared and traumatic past, Malrich is better able to understand his brother.

As suggested by Mireille Rosello in her analysis of this novel, Rachel is reduced to the traces he left behind for Malrich in his journal. Because his diary entries are the only interventions of Rachel's character in the text, he is not only transposed, but in fact transcribed into his own posthumously read diary. Malrich admits that he sees another Rachel in his journal, and relates to him, as he had not been able to do in life: "Là, dans son journal, Rachel est cool, sympa, rigolo. Humain, quoi. La douleur l'a rendu humble, proche des gens. [...] Peut-être le fait de s'interroger est-il la vraie raison. Il s'en est posé des questions dans son journal" (31-32).

These questions about Hans's past, his role during World War II and his flight from justice after the fall of the Third Reich remain largely unresolved with his suicide. They are instead taken up and reevaluated by Malrich.

Through Rachel's words, Malrich begins to learn of his family's past, but he, too, is left with questions, "Rachel est mon frère, pourtant je ne savais rien de lui, et là, son journal intime est comme un écran qui m'empêche de le voir. Mon pauvre Rachel, qui es-tu, qui est notre père? Qui suis-je?" (118-119). With this trio of questions, Malrich underscores the relationship between identity and lineage: he links his brother's suffering to his father's unpunished actions and both men's deaths as the cause of his own state of confusion. This connection is rendered more solid by Rachel's numerous questions and warnings regarding inherited guilt; he cautions that, "Le silence est la perpétuation du crime, il le relativise, il lui ferme la porte du jugement et de la vérité, et lui ouvre toute grande celle de l'oubli, celle du recommencement" (98). And indeed, this "recommencement" occurs as Hans's silence leads Rachel to return to the scene of his father's crimes and then Rachel's own silence, in turn, prompts Malrich to take up once again the investigation into their father's actions during and immediately following World War II in an effort to place his own life in reference to the void left behind by his father's silence. This cyclical repetition is likewise apparent in both sons' desire to return to Algeria to pay their respects at their parents' graves. At two points in the text, the brothers employ almost identical language to express this desire: "Ma décision est prise, je vais à Aïn Deb. C'est un devoir, une nécessité absolue. C'est mon chemin de Damas. Qu'importent les risques" (26; Rachel's diary) // "Je n'ai jamais pensé que remonter à la source des choses était chose facile. Tout a un prix. J'étais prêt à le payer. Rachel parlait de chemin de Damas, je ne sais pas à quoi ça renvoie mais ça doit être ça : le chemin d'Alger" (141; Malrich's diary).

In seeking answers, Rachel's journal proves an invaluable resource for Malrich but he is only able to truly understand and feel the weight of his family's past when he can physically experience a location that was significant to his father—the village where he reinvented himself, Aïn Deb. While Rachel does this on a significantly larger scale, tracing his father's movements across Europe and North Africa, Malrich also underscores the importance of the physicality of his experience in rendering the past real for him. In a practical sense, Rachel's diary entries provide concrete guidance for his younger brother. In several entries, Rachel details the process of applying for a visa to visit Algeria and then goes on to describe the difficulties he faced in travelling from Algiers to Aïn Deb. Having learned from Rachel's challenges, Malrich secured a visa through his network of friends and travelled via local buses rather than the expensive taxi service Rachel used. Once in Aïn Deb, both Rachel and Malrich are welcomed warmly and identified by sight as Hans's sons. After visiting with childhood friends, each Schiller son is taken to pay their respects at their parents' graves.

Both graveside moments are narrated in the first person and allow the internal reflection of the narrating brother to reach the reader. Both brothers' entries discussing these moments begin with a physical description of the cemetery and the placement of the Schiller parents' headstones and moves to the brothers' experiences before the tombs. It is at this point that their experiences diverge. Rachel describes the cemetery as having a clear delineation between the graves of normal residents, who die of natural causes, and those “dans une parcelle du cimetière délimitée par des pierres passées à la chaux, élevée de cette manière au rang de carré des martyrs, morts pour Dieu et la République” (37-38). Rachel, who visited his parents' tombs during summer 1994—mere months after the massacre in Aïn Deb—highlights the separation and veneration of his father among the other victims. At the tombs, Rachel ruminates on the

nature and temporality of life and records a feeling of calm he experiences at seeing his parents interred in such a way: “Parce que j’avais accompli le pèlerinage et que j’ai été fraternellement reçu, très vite j’ai senti la paix revenait dans mon cœur. Ma respiration s’est calmée, elle était une suite d’inspirations pleines de courage et de soupirs pleins de noble renoncement” (39).

Malrich, who excerpted a few pages from Rachel’s diary entries of this time, admits that he was unsettled by what he read and concedes in a direct address to his future reader that: “Ces pages du journal de Rachel m’ont inquiété. J’ai résumé, j’ai pris le meilleur, le reste est un vrai bla-bla de mosquée” (40). And, Malrich, informed of his father’s past, views Hans’s tomb, his death and legacy in the town—which Rachel describes in the following manner “On dit que les défunts laissent derrière eux une réputation et un people pour la juger sans merci” (37)—in a much more negative light. At the time of Rachel’s visit, Hans’s past and the physical traces of it (his personal archive of Nazi effects) have not yet come to light. When Rachel discovers this past, his views of his father irreparably change and, unquestionably, his graveside experience would have been affected as well.

As Rachel had done, Malrich begins his diary entry about the Schiller graves with a description of the cemetery. Roughly two years after the massacre, the cemetery shows the effects of time: “Le voilà donc le carré des martyrs où reposaient les miens. L’herbe avait poussé, la chaux des pierres avait disparu et les pierres étaient noyées dans la boue. Les martyrs étaient des morts des morts comme les autres, rien ne les séparait, leur espace avait rejoint celui des morts naturels. [...] Bientôt, ils seront unis dans la même poussière. La petite stèle posée par l’administration n’était plus visible, les défunts étaient placés sous la même loi, celle du temps qui efface tout” (185). Rather than focusing on the recognized sacrifices of the martyrs of the Aïn Deb massacre, Malrich underscores the equality of death. Similarly, the overgrown

cemetery itself seems to no longer recognize the difference, erasing the various types of death and rendering them all equal and equally anonymized.

Malrich's experience of communing with his parents is likewise quite different from that of Rachel. Rather than experiencing a sense of calm connectedness, Malrich describes an intense and physical pain:

...devant mes tombes, j'essayais de me recueillir dans la paix, de penser aux jours heureux de l'enfance entre papa et maman. Je n'y arrivais pas mais je me disais que bientôt je succomberais au charme de la méditation comme Rachel l'avait été au point de se retrouver philosophe comme toute une assemblée d'imams. Soudain, j'ai eu mal. Atrociement mal. Une douleur qui m'a déchiré le ventre. Ce qui était lointain, que j'avais appris en différé, en lisant le journal de Rachel, que j'ai intériorisé, refoulé, relativisé, était devant moi, sous mes yeux, les tombes de mes parents, celle de papa, de maman et les autres, nos voisins, nos amis, mes copains d'enfance et de petits bambins que je n'ai pas vus naître, ni grandir, tués comme des chiens par on ne sait qui. (186)

This reaction demonstrates that, although Malrich was aware of his father's past, and that he had been prepared for the cemetery visit by Rachel's diary entries and research, visiting the site of his parents' interment nevertheless produced an unexpectedly emotional result. Additionally, that Malrich differentiates the knowledge he learned from Rachel's diary ("en différé") from what he learns by visiting Aïn Deb underscores the importance of physically experiencing a site to understand its significance in his family's history and for himself.

Another difference in the Schiller brothers' experience of visiting Aïn Deb, is the longer-term ramifications of the visit. Rachel returned from Algeria with the decision to keep silent about what he found in the family home, and had determined to spare his younger brother the

pain of the truth he'd begun to learn about his father's Nazi past. Malrich, on the other hand, decided in Aïn Deb that he must combat this type of silence. Upon his return to France, Malrich turned to his brother in the only way he could. He decided to take up Rachel's diary entries and publish their joint diary. To this end, Malrich visits Rachel's grave and his recollection of this visit in his diary represents a unique temporal moment where the past and present almost collide (with the future as well because the experience is documented by Malrich for inclusion in the published future joint diary). This conversation, albeit one-sided, once again demonstrates how Malrich is more in touch with Rachel after his death than he had been in life:

Je me suis rendu au cimetière comme je me l'étais promis au village. Je me suis assis sur la tombe de Rachel et je lui ai longuement parlé. J'étais sûr qu'il m'entendait. Je lui ai dit : Salut, frérot, tu ne le sais pas, je reviens de Aïn Deb. [...] J'ai fait pareil que toi, je me suis recueilli sur la tombe des parents. [...] Quelle affaire que l'histoire de notre père et quel drame pour nous. [...] Ce que j'ai lu dans ton journal et ce que j'ai appris par tes livres m'ont donné froid dans le dos. J'en ai pris un coup de vieux. Est-ce que des choses comme ça peuvent se reproduire ? Je me dis que c'est impossible mais quand je vois ce que les islamistes font chez nous et ailleurs, je me dis qu'ils dépasseront les nazis si un jour ils ont le pouvoir. Ils sont trop pleins de haine et de prétention pour se contenter de nous gazer. (221-222)

Discussing his understanding of the family's past and relating it to his own situation shows that Malrich has a deeper understanding of the significance of his father's personal history than Rachel originally thought possible. Beyond his internalization and personal reconciliation with Hans's past, Malrich decides that in order to prevent further repetitions of the violence and trauma in which his father participated, he must share his story and the larger history with the

wider public. Because Rachel's work and his suicide inform this story, Malrich seeks his brother's approval: "Je voulais aussi te dire que j'ai décidé de publier ton journal et le mien, j'espère que tu es d'accord et que je trouverais un éditeur. À mon avis, la vérité est la vérité, elle doit être sue" (222-223).

In this scene at Rachel's grave, Malrich appears transformed from a young man without direction, purpose or personal history into a motivated and inspired aspiring author who wishes to make his family history and its larger implications known to the world. This "conversation", likewise, concretizes the differences in the Schiller brothers' reactions to learning of Hans's Nazi past. Clearly, the weight of history can be crushing, as in the case of Rachel's physical and mental decline ending in his suicide, or it can be understood as a cautionary example. For Malrich, accepting his father's past was no easy task, but he is able to link the rise of Nazism and political extremism during his father's time to the rise of religious extremism he experiences in his own neighborhood. His ability to find his own parallels between the past and the present demonstrates that Malrich has internalized and worked through his father's past and has decided to employ his knowledge to prevent such actions in the future. It is clear, then, from this scene, that Malrich intends to use their joint diary as the vehicle to share this history with a wider audience.

The presence of two narrative voices is already a departure from the traditional diary model, which chronicles the life events of one person from his or her unique point of view. In the case of *Le journal des frères Schiller*, this doubled narration is further complicated by a chronological irregularity in the text. Malrich acknowledges editing his brother's diary for clarity; however, there is a moment in the text that appears to indicate Malrich's misunderstanding or reorganization of his brother's journey retracing Hans's movements. Such

an irregularity calls into question the reliability of the main narrating brother. Malrich directly addresses the reader in two italicized notes that seem to serve as warnings to the reader and inform the audience of changes to his and Rachel's original writing. In two brief paragraphs that precede his first diary entry, dated October 1996, Malrich presents a note that resembles a signed "pacte autobiographique" in which he reveals that this text has in fact been modified.⁷¹ He thanks Rachel's former teacher who edited their combined diaries. A similar reminder appears near the end of the text, once again in italics and separated from the body of the novel: "Note concernant l'organisation des chapitres suivants et le choix des chroniques de Rachel. Ces dispositions m'ont été suggérées par Mme Dominique G.H." (191). Once again, Malrich has taken into account Rachel's former teacher's advice and this note is particularly relevant because of one potential and significant error in chronology that occurs just one page later.

Malrich describes his brother's journey across Europe and North Africa and admits, "Pour une raison que je ne connais pas, Rachel a laissé Auschwitz en dernière étape de son périple, alors que notre père y est passé au milieu de sa carrière. [...] Le fait est que cette visite, plus que les autres, l'a incroyablement bouleversé. Je crois que c'est là, à un moment très précis [...], qu'il a décidé de se suicider, de se gazer en vérité, dès son retour à Paris" (192). And it is indeed possible that it was at Auschwitz, in February 1996, that Rachel decided his own fate, but it was not until his journey had been completed in March 1996 with visits to Turkey and Egypt that Rachel set about killing himself in expiation of his father's sins. Rachel's final stop in the journey that followed Hans Schiller's movements away from his former identity as a Nazi chemist, took him to the pyramids of Giza. Here, he stages an exact replica of a photo he'd found in his father's personal archive, which he inherited after the murder of his parents. This

⁷¹ See the full note reproduced on page 107 above.

photograph, he says, is: “Une réplique exacte de l’originale, si on veut bien oublier mes airs de déporté. Au dos, j’ai écrit: ‘Helmut Schiller, fils de Hans Schiller. Gizeh, 11 avril 1996.’ Un demi-siècle les sépare; et quelques millions de morts partis en fumée” (215). This last-visited location is not without significance. With this image, he is literally retracing and recreating his father’s footsteps. No less significant is Rachel’s choice to use his German name rather than his hybrid name in this description. Describing himself with his German name and linking his identity to his father’s demonstrates how his retracing his father’s escape across Western Europe into North Africa has impacted Rachel sense of self: his life is linked to his father’s and his father’s crimes. Presumably this is the last place Hans went before resurfacing in colonial Algeria. And it is likewise Rachel’s last stop in retracing his father’s flight from Nazi Germany. Malrich says that Rachel left Auschwitz as his last site to visit, but we see that this is not the case. Is it more impactful to have him end his journey at Auschwitz and then ritualize his suicide as if he were a stereotypical prisoner? Upon returning to Paris, Rachel dresses himself in striped pajamas, shaves his head and finally kills himself with his car’s exhaust in his confined garage. Does Malrich linking his brother’s suicide to Auschwitz make this act perhaps more heroic and brave? Rachel himself never refers to his impending end of life act as a suicide and links it to justice being done decades after his father’s flight from just punishment.

It is conceivable that this is an editing error outside the world of the text; however, this is unlikely because of the importance of precise dating for the characters within the text. Religious extremists massacred Hans and Aïcha Schiller, along with other members of their town, on April 24, 1995 and Rachel chooses this date for his suicide one year later in 1996—“Je n’avais plus rien à faire au Caire. Ni ailleurs. Je rentre à Paris, j’ai un rendez-vous que je ne peux manquer. Arrivé où je suis, ce ne peut être que la fin. C’est le 24 avril que mes parents sont morts, c’est le

jour que Hans Schiller a échappé une fois pour toutes à la justice des hommes” (215). Rachel’s rendezvous then is with justice as he views his death as penance for his father’s war crimes. The precision with which Rachel undertakes the journey to recreate his father’s escape from Europe is not lost on either Malrich or the reader. But if it is not a simple error, how might it affect the reliability of Malrich as the narrator and the reader’s experience of the text? Does this error undermine the believability of this text as a diary? Does this suggest Malrich hasn’t understood the past as well as he thinks he has?

Perhaps, instead, Malrich’s active role in modifying Rachel’s diary alongside his own writing demonstrates his new ownership of the histories described in the brothers’ combined journal. Chronicling his discovery of Hans’s Nazi past and the emotions produced by this unearthed history, Rachel details his deferred postmemorial experience in his 2004 diary. Malrich, upon inheriting his brother’s journal, becomes a party to this experience and can employ it as a model for his own. Understanding the weight of their family history and learning its effects as described in Rachel’s journal, Malrich gains insight into the personal impact of these traumatic pasts. His own deferred postmemory experience is written alongside and in conversation with his brother’s writing in their joint diary—an expression of Malrich accepting and integrating the traumatic weight of his family’s past, of which he was previously unaware, into his identity.

Of Intention and Audience

Malrich’s potential error, as well as his two asides to the reader, establishes not only a link between his status as the author of this work and the external, reading audience, but also a distance between these positions and roles. The reader is firmly set apart from the story, but the

reader is not the only audience. The combined Schiller diary has been read and edited by Rachel's former teacher. Before this, Malrich was the original, and only, intended reader of Rachel's diary. The presence of fictional audiences is likewise evident in Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*. An intended audience is clear for Louis's film—he plans to submit it at a film festival (28)—as is the francophone Parisian audience of Omer's graffiti. The role of the audience in memory studies cannot be overstated. According to historian Guy Beiner, “When discussing memory, it is too easy to forget that films, like plays, books, paintings or any other form of cultural production that addresses the past, do not in themselves remember. Therefore the question of audiences is crucial for understanding the dynamics of remembering” (109). Pushing this concept further, Jorge J.E. Gracia highlights the relationship between author and audience: “The intended audience indirectly reveals some of the author's intentions and how the text should be approached” (Gracia 715).

The authors' intentions are indeed suggested through the dedication preceding Sebbar's narrative and the fictional introduction to the text from Malrich Schiller in Sansal's novel. Sebbar dedicates this text to “victimes algériennes d'octobre 1961 à Paris”, to the “Comité Maurice-Audin” and to several figures active through their own work and cultural productions in combatting the amnesia surrounding the events of the Algerian War within the French consciousness.⁷² These dedications clearly indicate the author's investment in fighting this historical aphasia and suggest that the intended audience would also support her attempts to do so. Malrich's introduction to the finalized combined (fictional) diary he has created replaces any dedication from the author, Sansal. In this introduction, Malrich acknowledges that the text has

⁷² The Comité Maurice-Audin is named for the young mathematician who was arrested, tortured, and died in French custody during June 1957. Committees investigating his death sprang up mere months after his death and protest, more generally, the French use of torture during the Algerian War for independence (Laronde 143).

been edited, indicating that his intended audience has a higher level of education than Malrich. His admission that he did not include all of the editor's suggestions suggests his very personal connection to this history. Finally, his inclusion of the editor's warning of "des parallèles dangereux qui pourrait [le] valoir des ennuis" (8) incites the reading audience to look for these parallels between the rise of radical Islam in the 1990s that Malrich sees in Paris and Algeria and the rise of Nazism during his father's youth.

Both these dedications and introductions serve as connections to the external, reading audience—but the connection to the fictional audience is perhaps even more significant. Rachel specifically requests that his diary be given to his younger brother, but the intended audiences for the fictional productions in Sebbar's text remain less clear. Regardless, each of the newly created cultural artifacts included in these novels (be it graffiti, Louis's documentary or the Schiller diary) are designed to be shared with the wider public and provoke them to act in some manner. Indeed, Gracia discusses the role of an audience in relation to a text: "That the function of an audience is to understand does not mean that the audience must be considered passive... On the contrary, the audience approaches the text actively, but its relation to the text and the aim it has, *qua* audience, are different from those that characterize authors" (Gracia 726). Malrich, as the original audience of his brother's diary, does indeed approach this inherited text actively. Not only does he use it as a resource when learning about events described by Rachel, but he also reads it as a cautionary tale of what might befall him if he allows the Schiller family history to impact him in the same way it weighed on his older brother. Instead of succumbing to the trauma of his father's history as a Nazi perpetrator, as Rachel did, Malrich is inspired to attempt to forestall a similar rise in extremism, which he has likened to the rise of the Nazi party, in his own community. In *La Seine était rouge*, Amel and Omer watch Louis's October 17 film, and

the connections between Amel's mother's testimonies and Amel and Omer's trajectory around Paris would suggest that they are actively retracing her steps after having gained a new understanding of them from the film. Gracia goes on to suggest that in spite of the audience's active approach to a text, "the audience does not really participate efficiently in the production of the text; only the author does that" (Gracia 729-730). And yet, in the cases of the fictional audiences portrayed consuming the works created by the fictional authors in these novels, the audience does impact the production of the "text". In Sebbar's text, Omer's graffiti is filmed by Louis, which suggests that after having shown the film to Amel and Omer—who were inspired to visit (and deface) the monuments and locations described therein by Amel's mother Nouria—he must have returned to the significant sites that were mentioned in the film and shot more footage. Likewise, in Sansal's text, the nature of the produced diary, which combines the writing of both Schiller brothers, reflects a joint effort by the original author and his audience-turned-second author.

Malrich's ability to find his own parallels between the past and the present demonstrates that he has internalized and begun to work through his father's past and has decided to employ his knowledge to prevent such events in the future. In an analysis of *Le village de l'Allemand ou le journal des frères Schiller*, Elena-Brandusa Steiciuc underlines the differences between how Rachel and Malrich react to discovering the past: "À la différence de son frère, écrasé par la culpabilité, Malrich se sent prêt à défier et à combattre l'horreur qui les accable, par le geste et surtout par la parole" (Steiciuc 174). She goes on to relate Malrich's plans to publish the diaries to the author's motivations in penning this novel: "La décision de Malrich est la même que celle de Boualem Sansal, qui lance dans son dernier roman une 'lettre de colère et d'espoir' à ses contemporains" (Steiciuc 175). Such a comparison creates one final parallel—here between

character and author—among the many that punctuate this text. These parallels link this chapter’s analysis of Sansal’s and Sebbar’s novels as works enacting deferred postmemory to Hirsch’s original concept of postmemory in that, at their foundations, both processes connect the second-generation to the first generation’s experiences. In the novels examined above, however, in contrast to the situations depicted and discussed in chapter one, the first generation in no way actively contributes to the second-generation’s increased understanding of and connection to their traumatic past. In a sense, Sansal’s fictional story reaches out to the real audience and provides a model for external reactions. The inverse of this is apparent in the following chapter, entitled “‘Writing Wrongs’: Redeploying History in *Mohand, le harki* and *Meurtres pour mémoire*”, in which the outside world functions as model for fictional events. *Mohand, le harki* (2003) by Hadjila Kemoum and *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984) by Didier Daeninckx both draw on real, external historical figures and events to produce new (albeit fictional) resolutions for unresolved traumas.

CHAPTER THREE

“Writing Wrongs”: Redeploying History in *Mohand le harki* and *Meurtres pour mémoire*

It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.

—Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*

Written 30 years apart, the two texts under consideration in this chapter, one by a well known French novelist, the other by a one-time beur novelist—Didier Daeninckx's “hard-boiled” detective story and Hadjila Kemoum's domestic drama—both share an unlikely interest in archives. As in Derrida's description of the pull of the archive above, these novels present and problematize archives that allow second-generation characters to “return to the origin” of the first-generation—an origin that had not been shared directly with them. The very inclusion of archives, both formal and personal, in fictional narratives destabilizes the status of these works as novels. Kemoum's 2003 novel, *Mohand le harki*, incorporates two characters' personal archives that include material taken from actual police, legislative, ministerial archives—both fictional and real. Daeninckx's text *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984) presents a more traditional archive maintained by the French state. When, how and why these archives are accessed (and by whom) represents the most salient connection between these two works.

In each of these texts, archives act in place of first-to-second generation transmission and provide a link backwards from the second generation to the trauma of the first generation without in-person testimony. As opposed to the traditional postmemorial experience as outlined by Hirsch, which is heavily dependent on the presence of shared memories from the generation that experienced a trauma, these texts depict families that are marked by the absence of this original

generation's intervention. While both texts depict families with surviving members of the first generation, these characters' refusal to discuss the traumas they experienced first-hand cuts their descendants off from understanding the weight of these memories that, in spite of never having been given voice, greatly impacted their lives. In Kemoum's novel, the titular Mohand removes himself from his children's lives through anger, alcoholism, and silence while Roger Thiraud, from Daeninckx's narrative, is murdered before his son, Bernard, is even born. In each of these novels, the father is absent (either self-segregates or is deceased) and the mother is a surprisingly a minor figure within the lives of the second generation. Roger Thiraud's widow, having witnessed her husband's murder, is so traumatized that she is unable to raise her son, instead sending him away to be raised by his paternal grandparents. Mohand's wife, Milouda, exits the novel before it even begins—the narrative opens with her burial after a long illness.

With no practical access to this first generation, then, the second generation is able to discover the trauma that nevertheless haunts their lives through exploring the vestiges and traces left behind by the first generation after their death. As such, the postmemorial experiences that are described in these novels do not strictly align with Hirsch's concept of post memory—they are, rather, deferred. Instead of being shared and transmitted during the second generation's youth, the first generation's memories have been compiled into personal documents and archives (both informal and institutionalized) that have been painstakingly collected by the first generation. This gesture reveals, perhaps, the desire on the part of these members of the first generation to share, someday, their traumatic experiences—gestures that were not realized during their lifetimes.

The daughter of a harki soldier who fought for the French during the Algerian War for independence, Hadjila Kemoum was inspired to write *Mohand le harki* by her personal history

and by harki collective history.⁷³ Like two of the second-generation characters in this novel, Kemoum was born in Algeria and moved to France in early childhood. Another autobiographical element shared between author and characters was Kemoum's father's alcoholism, which impeded their relationship and, coupled with her mother's depression, resulted in Kemoum being removed from the home and raised by a French foster family (Sutherland 195).⁷⁴ Later inspirations for this text, which depicts a distanced second generation connecting as adults with the traumas of their predecessors, can be found in an interview given by a former French official, Pierre Mesmer. According to Nina Sutherland, "In these interviews, Pierre Mesmer distanced himself from any responsibility for the massacres and later for the delay in repatriating the Harkis to France, remarks for which he has subsequently been sued by various Harki associations" (196). The inclusion of similar comments in the novel by a fictional French official in Kemoum's novel demonstrates how personal and public histories are both incorporated into this work of fiction. To a certain extent, it is possible that this novel allows Kemoum to create a fictional resolution to real events from her past. In a larger sense, a similar fictional reckoning takes place for the characters depicted in the novel. While the titular harki, Mohand Aberkhan—and his kidnapping of the aforementioned French official—are imagined, in reality, numerous harki associations in France endeavor to bring awareness, through activism and legislation, to this group's long overlooked experience during and after the Algerian War.

⁷³ The term harki designates an auxiliary soldier who fought alongside the French during the Algerian War for independence. As Nina Sutherland explains, loyalty was not always the motivating factor for harki soldiers; instead, some Algerians joined the French army as the result of "a desire to protect their families during a time of war and earn a living in a country ravaged by unemployment and famine" (193). Charles-Robert Ageron calculates that there were approximately 120,000 *supplétifs* at the beginning of 1961 (3) and Enjelvin estimates that more than 500,000 harkis and descendants live in France today (113).

⁷⁴ Sutherland explains that both alcoholism and depression resulting from the twin traumas and war and exile are not uncommon in the harki community (195).

This novel presents the largely dysfunctional Aberkan family and how the first- and second-generation family members have adjusted to life in metropolitan France. In an attempt to assimilate, Mohand shares little of his harki past with his children, and yet the weight of this contentious period nevertheless impacts his children. Without the intervention of Mohand, who has long been unable to confront this past with his children, the second generation attempts to understand Mohand's actions through his personal archive, which they discover only after his death. Through consulting his archive, mostly comprised of news clippings and photographs, the second-generation characters who choose to engage with this history are finally privy to a deferred postmemory experience that had previously been inaccessible to them.

Didier Daeninckx's connection to the traumas of the Algerian War also stems from a childhood experience. *Meurtres pour mémoire*, which engages with World War II history as well as French colonial history, finds its inspiration in Daeninckx's memory of his mother's friend's death in the February 8, 1962 demonstration at the Charonne metro station (Reid 45).⁷⁵ While this historical event is not addressed, the night of October 17, 1961 is a small but significant moment in the novel. This peaceful protest and the Parisian police force's violent response was likewise significant but also overlooked in larger French history for many years. This march, organized by the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), comprised approximately 25,000 men, women, and children peacefully protesting the racist curfew imposed uniquely on

⁷⁵ This demonstration, organized by French communist party and other left-wing groups, protested the Algerian War for Independence and *Organisation de l'armée secrète* (OAS) attacks in Metropolitan France and abroad. In the months preceding this protest, the OAS had been increasing its attacks (bombings and assassination attempts, for the most part) in an attempt to retain Algeria as a French colony. The Parisian Police force had not given approval for this protest and when officers arrived at the Charonne metro station to break it up, chaos ensued: "...the deaths occurred when panicked members of the crowd sought to flee a violent police charge by running down the stairs of a metro station. The nine victims were crushed and asphyxiated in the press of people..." (Cole 118).

Français musulmans d'Algérie, or FMA, as they were called at the time.⁷⁶ Jim House captures the violence of the police response to the demonstration: “Those killed that evening and over the following days were shot, beaten, tortured or drowned in the Seine or canals, in both central Paris and the outskirts, their corpses dumped or placed in anonymous graves. The other protestors detained [over 11,000 people] were eventually released, or ‘repatriated’ to detention centers in Algeria” (355). In *Meurtres*, Roger Thiraud (expectant father and history teacher), did not participate in the Algerian cause or this demonstration, but was murdered while returning home during the protest. Due to other events on October 17, Roger’s murder goes uninvestigated until his son, Bernard, is also gunned down decades after his father’s murder. Finally uncovering the relationship between the father and son’s visits to French archives in Toulouse (visits that preceded each one’s murder), Toulousian Police Inspecteur Cadin concludes that the crimes were likely connected.

Because both first-generation father and second-generation son die before a postmemorial experience can be enacted, this experience in this novel is further deferred by the inclusion of an outsider to the family who is nonetheless the age of the second-generation. Inspector Cadin, in completing the research begun by the elder Thiraud, Roger, and furthered by Bernard, effectively

⁷⁶ In colonial Algeria, the FLN’s initial and “immediate target was French power. [...] The leadership of the new force reflected less concern with political doctrine than with political action” (Lewis 163). Comprised of military and civilian participants, the FLN was active in Algeria and France throughout the Algerian war. For a wider discussion of the FLN, see: Henry F. Jackson, *The FLN in Algeria: Party Development in a Revolutionary Society*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977 and Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978. “FMA” is a designation that refers to Muslim Algerians living under French colonial rule. This specifically religious terminology shifted between the 19th and 20th centuries, but persisted to set these citizens apart from others in the colony and in France. On such terms, see: Todd Shepard, “La République face aux Harkis: Questions aux historiens” *Les Temps Modernes* 666 (2011), especially pages 58-60 and Patrick Weil “Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale: une nationalité française dénaturée” in *La Justice en Algérie (1830-1962)*, Paris: La Documentation française, 2005, 95-109.

becomes a proxy member of this second generation. While a character like Cadin's does not figure into Hirsch's traditional model of postmemory, which is centered on familial transmission, he essentially takes up the responsibilities of the second generation in seeking to understand the trauma of the first generation—here not only Roger's murder, but also the circumstances that led to it. Cadin's own deferred postmemory experience is further mediated by the second-generation member of the Thiraud family, Bernard, who is himself initially engaging in deferred postmemory work by taking up his father's research at the Toulouse archives. This novel, then, presents levels of history (French institutional involvement in atrocities during World War II and the Algerian War) and the multiple impacts of these traumatic moments.

While it may seem unusual to compare these texts, one of which finds intensely personal—nearly autobiographical—inspiration while the other seems to create layers of distance from author to subject, the connection between these novels originates in their reliance on archives and archival material. In her research, Carolyn Steedman links identity and the archive: “In the project of finding an identity through the process of historical identification, the past is searched for something...that confirms the searched in his or her sense of self, confirms that searcher as he or she wants to be” (73). Each member of the second-generation in these texts turns to an archive because the first generation has not been forthcoming with information about the past. In searching the archive for the historical significance unshared by their predecessors, the second-generation experiences what Harriet Bradley describes as “the ultimate intoxication of the archive: that leap of imagination beyond listening to the voices that clamour within it into that sense of the recovery of the lost and at one and the same time the discovery of one's better self” (111). This “better self” is perhaps a more complete self in these narratives. Without intervention or explanation from the first generation, the second-generation characters of each

novel initially feel only their predecessors' trauma without understanding the personal and historical significance of it. The archive, then, allows for this understanding and facilitates a deferred postmemorial experience, which had been previously unavailable for the second generation.

History of the Archive; History in the Archive

The archive as a concept is the subject of intense scrutiny. While the contents of official archives are rigorously controlled by, in most cases, the state or a ruling body, the status of the archive as an academic source and a subject of its own research is, likewise, under the purview of a growing body of researchers. As Bradley stated in 1999, "The archive...is a slippery concept" (108)—this short phrase alludes to the nature of much of modern scholarship on the archive as a "concept." This description registers a change in today's conception of an archive vis-à-vis earlier scholarship, which R.I. Moore describes as a belief "that truth lay buried in the archives, a sleeping princess awaiting their awakening kiss" (viii). At the same time, Bradley's "slippery" qualification nods to an ever-increasing number of articles and books that question and qualify the archive as more than a simple "repository of inert meanings" because such meanings only remain inert until they are interpreted by a researcher (108, 113).

In storing the traces of the historical past of a given nation, the archive would seem to provide tangible "proof" of its past deeds and suggest the potential for future strength. It is not insignificant to note that one of the archives at the heart of this chapter's analysis, the National Archives maintained by the French government, were opened in 1790, not long after the French

Revolution and the birth of the modern French nation as it is known today (Featherstone 592).⁷⁷

Featherstone underscores the relationship between the archive and the state in the following definition: “The term archive refers to the place where government records are stored. It was initially conceived as the site where official records were guarded and kept in secrecy. The archive was part of the apparatus of social rule and regulation, it facilitated the governance of the territory and population through accumulated information” (591). This originary function, then, implies the archive’s ability to connect the individual to the nation and to the nation’s history.

Mike Featherstone continues his discussion of the archive in highlighting its power in identity construction: “...archives were also important for the other part of the nation-state couplet, the formation and legitimation of the nation. The archive, then, was also a crucial site for national memory. It was the building that acted as the sanctum, the place in which the sacred texts and objects were stored that were used to generate collective identity and social solidarity” (592).

Bradley, among other scholars, underscores the power of the archive in concretizing a national identity and creating a space for the individual within the larger history of the nation: “Thus the institution of the archive from its initiation bridges the gap between public and private: public records in a private space” (110). The relationship of the citizen and the archive, which purports to protect a larger history in which he or she is implicated, reveals yet another archival relationship: that of the archivist and the visitor.

Archives are, as suggested above, created to preserve the legacy of a nation and its leaders—but without an audience to appreciate such records the weight of the archive is lacking.

⁷⁷ For a further discussion of the development of the French National Archives alongside current questions of access see, for instance, Jaak Valge and Birgit Kibal, “Restrictions on Access to Archives and Records in Europe: A History and the Current Situation”, *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28.2 (2007): 193-214. Other archives at stake in these novels include the Parisian Police archives and the personal collections of two characters.

Archives, to put it more plainly, are created for an audience—but they are first *created*. In his aptly titled article, “‘Who’s In, Who’s Out’: The Cultural Poetics of Archival Exclusion”, David Greetham states: “all conservational decisions are contingent, temporary, and culturally self-referential, even self-laudatory: we want to preserve the best of ourselves for those who follow” (9). Additionally, Thomas Osborne highlights the potential for bias in archival creation; he warns that in the archive, “It is never a matter of just revealing a given truth that is to be found there. So it would be a mistake ever to think that there could be an archive without a *politics* of the archive” (55). This “politics of the archive” stands in direct contrast to the now-dated ideal that has defined the scientific character of the discipline of history—its reliability, and reliance on the archives as proof. Helen Freshwater sketches out the “history of history” in the following:

Scientific truth about the past came to be associated with a similar set of practices in the newly professionalized discipline of history. These were summed up by Ranke’s three principles of historical investigation, which emphasized the objectivity of the historian, close analysis of archival material, and the importance of ‘*Wie es eigentlich gewesen*’ (as it really was) (quoted in Jenkins 1999: 106). This model prevailed in historical research in the social sciences until the 1950s: long enough for the archive to become firmly established as a symbol of truth, plausibility, and authenticity. (Freshwater 730)⁷⁸

That Freshwater links the “objectivity of the historian” with a reliance on “close analysis of archival materials” reveals a long-standing conception of the archive as a receptacle of truth, of literal traces of the past. This vision of the archive has been questioned during the last several decades, but, as Freshwater suggests, the weight of the archive as a “symbol of truth, plausibility,

⁷⁸ See also: Georg G. Iggers and James M. Powell, *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990; Bonnie Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women and Historical Practice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998; Joyce Appleby et al, *Telling the Truth about History*. London: Norton, 1994.

and authenticity” remains an alluring prospect for some scholars, especially those who may not have been given access to the archive. The question of access, then, returns us to the question of the audience of the archive—the reader of what Lyotard referred to as the “grand narrative” of history.⁷⁹

Qualifying her earlier description of the archive as “slippery,” Bradley suggests that there exists a general development of the archive as “a repeated connective sequence of archive – memory – the past – narrative” (108). As detailed above, it is not an accident which moments of the past are collected or ignored in creating *the* narrative of the past, but the very existence of such a narrative implies that there is an audience to read it (and that there will be a future audience for whom it has been preserved). Just as the archivist controls which elements of a given past are stored for posterity or legitimization in a nation’s archive, visiting these sacred relics is controlled as well. Osborne makes this especially clear in stating that “the existence of an archive always presumes the existence of a public, this is not necessarily the same thing as a general public” (54). Although archives are often cited as a tool used to create national memories and a shared identity of a nation’s inhabitants, they are not accessible to all of these inhabitants. Because French archives are deemed, in the eyes of the state, a national “patrimoine” there is a duty to protect and preserve them. The sensitive nature of certain materials stored within the state archive also necessitates limited access.⁸⁰ In 21st-century France, where wireless internet is widely available and even offered for free in numerous city

⁷⁹ Lyotard includes “mythologies, religions, beliefs” in his definition of this concept during a 1995 interview (Olson 401).

⁸⁰ See also: Barbara Cassin, “Politics of Memory on Treatment of Hate,” *The Public* 8.3 (2001): 9-22; Michel Duchein, “The History of European Archives and the Developments of the Archival Profession in Europe,” *American Archivist* 55 (1992): 14-25; and Valge and Kibbal, *op cit*.

parks, the archival administration remains largely resistant to such technology. The vast majority of French archives are uniquely available for consultation in person and while digitization of archival materials is underway, the French government has itself reported that within Parisian archives a grand total of 380 text pages and 190 images were digitized in the year 2013.⁸¹ With the question of accessibility, once again, the question of public and private in relation to the archive is brought to the fore. Private lives may become elements stored in the public record, but this so-called public record may in fact remain private.

What's more, even if a scholar can access the archives, he or she brings a set of preconceptions of what should or should not be stored in this record. Freshwater notes the doubled responsibility that both those controlling and visiting archives have in relation to the material housed therein: "Once removed from the world of recitation—enunciation—the voices of the past preserved in the archive will be mediated by the decisions of a series of archivists, experts, and academics. These 'curators' control which voices are given the opportunity to speak again to a wider audience" (734). Placing those who would seek to make the archive "speak" alongside those who have collected and control the archives suggests that free and open access to the past is not necessarily the same as unmediated access. Featherstone, as well, highlights the impact of the researcher's own biases in choosing which elements of the archive to study: "...it is clear that the archivist's gaze depends upon an aesthetics of perception, a discriminating gaze, through which an event can be isolated out of the mass of detail and accorded significance" (594). Indeed, approaching an existing archive—attending to what has been included, what has been excluded and how these contents have been organized—presents one layer of distance from the past and, beyond this, another level of separation is inherently present when a modern scholar

⁸¹ For more statistics of this nature, see the annual report of the Service interministériel des Archives de France: <http://www.archivesdefrance.culture.gouv.fr/static/7566>

attempts to recreate the past through the archive. In another commentary on the relationship between archival materials and those who would employ them, Freshwater cautions: “As the archive cannot offer direct access to the past, any reading of its contents will necessarily be a reinterpretation” (738). She goes on to characterize what she describes as the “attraction of the archival object”: “We are all surely vulnerable to this beguiling fantasy of self-effacement, which seems to promise the recovery of lost time, the possibility of being reunited with the long past, and the fulfillment of our deepest desires for wholeness and completion” (734). Dominick LaCapra has also pointed to another “attraction” that seems to draw researchers to the archive, especially those collections which have had limited exposure. He calls this experience a “fetishizing of the archive” and once again it is the result of a researcher’s own biases or interests coloring an interpretation of a given set of documents or artifacts. Indeed, LaCapra warns against viewing the archive as “a literal substitute for the ‘reality’ of the past which is ‘always already’ lost for the historian” (92). And yet, when an archive does not include all aspects of a given past, a similar reaction can be produced. Such exclusions can, in fact, create a situation in which “destroying or prohibiting the archive has only provided it with additional content. In this case that content is all the more unreal because it has been removed from sight and interred once and for all in the sphere of that which shall remain unknown, therefore allowing space for all manner of imaginary thoughts” (Mbembe 23).

Although the consensus among scholars is that a traditional archive is created and controlled by the state or a ruling organization to store and catalogue artifacts and documents related to the history of this state, it is evident that in a changing and modernizing world, this traditional archival model is already being challenged and expanded. Featherstone has noted the changing boundaries of the archive: “The archive ceases to be a physical place, housed in grand

buildings such as national libraries, and informational control and formation ceases to be in the form of the panopticon with its bureaucratic forms of control and surveillance. Rather the decentralized digital archive takes the form of a database in which, depending on the access coding, knowledge becomes freer to flow through decentered networks” (595). As seen above, however, the digitizing of the archive does not always correlate to an increase in accessibility. Beyond varied forms of archival repositories—digital or physical—an archive does not necessarily need to be a material document or artifact. Rather, a city can function as an archive, as argued by novelist Ciaran Carson: “the city...is in itself an archive of memory, from which the storyteller can pluck endless objects, symbols and traces to develop a narrative, utilizing ‘the teeming archive of his inward eye’” (Carson 80). Beyond the physical traces of history engraved on a cityscape, French historian Pierre Nora has pointed to commemoration ceremonies, memorial sites, anniversaries and monuments as some of the many sites of memory in his *Lieux de mémoire*. These varied archival bodies then demonstrate that the definition of an archive is changing and theories of the archive as such have been marked by change as well. On the other hand, Freshwater warns against losing all faith in the archive, despite its being controlled, changed and existing in varied forms. While she acknowledges the last several decades’ growing investigation into the faithfulness of the archive, she asserts:

We have replaced the archive’s traditional legitimacy with a site of conflicted signification. But this need not lead toward the fatalistic conception that there are no facts, only interpretations. [...] Despite our reservation concerning the reliability of the archive and its liability to mislead and manipulate, we have to return to the past, or what remains of it, in order to attempt a cautious, conditional reconstruction (751).

If the archive is cited as one of the integral ways in which national identity is formed and solidified, what, then, is the result when one's identity is distorted or perhaps not present in the archive? When one fails to 'find one's self' in the archive? This is the case in many colonial and postcolonial archives, which were created and most often retained by the colonial power.⁸² Following decolonization, a former colonial subject, if even given access to archival documents, might very well find that the history reflected in the official record is dissimilar to the history that he or she recalled experiencing. Marlene Manoff has investigated the weight of the archive in postcolonial studies, stating that this field "is highly suspicious of the colonial record and could be defined, in part, as an attempt to locate the voices of the silenced native within the literature produced by colonial powers;" she also notes that, increasingly, postcolonial "scholars focus on the absences and the distortions of the archive" (15). In her discussion of the archive as no longer, if it ever was, a neutral site of memory, Manoff demonstrates that in the case of colonial archives the politics behind the official record's creation become even more troublesome: "If the establishment and consolidation of the empire was built on the accumulation of information about the people and places under the colonial rule, one of the strategies adopted by postcolonial subjects has been to reinterpret and re-contextualize the information and thus call into question the colonial version of events" (16). Likewise, Suzanne Keen has stressed the importance of interrogating the archive as a means to reclaim a colonial past: "If one of the essential tools of empire-building was the collection of information, one of the characteristic postcolonial strategies is to reclaim, re-examine, and resituate that information, making the former margin the [center] and source of representation" (211).

⁸² The Archives nationales d'outre mer are currently stored in Aix-en-Provence, Nantes houses the Centre des Archives diplomatiques, and Paris holds the Archives nationales.

Works of fiction can serve to interrogate this contested history. Lia Brozgal has investigated the “the role of the literary text in representing that which cannot be seen or experienced, and in producing a new form of archive, one that slips the bounds of state control, abetted by a very different type of archon” (35). Indeed, this new form of archive, woven into a fictional narrative performs a similar gesture of storage of memories of the past and suggests “literature’s mission to engage in a dynamic reevaluation of such memories” (Gorrara, “Reflections” 136). As highlighted by Brozgal, the ability of fiction to “slip the bounds” of governmental oversight—particularly the censorship and repression within the context of the Algerian War—empowers authors to question the accepted history they present within their own works. The inclusion of the archive into works of fiction adds a sense of verisimilitude, as does the inclusion of real and verifiable events that generally serve as inspiration for an investigation within a text. In the two novels discussed in this chapter, the authors have included descriptions of events that took place during WWII, the Algerian War and on October 17, 1961, as well as uncredited citations of realia.⁸³ These inclusions all serve to imbue the fictional texts with an aura of plausibility, even veracity—if not verisimilitude. Through a fictional investigation of real histories, second-generation characters are able to connect with their families’ pasts as they have been preserved in archives. This engagement with the past is motivated by an incomplete understanding of it—the archives, both personal and public, are held up as a potential link between the second generation seeking answers and the first generation whose traumas have been, to some extent, conserved therein.

⁸³ These citations include portions of newspaper articles, archives, and texts.

The Personal Becomes Public in *Mohand, le harki*

Hadjila Kemoum's largely overlooked novel *Mohand le harki* (2003) performs the work of history by providing a fictionalized account of one harki family's experience in Algerian and France thereby combatting the absence of a substantial corpus of historiography on Harki soldiers who fought alongside the French during the Algerian War for independence. In the absence of an open and accessible archive, novels of this sort have emerged to fill this void and provide insight into hidden aspects of this period of time. While the number of Harki testimonies and memoirs is increasing, Kemoum's novel is one of only a handful of fictional texts that treat this contested historical episode.⁸⁴ Although the text's genre is clearly defined as *roman*, Kemoum's apparent recourse to personal history and, more explicitly, to Franco-Algerian collective history, imbues this work with the weight of the very real trauma that it relates—as does the novel's inclusion of references to the cultural and political zeitgeist of 1960s Algeria and, later, 20th-century France. The insistence on the presence of archival material and fictional representations of real figures likewise suggests that this novel represents a cultural artifact to be read through the critical lens of history.

As the title suggests, the figure of the harki is central to Kemoum's novel. During the very first month of the Algerian War, which began in November 1954, the first *harka* (or group of harki soldiers, from the Arabic word *hararka* meaning “movement” or “war party”) was

⁸⁴ Recent scholarship on the harki condition includes: Nina Sutherland, “Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mothers Speak through their Daughters,” *Romance Studies* 24.3 (2006): 193-201; William B. Cohen, “The Harkis. History and Memory,” in Patricia M.E. Lorcin, ed. *Algeria and France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006; Amy L. Hubbell, “Unspoken Algeria: Transmitting Traumatic Memories of the Algerian War,” in Névine El Nossery and Amy L. Hubbell, eds. *The Unspeakable: Representations of Trauma in Francophone Literature and Art*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013; and Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound that Never Heals*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

created, although the term was not employed officially until February 1956, and numbers of *harka* did not grow significantly until 1957.⁸⁵ In one of her numerous studies of the harki, Géraldine Enjelvin lists some of the many reasons why a French colonial subject in Algeria might have joined the French army, a gesture that would have extended the colonial status of their country (and, consequently, their own subaltern condition): “They enrolled for the regular pay, out of loyalty towards a French army officer, to be on the side of the likely winners, to avenge a parent killed by the National Liberation Front, to obey their village chief, because they had been strongly encouraged by the Francophile Muslim notables of their village to join a *harka*, and/or because they had (often purposefully) been compromised by the French army” (113-114).

Although these harki soldiers had been promised French citizenship and repatriation to France upon the conclusion of the war, this did not always come to pass. Following the signing of the Evian Accords, a cease-fire which took effect in March 1962, and independence a few months later in July, the harkis found themselves in an existential double-bind: subject to danger in Algeria, yet generally unwelcome in France. Louis Joxe, the French Minister of Algerian Affairs (1960-62) and one of the key figures in the drafting of the Evian Accords, ordered that harkis attempting to flee Algeria by seeking passage to France should be prevented from leaving Algeria and returned from France should they arrive. This order rendered several thousand harki soldiers and their families stranded in Algeria and vulnerable to what numerous sources describe as “deadly reprisals and barbaric opportunistic killings...widespread in certain Algerian regions”

⁸⁵ According to Lucie Knight, “the minister Robert Lacoste...defined the harkas as: ‘formations temporaires dont la mission est de participer aux opérations de maintien de l’ordre’ and fixed their number at 10,000. However, due to their knowledge of both the terrain and the methods utilized by the fellaghas, their number quickly increased and, by 1959, they represented the most numerous group of Algerian combatants at 60,000 men” (note 5).

(Enjelvin 115). The harki contribution during the Franco-Algerian war has since been officially recognized with a plaque in the Invalides, inaugurated September 25, 2001 with the following inscription: “The French Republic acknowledges its gratitude to the repatriated members of additional and assimilated forces or victims of captivity in Algeria for the sacrifices they made” (McCormack 1133). Harkis nevertheless occupied (an arguably still do, as do their children) an uncomfortable position: viewed as traitors in Algeria because of their collaboration with the French army while simultaneously viewed as the enemy in France because of their Algerian heritage.⁸⁶

While the events of the Algerian War remain polemical, the fate of the harki soldier figures into what Enjelvin has termed an “era of forced forgetting.” As a result of sometimes forceful or dishonest recruitment tactics employed by the French army and the subsequent abandonment of thousands of harki soldiers as well as numerous other painful, tragic episodes (for example, instances of torture of both Algerians and French soldiers during the conflict), Enjelvin suggests that such incidents mentioned above begin to explain why the French government “was reluctant to memorialize the war and why it voted a series of amnesty laws (in 1962, 1966, 1968 and 1982), with a view of officially erasing the troubled memories of the Algerian War and reconciling the French nation” (115). In the Franco-Algerian case, the use of censorship and amnesty—both at a national, legal, and on an independent societally instituted

⁸⁶ Paul A. Silverstein characterizes the harki position as a “double-bind of agency in which many Harkis and their children today find themselves constrained to rearticulate a discourse of victimhood that sidelines their responsibility for their original choice (however constrained) of joining the auxiliary forces, if not, of course the unforeseeable and catastrophic outcomes of that decision” (1037).

level—has kept the full extent of the two nations’ entwined histories from public knowledge.⁸⁷

Indeed, the would-be reconciliation in post-war France was doubly complicated for the harkis and their family members who did make it to France—because to integrate in French society, it would appear necessary to erase this period from their past and abandon any vestiges of Algerian culture.

As a result of this period of “forced forgetting,” the events of this conflict remain contentious—more so because archives are only partially open to researchers in France and unavailable to researchers in Algeria. With a minimum delay of 25 years, which can be extended to 50 or even 100 years if the information is especially sensitive, archives are often unavailable to those who would be the most impacted by them.⁸⁸ This current obfuscation of information echoes French policies of governmental intervention and censorship in place during the Algerian conflict. Because the harki past is not entirely accessible in official French archives, the identity of this group is essentially undermined.⁸⁹ The case of the harki becomes more complicated by questions of nationality, national identity and the often-challenging issues of exclusion from the larger French society. This segregation has been codified by the very designation of this group

⁸⁷ Jim House outlines the numerous steps taken by the government to maintain the official narrative of Franco-Algerian history, including immediate “censorship and repression”, how Papon was able to prevent investigations into the deaths (officially recognized as a total of 3) that occurred on October 17, 1961, and the long-lasting effects of “the unanimously voted amnesty legislation and selective access granted to the archives” (358). McCormack also underscores how information on the Algerian War is “little taught” in public schools (1134).

⁸⁸ The Loi du 15 juillet 2008 updated restrictions on access to archives as defined by the Loi du 3 janvier 1979. Restrictions vary based on the type of information preserved in the archival documents, as described by the Commission d’accès aux documents administratifs: <http://www.cada.fr/archives-publiques,6093.html>

⁸⁹ Numerous documents containing brief mentions of harki soldiers during and after the Algerian War are available for consultation at the Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer in Aix-en-Provence, France. See, in particular, cartons 81F 160, 161, 202.

as “harkis.” Enjelvin has highlighted another issue in her study of the harki identity, stating “the Harkis’ main fight...has been over the past few years for a place in the collective historical fabric of France and for the official recognition of the French state’s responsibility in what they regard as a criminal act of abandonment” (119).

A place in society requires a recognized identity and one way to establish a collective identity has been through writing. The growing corpus of harki texts includes not only fictions, but also autobiographies and works of testimony. One such contributor is the writer Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, who occupies a position of both witness and chronicler. As suggested by the title, *Fille de harki* (2005), this text presents Besnaci-Lancou’s own experiences as the daughter of a harki soldier who fled with his family to France. The text is intensely personal and written from the point of view of a grown woman looking back on the events of her childhood, a point of view reinforced in the author’s introduction: “Je n’ai jamais pensé m’engager dans des associations de harkis. Pour moi, c’est le passé. Être harki, ce n’est pas héréditaire. Hélas, le malheur se transmet. Pour mes enfants, il me faut donc regarder ce passé et stopper la chaîne des malheurs” (17). While the status of harki is not “hereditary,” as she states, the impact of this familial association with the harki experience is nonetheless transmitted across generations. The concept of an unspoken but nevertheless palpable “malheur” among harki descendants is also present in Kemoum’s novel. In highlighting the need for transmission of this past within the harki community, Besnaci-Lancou’s second text, *Nos meres, paroles blessées* (2006), presents the testimonies of twenty women who fled to France following the Algerian War. In introducing the short stories presented by these women, Besnaci-Lancou suggests the role and impact of her work (and of writing these personal testimonies) as “freeing” speech (“la libération de la parole”) (19). One témoin, Berkhta, underscores this purifying power of sharing history when she

laments that her husband will not speak of the past: “Il a un ulcère qui le maintient éveillé des nuits entières. Si seulement il parlait de son passé, il se laverait le cœur et l’estomac” (45). The power of testimony is equally at stake within the fictional context of *Mohand le harki*.

Unlike the self-representations provided by the first-person (both singular and plural) in Besnaci-Lancou’s texts, Kemoum writes her novel using a third-person omniscient narrator. The reportage style of the text is reflected at the beginning of each chapter: before the narrative continues, italicized details regarding the location, date and time of the events to follow are provided. This text presents one father’s search for justice and recognition from the French government, while also trying to reunite his broken family. While the text is not written from her perspective, the author seems to draw inspiration from her own experience as the daughter of a harki soldier. Interestingly, Kemoum was not raised by her father, as she was placed in foster care after the family immigrated to France. It is possible that Kemoum—like the witnesses included in *Nos mères*—uses her writing to imagine the relationship that might have existed between her father and herself had she not been removed from his care. In a larger sense, this novel in a post-colonial Algerian context serves therefore as a counterpoint to the national history written and maintained by the French government.

Mohand le harki enacts a deferred postmemory experience facilitated by the discovery of a personal archive that connects the members of the second generation to the experiences of the first. While the bulk of the novel is fictional, the work references real events and incorporates archival documents. The main character’s personal archive, his “vieux papiers” as they are described in the text, as well as external information (largely uncited excerpts from newspapers, governmental memos, and a paragraph from page 255 of Henri-Christian Giraud’s *Réplique à*

l'amiral de Gaulle) folded into the text all serve to combat the lack of inter-generational communication that is all too common in harki literature.

This novel presents the Aberkan family living in small-town France. After fighting for France as a harki soldier during the Algerian War, Mohand Aberkan moves his growing family to France—which, as a result of his service during the war, he proudly views as his homeland. The second generation, his four children (two of whom were born in Algeria) do not share his rosy view of France. As the reader learns through flashbacks, instances of bullying and racially driven exclusion define the childhood of the second generation characters in the novel. Late in life and after decades living in France, Mohand feels compelled to correct historic wrongs he hears declared by a retired French minister, Philippe Janard, who appears on television promoting his forthcoming memoirs.⁹⁰ In an unlikely turn of events, Mohand takes this former French official hostage in an attempt to force him to admit the “real” (rather than the accepted) history of harki soldiers in Algeria. This fictional character is no doubt based on the life and career of Louis Joxe, former French minister of Algerian Affairs. In the course of this novel, this proxy character references his contributions to the war effort and his compensation for such service, which are in line with those Joxe received. Notably, the novel also makes reference to a formerly top-secret telegram sent by the real Louis Joxe, terminating harki repatriations.⁹¹

Throughout this text, Mohand’s motivations are clear: he seeks a public admission of guilt from

⁹⁰ Similar interviews by Pierre Mesmer in 2000 and 2001 seem to have been the real-life inspiration for the fictionalized Janard’s televised interview (Sutherland 196).

⁹¹ Within the narrative, Philippe Janard gives a televised interview about his forthcoming memoirs and his military service in Algeria. Louis Joxe’s actual telegram is quoted by the journalist—“Il faut éviter de donner la moindre publicité à cette mesure” (Kemoum 114)—and its reference number is given by Philippe Janard: n° 1334/MA/CAB/DIR.12 MAI 1962 (Kemoum 114). A full reproduction of this correspondence between Pierre Messmer and Louis Joxe can be found on the PNHA’s privately maintained website: <http://www.piedsnoirs-aujourd'hui.com/joxemes.html>

a representative of the French government for their abandonment of the harkis. The result of Mohand's attempt to bring public attention to this more or less unrecognized aspect of French colonial history has visible repercussions within his family as well as across the nation. As the French media disseminates news of the hostage situation—we learn that Mohand's daughter, Dehbia, is herself a journalist—Mohand's four estranged children gather together in an attempt to understand what has driven their father to act this way. Although Mohand ultimately perishes during a standoff with police, he is discovered to be unarmed and is immediately transformed into a martyr for the harki cause. Janard, on the other hand, once freed from his home, is shunned by the gathered media and will presumably be questioned at length about French involvement in harki affairs during and after the Algerian War and ultimately brought to justice in a way as yet only possible in novels. Mohand dies but his cause, as well as that of the harki, is served. Mohand's public display spurs his children to reflect on his past and, in his absence, they discover their father's personal archive of the Algerian War comprised of newspaper clippings and photographs delicately preserved in a large album. Reading through this archive, which had been hidden in their family home, Mohand's children are finally able to appreciate their father's trauma, which he had never before shared with them, and his need for widespread recognition.

During his life, Mohand's silence impacted all of his children. Without understanding what their father had witnessed and endured before coming to France, the Aberkan children could not comprehend the trauma behind Mohand's silence. Although they did not appreciate the details of Mohand's time as a harki soldier, each of his children internalized his inability to confront the past. From the very beginning of the novel, which describes the small funeral for the matriarch of the Aberkan family, Milouda, it is evident that all four children are detached from their parents and are leading very busy and successful lives across France and in Montreal,

Canada. Worried that his children will not attend their mother's funeral, Mohand reflects on their career successes: the oldest, Arezki, is an executive at IBM; the second-oldest, Dehbia, is a TV journalist in Paris; Jacques works in the logging industry in Canada; and the youngest, Christine, is a restaurateur in Cannes. Of the four Aberkan children, two are especially important to the narrative. The oldest son, Arezki, and the youngest daughter, Christine, are uninterested in their family's past and seek simply to continue their comfortable lives working and living in France without being associated with a harki-hostage situation. Neither has retained any link to their family's heritage in Algeria. Arezki and Christine appear to have taken Mohand's hoped for assimilation to the point of amnesia. It is the other children, Dehbia and Jacques, who, after years of misunderstanding their father and his silence in regards to his past in Algeria, finally seek an understanding of the Algerian War and its impact on their family.

Mohand fought proudly for the French while in Algeria; he viewed himself as a French citizen and insisted that his children see themselves as French as well. Nevertheless, at several moments in the narrative, as they reminisce on their lives in France and their experiences that have led up to the hostage situation, both Dehbia and Jacques describe a sense of double unbelonging.⁹² They are estranged from their Algerian roots by their father's desire for integration and assimilation in France and yet they are not fully accepted in France, neither by the French nor by other North African immigrants. Despite living in France and attending French schools, both Dehbia and Jacques were mocked for their difference: Dehbia recalls being insulted during her childhood: "...des insultes des Arabes du quartier qui la traitaient soit de 'putain', soit de 'fille de traître', et qui interdisaient à leurs enfants de la fréquenter parce qu'elle

⁹² As described by Salman Rushdie in his memoir *Joseph Anton*, this term encapsulates a feeling common among immigrants and their children; conceiving of oneself as "heterogeneous instead of homogeneous, belonging to more than one place, multiple rather and singular, responding to more than one way of being, more than averagely mixed up" (54).

voulait vivre ‘à la française’. Dehbia ne voulait pas vivre ‘à la française’. Elle ne s’était jamais sentie autre chose que *française*. Ce n’était pas un choix, mais bel et bien la réalité de son être” (162-3). Jacques likewise reproaches his father for having saddled him and his younger sister with French first names that, coupled with their obviously Algerian surname, only made their difference more apparent.

Later in the text, Mohand, as well, laments that perhaps his insistence on *francité* precluded his children’s understanding of the past and its impact on their lives: “Après tout, je voulais qu’ils soient français, plus français que les Français. Ils le sont. Jusqu’à l’ignorance, jusqu’à l’amnésie...” (84-5). This ignorance and amnesia that affect the Aberkan children is visible from the very beginning of the novel: gathered around their mother’s tomb, the children do not know what to say or do. Looking to their father to finally share a long-hidden facet of his heritage, the children ask Mohand how they should mourn their mother. Much to the surprise of his children, and indeed, the reader, Mohand begins to sing a funerary song in Arabic honoring Milouda. With this act, it is apparent that Mohand’s connection to the past and tradition are still very much intact in spite of his attempts to bury them with silence, alcoholism and assimilation.

In spite of their father’s inability to share the trauma of his harki past with them, it seems to have insidiously permeated their lives, manifesting in the careers of two of the Aberkan children. Dehbia is an investigative journalist for France 2 and her younger brother, Jacques, is a trained historian—careers that leave them especially able to engage with history and seek the truth about their father’s past. Dehbia, as a journalist, is a character imbued with authority and a desire to seek the truth. She is not the only journalist in the text; in fact, another journalist interviews Philippe Janard about his forthcoming memoirs. In refuting his introduction, which labeled him “le bradeur de l’Algérie française, l’homme de la négociation avec le FLN, le

responsable de l'exode des pieds-noirs et – plus grave encore – de ce que certains n'hésitent pas à appeler le génocide des harkis" (105), Janard clarifies that he was in fact "l'homme qui a permis que les choses se passent le moins mal possible" (106). In this interview, the journalist contests Janard's opinions and memories of French policies during the Algerian War—imploing him to revise his statements on the accepted history: "Mais les choses ne se sont pas passées comme cela, vous le savez" (107). As evidenced by these two figures (among other journalists who arrive to cover the hostage situation), the role of the journalist in this narrative is to find the truth and it make it known.

Just as the narrative's valorization of the news media as a transmitter of truth provides insight into Dehbia's character, her brother Jacques's training as a historian likewise has wider significance in the context of the novel. The reader is first under the impression that Jacques only works in the logging industry in Canada and this limiting identifier is almost as interesting as his later-revealed specialization in history. His work in logging and his self-imposed exile in Canada ties Jacques back to the harki experience he has tried to escape. It was only chance that kept the Aberkan family out of a logging hamlet where so many repatriated harkis were placed by the French government. As described in the novel, "entre 1962 et 1975, les harkis vivent en silence dans les camps ou dans les hameaux forestiers, véritables ghettos où ils sont confinés. Un jour, Mohand et quelques autres se voient proposer de loger dans une cité HLM à Vaulx-en-Velin" (Kemoum 95). Jacques's work in forestry could suggest an underlying affinity for the harki experience, a link to his family's past that Jacques is subconsciously seeking. Many thousands of harkis were originally housed in transit camps or forestry camps around France. These camps, suggests Todd Shepard, were seen as an "attempt to force occidentalization" of the newly repatriated Algerians ("Excluding" 86). Vincent Crapanzano has also studied the use of

transit camps following the Algerian War. While they were meant to be temporary resettlement facilities, many harkis were left languishing in these camps for decades. Protests calling for change broke out in the summer of 1975; “these protests were so effective that the government was forced to close the two remaining camps and push toward the closure of the forestry hamlets” (Crapanzano 146). Jacques’ choice to reinvent himself in Canada, a former French colony, is more interesting in light of this historical context. It also suggests that, Jacques remains connected to France—historically and linguistically—despite the distance he has created.

Well after Mohand’s death and only six pages from the end of the novel, Jacques reminds his siblings and finally informs the reader that he has a degree in history. While this is the first confirmation of his training in history, several of his previous actions hinted at his studies as a historian. He is the only second-generation character to understand the impact of Philippe Janard’s above mentioned interview on November 28, 2001 which, when viewed by Mohand, pushes the former harki to act the following morning. Unable to reach his father, Jacques turns to Christine to confirm his suspicions:

—J’ai un pressentiment. Je viens de voir une émission sur les harkis à la télévision.

—Une émission sur les harkis? Tu sais, ici, au restaurant, c’est encore le coup de feu et je n’ai pas beaucoup le temps de regarder la télé...Et quand je l’ai, inutile de te dire que je choisis plus rock’ n’roll que ces vieilles histoires du passé... [...]

—L’invité de l’émission était Philippe Janard.

—Connais pas...

—Mais si, fais un effort, voyons! Philippe Janard, c’est cet ancien ministre de la Ve République, l’un des principaux acteurs des accords d’Evian...

—Bon, si tu veux... Mais les accords d'Evian, moi, ça ne me dit pas grand-chose...

(117-118)

Jacques is met with Christine's apparent disinterest in history, even if it is closely linked to her own past. Christine's focus is on the present in her restaurant in Cannes rather than the drama that will shortly unfold a few miles from her childhood home. Jacques also discovered Mohand's personal archive of news materials and photographs left in the abandoned Aberkan home. And it is Jacques who will make sense of what Mohand has left behind:

—Qu'allons-nous faire de tout ça? demande Arezki qui essaie de cacher sa peine sous un fragile vernis de cadre supérieur.

—Le garder, bien sûr! réplique Jacques. D'ailleurs, si ça ne vous dérange pas, je souhaiterais en être le dépositaire.

—Moi, je suis d'accord, dit Christine. Mais qu'est-ce que tu vas faire? Rapatrier tout ce fourbi au Canada?

—Qui te dit que je rentre au Canada? Il y a des choses à faire ici.

—Je ne voudrais pas te décourager, intervient Arezki, mais je dois très honnêtement te prévenir que le métier de bûcheron en France, même dans les Vosges...

—Qui te dit que je veux être bûcheron? Tu oublies que j'ai une licence d'histoire. J'ai bien compris, depuis quelques jours, qu'il y a un sacré boulot à faire dans ce secteur.

(226)

As a trained historian, Jacques can understand the traces left by his father and deems himself the best suited to undertake this "sacred work" of preserving and sharing the harki past.

Mohand's harki past is largely confined to his "vieux papiers", his collection of articles and mementos related to his time as a soldier. He never discussed this personal archive or his

military medals and souvenirs with his children during his lifetime, but shortly before his death, he shares with Dehbia his rationale for taking Janard hostage. Mohand receives permission for a brief visit from his daughter Dehbia, an episode that allows both the reader and his family to better understand his dramatic decisions. Mohand certainly anticipated his own death and took the opportunity of his final conversation with Dehbia to explain to her in his own words why he had begun this hostage standoff and why he must ultimately see it through to the end. Mohand explains that he has taken Janard hostage so that the retired minister, as a representative of the French government, can finally admit his role in the abandonment and deaths of harkis left in Algeria. Additionally, he makes it clear that he has also taken this stand for the future and more specifically for his children, telling Dehbia:

—Dis bien à tes frères et à ta sœur que je vous aime, Dehbia.

—Si tu nous aimes, papa, arrête tout ça, je t'en supplie. Arrête pendant qu'il est encore temps.

—Mais, c'est parce que je vous aime que je ne peux pas arrêter tout ça, *habibi*. (197)

The weight of this brief conversation is immediately clear to the reader. Before leaving Janard's home with his granddaughter (who Mohand had never meant to take hostage and agreed to free), Dehbia verbally confronts Janard, accusing him of having condemned her to death at the age of three with his Evian Accords (192). Foreshadowing her future actions, Dehbia laments that if only she had been aware of her father's past and the harki cause sooner she might have acted differently: "Et si j'avais parlé comme ça plus tôt, si des milliers d'autres avaient parlé comme ça plus tôt, vous et les vôtres seriez sur le banc des accusés aujourd'hui. Et les nôtres ne seraient pas des oubliés de l'histoire" (192). With his death, shot in full view of the gathered spectators and media, Mohand makes certain that neither he nor the hundreds of assembled harkis will be

forgotten. Mohand's resolve in the face of this prospect is, in his own words, the result of his military training. When his daughter asked him to give himself up and end the hostage standoff, he told her without hesitation that he could never turn himself over to the police: "Me rendre? Quand j'étais un jeune *boujadi* de l'armée française, on nous a appris que c'était un mot interdit. Moi, je n'ai pas changé. Je suis un vieil homme, mais mon cœur est toujours celui d'un soldat de dix-huit ans" (194). Ironically, here Mohand claims that he learned not to surrender when he was in the French army, and now this resolve is being used against Janard and the police, figures of French power. This statement is notable, not only in revealing Mohand's conviction but also because it is a rare example of Mohand directly speaking to his children about the past.

A more salient connection to Mohand's past remains in his personal archive, discovered in the family home by his youngest son. Jacques, at the conclusion of the text, views his father's past as finally connected to his own: "Tu te rappelles, Dehbia, quand on disait, en plaisantant, que nous ne serions jamais de riches héritiers? Nous avons tort. Ce qu'il est en train de construire, papa, c'est notre héritage" (204-5). This inheritance takes the form of the artifacts that comprise Mohand's personal archive. Rather than simply accept the given public history, Mohand saw the official record (and those, like Janard, who created it) as speaking over his own memories, obscuring or replacing his own voice and vision of the past—the French government has usurped his own rhetorical power to create or record the past. To counter this view, Mohand's own personal archive was one created for himself and, ostensibly, to be shared with his children—though he was unable to share it with them during his lifetime. Jacques, in discovering this trove of history, is exposed to a past that Mohand had been emotionally unable to share. Through his personal collection of articles and photographs he deemed important to his own story, Mohand has curated a narrative for his children. Without the direct intervention of

the first generation, Jacques's experience is not "postmemorial" in the traditional sense envisioned by Hirsch, but his training as a historian puts him in an ideal position to be able to better understand the full weight of his father's past now that he has to access it through this archive. Through his own initiative, Jacques decides to return to the family home and continue his father's mission of creating a place for a harki narrative in French history, thereby enacting a deferred postmemorial experience.

In this archive, Mohand had painstakingly collected photographs and newspaper articles related to the harki condition in France. There is no indication that Mohand had ever visited any French governmental archives, but his collection of clippings reveals that he kept himself abreast of any reports relating to the Algerian War and more specifically to harki soldiers who, like himself, had relocated to France following the conflict. Several of the artifacts collected in Mohand's personal archive, which had been stored securely, along with his military uniform, in a locked trunk in the family home, represent instances of intertextuality, as they are real newspaper articles, historical texts, and archival materials incorporated into the narrative of the novel.

One such example of a real text folded into the narrative of the novel, is a newspaper article that Mohand consults the night before he takes Janard hostage (122-23). In Mohand's archive, this newspaper article describes a homeless former harki named Arezki Dillel who was found dead in the streets of Paris January 26, 1976. This article profoundly affects Mohand not only because the victim shares the name of his oldest son, but also because he recognizes that this harki's fate could have been his own if it were not for his familial connections, as tenuous as they were. This description of an article dating from 1976 as "recent" in relation to the narrative's place in the year 2001 is rendered more interesting when considering that this article (or rather the inspiration for the fictional version of it) was published in the year 2002—one year

before the novel's 2003 publication. Clearly inspired by this press clipping, which described the death of Dillel Areski (with a minor spelling change from *s* in the true story and a *z* in Mohand's fictional version), Kemoum quotes liberally from the un-cited and unreferenced *Le Point* article written by Jean-Michel Décugis.⁹³

In including real, verifiable archival materials—as well as other written sources—*Mohand le harki* becomes a counter-archive in its own right and serves an archival function.⁹⁴ While firmly rooted in the fiction genre and marketed clearly as “roman,” this novel nonetheless creates a fictional simulacrum of French society and figures within its narrative. For example, in creating fictional avatars for real historical figures, the novelistic form allows the author to mete out justice in a fictional world that has remained elusive in the reality outside the novel. Beyond serving as a link between Mohand and his children, the inclusion of a personal archive, which itself incorporates real, extradiegetic archival material, suggests that the archive as a narrative device serves a greater purpose in this text. It imbues the novel with an archival function and becomes itself a resource for future scholars. Within the narrative, Mohand's personal archive permits his children to finally glimpse his long-hidden past, but it also—in its veracity—reaches out from the pages of the novel into the real world of the contemporary reader who is likewise

⁹³ The casual reader may not be aware of the direct citation of this article within the narrative. A search in *Le Point*'s records, consultable online, however reveals that Kemoum has included almost the entirety of the article's first paragraph into her text—although it is unattributed and dated differently than the published article. <http://www.lepoint.fr/actualites-societe/2007-01-20/la-verite-sur-la-tragedie-des-harkis/920/0/60651>

⁹⁴ In conversation with Antoinette Burton's conception of cultural objects serving as archives, Lia Brozgal “[conceives] of their archivistic attributes as a *function*, a gesture that allows their specificity to as cultural texts (literary, in this case) to signify, thus underscoring the importance of analyses that account for their aesthetic and formal, as well as historical, attributes. It is as literary objects, then, that the October 17 texts constitute a collection of traces that refer to real past events and participate in the production of knowledge about those events, particularly in the absence of the official archive” (46).

given access to the past of the Algerian War. In consulting his personal archive and witnessing his self-sacrifice for the recognition of harki history, the second-generation characters in the Aberkan family begin to have deferred postmemorial experiences. Understanding their father's motivations, they start to confront the silent trauma that has infiltrated their lives in France. Without their father's curated memories left for them, they would not have the full picture of his past and its effect on his life.

The Detective and Deferred Postmemory in *Meurtres pour mémoire*

Author of more than 30 novels and short stories as well as radio and theater productions, Didier Daeninckx has been writing since the early 1980s.⁹⁵ In a 1994 interview with François Maspero, the author revealed that the inspiration for his 1984 novel *Meurtres pour mémoire* came in part from his own experience witnessing a 1962 march for peace in Algeria that concluded at the Parisian metro station Charonne.⁹⁶ Chief of police Maurice Papon figured prominently in the repression of this march, echoing his involvement in the October 17, 1961 protest march, which serves as the link between the many temporal layers of this novel—the colonial period, World War II and the novel's present in the 1980s. Indeed, the relationship between the past and the present is central to Daeninckx novelistic choices: “J’ai cette envie de redonner une présence aux gens qui m’ont précédé et que j’aime bien. Ils ont laissé des traces

⁹⁵ While Daeninckx is a French author, *Meurtres pour mémoire* is not his first novel to engage with France's colonial history. Several novellas in his “New Caledonian cycle” focus on France's colonial past and the fate of former colonial subjects. Moreover, his *roman noir* style allows him to investigate the overlapping of history and memory in his novels and novellas.

⁹⁶ See: *Œil de la lettre* spécial Didier Daeninckx. Paris: La librairie Les Cahiers de Colette (1994). In this personal interview, Daeninckx describes the death of a neighbor during the Charonne protest and underscores the weight of this past in his own life. The violence of this protest's suppression by the French police resulted in a total of nine deaths (Cole 118).

fortes, mais ils n'ont pas pu s'exprimer : de ce fait, on leur a un peu volé leur vie. Planter, comme Cadin, mes ongles dans des morceaux de réalité" (Maspero n.p.). In referencing one of the main characters who has appeared in several of his novels, including *Meurtres pour mémoire*, Daeninckx links himself and his entire corpus of work with Police Inspecteur Cadin who relentlessly searches for truth behind hidden moments in French history. Daeninckx's presentation of this act of deferred postmemory is rendered even more complicated with the murder of main character and historian Bernard Thiraud. Bernard—a member of the second generation who had been investigating the circumstances of his father's death—is killed so that any information he recently uncovered in the national archive is buried with him.

The archive is central in *Meurtres pour mémoire* and so are the characters that interact with it. The transformative power of narrativizing the archive, which ultimately permits history to escape its archival boundaries—either through a formal study or in a more creative capacity—is a quality celebrated by the French novelistic genre *roman noir*.⁹⁷ The activation of history—as a recorded within the archive—is a process not overlooked by Carolyn Steedman who declares: “*nothing happens to this stuff, in the Archive*. It is indexed and catalogued—though some of it is unindexed and uncatalogued, and parts of it are lost. But as stuff, it just sits there until it is read, and used, and narrativized” (67, emphasis original). In her recent article on French crime fiction, Claire Gorrara focuses on the role of the *roman noir* in re-activating historical moments and the general public's recollections of them with the new insight of modern, albeit fictional, investigators. Although her study is not entirely reliant on history as it has been preserved in archives, the role of the state in collecting and codifying memories that are often preserved

⁹⁷ For more information on this genre, see: A.I. Morris, “Roman noir, années noires: the French Néo-Polar and the Occupation's legacy of violence,” in D.J. Gascoigne, ed. *Violent Histories*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007; and Claire Gorrara, *French Crime Fiction and the Second World War: Past Crimes, Present Memories*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012.

within the official archive remains central to her study of detective-driven literature, a genre known for “investigating troubling periods in European history” (“Reflections” 131). In her study, this unresolved period in history is primarily the Holocaust, but the genre can be employed to work through other historical crimes as well. She goes on to concretize the ways in which a novel of this genre might seek to re-evaluate a given moment in history, stating, “crime fiction offers the writer and reader a highly codified format in which to remember the past. By means of its formal structures, its narrative perspective and thematic preoccupations, crime fiction mediates historical memories in ways that give rise to morally and politically charged interpretations” (ibid 134). Indeed the mediation of the crime fiction novel recalls the distance with which one faces the archive—both documents provide the reader with an interpretation of the past rather than a pure and unmediated view of it.

Just as with the archive then, the *roman noir* remains ultimately the creation of an author and the result of his or her invented detective. It is the detective figure that uncovers and re-evaluates the contested history contained in the novel. While this figure may or may not visit an archive, he or she is in constant dialogue with a necessarily hidden past and what has been until his or her arrival the official and accepted history. Gorrara solidifies the detective’s link to the past and position as a researcher:

For if the detecting figures in such texts are superficially charged with unearthing the story of an individual crime in the present, this work is doubled by a process of historical reconstruction as shameful events, such as state complicity in the deportation of Jews from wartime France, are remembered and reclaimed as ‘missing’ stories. Why and how these stories resurface prove key to solving social disorder in the present.

(“Reflections” 135)

Not only does the detective discover a long-hidden historical event, through its being unearthed the detective is able to question the official history that had marginalized this event. This revelatory gesture renders visible the apparatuses that had worked to suppress what has been deemed historically or politically shameful: “By focusing on the experiences of a marginalized community, such detecting figures reinforce a notion of official history as one dominated by powerful pressure groups. The individual trajectory of the detecting figure functions, therefore, as a counterweight, a corrective to such publicly acknowledges narratives” (ibid 135). The detective, seeking truth, rather than the archive which ostensibly preserves truth, is at the center of the *roman noir*—but within a subgenre entitled “romances of the archive” the detective delves into the archive to problematize the accepted historical record.⁹⁸

As in *roman noir*, romances of the archive often focus on contested histories. Also similar to the crime fiction genre, in both *roman noir* and romances of the archive, it is often a contemporary incident or crime (often a murder) that prompts an investigation into the past and ultimately results in the discovery of hidden and shameful elements of this past. In her study of British romances of the archive, Suzanne Keen reveals the significance of this “discovery” in her definition of the unifying element in romances of the archive: “The central romance of the archive...lies in the recovery or discovery of the ‘truth,’ a quasi-historical truth that makes sense of confusion, resolves mystery, permits satisfying closure, and, most importantly, can be located. The truth, suggests the marvelously yielding imaginary archive, has not been irrevocably lost” (Keen 14). This truth, apparently safeguarded in the archive, remains less questioned than truth as portrayed in *roman noir*. Indeed, Keen describes “hard facts” waiting to be found within the archive:

⁹⁸ Suzanne Keen investigates this term and its significance in *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Despite the prevailing view that postmodernism has scuttled old-fashioned notions of Truth, by far the majority of romances of the archive seek and find solid facts, incontrovertible evidence, and well-preserved memories of times past. In the face of postmodern skepticism, this kind of contemporary fiction claims that its world-making can answer questions about what really happened, though it does so without surrendering its license to invent. Some romances of the archive win the approval of professional historians; others revel in the counterfactual freedoms of make-believe. (3)

Rather than seriously interrogate the status of historical artifacts stored within the archive, romances of the archive, according to Keen, destabilize the accepted persona of a historian or a researcher. As detailed by Jackie Buxton in her review of Keen's study of archival romances, in addition to the presence of archives in the story, "the romance quotient is supplied by an adventure quest plot which invariably relies on the revelation of buried truth that 'makes sense of confusion, resolves mystery, permits satisfying closure, and, most importantly, can be located' (Keen 14)" (Buxton 346). This characterization makes clear the importance of the very investigation—while the results of such research are also noteworthy, it is the search and the seeker that reveal the specificity of romances of the archive. Keen emphasizes the role of the researcher within these texts and asserts that "the romance of the archive tends to empower the more marginal researchers and to show them beating the professionals at their own game" (36). The focus on the researcher reveals the larger role of this genre: "Romances of the archive quarrel about who deserves to have custody of the past" (Keen 230). Indeed as Keen describes in her study of this genre, the persona of the guard of history—once it has been rediscovered through research in the archive—is a universal character, but his or her actions are not universal across the genre: "Fictions of archival research provide sturdy vehicles for the narrative

exploration of vital questions for postcolonial and postimperial subjects alike. Which of our many pasts do we choose to know and retell? How will we adjudicate the rival claims of history and heritage in a multicultural twenty-first century? Romances of the archive cannot answer these questions directly, nor do they agree in their versions of history, but they do insist that sufficient traces of the past remain for the imaginative rediscovery of truth” (229). This genre, like the *roman noir*, problematizes the storage and recovery of the past, but, as Keen states above, cannot provide a complete resolution outside of a fictional one. Although romances of the archive might not be capable of answering the questions Keen poses above, Inspector Cadin attempts to confront these quandaries in *Meurtres pour mémoire*.

Shortly after we are introduced to Roger Thiraud, he exits the book with his violent murder in the streets of Paris. Roger inhabits the text for only the first two chapters and in this time we learn little about his character, and yet his specter remains present in the text until the very end. Interestingly, the description of his death returns throughout the text several times recounted by different actors: the narrator first (38-9), the police inspector Cadin (81), a long-neglected witness (125-6) and the shooter himself (156-7). Minutes before his shooting, Roger is nearly hit by a pair of teens on a moped hurrying to join their fellow protestors in front of the Rex—an important meeting location for marchers on October 17, 1961. Ironically, if he had been struck and killed by the moped rather than having been killed by a gunman dressed as a CRS agent, Roger Thiraud’s death would have been chalked up to fate. Instead, he narrowly avoided being struck by the moped, and was in place to be murdered according to well-laid plan. The murder occurs with calculated detail and goes unnoticed as a result of the surrounding commotion produced by the protest and violent police repression of the protestors then clogging the streets. The minutiae of his assassin’s actions leading up to Roger’s death occupy almost as

much space in the narrative as did the description of him alive. Over the course of two full pages, the shooter silently observes Roger, verifies his identity, approaches him and finally shoots him in the temple before disappearing into the crowd:

Bien qu'il soit revêtu de l'uniforme des CRS, il ne semblait pas être concerné par l'activité de ses collègues et se contentait, tout simplement, de fixer l'endroit précis où se trouvait Roger Thiraud. Il jugea le moment venu et sortit de l'ombre. [...] Il distinguait maintenant les traits de Roger Thiraud et revit en mémoire le jeu de photos qu'on lui avait confié. Le même front large, les lunettes d'écaille, jusqu'à cette curieuse chemise aux pointes de col boutonnées. [...] Roger Thiraud ne prêtait pas attention à lui ; l'homme en profita pour se placer derrière. Brusquement, il lui coinça la tête avec son bras droit. Le manteau vint se coller sur le visage du professeur qui laissa tomber son bouquet de fleurs et le paquet de gâteaux. Il agrippa désespérément la main de son agresseur pour lui faire lâcher prise. Mais l'homme, méthodiquement, appliqua le canon de l'arme sur la tempe droite de Roger Thiraud, introduisit le majeur dans le pontet et appuya sur la détente. Il repoussa le corps en avant, recula. Le professeur s'effondra sur le trottoir, le crâne éclaté. (38-9)

The methodical description of Roger Thiraud's death leaves the reader with more questions than answers. With an understanding that the shooter was merely disguised as a CRS agent and killed Roger on the order of an unknown superior, the reader—and indeed the other characters in the narrative—is left with no explanation of why Roger was killed and who pulled the trigger.

In the pages preceding his death, the narrator describes Roger Thiraud as a rather ordinary instructor of Latin and History. Through descriptions of his lecture given in class on the afternoon of October 17, 1961, one can understand him to be an attentive and sensitive

instructor and a loving husband and father-to-be. Aware of his class's disinterest in his lecture on the child in the Middle Ages, Roger recognizes that this research might be distracting his students, but nevertheless continues his discussion of this subject close to his heart as a result of his wife's pregnancy. His love for his wife, Muriel, is obvious in the gifts he plans to bring home to her: a bouquet of flowers and a box of sweets. These items fall dramatically with the death of Roger Thiraud, who was shot on the sidewalk mere steps from his apartment building. Despite having been murdered seven weeks before his son Bernard's birth, Roger's life and death both had a measurable impact on Bernard's life—and his own early death as well.

The reader meets Bernard approximately two decades later in his mother's home. As in the case of his father, one learns little about Bernard in this initial description. It is no surprise that Bernard is studying history; his fiancée Claudine seemed to underscore the link that this shared scholarly pursuit between Bernard and his father: "il se consacra tout naturellement à l'étude de l'histoire" (48). With the use of the word "naturellement" the reader can appreciate that Claudine saw Bernard's choice of scholastic milieu as an obvious result of his father's work. She later affirms to Inspector Cadin that in spite of Bernard's archival research into the early 1940s, Bernard once again followed in his father's footsteps in his choice of university specialization. Cadin inquires after his studies:

—Bernard aussi était historien. Il était spécialiste de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, je crois ?

—Non, pas du tout. Il préparait une thèse sur l'enfant au Moyen Âge. Vos renseignements sont inexacts.

—C’était une simple supposition ! Votre ami a consulté au Capitole et à la préfecture des liasses de documents sur la période 1942-1943. J’en ai déduit qu’il profitait de votre passage à Toulouse pour compulser des archives indisponibles à Paris. (77)

Bernard’s choice of thesis topic perhaps reflects his latent desire to understand a father he never knew. Noticeably, Bernard does not study the tumultuous time period during which his father was killed. The young Thiraud appears to have accepted whatever explanation had been given to him as a child—at the time, his death had been taken as proof of his involvement in the Algerian independence movement and, attempting to avoid inflaming colonial tensions further, the Parisian police performed no autopsy or investigation in 1961. As a result he is not actively pursuing his father’s killer or researching the circumstances of his father’s death through his university studies. Instead, in his choice of study, Bernard appears to be honoring his father; or, even more likely, as becomes clear in an examination of their personal research, Bernard continues his father’s work.

Additionally, Claudine confirmed that Bernard’s upbringing might have pushed him in the same direction as his father. Rather than being raised by his mother, who fell into a deep and debilitating depression following Roger’s death, Bernard was raised by his paternal grandparents in Drancy, France. In describing Bernard’s childhood with his grandparents, Claudine essentially suggests that they viewed their involvement in Bernard’s upbringing as if they had received a second chance to raise their son: “D’après ce que j’ai pu comprendre, la mère de Bernard a été très choqué par la mort de son mari, au point qu’elle se refusait à élever son propre fils. Ce sont les grands-parents qui se sont chargés de lui... Il n’empêche qu’ils ont cru retrouver leur fils, trente ans plus tard : ils ont conçu l’éducation de Bernard de la même façon que s’il s’agissait de leur enfant” (136-7). Although very little space in the novel is devoted to

describing the characters' academic pursuits, it remains essentially some of the only information we do have about the characters and is therefore significant in creating a link between father and son.

Beyond the similarities in their academic pursuits, both Roger and Bernard were pursuing the same research in their spare time. In the course of his investigation into Bernard's murder, Inspector Cadin interviews Muriel Thiraud. This revealing conversation unearths information about both her husband's and her son's murder and enables to Cadin to finally begin to establish a concrete link between the two deaths. After denying her husband's interest in Algeria or in politics at all, Muriel states: "Nous parlions histoire ou littérature. Le Moyen Âge le passionnait beaucoup et il se relaxait en écrivant une sorte de monographie sur sa ville natale Drancy. [...] Enfin, cette monographie est chez mon fils. Du moins chez sa fiancée, Claudine" (127-129). This monograph detailing the history of Drancy solidified the connection between father and son, as explained by Claudine: "Bernard voulait la terminer, en souvenir de son père" (Daeninckx 142). What's more, it was this work, this memorial to his father, that brought Bernard to the same archive in Toulouse that his father had visited two decades before. At first—and indeed for a significant portion of the novel—both the reader and the investigating team in Toulouse are unaware of the contents of Bernard's archival search or their significance—it is even later in the narrative that the reader learns of Roger's visit to the same archive. After reading the monograph, which traces the history of Drancy from Roman colony through World War II, Cadin is immediately affected by the revelation of French complicity in deportations from Drancy. Cadin does not immediately understand the Thiraud men's interest in this city or this period, he only knows that Roger was born and raised in Drancy and Bernard was sent to his grandparents in Drancy after his father's murder. In describing her fiancé's work to Inspector

Cadin, Claudine told him that after she'd asked Bernard what he was looking for, he had jokingly implied he was investigating something dangerous: "je m'occupe des histoires dangereuses ; une mystérieuse organisation s'agite dans l'ombre. Laisse-moi te protéger par l'ignorance" (50).⁹⁹ In addition to this prescient description of his work, the circumstances of Bernard's death piqued Cadin's interest. Unlike his father's murder in 1961, the streets of 1982 Toulouse were much calmer and provided no easy explanation for the shooting death of an unarmed young Frenchman.¹⁰⁰

Unlike his father's death, Bernard's murder does not go un-investigated. Performing a routine identity check on his victim, Inspector Cadin notes the similarities in the deaths of both Thiraud men. With little else to go on—the only witness to Bernard's crime being a well-known alcoholic in Toulouse—Cadin suspects that perhaps the murders are related. The only description of Roger's death on file at the police headquarters in Paris sums his entire life up in three sentences: "Fichier Alphabétique : Roger Thiraud, professeur d'histoire au lycée, né le 17 juillet 1929 à Drancy (Seine). Décédé le 18 octobre 1961 lors des émeutes FLN à Paris. Élément européen probablement lié au mouvement terroriste algérien" (Daeninckx 79). After investigating further, Cadin meets with an old friend working in the Parisian Identification division of a French anti-terrorist task force; with his clearance, Dalbois provides Cadin with more information on the death of Roger Thiraud, though this new information is not especially

⁹⁹ Bernard was, in fact, following in his father's research footsteps by investigating the archival carton beginning with DE including "DÉbroussaillage, DÉdommagements, DÉfense passive, et autre DÉsinfections pour concentrer mon attention sur les dizaines de pièces référencés DÉportation" (194).

¹⁰⁰ In addition to Bernard's murder, several other crimes—of varying seriousness—are depicted in the novel: a grave-diggers' strike, a jewelry heist in which several thousand francs worth of diamonds are swallowed and then expelled by the culprit, and a postal mix up involving the police commissioner's stamp and a group of situationists.

elucidating. Cadin reacts: “—C’est tout de même extraordinaire, on ramasse un prof d’histoire sur un trottoir parisien, la tête truffée de plomb, et on ne prend pas la précaution de pratiquer une autopsie. Rien. Pas d’enquête non plus ; on ne recherche ni les causes de mort ni l’assassin !” (Daeninckx 88). With this information, Cadin is now faced with new members of the Thiraud family shot in the street, seemingly without cause or provocation.

Certainly, the similarities between their deaths are shocking, yet it is the differences between each crime that intrigue the inspector more. For example, the manner in which Bernard was shot reveals a less-experienced killer, and the description of the crime in the text affirms this:

Bernard avait hâte de raconter sa découverte à Claudine, il pressait le pas. [...] Soudain il n’y eut personne, pas une voiture; Bernard sentait la présence de l’homme qui le suivait. Il se retourna, le vit à deux mètres de lui qui fouillait dans sa poche et en sortait un pistolet. Bernard, intrigue, n’avait pas peur de ce vieil homme d’une soixante d’années, essoufflé; il chercha autour de lui la raison qui le poussait à exhiber une arme. Avant qu’il ne comprenne, la première balle se ficha dans son épaule et le fit chanceler. Le tireur se rapprocha encore, à le toucher. Il sentait son haleine. Bernard ne trouvait pas la force de lutter, la seconde balle lui traversa le cou. Il s’effondra tandis que son assassin lui vidait les six dernières cartouches du chargeur dans le dos. (52)

The lack of expertise described above reveals that Bernard’s killer, unlike Roger’s, was not professionally trained—as is noted by Cadin at the crime scene. Yet, his persistence in tracking and executing Bernard would seem to suggest that, as in the case of his father’s death, his assassin was acting on someone else’s orders. This newfound link between the two deaths spurs Cadin on to continue his investigation. A full-fledged investigation into Roger’s death in 1961

seems impossible due to the “events” in Algeria and the political climate in France; Cadin remains constrained by the after-effects of this time period in his 1982 investigation of Bernard’s death. Indeed, after providing Cadin with information about Roger’s death, Dalbois’s colleague Gerbet—the faceless French governmental official *par excellence*—warns Cadin not to look too closely into this period in France’s past. He cautions both Dalbois and Cadin: “Aujourd’hui ces événements concernent deux pays, la France et l’Algérie. Les gouvernements n’ont aucun intérêt à voir resurgir certains fantômes. [...] L’heure est à l’oubli, sinon au pardon” (88-89). He calls upon Cadin’s profession as a police investigator in an attempt to convince him to pursue this connection no further: “Cinquante ans de secret absolu. Il n’est pas don mon pouvoir d’y déroger. Et certains dossiers explosifs pourriront pendant des siècles entiers avant de revoir la lumière. Vous savez autant que moi que les gouvernements ont besoin d’une police forte et unie. Remettre l’affaire d’octobre 1961 sur la place publique produirait l’effet inverse” (90-91). In spite of these warnings, Cadin continues his investigation into the deaths of both Bernard and Roger Thiraud.

As a police inspector, Inspector Cadin’s primary drive is to seek the truth and understand the events leading up to a crime, and yet his interest in this case seems to extend beyond these foundational principles of police work. In taking up the examination of Roger Thiraud’s death, Inspector Cadin seems to continue and expand the work of Thiraud’s murdered son. The first interactions he describes in the novel do not dispute this initial understanding of his character and, additionally, because the reader is allowed access to his innermost thoughts, Cadin’s character becomes the most complex of all those included in the novel. Through the information gleaned from Cadin’s interactions with his colleagues, the reader comes to understand that although he is new to the force in Toulouse, he is well-respected and well-liked. Although

Bernard's murder is the largest case in the novel, the other crimes mentioned in the text allow the reader further insight into Cadin's approach to investigation. In his own conception of his profession as a police detective, Cadin poetically laments the pull of the past he experiences during his investigations: "Il m'arrive de courir après des fantômes plus souvent qu'à mon tour..." (74). His work chasing ghosts leads him to investigate Roger's death alongside Bernard's within their historical contexts and as such is able to recognize the link between these murders.

The reader is introduced to Inspector Cadin by the character himself in the first person and it is not until he is addressed directly by another character that we even learn his name. The page after Bernard's murder is described, the novel's narrative abruptly switches from third-person narration to first person narration, with Inspector Cadin occupying the privileged role of "je". While such a division in the text, which essentially splits the novel into two sections—one occupying the time before the crime and the other focusing on investigating it—is not uncommon in a *roman policier*, the change in narrative voice from one section to the next is nonetheless a significant decision on the part of the author.¹⁰¹ With such a narrative shift, the reader is given greater insight into Inspector Cadin's character, personality, and motivations. This first-person narration is likewise more revelatory: in previous chapters, the reader received descriptions of a given character's actions, but was not privy to his or her inner thoughts or worries. In the case of Cadin's narration, however, the reader is aware of his personal thoughts and emotions. With such a narrative rapprochement, the reader is brought closer to Cadin and,

¹⁰¹ The use of first person narration is not unusual in *roman noir*. Often it serves to align the reader with a particular character, often the criminal or the detective investigating this character, and affords the reader insight into this character's actions. Such narration is described by Claire Gorrara, *The Roman Noir in Post-war French Culture: Dark Fictions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

through him, closer to the investigation and an understanding of the significance of the events of both October 17, 1961 and those that occurred in Drancy during World War II. This shift in narration occurs in the middle of chapter three and remains in place until the end of the novel eight chapters later. While the deaths of Roger and Bernard Thiraud are never far from the surface of the narrative, Inspector Cadin progressively takes more and more of the reader's attention and his investigation into their lives leading up to the murders rather than the crimes themselves becomes the driving force of the narrative. Indeed, in appropriating the narrative voice, Cadin appears to control what is learned throughout his investigation and later the dispersal of this information to the reader—and feels a responsibility attached to the weight of this knowledge. Cadin appears to go beyond his duties in investigating Bernard's death—he ignores warnings from other French officials and even continues after an attempt on his life—and, in so doing, his character seems to take up the work, the responsibility of members of the second-generation following the Algerian War to understand the historical impact of this event.

At the onset of his investigation, Cadin admits that he knows little of the events of the night of October 17, 1961, telling a colleague: “Cette manifestation, par exemple. Je me suis vaguement renseigné. [...] Un Oradour en plein Paris ; personne n'en sait rien ! Il doit bien exister des traces d'un pareil massacre...” (87).¹⁰² In the face of a lack of information, Cadin endeavors to learn more about October 17 and its link to Roger Thiraud's death. Although Roger's killer later tells him that the protest simply served as cover for his actions, Cadin eventually comes to understand a great deal about this peaceful protest march. During his investigation, he seeks witnesses who experienced the march first hand, in the hopes that they

¹⁰² As explained in a footnote in the novel itself, Oradur-sur-Glane, located in the Haute-Vienne, suffered the massacre of 642 inhabitants at the hands of Nazi soldiers on June 10, 1944 (Daeninckx 87). That this event has to be explained in a footnote reveals the depth of French amnesia about events beyond colonial conflicts.

might have seen what befell Roger Thiraud. Relying on his police connections, Cadin learns the name of a certain police photographer who was assigned to cover the protest—Marc Rosner, named in the text, presumably is the fictional proxy of newspaper photographer Elie Kagan.¹⁰³ Although he was in place to provide images for the police, none of his photographs appear to have survived: “Il devait couvrir l’intervention des Brigades spéciales, mais il n’a jamais remis les bobines, du moins c’est la version officielle” (91). In meeting with Marc Rosner, Cadin discovers a great deal about the night of October 17, 1961; Rosner described what he witnessed throughout the city: unarmed marchers, misinformation on the police radio about injured officers, beatings and deaths within the Prefecture of police. Because these revelations contradicted what little he knew about the protest, Cadin is necessarily dubious, and Rosner appreciates his hesitation: “Je vous raconte tout ça, inspecteur, bien que ça n’ait jamais existé officiellement. Aucune preuve. Aucune traces de ces quarante-huit cadavres” (108).¹⁰⁴ Following Rosner’s description of the brutality of the night of October 17, Cadin needed to find the proof that Rosner believed could not possibly exist. Having learned of a Belgian film crew in Paris recording the visit of the Shah of Iran and Farah Diba, Cadin travels to Belgium to meet with one of the filmmakers—Mr. Deril. His visit, over twenty years after the footage was created, is a surprise to the filmmaker. Cadin’s position within the French government is even

¹⁰³ Elie Kagan began his career as a photographer in the 1950s and is most well known for approximately 40 now iconic images taken on the night of October 17, 1961—photographs that are now stored at the Musée d’Histoire contemporaine-BDIC (Laronde 143). He collaborated with historian Jean-Luc Einaudi to produce a phototextual history of this event, entitled *17 octobre 1961*, Paris: Actes Sud, 2001.

¹⁰⁴ The death toll is actually thought to be much higher than the 48 mentioned here. Although the original police figure places the Algerian death toll at three protestors, Joshua Cole admits that while “No one will ever know the exact number killed...most historians have contented themselves with the approximation, ‘several dozens’” (116). House and McMaster have concluded that during September and October 1961, “well over 120 Algerian were murdered by the police in the Paris region” (167).

more surprising, as Deril tells the inspector: “Depuis vingt ans je commençais à être persuadé du peu d’intérêt de la justice française pour ces documents. Je suis prêt à les mettre à votre disposition” and he goes to explain his reaction: “Vous n’êtes pas le premier Français à vous intéresser à ce film sur les manifestations algériennes. Les services de sécurité de votre pays ont tenté de racheter l’original et les copies à la RTBF, mais la direction a tenu bon. J’imagine que les responsables de la tuerie ne souhaitent pas qu’on fasse trop de publicité concernant les conséquences de leurs ordres...” (109, 113). Inspector Cadin is left to watch the footage alone as Mr. Deril continues working on a current project. The narrative is then interrupted with over two pages of description of the images and event captured on film; “Les images défilèrent, toutes plus insoutenables les unes que les autres. La première partie du document avait été tournée depuis une voiture roulant à travers Paris. Une multitude d’affrontements opposaient des manifestants désarmés, hébétés, à des groupes compacts de CRS, de gardes mobiles décidés et motivés. L’absence de son donnait plus de poids encore aux scènes de violence” (114). With such vivid description, not only of the events recorded, but also the movement of the vehicle and camera, both Cadin and the reader are transfixed. While the video undoubtedly informs Cadin about numerous crimes that occurred in Paris on the night of October 17, he is able to discern the image of Roger Thiraud in several shots. As a result of this footage, Cadin witnesses Thiraud’s killer, dressed as a CRS agent, approach him; finally he has a face to associate with the crime. Armed with this new evidence, Inspector Cadin returns to Paris to interview Muriel Thiraud, Roger’s widow.

As described by Claudine Chenet and the omniscient narration from the beginning of the novel, Muriel Thiraud appears to have been irreversibly impacted by her husband’s death. Following her son’s murder, Cadin sees her as a broken woman, “un mort vivant” occupying an

apartment as depressed, and oppressed, as she is: “La pièce était plongée dans l’obscurité. Tous les volets avaient été tirés ; la femme avait juste laissé une fenêtre ouverte pour permettre à l’air de circuler. Des rais de soleil filtraient à travers les claires-voies” (123). In keeping her home in shuttered darkness, she is quite literally keeping out the world and confining the truth of the past, of her husband’s murder, to the same obscurity that weighs on her. In opening the shutters, Cadin poetically shines a light on what Muriel knows and thereby convinces her to reveal to him what she saw over twenty years ago. Based on her appearance and the state of her home, Cadin proceeds with apparently little hope of benefiting from his interview with her, especially after Muriel explains her disinterest in his investigation:

—Monsieur l’inspecteur, tout ceci appartient au passé. Il ne sert à rien de revenir sur tous ces événements et de disséquer les responsabilités...

Elle faisait de longues pauses entre chaque mot et ponctuait ses phrases de longues expirations.

—...Mon mari est mort, mon fils est mort. Vous ne les ferez pas revenir. J’accepte que ma vie soit ainsi ; j’espère les rejoindre le plus vite que possible. (123-4)

In spite of her declared desire to not revisit the past, it is clear that Muriel Thiraud is completely consumed by it. After raising the curtains on one closed window, Cadin makes a startling discovery: not only does this action provoke veritable hysteria in Muriel Thiraud, but also affords Cadin a view down to street level—precisely where Roger was killed walking up the stairs on Notre-Dame-de-Bonne-Nouvelle. Aware now that Muriel was not only affected by the loss of her husband, but by having powerlessly witnessed his murder, Cadin, shocked by this revelation, continues his interview:

Je la pris par les poignets et l'entraînai, petit à petit, vers le lieu tant redouté. Je ne cessai de lui parler, de la réconforter. Plus elle s'approchait de la fenêtre et plus sa détresse devenait intense. [...] Elle se détendit, cessa de pleurer et de geindre. [...] Elle se décida, d'un coup, à regarder la rue.

—Vous étiez là, n'est-ce pas ? Vous étiez là, à l'attendre quand il a été tué ? Dites-moi...
Personne ne vous a jamais demandé de témoigner ? [...]

—Oui, j'étais accoudée à la fenêtre. [...] Les cris, les bousculades, les grenades qui éclataient, les coups de feu. J'étais comme folle. Je me précipitais à la fenêtre à tout instant pour guetter mon mari, où à la porte dès que j'entendais des pas dans l'escalier. À un moment, je l'ai aperçu, dans la rue, il s'approchait de chez nous. Je m'en souviens comme si ça se déroulait à présent. Il marchait avec un bouquet de mimosas et un carton de gâteaux. Il a gravi quelques marches et s'est arrêté auprès de la balustrade pour observer les événements, les matraquages. [...] J'ai crié, crié du plus fort que je pouvais sans résultat. (125-6)

Although she does not describe her husband's death in detail—merely alluding to the presence of a CRS officer and a gun in his hand—it soon becomes apparent that her testimony to Cadin has had a huge impact on Muriel. Surprisingly—or perhaps not, given the lack of autopsy or investigation into the death of Roger Thiraud—she had never been asked if she saw her husband's death and in encouraging her to testify to what she saw, Cadin provokes a real and measurable change in her. This arrangement provides noticeable relief to Muriel and provides Cadin with more information to continue seeking a resolution to deaths of two Thiraud men; he describes her countenance later in their conversation: “Elle m’adressa un sourire; je parvins pas à penser, sans un fort sentiment d’angoisse, qu’il s’agissait là de son premier sourire depuis vingt-

deux années” (127). Having been raised away from his mother, Bernard Thiraud presumably could not have learned that his mother was witness to his father’s death. Additionally, her trauma resulting from having witnessed Roger’s murder appears to have prevented her from sharing any memories of the past with her son. During their interview, Muriel reveals to Cadin memories that she had not been able to share with her own son due to the extent of her trauma following her husband’s murder, and thereby essentially places Cadin into the place of the second-generation.

Inspector Cadin, whose own personal history is not revealed within this text beyond what details he provides to the reader himself, operates on multiple levels within the novel. At the most basic level, he is a police officer investigating a crime. The reader learns he is a man of passion, play, and persistence through scenes detailing his attentions towards the subjects of his investigation, his bemused interest in his lieutenant’s video games, and his unwavering resolve to find those responsible for the deaths of Roger and Bernard Thiraud. Perhaps most interesting though, is Cadin’s preoccupation with the night of October 17, 1961. Although he knew little of the events of this Parisian protest march before beginning his investigation in Bernard’s murder, Cadin’s interest grows exponentially throughout his inquest. Before his death, Bernard Thiraud has essentially been attempting to learn the personal history of a father he had never known through completing a project that had been close to his heart. Once Cadin discovers Roger’s manuscript investigating the Vichy government’s collaboration with Nazi orders relating to the deportation of French men, women and children from the transit camp at Drancy, he is able to discern the link between Bernard’s death and Roger’s two decades prior. Having begun his archival research to complete his father’s manuscript, Bernard unwittingly set in motion once again the governmental obfuscation that had been responsible for his father’s death. Once

Bernard discovered the truth of French involvement, particularly that of André Veillut, his death, like his father's, was inevitable.¹⁰⁵ Cadin, too, through the course of his murder investigation, learned of French involvement in World War II deportations and he nearly suffered the same fate as the Thiraud men—an attempt on his life was made in the streets of Toulouse, although he was able to defend himself and shoot his attacker.

In bringing the history of Drancy as well as that of October 17 to light through his investigation, Cadin essentially completes the work of the second-generation, the members of which sought understanding and explanation for the trauma of those who experienced these events firsthand. In putting the pieces together (Roger's archival research, Bernard's own research decades later and the motivation behind their murders), Cadin is able to create a complete picture not only of the Thiraud family trauma, but also gains an understanding of the French national trauma that contributed to their deaths. While completing his investigation, he effectively finishes the work of the Thiraud men, and in so doing, engages in a deferred postmemorial experience. While Roger's death was one part of the trauma of October 17 that marked the Thiraud family, Cadin, by investigating the wider circumstances of his death, is able to link the traumas that punctuate this text together. Cadin's initial investigation into this convoluted history is met with hesitation, resistance and overwhelming ignorance, as he describes himself: "Personne ne veut en parler, il n'y a pratiquement pas de traces... Sans la mort de Bernard Thiraud à Toulouse, il probable que j'aurais continué à tout ignorer" (103). And yet, in spite of an ignorant and unwilling public, the police inspector succeeds in brining these pasts

¹⁰⁵ As in Kemoum's novel, Daeninckx based this character on a real French figure: Maurice Papon. This character's professional career (described pages 213-215) bears a striking similarity to that of Papon in that they were both employed as the secretary general in the Bordeaux region, known for Nazi collaboration during the 1940s, and then transferred to the Paris prefecture post-war.

to light and sharing these lesser-known moments of French history with the wider public. Such an impulse, the need to understand and work through un-transmitted pasts, is central to postmemory. Cadin's mediated relationship to these traumas—connected through his work and his assumption of the second-generation role to complete the first generation's work—renders his postmemorial experience deferred, but no less impactful.

Although Cadin's personal history, and any unlikely but potential link to Drancy or the Algerian War for independence, remains a mystery to the reader, one can assume that his interest in investigating these events began simply as yet another case to the police inspector. This novel, then, seems to problematize the larger implications of someone who is not a direct inheritor of the trauma affecting his or her ancestors taking up the task left uncompleted by that very generation. Such a narrative choice can be read as a possible call to action to a larger community of readers. As apparent in the novel, these events impacted a wider swathe of French society than those directly involved and the narrative prompts its readers to reflect on such an impact. This version of the novel, indeed, seems to incarnate a postmemorial impulse—a need to transmit—that is visible not only through the characters, but also through its presentation complete with accompanying educational notes and explanations. With an educational introduction, chapter breaks—complete with word games and writing exercises—and numerous footnotes explaining references and events, this edition clearly attempts to educate the reader.

Both this novel and Kemoum's *Mohand le harki*, while addressing different moments in French history, harness the power of national memory to undermine it. The archive as a privileged record of French involvement at home and abroad is employed, interrogated and found lacking—either by sheer inaccessibility or as a result of historical exclusions. Additionally, these two texts mirror each other in their use of temporal compression and

confusion: irruptions from the past of the first generation are common in the narratives set in the novel's present. Such formal decisions on the part of the authors recall the notion, prevalent in trauma studies, that writing trauma often produces or incorporates traces of the trauma in the writing itself. As Bradley argues, "in the endeavor of writing history we also inevitably rewrite history, that is re-create the past in new forms" (109). The transgenerational experience of trauma and search for truth is equally present in both works. Members of the first and second generation are seeking the same aspects of truth and history, yet the first generation remains unable to fully comprehend and transmit it. The second generation must then continue the memorial work in order to share with a larger community the truth that members of the first generation—in both novels a paternal figure—had been seeking. The purpose of such literature, and of archives, is to preserve and facilitate the transmission of information across generations. As LaCapra suggests, "certain forms of literature or art, as well as the type of discourse or theory which emulates its object, may provide a more expansive space (in psychoanalytic terms, a *relatively* safe haven) for exploring modalities of responding to trauma, including the role of affect and the tendency to repeat traumatic events" (185). Unshared trauma can nevertheless be transmitted between generations and the archives in these texts serve to connect both generations to the same traumatic history.

POSTLUDE

Deferred postmemory at the crossroads of science and literature

One of the overarching questions in this project has revolved around a crisis of postmemory, namely the lack of transmission from one generation to another. In contrast to the model elaborated by Marianne Hirsch—in which the first generation who experiences a trauma freely and frequently shares their traumatic memories with their descendants, deferred postmemory (the concept I have defined and developed in this project) is instead characterized by an absence of transmission, or even by silence.¹⁰⁶ In the examples I have selected to explore, the first generation is reluctant or unable to share their traumatic past with members of the second generation who suspect or deduce that these absences or silences are nonetheless charged with meaning. The traumatic memories are thus retrieved by the second generation via processes that involve a search for signs and deriving their meaning: research, detective work, questioning. This project has thus investigated the capacity of literature to express and enact the impact of such gaps in transmission and the lengths to which later generations will turn to as a way to reconnecting with a familial past.

Literature, although the primary focus of this project, is not the only field concerned with the preservation and transmission of traumatic memories. The work of the neuroscientist Daniela Schiller is also invested in understanding and representing the workings of memory. The child of a Holocaust survivor, Schiller has linked her interest in emotional memories and her father's unshared experiences during World War II. As chronicled in the May 19, 2014 issue of the *New Yorker*, Schiller's work in "[finding] a way to rewrite our darkest memories" is a recent

¹⁰⁶ While in Hirsch's model, the first and second-generations directly experienced and were born immediately following the Holocaust respectively; Pierre Nora has traced the origins of the "generation" as a concept to the French Revolution and has also applied it to more recent historical moments, including *Mai 68* (*Realms* 498-531).

development in the scientific study of memory formation and retention (Specter).¹⁰⁷ Tracing several accepted notions of memory from the time of Plato and Aristotle, who “saw memories as thoughts inscribed on wax tablets”, to a more modern understanding of memory “as a camera...filming, storing, and recycling the vast troves of data we accumulate throughout our lives”, this article and Schiller’s work focus on contemporary means of prohibiting memory formation or impacting memory retrieval (Specter). Schiller’s current research builds off of two processes essential to understanding memories, especially those associated with fear: consolidation and reconsolidation. Consolidation is a bio-chemical process through which new experiences move from short-term to long-term memories, eventually becoming “imprinted onto the circuitry of our brains” (Specter). Reconsolidation, as the name implies, occurs when a fixed memory is recalled, and in “[retracing] the pathways in which it originated, and that under certain circumstances the memory seems to change” (Specter). Although researchers did not easily accept the validity of this process, a study conducted by Karim Nader in 1999 determined that “the very act of remembering something makes it vulnerable to change” (Specter). It was this study that encouraged Daniela Schiller to believe that humans might respond in the same way the rats in Nader’s experiment had to fearful memories and their being blocked by chemical intervention. Indeed, “when Schiller learned of Nader’s findings, she wondered if it would be possible to reactivate traumatic memory in humans and then block the fears associated with it, much as Nader had done with rats. With her father’s advancing age never far from her mind, she became determined to find out” (Specter). Rather than inject her human subjects with the protein-blocking chemicals that inhibited memory formation in Nader’s experiment, Schiller instead turned to behavioral training.

¹⁰⁷ A similar story investigating Daniela Schiller’s research into memory and fear appeared in 2013: Stephen S. Hall, “Repairing Bad Memories.” *Technology Review* 17 June 2013.

Although Schiller's interest may lie in understanding her father's unshared historical trauma, her initial study monitored and attempted to reduce fear responses in her subjects. After training sixty-five human subjects to fear an innocuous shape, a colored square—an association reinforced by a mild shock—Schiller attempted to train the subjects to overcome their fear. The results of her study suggest that humans can indeed forget a fear: if, the next day, her subjects were repeatedly exposed to the fearful stimulus (the colored square) without the associated shock their fear response would decrease and disappear.¹⁰⁸ This method of exposing a subject to a fear or negative memory in order to reduce its effect is not entirely novel: “Extinction training has for a long time been one of the principal treatments for many phobias and fears; psychiatrists refer to it as exposure therapy. The more you see something, the less it scares you, and the less it scares you the more you are able to deal with it” (Specter). And yet, to repeatedly revisit a painful experience in order to render it less impactful is not without controversy. According Edna Foa, the director of the Center for the Treatment and Study of Anxiety at the University of Pennsylvania:

There has always been a group that says we could reignite a trauma by asking people to deal with the memory...In this thinking, keeping the memory suppressed was actually better. That was the strong belief in the early era of psychiatry: Put it behind you. Don't deal with it. Get on with your life. The idea behind counseling was to soothe the patient, to find ways to make him as comfortable as possible. (Specter)

In Schiller's project, however, it is this continued exposure, the reliving and reconsolidation of a memory, that she believes will make the patient more comfortable. When she suggested to her father, Sigmund Schiller, that he should revisit his memories of the Holocaust, he flatly refused,

¹⁰⁸ The full results of this study were published by Schiller as: “Preventing the return of fear in humans using reconsolidation update mechanisms” *Nature* 463 (2010): 49-54.

stating, “You must suppress. Without suppression I wouldn’t live.” As related in the *New Yorker* article, Schiller persisted with her father, urging him to speak of his traumatic memories: “‘I think it’s good to cry—you should bring back memories and relive them. And since you are not in the war anymore, it might be a good experience.’ At that, Sigmund Schiller shook his head and stopped speaking” (Specter).

The real world example of Sigmund Schiller’s reluctance to discuss his traumatic memories reflects the fictional examples present in the majority of the works studied in this project. In the texts analyzed in the second chapter, namely Boualem Sansal’s *Le Village de l’Allemand, ou le journal des frères Schiller* and Leïla Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge*, the first and second generations are cut off from each other by death and difference, both linguistic and cultural. The fictional Schiller brothers in Sansal’s novel discover their father’s hidden Nazi past after his death. He had hidden this part of their family history from his sons, who subsequently uncovered the details of their father’s past in a cache of mementos and medals he had acquired during World War II. The Schiller patriarch’s motivations for keeping his past a secret are never actually revealed, perhaps as a way to prevent the destructive weight of this legacy from impacting his sons. The first generation’s decision to not share their traumatic memories with the second generation is much clearer in Sebbar’s text in which first generation characters refuse to speak of their role in the violently suppressed October 17, 1961 demonstration. In response to one second generation character’s prodding, Lalla explains the effects of her traumatic past and why she wants to spare her granddaughter: “Des secrets, ma fille, des secrets, ce que tu ne dois pas savoir, ce qui doit être caché, ce que tu apprendras, un jour, quand il faudra. Ce jour viendra, ne t’inquiète pas, ce jour viendra et il ne sera pas bienheureux pour toi...” (13). As in the case of

the fictional Schiller brothers, the second generation characters in Sebbar's novel discover the truth of their predecessors' pasts on their own, without the first generation's direct participation.

This pattern repeats itself in the third chapter, in which the second-generation characters seek out the first generation's history that had never been shared with them. In Hadjila Kemoum's novel, *Mohand le harki*, the titular character makes a conscious decision to share little of his past as a harki soldier in colonial Algeria, preferring that his children assimilate into Metropolitan France. In a dramatic turn of events, a similar lack of knowledge has deadly consequences when, in Didier Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire*, the second-generation character is killed just as his father had been before him for attempting to expose the French state's involvement in World War II era deportations. Unaware of the risks and in spite of the consequences, second-generation characters in both texts research their families' roles in historical events with little insight from the first generation.

Unlike the examples explored in chapters two and three, the first chapter of this project most closely dramatizes Daniela Schiller's hope for the transmission of traumatic memories. In the two novels examined in this chapter, *L'ancienne demeure turque* written by Andrée Montero and Maïssa Bey's *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*, two first-generation characters share their traumatic memories with younger characters. In both instances, not only do the characters gain insight into their own experiences through an exchange with the second generation, but they are also described as being changed by the experience of giving voice to their traumatic memories. Although neither character explicitly details the most traumatic moments of their pasts, they revisit their emotional memories as a result of meeting members of the second generation.

Although the first chapter's pair of texts would seem to confirm Daniela Schiller's research—that reconsolidating one's memories through repeatedly giving voice to them

diminishes the trauma associated with the original memory—the motivation for sharing traumatic memories in Schiller’s study is at odds with wider scholarship on trauma. Schiller encourages her father to share his past to ease his own suffering and yet this self-centered approach to traumatic memories is rarely cited as the motivation for members of the first generation to speak about their traumatic experiences. Rather, the impulse to share traumatic memories is more often turned toward the future and functions as a commemorative or preventative gesture. A testimonial link between past, present, and future is central to Hirsch’s concept of postmemory and is likewise underscored in Eva Hoffman’s understanding of her own role as a member of the second generation after the Holocaust. In *After Such Knowledge*, she describes herself as “a receptacle of historical legacy” (x). In light of Hoffman’s view of the duty of the second-generation, it is not surprising then that the first generation’s motivation to share their traumatic memories is often more related to the impact of such memories on others rather than on themselves. In the introduction to *After Testimony*, the editors highlight the first generation’s “overwhelming need” to testify: “As many witnesses stated, they lived only for the day when they could tell the world about the unimaginable horrors they have experienced—and many also feared that no one would believe them or, worse still, that no one would care” (3). This need not only to speak, but to be heard, is also underscored in Primo Levi’s reflections on his and other survivors’ fears in speaking about the Holocaust: “Almost all the survivors, orally or in their written memoirs, remember a dream which frequently recurred during the nights of imprisonment, varied in its detail but uniform in its substance: they had returned home and with passion and relief were describing their past sufferings, addressing themselves to a loved one, and were not believed, indeed were not even listened to” (12). If, however, as in the case of Schiller’s personal experience and Hirsch’s larger concept of the postmemorial experience, the

first generation finds a listener in the second generation, the shared traumatic memories can be examined in a new light.

Once the second generation takes on the mantle of “guardianship” as described by Hoffman, it is necessary to investigate how they interact with these memories. One way to do this is by considering one of Hirsch’s guiding questions in developing postmemory: “Can the memory of genocide be transformed into action and resistance?” (“Generation” 104). The experiences depicted and the fictional works created within the narratives analyzed in this project answer this question with a resounding yes. After connecting with the trauma of the first generation through traces left behind—in the form of diaries, archives, and places—characters from the second generation interact with their families’ traumatic histories in ways that those who experienced the trauma directly might not have been able to. In a similar position as the fictional members of the second-generation found in these novels, Schiller’s experiences and research are informed by her position as a member of the second generation. Although her interaction with her father may not have been as smooth as her lab-based experiments, his sharing memories of his childhood during World War II significantly affected Daniela Schiller. Sigmund Schiller’s eventual discussion of his experiences during World War II did not diminish the trauma he associated with these memories and in fact pushed him to confirm that he had made the correct choice for himself in suppressing his traumatic past in order to continue living post-war. For his daughter, however, learning the details of his childhood experiences had a profound impact on her understanding of her father and also their shared familial past. Schiller describes a new understanding of her father after learning more about his past traumas: “...now I can only see him with all the insight I have gained. My memory has been updated. I have spent

so much of my life trying to find a way to reconsolidate my father's memories, and ended up reconsolidating my own" (Specter).

This project demonstrates the durability of memories; not fixed as they once were believed to be, but long-lasting and accessible not only through direct exchange (as in Hirsch's model of postmemory) but also through other means of connection. Members of the second-generation, upon learning of the first generation's past—through archives, diaries and other traces left behind—incorporate the knowledge of such trauma into their identities and share this information with others, thereby enacting a deferred postmemorial experience.

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