

UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

The Place of Atrocity: Geographical Imaginaries in Delbo, Camus, and Duras

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/71p7996d>

Author

Brutsche, Vanessa

Publication Date

2017

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

The Place of Atrocity: Geographical Imaginaries in Delbo, Camus, and Duras

by

Vanessa Marie Brutsche

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

French

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Film Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Debarati Sanyal, Chair

Professor Michael Lucey

Professor Miryam B. Sas

Summer 2017

Abstract

The Place of Atrocity: Geographical Imaginaries in Delbo, Camus, and Duras

by

Vanessa Marie Brutsche

Doctor of Philosophy in French

and Designated Emphasis

in

Film Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Debarati Sanyal, Chair

This dissertation brings to light a poetics of space in postwar texts and films that represent the aftermath of historical trauma. I show that the spatial poetics of confinement, deportation, and diaspora in works by Charlotte Delbo, Marguerite Duras, and Albert Camus highlight the unsettling but unavoidable continuity between sites of atrocity and the everyday world. Instead of depicting the concentration camp as an enclosed and impenetrable site of extreme violence – one that must be remembered, while sealed away in both time and space – these works insist on the connections between everyday life and catastrophic violence. This focus on space enriches the critical discussion of traumatic memory, which has predominantly evaluated trauma as a temporal disruption of the psyche. By reading works of literature and film through the lens of space, I show that the ongoing political urgency of this traumatic history was envisioned as the proximity between concentration camps and the pacified, quotidian world. Across texts that range from testimony (Delbo) to fiction (Camus) and experimental film (Duras), the concentration camp comes into direct contact with urban and domestic spaces. As a result, these works radically dismantle the perceived boundaries of the camp, emphasizing its capacity – as site, system, and figure – to contaminate even the most familiar spaces of the everyday, such as the city street, the railway station, or the home.

In memory of Charles William Dusing Sr.
(1922-2009)

CONTENTS

List of Figures	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: “Un endroit d’avant la géographie”: Charlotte Delbo’s Concentrationary Universe	16
Chapter 2: Totalitarianism and States of Exception: The Plague in Camus's <i>Etat de siège</i>	47
Chapter 3: <i>Les travellings sont affaire de mémoire</i> : Circulating Memory in Duras’s <i>Aurélia Steiner</i>	74
Conclusion	109
Bibliography	112

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: <i>Aurélia Steiner Vancouver</i>	p. 71
Figure 2: <i>Aurélia Steiner Vancouver</i>	p. 72
Figure 3: <i>Aurélia Steiner Vancouver</i>	p. 78
Figure 4: <i>Aurélia Steiner Melbourne</i>	p. 85
Figure 5: <i>Aurélia Steiner Melbourne</i>	p. 87
Figure 6: <i>Aurélia Steiner Melbourne</i>	p. 90

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

So many friends, colleagues, and family members have been essential to the writing of this dissertation that it is impossible to do justice to everyone who has helped sustain my work during this process, whether by aid, support, dialogue, or sheer presence. I especially benefitted from the endless patience and insight of my advisor, Debarati Sanyal, as well as that of Miryam Sas and Michael Lucey. Aubrey Gabel and Margot Szarke were my dissertation writing group, offering both academic and emotional support throughout years of drafts and job applications. Jessie Singer has been by my side as a friend and fellow student since our first day of graduate school, and I am proud to have graduated with all three of these brilliant women.

I would also like to thank my family, particularly my parents, who have endured my obsessions with both French and literature for decades, beginning at an age when I was much too young to understand either one. My final expression of gratitude goes to Matt, my tireless partner, accomplice, and confidant, whose contributions I cannot begin to enumerate.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my maternal grandfather, who saw things in Europe in the spring of 1945 that he could not forget.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is animated by a central inquiry: what does it mean when the logic of the concentration camp begins to structure spaces of everyday life? How can the postwar city be part of the concentration-camp universe? In response to such questions, *The Place of Atrocity: Geographical Imaginaries in Delbo, Camus, and Duras* excavates a literary and cinematic corpus that links geography, architecture, and urban space to mass destruction. Examining texts and films from the end of the war to the 1970s, I argue that the catastrophic revelation of the concentration camp system brought about different ways of thinking about geography and urban space. Instead of depicting the concentration camp as an enclosed and impenetrable site of extreme violence – one that must be remembered, while sealed away in both time and space – these works refuse to separate everyday life from traumatic historical violence. The “place of atrocity” refers not only to the geographical location of extreme violence – a proposition that is not as self-evident as it may seem – but also, the conceptual place accorded to historical violence in the cultural and geographical imaginaries. By reading works of literature and film through the lens of space, I show that the ongoing political urgency of this traumatic history was envisioned as the spatial proximity between concentration camps and spaces of everyday life. Across texts that range from testimony to fiction, theater, and experimental films, the concentration camp comes into direct contact with the urban and domestic spaces of everyday life. As a result, these works radically dismantle the perceived boundaries of the concentration camp, emphasizing its capacity – as site, system, and figure – to contaminate even the most familiar spaces of the everyday, such as the city street, the subway station, or the home.

The Place of Atrocity engages with works by Charlotte Delbo, Albert Camus, and Marguerite Duras that negotiate the geographical dimensions of representing and transmitting the memory of historical violence. While this combination of authors may at first seem unusual, reading them alongside each other, through the lens of space and place, brings to light a shared reflection on the space of the concentration camp in its unsettling proximity with the here and now. More generally, the three authors also share a common interest in the aftermath of historical trauma. Belonging to the generation of writers who were young adults during World War II (in fact, all three were born within months of each other), Camus, Duras, and Delbo used literature as a means of reflecting, often provocatively, on the ethical, political, and aesthetic stakes of representing the atrocities of the war. This mutual inclination can be traced through the respective major works at the center of each author-based chapter of this dissertation. Delbo’s *Auschwitz et après*, Camus’s *L’État de siège*, and Duras’s *Aurélia Steiner* all share the particular trait of thinking across space in the context of traumatic memory. The spatial tropes that shape the depiction of the camps in these texts reflect formal and conceptual resonances in how their authors

respond to the problems of memory, representation, and trauma. Using these resonances to map a critical engagement with spatiality and historical violence, I argue that these works are invested in not only traversing the borders of sites of trauma, but in demonstrating the connections between everyday life and catastrophic violence.

This focus on space in *The Place of Atrocity* enriches the critical discussion of traumatic memory, which has predominantly evaluated trauma as a temporal disruption of the psyche. As this dissertation frames trauma from the point of view of cultural memory, I do not adhere to the strictly psychoanalytic definition of trauma as missed experience, and tend to use the term “trauma” in the broader (and perhaps less precise) sense of historical trauma. Dominick LaCapra’s useful distinction between *structural trauma* (a sense of “transhistorical absence” experienced as a lack of pure origins or the impossibility of totalizing meaning) and *historical trauma* (which entails specific instances of traumatic violence) allows us to avoid conflating a pervasive sense of trauma or victimhood with actual historical loss (77-8).¹ This distinction renders crucial the specificity of subject positions such as victim and perpetrator, and considers the political and social legacies of the traumatizing events. While it is impossible to divorce the concept of trauma from its psychoanalytic origins, this project is oriented towards the means by which cultural memory of the Holocaust and other atrocities is produced and passed on.

In the context of memory studies, this project addresses the production and transmission of cultural or collective memory, as opposed to the structure of individual memory. The term “collective memory” was coined by Maurice Halbwachs to describe the fundamentally social process of how groups maintain memories, by means of a *cadre* of shared communicative practices. The discipline of memory studies is indebted to Halbwachs for the insight that all memory, including personal memory, is formed through the social framework of collective memory. Cultural memory also necessarily operates at the collective level, but the distinction between collective and cultural permits, in the latter, a foregrounding of the media (textual, visual, audio, digital) by which memories are maintained and circulated. This shift in focus opens up the theorization of collective memory to the transgenerational transmission of memory (as in Marianne Hirsch’s concept of “postmemory”²), as well as the transnational and transcultural circulation of memory discourses.³ Indeed, the

¹ For a critique of the appropriation and globalization of the discourse of trauma and in contemporary culture, see Fassin and Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma*.

² Originally conceived to describe the relationship of the children of survivors to the cultural or collective trauma of their parents, Hirsch defines postmemory more broadly as the response of the second generation to the trauma of the first. See Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*.

³ The scholarship on the field of memory studies is now voluminous. A succinct overview of theorizations of memory from Halbwachs to the present, including the distinction between collective and cultural memory, can be found in Richard Crownshaw, *The Afterlife of Holocaust*

transcultural turn in memory studies is by now firmly entrenched, with the dissemination of “multidirectional memory” (Rothberg) to describe the interconnections and negotiations between the memories of different histories of violence – such as the Holocaust, slavery, and colonialism – on a global scale.⁴

The Place of Atrocity brings a spatial humanities perspective to post-Holocaust literature and memory studies, foregrounding spatiality as a dimension of the representation of historical trauma. The dynamics of space and place undeniably play a significant role in the ways we think and remember the Holocaust, in part because the processes involved in its implementation, such as ghettoization, deportation, and internment, are fundamentally spatial phenomena – they are ways of controlling the geographic presence or distribution of individuals and groups. However, in the domain of literature studies, scholarly approaches to the topic frequently focus on the temporal dimensions of history and memory, especially from the point of view of trauma theory. Indeed, the now-canonical writings of Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub set forth an epistemology of trauma that is primarily temporal, proceeding under the signs of latency and repetition. Yet spatial modes of experience clearly cannot be excluded from the categories of history and memory, just as space and time cannot be disengaged as co-constituents of narrative. My insistence on geographic continuity is markedly different from the lack of closure produced by the endless repetition of traumatic memory.

In recent decades, there has been a groundswell of interest in space and place in literary and cultural studies. One of the first works to take a spatial approach to the study of collective memory was Pierre Nora’s monumental *Les lieux de mémoire*, which proposed a selected cartography of the memory sites particular to French national consciousness.⁵ The “spatial turn” in critical theory so heralded by Soja in *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) has received much attention, especially in the age of globalization and transnationalism. The widespread acknowledgement of space as a crucial structuring force in social life has brought with it studies of the political stakes and effects of how social spaces are defined and controlled, as well as the different ways

Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture, Chapter one: “Theory after Memory.” For an up-to-date survey of the current state of the field that gives an account of the transcultural, transgenerational, transmedial, and transdisciplinary turns, see Bonds, Craps, and Vermeulen, “Introduction: Memory on the Move,” in *Memory Unbound*.

⁴ The dynamic, hybrid form of memory that emerges from the interconnections between histories of violence has been the subject of many important contributions: see Huyssen, *Present Pasts*; Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory*; Crownshaw, *Transcultural Memory*; Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing*; Rothberg, Sanyal, and Silverman, eds., “Noeuds de mémoire” (Special issue of *Yale French Studies*), to name a few.

⁵ Nora’s project has often been critiqued as a nostalgic and fundamentally nationalistic attempt to preserve the links between collective memory and French identity by excluding regional and colonial histories. See Rothberg, “Between Memory and Memory.”

in which the representations of space can be contested or reconfigured. More recently, humanistic inquiries into space, place, and geography have proliferated under the rubric of “geocriticism,” geohumanities” “spatial humanities,” or “environmental humanities.”⁶ Ranging from the global scale of geopolitics to the national and the local, modern geography is also now deeply implicated in debates over public memory. While terms such as geography, topography, and landscape have often been deployed metaphorically in scholarship on Holocaust memory, geographic methods of analysis have revitalized this area of inquiry, resulting in what may be called a spatial turn in Holocaust studies. A groundbreaking example of this interdisciplinary work can be found in the multi-authored volume, *Geographies of the Holocaust*, which applies digital methods of visualization and GIScience to different elements of Holocaust historiography.⁷ As the authors remind us, the Holocaust was “a profoundly geographical phenomenon” (1), one that “was implemented through space and not merely in space” (228). By bring this emerging focus on spatial modes of thinking in historical geography to post-Holocaust literature and film, this dissertation aims to illuminate how historical memory of genocide moved along spatial lines, so that the concentration camp came to haunt the experience of the city.

Henri Lefebvre, the Marxist philosopher (and grandfather of postmodern geography⁸), presents a striking example of the way that urban space and the concentration camp were being thought together in the years after the war. The first volume of his *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, written in 1945 and published in 1947, ends with a chapter called “Les Possibles,” in which a reflection on the concentration camps emerges from an interrogation of the “essence” of industrial, urban life (254-55). With little transition, he begins to narrate life in the camps through an assemblage of published survivor testimonies (including that of David Rousset), before posing the question: aren’t these impressions of the concentrationary universe “précisément au fonds le plus constant, au soubassement de la vie quotidienne?”

⁶ For recent volumes that ambitiously both theorize and put into practice the interdisciplinary collaboration of geography and the humanities, see David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris, eds. *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010; Michael Dear, Jim Ketchum, Sarah Luria, Douglas Richardson, eds. *GeoHumanities: Art, History, Text at the Edge of Place*. New York: Routledge, 2011; and Stephen Daniels, Dydia DeLyser, J. Nicholas Entrikin, and Doug Richardson, eds. *Envisioning Landscapes, Making Worlds: Geography and the Humanities*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

⁷ Other recent contributions to the spatial humanities in Holocaust studies include Tim Cole, *Holocaust Landscapes*; Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca, eds., *Hitler’s Geographies*; Simone Gigliotti, *The Train Journey*; Claudio Minca, “Geographies of the Camp.” See also Claudio Fogu’s “A ‘Spatial Turn’ in Holocaust Studies?” in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, where Fogu’s essay is followed by an interview with contributing authors of *Geographies of the Holocaust*.

⁸ *La Production de l’espace*, a founding text in the discipline, is published in 1974.

(258). Just as we must abandon the idea of Reason in order to begin to apprehend the camps, he argues, we must abandon the same illusion “pour comprendre l’univers *quotidien* de l’homme moderne” (259, ital. in orig.). He goes so far as to name Auschwitz “*cité capitaliste*” (260, ital. in orig.); Auschwitz is seen as the limit case of the modern, industrial city (261).⁹ Writing in 1945, Lefebvre tells us that our daily life is revealed by the concentration camp universe. Just as the critique of everyday life that flourished in mid-century France did so “not merely in order to describe lived experience, but in order to change it” (Kaplan and Ross 1), the theorization of the concentrationary in the wake of Nazism did not set out to be simply a description, but a political intervention.¹⁰

The primary corpus of this project spans from the end of World War II to 1979, corresponding to a period that saw the continued development of theories of space and the everyday in French thought, from avant-garde groups like the Lettrists and the Situationists to philosophers such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Michel de Certeau. While previous scholarship has demonstrated the extent to which the idea of the everyday is invested in critical examinations of the nature of social space and urban geography, I argue that it is indissociable from its opposite: the *extreme*. I demonstrate that the everyday and the extreme – like the camp and the city – are mutually constitutive, while delineating a historical transformation in the very concept of the extreme.

Twentieth-century cultural preoccupations with the tension between the extreme and the everyday date to the period preceding WWII, in the forms of radical experience sought by the Surrealists (dream, delirium, madness), by Georges Bataille (the sacred), or by Antonin Artaud (cruelty), among others. However, these literary and philosophical forms of violence give way after the Second World War to an understanding of the extreme as physical violence perpetrated under a “state of exception” (Schmitt), such as torture, extermination, or the reduction to “bare life” (Agamben) in the camps. In the postwar era, the cultural concept of extremity is recast in light of the extreme violence that took place in the concentration and extermination camps, as well as the spatial processes of ghettoization, deportation, and internment that characterized them.

In the decades after the Second World War, France’s urban landscape was transformed by demolition, reconstruction, and modernization. Critiques of urbanism in this period centered largely around the specter of massive new housing projects,

⁹ The significance of conceiving of Auschwitz as a city unto itself will be addressed further in Chapter One.

¹⁰ In the context of this study, it is remarkable that Henri Lefebvre and Charlotte Delbo were very close – in fact, she worked as his secretary at the CNRS in the 1960s. Further research is needed to uncover the extent of Delbo’s activities with Lefebvre (although she did publish several book reviews on sociology and urban studies), but the very fact of their collaboration is significant and suggestive.

though official accounts vaunted their dazzling modernity.¹¹ Rather than expressing nostalgia for traditional modes of urban life, the texts and films I examine point to the unsettling correspondence between this architecture and the industrialized containment of human bodies put in place by the vast system of concentration camps. In fact, this confluence had already manifested itself in the Parisian suburb of Drancy, where the Cité de la Muette, usually considered the first large-scale modern housing complex in France (built 1932-34) was requisitioned as a transit and internment camp during the Occupation, from which most deportees were sent directly to Auschwitz.

If the Cité de la Muette's high-rise towers of concrete and steel proved to be the architectural progenitor of even larger housing projects after the war, the internment camp of Drancy represented the troubling penetration of the concentration camp regime into the country's center. As postwar Paris sought to exorcise the memory of internment, deportation, and genocide, the texts I study call attention to this collusion between modern architecture, industrialism, and the Nazi concentrationary apparatus. *The Place of Atrocity* charts the discourse of "concentrationary" space in the social imaginary as it moves *from* the camps and *towards* urban life, at a time when viewing the city through the camp opened a forceful mode of critique. Yet this mode of comparative thinking between the camp and the city gets foreclosed with the rise of a new era in international Holocaust remembrance, dominated by the figure of the survivor and the concepts of the Shoah's radical specificity and unknowability.¹² My project enacts a theoretical shift in focus from an archival interest in the postwar transmission of survivor testimony to a vision of how the spatial logic of the camp and of the Nazi colonial regime was seen as susceptible to reproduction in the structures of urban life – what theorist Guy Debord in 1961 called "l'organisation concentrationnaire de la vie" (9).

Defining the Concentrationary: From History to Theory

The term "concentrationary," or *concentrationnaire*, is not merely the adjectival form referring to concentration camps – it has a literary and political history rooted in the immediate aftermath of the war, with continued significance as a conceptual category for the lived reality of the concentration camp. The expression

¹¹ Florian Urban notes that the "peculiar metaphor" of the *univers concentrationnaire* became widespread in reference to housing projects in 1960s France, particularly the modern towers of Sarcelles (whose construction is depicted in Christiane Rochefort's *Les petits enfants du siècle*). See *Tower and Slab*, 49-51.

¹² See Annette Wieviorka, *L'Ère du témoin*. Wieviorka demonstrates that the "era of the witness" is in full force by the late '70s, when the individual is perceived as the bearer, or embodiment, of history, and international politics are strongly marked by the memory of the Holocaust. The corpus of this dissertation, ending in 1979, coincides with the trajectory described by Wieviorka.

“concentrationary universe” was inaugurated by David Rousset, a Communist militant deported to Buchenwald for his resistance activities in France. His structural and philosophical analysis of the concentration camp system was published as *L’univers concentrationnaire* in 1946. From its opening pages, Rousset’s topography of the concentrationary universe immediately situates it within the built landscape of urban and industrial centers, as well as in the “natural” landscape of both agriculture and tourism. Ranging from “La grande cité solitaire de Buchenwald ; une petite ville touristique sur les bords de la Weser” to the “chantiers” of Neuengamme, to the “champs de blé et de moutarde” of Helmstedt, and to the encampment of Woebblin “comme un chancre sur la forêt” (Rousset 21-22), Rousset’s particular trajectory through the concentrationary universe is crucially embedded in the political, social, and economic functions of lived space. This embeddedness of the concentrationary universe within other spaces is an essential dimension of the concept (and which is expressed in different ways in each of the texts and films I address).

For Rousset, the *univers concentrationnaire* has the specificity accorded by its own “règles” and “sens,” which separate it from ordinary existence, but it also impinges on the world outside of it: “que cet univers concentrationnaire existe n’est pas sans importance pour la signification de l’univers des gens ordinaires, des hommes tout court” (49). The pertinence of the concentrationary universe to the everyday life of the present, its inherent mobility, make it “la gangrène de tout un système économique et social” (182), an infection capable of attacking any part of the proverbial “body” of human society. This universe, for Rousset, is not only a model of a particular kind of space designed for containment and oppression, but also a lens for social analysis. The dually moral and political conclusion of *L’univers concentrationnaire* describes the Nazi camps as a warning:

L’existence des camps est un avertissement. . . . ce n’est qu’une question de circonstances. Ce serait une duperie, et criminelle, que de prétendre qu’il est impossible aux autres peuples de faire une expérience analogue pour des raisons d’opposition de nature. . . . l’existence et le mécanisme de cette crise tiennent aux fondements économiques et sociaux du capitalisme et de l’impérialisme. Sous une figuration nouvelle, des effets analogues peuvent demain encore apparaître. (186-87)

The “figuration nouvelle” under which the concentrationary universe is liable at any time to reappear is thus central to the original conceptualization of the term, which sees the concentrationary as arising from the socioeconomic conditions of capitalism and imperialism. Ordinary, everyday life is implicated in the concentrationary universe in Rousset’s text (as it is in the works by Delbo, Camus, and Duras that I will analyze in the following chapters). Rousset’s text concludes on a cautionary note, calling for

our vigilance in the face of the potential recurrence of the concentrationary regime.¹³ To write of a concentrationary universe, or a concentrationary art (as Jean Cayrol does in “Pour un romanescque lazareen”) is to identify a geographically and historically mobile mode of oppression that cannot be relegated to any closed past.¹⁴

Crucially, this analysis of the of the concentrationary universe as containing varied spaces within it does not differentiate between concentration camps and the kinds of sites that we now refer to as extermination or killing centers. The political and memorial culture of postwar France saw all deportation to Nazi camps as part of a unified phenomenon. As Samuel Moyn explains, “Rousset epitomized, in France, the broadly universalist and specifically antifascist interpretation of Nazi criminality” (54). This view of the camps became normative in the years after the war, and remained so for approximately two decades.¹⁵ For Rousset (as well as for Hannah Arendt, who was greatly influenced by *L’univers concentrationnaire* [Moyn 56-8]), the difference between concentration and extermination is one of degree. The emergence in the 1960s of a memorial paradigm that centers the Holocaust as a genocidal event in which Jews were specifically targeted by the Nazi regime thus distinguishes the Final Solution from the broader concentrationary system, and displaces the “concentrationary universe” as the dominant framework for understanding the camps.

In other words, the distinction between concentration and extermination is rooted in the need to acknowledge Jewish specificity of the Holocaust and define it as genocide, rather than just another facet of Nazi political persecution. In the case of France, the universalist view of deportation also helped maintain a patriotic, Gaullist vision of French martyrdom during the war, without threatening the paradigm of the French Republican subject as transcending the particularity (or *communautarisme*) of ethnic or religious identity. This shift towards recognition of Jewish victimhood also entailed the displacement of Buchenwald as paradigmatic camp, with Auschwitz

¹³ In this it resembles Alain Resnais’s foundational film about the camps, *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), which evokes “le vieux monstre concentrationnaire” and “la peste concentrationnaire” that we are foolish to believe vanquished and in the past.

¹⁴ This opening up of the memorial model of the concentration camp to other instances of violence, not only in the past but in the present, is precisely the use to which Georges Perec puts Rousset’s text at the end of *W ou le souvenir d’enfance*. Citing Rousset’s *L’univers concentrationnaire* allows Perec to connect his memories of loss during the Holocaust to the victims of Pinochet’s dictatorship in Chile. See Perec, 221-222.

¹⁵ Moyn argues that the controversy surrounding the 1966 publication of Jean-François Steiner’s *Treblinka*, which recounts an uprising among Jewish prisoners in the extermination camp, marked a watershed moment when French culture began to recognize the specificity of Jewish victimhood. See Moyn, chapter three: “Nazi Criminality between Concentration and Extermination.” Annette Wieviorka situates the cultural shift towards an understanding of the Holocaust slightly earlier, at the time of the Eichmann trial in 1961. See *L’Ère du témoin*.

instead becoming the symbolic center of the perpetration of the genocide. Over the course of the ensuing decades, this separate status also developed, from some vantage points, into a stronger assertion of the absolute uniqueness of the Holocaust, its incomparability and ultimately, even the idea of its unrepresentability.¹⁶ In their extreme versions, these modes of remembering the Holocaust singularize it as a paradigm of historical trauma, preventing it from being understood in relation to other histories of violence. As a result, the Holocaust seems to occupy an untouchable place.¹⁷ However, in what follows, I hope to make a case for the utility of the concentrationary as a political and aesthetic phenomenon that can also help illuminate memories of genocidal violence (not strictly limited to the Holocaust).

Thanks to the acknowledgement of the Holocaust as event, current historical literature on the Nazi regime distinguishes the Final Solution from the broader phenomenon of concentration camps. While Auschwitz still dominates the popular imagination as center of the Holocaust, scholarly accounts often identify the perpetration of genocide with the rapid, industrialized methods of murder used at the four dedicated extermination camps (*Vernichtungslager*), or death camps (*Todeslager*): Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. This designation means that these sites were used to execute deportees upon arrival by means of either exhaust fumes or gas chambers, and that there were no barracks or work details, as there were in concentration camps. Thus, historians emphasize that these camps, located farther east than many of the more recognizable concentration camps (like Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Dachau), should be remembered as where the Holocaust actually took place. Identifying the Nazi genocide uniquely with designated extermination camps, however, brings another set of historical problems. Where do we locate the mass shootings (*la Shoah par balles*) and death pits in this schema, or Jewish victims who died in other kinds of sites (such as ghettos, transit camps, cattle cars en route to camps, during forced medical experiments, or in slave labor camps, to name a few)? And how do we situate the largest and most notorious camp in the Nazi system, Auschwitz-Birkenau, which contained facilities for many of the different functions listed above?¹⁸

¹⁶ The question of whether the Holocaust can, or should, be compared to other instances of genocide or mass killings, as well as whether the Holocaust can be adequately represented, have been amply discussed. The essential volume on these debates is Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation*. Thomas Trezise presents a lucid and sustained critique of the rhetoric of unspeakability in *Witnessing Witnessing*.

¹⁷ I will not rehearse these debates here, but they are addressed in the works referenced in footnote 2, above.

¹⁸ Annette Wieviorka points out that Birkenau in particular complicates the distinction between concentration and extermination camp because it was the destination for all women deported to the Auschwitz complex, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Thus, Wieviorka reminds us that we can only imagine a “cloison étanche” between Auschwitz as a concentration camp

Most accounts that set out to categorically separate concentration from extermination do so with recourse to the intention of the perpetrators. Indeed, the very definition of genocide – developed, as is well known, after the end of the war as an attempt to formulate a legal and judicial response to the Nazi atrocities – hinges on the “intent to destroy” a targeted ethnic group.¹⁹ In the kinds of instances mentioned above, this can entail a conceptual model that begins with the categorization of *deliberately* genocidal practices, but may result in the drawing of borders that exclude victims who perished outside of the recognized methods of elimination. Timothy Snyder’s influential *Bloodlands* may be considered a recent example. Snyder’s groundbreaking work decenters not only Auschwitz but the camp system as a whole, directing our attention to the “bloodlands” of Eastern Europe, where the majority of both Nazi and Soviet mass killings were perpetrated in 1933-1945. While Snyder importantly shifts the geography of mass killings and expands the roster of recognized methods to include deliberate starvation (in addition to gassing and shooting), he maintains the distinction between concentration and extermination on the basis of which camps were “designed for mass killing” (382). In addition, such a schema puts slave labor in a secondary position, despite the Nazi policy of *Vernichtung durch Arbeit*, annihilation through labor, which should problematize the identification of the Nazi genocide with a restricted set of killing methods. Beyond the *Vernichtungslager*, we can see that annihilation (*Vernichtung*) was pursued explicitly by the Third Reich under more than one form.²⁰

Although the distinction between concentration and extermination relies largely on the plan, intention, or design of the perpetrators, there are nevertheless spatial connections between the two, as the camps were a vast and interconnected system. Of course, we should continue to try to deepen our knowledge of Nazi terror with recourse to the development and implementation of policies, as well as the ideologies that undergird them. Here, the task of the historian is to draw lines between aspects of historical events in order to categorize and analyze them –

and Birkenau as a killing center if we exclude the issue of gender. See *Auschwitz, 60 ans après*, 77-78.

¹⁹ The United Nations defines genocide as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.” Text of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) is available at <https://treaties.un.org>.

²⁰ I would argue that excluding slave labor in favor of the absolute demarcation between killing centers and concentration/labor camps is somewhat misleading. All of the extermination camps had a *Sonderkommando* of Jewish prisoners working with the gas chambers and crematoria, and who therefore lived and worked on-site (usually for weeks at a time), until they too were eliminated. From this perspective, extermination camps were also sites of forced labor, where prisoners performed the most horrific tasks – the “dirty work” of extermination.

ultimately, to try to *explain* how and why they occurred, or to revise dominant models that may be seen as distorting the overall nature of the event. The migration of Holocaust historiography towards the East (a trend in which Snyder's work plays a large part) is an example of a re-evaluation of dominant models of historical knowledge. As Simone Gigliotti indicates, recent years have seen a resurgence of scholarship that "attempts to reclaim the places and experiences that are authentically indicative of the historical record of Nazi genocide: most victims died in Eastern Europe outside of concentration camps" ("A Mobile Holocaust?" 330).

Evidently, there are many questions that arise from systematically mapping the conceptual distinction that separates internment from genocide onto the material history and geography of the Nazi camps. The cultural imaginary of Nazi terror tends to reduce, streamline, and emblemize the Holocaust instead of promoting historical and memorial narratives that seek out the terrifying complexity, range, and variation of experiences that characterize it. To be clear, I am not arguing that we cannot distinguish extermination from concentration, nor am I calling for a return to the universalist way of thinking that, until the late 1960s, dominated French memory of WWII, and was unable to extricate Jewish victimhood from the broader phenomenon of political deportation. Rather, I want to suggest that the conceptual distinction cannot be so easily projected onto geographical and material oppositions between East versus West, extermination camps versus concentration and labor camps. In this dissertation, I attempt to treat the camp system as a constantly changing and developing network, in a similar sense that the Holocaust, as Tim Cole writes, should be understood not as static and monolithic, but dynamic, "something moving in time and space" (6).²¹ Through the concept of the concentrationary, with its simultaneous traits of embeddedness in space and the potential for geographic and historical mobility, I suggest that we can find ways of articulating the contact or intersections between concentration and extermination, as both spaces and realms of experience, without effacing their differences and their specificity.

To this end, I suggest that a focus on space and geography – a growing area of research in Holocaust studies – can offer an alternative to the model that radically opposes concentration camps and sites of genocide, giving us ways of visualizing the Holocaust and the concentrationary together. Recent scholarship on the historical geography of the Third Reich has greatly expanded our knowledge of the spatial experience of the Nazi camp regime.²² Notably, the voluminous and ongoing project, *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* (2009-12,

²¹ Similarly, Simone Gigliotti comments that the "spatial turn" is bringing to Holocaust studies "a mandate to rethink the structures of confinement as fixed and unchanging" ("A Mobile Holocaust" 330).

²² See examples previously, in footnote 5. Simone Gigliotti comments that the "spatial turn" is bringing to Holocaust studies "a mandate to rethink the structures of confinement as fixed and unchanging" ("A Mobile Holocaust" 330).

volumes I-II; volumes III-VIII forthcoming), indicates that the camps and ghettos under the Third Reich are far more numerous than previously thought.²³ This project not only enlarges the map of perpetration, but offers an unprecedented level of detail about individual camps. The project's General Editor, Geoffrey P. Megargee, describes the "vast universe of camps and ghettos" that included, in addition to concentration camps, the "bewildering array of other persecution sites: killing centers, ghettos, forced labor camps, prisoner-of-war (POW) camps, resettlement camps, 'euthanasia' centers, brothels, and prisons, among others" (xxxiii). The accounts of the "camp and ghetto universe" provided by this encyclopedia highlight the range, flexibility, and mobility of the various parts of the Nazi camp system, providing a conceptual framework in which to think the similarities and differences between the wide range of sites in this system, which far exceeded the two categories of extermination and concentration camps in both theory and practice. Within this "vast universe," we can think various sites of confinement and violence in constellation with each other, in a way that is not unlike the *concentrationary universe* chronicled by postwar writers.

One of the most extended articulations of the concentrationary as a concept occurs in Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman's joint introduction to the 2011 volume, *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais' Night and Fog (1955)*. In this text, the writers formulate a definition of the concentrationary that is inspired by the elaboration of the term by Rousset, Arendt, and Cayrol. As they explain, the concentrationary is not a situation restricted to the particular historical moment of Nazism, but "also refers to a system, enacted in a historically specific time and space, but not identical with that moment alone" (8).²⁴ This theorization of the concentrationary as the logic or structure of the camp that is realized differently at specific historical moments and in different spaces is a reclamation of the transhistorical dynamic and geographic flexibility inherent in the original conceptualization of the term. In response to this system of radical dehumanization and deadly violence, they write, "*Concentrationary* art both embodies affecting commemoration of the suffering and the dead and incites active resistance in the viewing or reading subject to the novel persistence of the *concentrationary* universe" (29). This dual role of concentrationary art and aesthetics as both

²³ As of 2017, the current estimate is 44,000. In a 2013 article in *The New York Times*, the project's lead editors estimated up to 42,500 camps, a drastic increase from the 7,000 projected when they began research in 2000. See Eric Lichtblau, "The Holocaust Just Got More Shocking." *The New York Times* 1 March 2013.

²⁴ It should be noted that Pollock and Silverman go to great lengths to separate the concentrationary from the Holocaust or genocide, which is more restrictive than the model I am proposing. In their analysis, it is only when detached from the specificity of the historical and racial context of Judeocide that the concentrationary can take on resonances across spatio-temporal boundaries.

commemoration and resistance embodies the potential of the concentrationary to make connections across different times and spaces – the “commemoration” of past trauma and “resistance” to the recurrence of such atrocities in the present.

My use of the concept of the concentrationary – including its insistence on the uneven internal topography of the concentrationary universe, which entails, in certain places and times, continuity with the genocidal regime – is not meant to backtrack on the recognition of Jewish specificity in Nazi persecutions. Rather, I have attempted, in this discussion, to point to some of the problems that arise from an epistemology that draws a strict demarcation between the spaces in which atrocities were perpetrated. The concept of the concentrationary allows a dialogue between historical specificity and aesthetic discourse in a way that charts the mixed spaces and logics of the concentrationary universe. An aesthetic approach to the concentrationary as a spatial poetics thus navigates between particularity and paradigm, between historical specificity and cultural representation.²⁵ As Max Silverman suggests, the resources of aesthetic form and imagination may be “more suited than historical or sociological method to making visible the complex interaction of times and sites at play in memory, as the very purpose of imaginative (poetic) works is to overlay meaning in intertextual space rather than tell a linear narrative” (“Hybrid Memory” 63). Exploring the geographical imaginaries in works of literature and film is especially productive in this respect, as spatial models also offer a wealth of non-linear modes of visualization.²⁶

The Place of Atrocity focuses on representations of the camp because of the place that it took on in the collective imaginary – even if that place can be shown to be disproportionately large, for various reasons (including, in no small part, the images and media circulated about the liberation of some of the Western camps by the Allies, as well as lack of access to archives related to mass killings in Eastern Europe until after USSR’s collapse in 1991). In postwar France, the concentrationary migrated into the heart of the city and everyday experience. Over the course of the dissertation, I will show that attention to the indistinct borders and the persistent, haunting presence of the concentrationary in the texts and films I analyze can advance our understanding of how the camps were remembered, and how their memory was brought to bear on the conditions of modern life. By identifying the structures of a new political possibility – what Giorgio Agamben calls “the hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political space” of biopolitical modernity (*Homo Sacer* 166) – the concentrationary is not just historical, but urgently contemporary.

²⁵ In the context of this project, I understand “aesthetic” to include the literary, visual, and cinematic.

²⁶ See Fogu, “A ‘Spatial Turn’ in Holocaust Studies?” on the major importance of the non-linear, spatialized forms of visualization being made available by GIScience in historical geography.

In chapter one, I examine the testimonial writings of Charlotte Delbo, who maps the contours of the concentrationary regime in her trilogy, *Auschwitz et après* (1965-71). Until recently, Delbo had received relatively little scholarly attention, and has been primarily studied through the psychological framework of trauma theory. However, I argue that Delbo's work invites a spatial reading that accounts for her political engagement against the spread of concentrationary, totalitarian regimes in the postwar period. Delbo's texts both probe and rupture the boundaries of the concentration-camp universe by depicting its penetration into urban and domestic spaces. This chapter draws on recent theorizations of the concentrationary as well as architectural history and historiography, in order to propose a new geographic framework for understanding the articulation between the camp system and spaces of everyday life.

Turning to the works of Albert Camus, chapter two explores an overlooked text that is central to the geographical imagination of the concentrationary. Camus's little-known play, *L'État de siège* (1948), which dramatizes the invasion of a Spanish city by a dictatorial figure named the Plague, is typically read as a failed adaptation of his famous allegorical novel, *La Peste* (1947). However, I contend that in the passage from novel to play, Camus explicitly stages the emergence of a concentration camp – with its distinctive barbed wire and watch towers – in the city center. Unlike *La Peste*, *L'État de siège* does not use a quarantined city to allegorically evoke the carceral conditions of an occupied city. Rather, it insists on the potential for a concentrationary regime to arise in the midst of the postwar city. Engaging with the concepts of sovereignty (Schmitt), biopolitical power (Foucault), and the state of exception (Agamben), I argue that the transformation of the city into a concentrationary space erodes the distinction between city and camp, laying bare their shared foundations in sovereign power and spatialized forms of bodily control.

While Camus domesticates the camp by bringing it into the space of the city, Marguerite Duras disperses the camp across the globe. The third and final chapter examines a pair of Duras's experimental films, *Aurélia Steiner Melbourne* and *Aurélia Steiner Vancouver* (1979), in which the violences perpetrated in Europe are remembered by means of geographic displacement (to Melbourne, Vancouver, and the North Pacific). This network of sites of trauma and places of remembrance creates a spatial continuity between camp and city, event and aftermath – a continuity that is represented by global systems of water and structured by the visual element of the tracking shot. The geographic and conceptual expansion of the concentrationary universe mapped by *The Place of Atrocity* culminates in Duras's diasporic vision of Holocaust memory, which produces an impossible coincidence of time and place to mark the haunting presence of the concentration camp in the cities of the world.

The works addressed in this project enact a critical expansion of concentrationary space, insisting on the continuity between sites of atrocity and the pacified, everyday world of postwar liberal democracy – a world that, like our own,

wants to deny its imbrication with exceptional violence. *The Place of Atrocity* points to a time when thinking the city through the lens of the concentration camp first offered a viable means of critique – one that was at once anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, and anti-totalitarian. In light of the current resurgence of concentrationary spaces at the borderlands of Europe and the U.S., where the biopolitical state systematically detains, regulates, and manages migrant populations, these works should be read not as pure acts of commemoration, but as political and ethical interventions in the present.

CHAPTER 1

“Un endroit d’avant la géographie”: Charlotte Delbo’s Concentrationary Universe

The two decades following the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps were marked by an enormous amount of written documentation – by survivors, witnesses, historians, and theorists – yet, by the mid-1960s, this textual glut was being met with calls for creative approaches, for literary treatment of the camps.¹ It was at this moment that *déportée résistante* and Auschwitz survivor Charlotte Delbo chose to publish her memoir, the manuscript of which, composed in the months after liberation, had gone untouched for nearly twenty years. Delbo herself promoted the literary status of her testimonial writing, as well as its direct engagement with the political and material conditions of the present. Or, in Delbo’s words, “Je n’aime pas écrire la littérature gratuite ou formelle. Je n’écris pas pour écrire. Je me sers de la littérature comme d’une arme, car la menace m’apparaît trop grande.”² While Delbo’s words indicate an intervention in the politics of her historical moment that is as militant as it is literary, the nature of trauma, individual memory, and testimony have prevailed in most studies of her remarkable body of work.³

This chapter proposes a reading of Charlotte Delbo’s testimonial memoirs that is as attentive to the political as to the aesthetic stakes of her project, precisely because the literary mode is, for Delbo, what is capable of making a history of suffering into a “weapon” in the present. The production of a spatial poetics of the concentrationary breaks down the perceived boundaries between the extreme and the everyday that allow the concentration camps to seem distant and enclosed, in both space and time. In Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi’s elegant formulation, “Pronouncements on the poetics of (or after) Auschwitz tend to establish a symbolic geography in which the camp represents both center and periphery: it constitutes the very center of

¹ See for example Maurice Nadeau, *Le roman français depuis la guerre* (1963); Claude Prévost, “La tragédie c’est la politique (notes sur les camps nazis dans la prose française)” (1965); or A. Alvarez, “The Literature of the Holocaust” (1964).

² François Bott, “Entretien avec Charlotte Delbo: ‘Je me sers de la littérature comme d’une arme.’” *Le monde*, 20 June 1975. Reprinted in Caron and Marquart, eds., *Les Revenantes*, 25.

³ In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in Delbo’s life and work, particularly since the March 2013 conference at the Bibliothèque nationale de France commemorating the centennial of her birth. A volume of essays was published after the conference: *Charlotte Delbo: Œuvre et engagements*, ed. Christiane Page. Also of note are a special issue of *Women in French Studies* dedicated to Delbo (vol. 6 [2016], eds. Audrey Brunetaux and Michael S. Koppisch) and two biographies: Violaine Gelly and Paul Gradwohl, *Charlotte Delbo* (2013), and Ghislaine Dunant, *Charlotte Delbo: la vie retrouvée* (2016), the latter of which won the 2016 *Prix Femina essai*.

evil but is located in a realm just beyond the borders of civilized speech and behavior” (Ezrahi 121). This symbolic geography of the camp, which has dominated in the cultural imaginary since the advent of the “era of the witness” (Wieviorka), constructs the camp as paradigm of Nazi atrocities, yet also beyond representation, inaccessible to understanding. In contrast, the geographical imaginary at work in Delbo’s texts ruptures the abstraction of Auschwitz as both untouchable center and unreachable periphery, exposing the complex landscape of the concentrationary and its interconnections with other spaces. Delbo’s textual production of the concentrationary universe as a transhistorical and geographically mobile space highlights the unsettling but unavoidable continuity between the site of the camp and the everyday world.

As a contribution to the critical discourse of the “concentrationary,” a figural space that moves through the terrain of postwar cultural memory, this chapter will focus on the works of Charlotte Delbo that grapple with the memory of deportation: the trilogy *Auschwitz et après* (1965-71) and the posthumous *La mémoire et les jours* (1985). These are the works for which Delbo is best known, although there is growing interest in her other writings – plays, in large part – which invariably deal with the various historical events that ignited her political commitments. From the Algerian war and torture in her first published book, *Les Belles Lettres* (1961), to May 1968 (*La théorie et la pratique* [1969]), the Prague Spring (*La capitulation* [1977]), the dictatorship of Franco (*La sentence* [1972]) and of Pinochet (*La victoire était-elle possible* [1975]), to name a few, Delbo consistently displays concern for struggles against totalitarianism and oppression – issues which, needless to say, permeate her texts about the camps as well.⁴ I focus here on texts that deal directly with the memory of deportation and the Holocaust in order to outline a postwar spatial poetics that emerges in testimonial literature from the new space of the concentration camp.

The trilogy *Auschwitz et après* comprises *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* (1965), *Une connaissance inutile* (1970), and *Mesure de nos jours* (1971).⁵ *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* is the most well-known and widely read of all Delbo’s works, and is often regarded as an emblematic work of testimonial literature in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Made up of short texts combining poetry and prose, it is united not by chronology but by the

⁴ Delbo was deported for her activity with Communist militants in the Resistance, although she did not align herself with the PCF as dogmatically as her husband. Delbo’s relationship to the Party was contentious after the war, due to her fundamentally anti-authoritarian attitude, which made her critical of its hierarchical nature, and was exacerbated, of course, by the revelation of the Stalinist camps. (See Gelly and Gradwohl, 239-243, on Delbo’s “relation difficile” with the Party.) Still, she remained throughout her life radically anti-totalitarian, anti-imperialist, and anticapitalist.

⁵ *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* was first published by Éditions Gonthier in 1965, and was republished by Éditions de Minuit in 1970 at the time of the publication of volume two, followed by the third volume in 1971.

rhythms and repetitions of camp life, evoked in passages ranging from brief narratives to restrained, imagistic free verse. The first volume takes place entirely in Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the author spent the first year of her 27-month internment in Nazi camps, but lacks nearly any temporal or geographic references, leaving the reader submerged in the brutal immediacy of the experience. In contrast, *Une connaissance inutile* highlights movement, travel, and displacement, but nonetheless gives way to the achronological and affective trajectory of memory. The first two volumes, then, are similar in style and form (mixture of poetry and prose, short vignettes), but with a more discernable temporal structure in the second, integrating a loose chronology. Volume two moves from Delbo's imprisonment in France (at which time her husband Georges was executed), to her deportation in a convoy of 230 women, arrival at Auschwitz, her transfer with a small group of comrades to work in a laboratory at Raisko, a satellite camp of Auschwitz, her subsequent transfer to the women's camp Ravensbrück, and finally, liberation and evacuation to Sweden.⁶

Completing the trilogy, *Mesure de nos jours* constitutes an innovative stylistic departure from the previous volumes, gathering together testimony from several fellow ex-deportees to recount the difficult and alienating process of return endured by survivors, marked by traumatic memory, estrangement, and misfortune. Volume three begins with the journey home to France from the Swedish hospital where Delbo and her surviving comrades recuperated immediately after liberation. The return is what completes the arc of Delbo's testimony – it is the place from which the testimony emerges, and where the trauma of Auschwitz enters everyday life – because, as Ross Chambers succinctly remarks, “Auschwitz returns in, and as, its own aftermath” (211). It is the “after” of *Auschwitz et après*, the condition of possibility for memory, and the impossible place from which “aucun de nous ne reviendra.”

Beginning with a paired analysis of poems – “Rue de l'arrivée, rue du départ” in *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* and “Ce point sur la carte” in *Une connaissance inutile* – I will show how these texts engage a similar, topographic viewpoint of Auschwitz, figuring the confluence of bodies towards a site of destruction. Yet the synthesizing and totalizing cartographic vision of deportation that these poems imply cannot be read in isolation from the varied geography of the concentrationary universe presented elsewhere in Delbo's texts. From this vision of the camp system embedded in the larger geographic network of deportation stretching across the territories occupied by the Third Reich, I will transition to a closer view of the ways in which the spatial poetics of the texts treat the everyday reality of camp life, and how the concentration camp relates to other dominant spaces: namely, the urban and the domestic. In addition to the most recognizable markers of the concentration-camp world (barbed wire, watch tower, crematoria chimney, barracks), *Auschwitz et après* is also occupied

⁶ It is important to note that this chronology, however, is not made available in any transparent or linear fashion in the trilogy. It was reconstructed with the help of Delbo's socio-historical work, *Le convoi du 24 janvier*, as well as the biography by Gelly and Gradwohl.

by alternative spaces of the concentrationary.⁷ In Delbo's work, familiar places like houses, cities, and the landscape are privileged sites in the textual production of a concentrationary universe that crucially incorporates issues normally thought of as occurring outside of the strictly conceived, fenced-in perimeter of the camp. These are places where relationships between victims, perpetrators, and civilian bystanders are staged and problematized, and where, fundamentally, the implacement of bodies – that is, the mutually activating relationship between space and the bodies that traverse and inhabit it – is reformulated in the matrix of concentrationary violence.

The *univers concentrationnaire*, then, is not uniquely populated by prisoners and guards, victims and executioners – its denizens include civilians, passersby, the children of SS, and the traces of former inhabitants or victims. Thus, this chapter will show how a testimonial text (that has most often been analyzed in a psychoanalytic framework) is critically engaged with the political stakes of representing a concentrationary regime and the ramifications of that experience that reverberate across space and time. Reading Delbo's work through the lens of space, place and geography will illuminate the critical expansion of both the space and the population of the concentrationary. Thus, I will be using the term *concentrationary* in order to, like Pollock and Silverman, “refer both to a historically-created and realized system of terror that took place in real locations and to a theoretical concept that emerges from this state of affairs as a new political possibility” (4), while emphasizing the capacity of the figure of the concentrationary to intrude in, break down, or contaminate even the most typical spaces of the everyday: the urban and the domestic.

The sole occurrence of the word “Auschwitz” in the text of Delbo's first published work of testimony, *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*, is the title of a poem.⁸ It is remarkable, however, that the singular evocation of this notorious name in the opening volume of the trilogy does not refer to Auschwitz the concentration camp, but Auschwitz the city. As Annette Wieviorka reminds us, Auschwitz is the German name for a Polish city, Oświęcim, that in turn gave its name to the camp located in its proximity. “Cette dualité du toponyme,” argues Wieviorka, “permet aujourd'hui de faire comme s'il y avait deux lieux bien séparés. D'un côté, la ville polonaise d'Oswiecim, de l'autre, un camp de concentration et un lieu de mise à mort, allemand, comme l'indique son nom, Auschwitz” (*Auschwitz* 12). Wieviorka's telling “comme si”

⁷ As Tim Cole suggests in *Holocaust Landscapes*, we can think of the Holocaust (and, I argue, the concentrationary regime) as “a place-making event that created new places – ghettos and camps – within the European landscape, or reworked more familiar places – such as rivers or roads – into genocidal landscapes” (2).

⁸ As Thomas Trezise points out, the word “Auschwitz” did not even appear on the cover of the first edition of *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*, because it was not initially envisioned as part of a trilogy. It was not until the second edition, when the following two volumes were published, that the trilogy's title, *Auschwitz et après*, appeared on the cover (“Question” 860).

challenges the imagined separation of camp and city, when in fact the Nazi system of concentration and death camps was imbricated in an industrial complex that was dedicated in large part to colonizing the space and exploiting the resources of occupied countries. The concentration camps were integrated into the economy of the Third Reich, as the opening pages of Rousset's *L'univers concentrationnaire* highlights, where factories and worksites fueled by slave labor from concentration camps are interspersed among forests and towns (Rousset 21-22).⁹

The inclination to imagine Auschwitz (the camp) as isolated from the geographical context in which it was constructed is symptomatic of a general tendency to think paradigmatically about the events of the Holocaust (Auschwitz as *the camp*, Warsaw as *the ghetto*), focusing on the most extreme instantiations of the Nazi persecution of the Jewish people.¹⁰ This tendency causes us to lose sight of another side of the National Socialist project: the expansiveness of its ambition on both the geographic level (systematic acquisition of territories for the Reich) and the historical level (the founding of a new civilization and world order). The economic, the industrial, and the racial were inextricably intertwined in the Nazi concentrationary system, which was closely wedded, furthermore, to the colonial project of Germanization of Eastern Europe.¹¹

The “symbolic geography” identified by Ezrahi that places Auschwitz emblematically at the center of a metaphorical landscape of Evil is consistent with what Wieviorka describes as a dehistoricizing and decontextualizing process: the concentration camp becomes “Un lieu en quelque sorte non inscrit dans un territoire. Cette extraterritorialité, cette non-inscription dans un espace réel, dans un pays précis” (*Auschwitz* 12). Unlike the namelessness or extraterritoriality of Auschwitz frequently evoked by Delbo as the condition of deportees, to whom the name “Auschwitz” was unknown or meaningless, this paring away of the geopolitical context of the camp’s existence points to the cordoning-off of Auschwitz as metonymy for the Holocaust, itself untouchable as event and concept. However, as Paolo Giaccaria and Claudio Minca point out, Auschwitz was “not located in a void”

⁹ See my discussion of Rousset in the Introduction.

¹⁰ Wieviorka argues that since the 1960s, Auschwitz has become “métonymie du mal absolu,” and accordingly, the Shoah “le modèle de la construction de la mémoire, le paradigme” for analyzing traumatic historical events (*Témoin* 15).

¹¹ In a similar vein, genocide and urbicide were joint strategies in the Nazi assault on Eastern Europe. Just as the intent to exterminate Slavic or Soviet opponents was coupled with the elimination of their cities, the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto was also a conclusive step towards the extermination of Polish Jews. In other words, the genocidal project that informed the growth and functioning of the concentration and extermination camp system also informed how urban spaces in the path of the Reich were dealt with. See Kohlrausch and Hoffmann, 311-12.

– rather, “it was fully embedded within the broader spatialities and territorialities that were implemented by the Nazi imperial project” (7-8).

In *Mourning Becomes the Law*, philosopher Gillian Rose argues that the massive camp-complex of Auschwitz should, in fact, be thought of as a city in itself, based on Robert Jan van Pelt’s architectural research revealing Nazi plans to develop Auschwitz into a major German city, “the administrative centre for the Germanification of eastern Upper Silesia” (Rose 31). Indeed, in their extensive study, *Auschwitz, 1270 to the Present*, Dwork and van Pelt amply show the centrality of the camp-complex to the Nazi vision for the Third Reich’s eastern expansion, a historical and geographical legacy that they saw as their rightful claim: *Lebensraum* for the *Volk* (11).¹² While “Auschwitz was put on the map of the SS financial empire” as a valuable industrial production site (Van Pelt and Dwork 171), it took on an additional role as an agricultural center to help ethnic Germans adjust to local farming conditions. Indeed, the goal of Nazi regional planning was “the spatial and territorial realization of a millennial empire for the Third Reich” (Giaccaria and Minca 8).

Furthermore, the notorious collaboration with the IG Farben corporation, leading to the use of slave labor from Auschwitz in an artificial rubber plant known as the “buna,” made Auschwitz (both the city and the camp) into even more of a center, since the town of Oświęcim/Auschwitz, its Jewish residents forcibly evacuated, was to serve as residence to the IG Farben employees. Thus the industrial and financial collaboration of the corporate business and the Third Reich’s camp system was ensured. As Van Pelt and Dwork summarize, “The construction of the buna plant at Monowitz, the aggrandizement of the town of Auschwitz, and the expansion of the concentration camp were intimately interrelated and interdependent projects” (236). City and camp were to develop a kind of symbiotic relationship, in terms of both space and population: German residents of Oświęcim working for IG Farben, while Auschwitz prisoners provide slave labor at the IG Farben plant. After the agreement with IG Farben, Auschwitz grew massively and quickly. In the words of Nikolaus Wachsmann, “Previously, concentration camps had resembled small towns; Auschwitz turned into a metropolis” (31). The urban planning involved in German plans for the expansion and solidification of the Third Reich was directly related to Auschwitz’s rapid growth into the largest camp complex in the regime. Indeed, as Wieviorka warns, we can no longer “faire comme s’il y avait deux lieux bien séparés,” because Auschwitz problematizes the distinction between the history of the city and the history of the camp. The “aggrandizement” (Van Pelt and Dwork 236) of the city

¹² The expression *Lebensraum* (“living space”) was coined by geographer Friedrich Ratzel in 1901 to articulate the German-nationalist vision of the rest of the world as colonizable space, which would allow the “biologically superior” race to sustain a balance between industrial development and agriculture. See Traverso, 51-2. Many geographers, architects, urban and regional planners were employed by the Third Reich in order to execute the racial cartography envisioned by Nazi ideology.

of Auschwitz was supported by the destiny of the camp of Auschwitz to become the “metropolis” of the concentration camp system.

By embedding the history of Auschwitz the concentration camp in the centuries-long history of German colonization of the East, as well as in the role of slave labor in the functioning and expansion of the Third Reich, geographical approaches such as these re-orient the typical theoretical approaches to Auschwitz. Instead of seeing the camp as “the end-product and telos of modern rationality,” Rose argues, this analysis allows us to see the plans for Auschwitz as “the outcome of the struggle between the politics and the anti-politics of the city” (34). In other words, if the formation and development of Auschwitz as a camp site cannot be isolated from the ongoing spatial politics and economy of Germany and Eastern Europe, then we cannot isolate the camps from the politics of the city. This line of thinking calls for us to recognize the familiarity of the “city” of Auschwitz, and to reconsider its boundaries. For Giaccaria and Minca,

any description of the camp based on dichotomous categories that imagine a radical inside (the camp(s) of Auschwitz) and a radical outside (the town of Oswiecim-Auschwitz) is not only difficult to sustain, but also overlooks the existence of a mobile threshold between the two and its related geographies that were essential in the production of these experimental racialized spatialities. (8)

This “mobile threshold” between the camp and the city redefines both literal and metaphorical understandings of the “place” of Auschwitz. Thus, an analysis of the camps that includes a broader, systemic framework, as well as a consideration of the politics of space in particular (much like Rousset’s original use of the concentrationary) can open up new or previously neglected ways of thinking of the Holocaust and the concentrationary universe as interpenetrating, overlapping phenomena.

In what remains, I will demonstrate how Delbo’s work engages with the stakes of the concentrationary universe as a phenomenon that can and does recur in certain forms or resonate in other events, and also as a space that is not radically closed or in discontinuity with the “outside” world, but instead fundamentally impinges on the quotidian of urban and domestic life. It is for this reason that the single appearance of the proper name *Auschwitz* is a pivotal moment in the text, a signpost directing our attention outward, as it leads us into the city.

In *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*, concrete references to geographical and temporal markers are nearly nonexistent: a depiction of the camp “sans dates, sans repères” (Gelly and Gradwohl 115), leaving the reader fully immersed in the harrowing, disorienting, daily experience of life and death in Auschwitz. Indeed, many sections of *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* have general titles, such as “La nuit,” “Le lendemain,” “Le soir,” or “Dialogue.” “Une façon de nous perdre,” write Delbo’s biographers, “de

même que toutes ces femmes furent perdues, dans un présent qui n'en est pas un, un présent qui n'a pas d'avenir, un présent qui refuse le passé" (Gelly and Gradwohl 116). Philippe Mesnard also evokes the text's lack of "ces repères habituels qui permettent de circuler dans la topographie de lieux que le lecteur essaie d'imaginer, malgré leur étrangeté et leur brutalité confondues, pour mieux comprendre" (« Pourquoi Charlotte Delbo » 19). Linking the experience of space to the transmission of knowledge from survivor to reader, Mesnard joins Gelly and Gradwohl in suggesting that this technique is in part what allows the text to produce a readerly experience that mimics, however distantly, that of the deportees.¹³ And yet, the text is not completely lacking spatial markers – the *barraques*, the various worksites, *block 25*, *la place de l'appel*, all structure the daily experience of the camp space.

The spatial poetics of *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* and *Une connaissance inutile* is structured by a set of recurring tropes, of which the most frequent are *la plaine glacée*, *le marais*, *les barbelés* and *les miradors*. The latter two examples, barbed wire and watch towers, also circulate throughout the trilogy and in other texts, such as *Le convoi du 24 janvier* and *Les belles lettres* (not to mention the cultural imaginary), as synecdoche for camps in general – widely recognizable tropes of the concentrationary universe. In addition to these physical markers, the conceptual designation of namelessness or illegibility continues to structure the subjective experience depicted in the texts. The prose is often almost hypnotically repetitive, hallucinatory: "Derrière, au-delà des barbelés, la plaine, la neige, la plaine./Un seul cri qui déchire l'immobilité de la plaine. [. . .] La plaine. La neige. La plaine" (48). The stark intensity of the cold and emptiness of the winter in Auschwitz dominate, shattering the sense of time, and even of subjectivity: "Le silence est solidifié en froid. La lumière est immobile. Nous sommes dans un milieu où le temps est aboli. Nous ne savons pas si nous sommes, seulement la glace, la lumière, la neige aveuglante, et nous, dans cette glace, dans cette lumière, dans ce silence" (53). Numerous descriptions of the grueling hours of rollcall, or of the seemingly endless marches to distant work sites, seem to dissolve time in the overwhelming presence of space, but space without markers of distance, space *sans repères*: "Les marais. La plaine couverte de marais. Les marais à l'infini. La plaine glacée à l'infini./ Vous marchez dans la plaine couverte de marais. Les marais jusqu'à l'horizon. Dans la plaine sans bord, la plaine glacée. Vous marchez" (73). Delbo's stark, evocative prose consistently produces a space that is desolate, naked, deadly, otherworldly, and boundless. The space of the text is not conventionally

¹³ Similarly, Anne Martine Parent argues that the "titres inoffensifs et banals" allow Delbo to destabilize the reader by contrasting with the disturbing content, revealing the profound difficulty of trying to describe the everyday reality of the camp (71).

mappable, the opacity of its geography figuring the alterity and inaccessibility of the experience.¹⁴

A striking example of this can be found in the second volume, *Une connaissance inutile*, where the moment of arrival is recounted as a radical disruption of the possibility of spatial knowledge or mastery:

Un matin de janvier 1943 nous arrivions. Les wagons s'étaient ouverts au bord d'une plaine glacée. C'étaient un endroit d'avant la géographie. Où étions-nous? Nous devons apprendre – plus tard, deux mois plus tard au moins; nous, celles qui deux mois plus tard étaient encore en vie – que l'endroit se nommait Auschwitz. Nous n'aurions pu lui donner un nom. (88)

The moment of arrival at Auschwitz is a leitmotif of Delbo's testimony (as it is for a large number of survivor testimonies). This description inducts the reader into the ominous space of the concentration camp, but here, the initial impression of this unknown place is devoid of any of the now-recognizable signifiers of the most notorious of the Nazi concentration camps, such as the infamous entry gate, barbed wire, or barracks. Instead, Delbo simply indicates the barrenness of a nondescript, icy clearing ("une plaine glacée"). This enigmatic space "before geography" resists the ability of the group to understand and name it, yet it is already named. It is a defined place that paradoxically defies geography (which is, of course, the process by means of which we conventionally make sense of and produce knowledge about space). The description is startling, because we tend to think of the concentration camp as enclosed, surrounded by fences and punctuated by watchtowers. But to be a space "before geography" does not signify here primordial or untouched – it means the camp destabilizes our process of demarcating and ascribing meaning to it.

As Lawrence Langer writes, entry into the concentrationary universe "requires nothing less than a redefinition of frontiers, and in some instances their dismissal, leaving the individual wandering uneasily in alien terrain" (*Age of Atrocity* 204). Indeed, the *barbelés et miradors* in Delbo's texts are mobilized most often as signifiers of the concentrationary, rather than as literal markers of enclosure. The paradoxical openness of Delbo's concentrationary universe is often overlooked, because it problematizes the most basic assumptions that have become commonplace regarding how the world of the Nazi concentration camps relates to the space and time of the everyday. The tension here arises from the contrast between the radical alterity of Auschwitz as a conceptual space and the camp's embeddedness in geographic and historical continuities. As Michael Rothberg shows in *Traumatic Realism*, one of the functions of Delbo's testimony lies in how "it maps the way that the radical strangeness of the concentrationary universe opens onto the familiarity of the known world" (143-44), constantly probing and reconfiguring the border between the two.

¹⁴ Similarly, in *Spectres, mes compagnons*, Delbo uses the figure of the desert as a metaphor for Auschwitz, as it shares the characteristics of vastness and desolation: "Le seul désert peut-être, celui où les hommes perdent jusqu'à leur qualité humaine" (35). See also 33, 40, and 45.

The thematics of place are evidently at stake even in the titles of the trilogy and the first volume. “*Aucun de nous ne reviendra*,” in particular, raises the question of location as implicitly contradictory. The verb *revenir* implies a point of reference, a place or location from which it is uttered. But when that place is Auschwitz (as is the case when the phrase occurs for the second time, on the penultimate page), “*aucun de nous ne reviendra*” becomes paradoxical, because the testimony that it frames is necessarily articulated from the position of survival. In other words, “‘None of us will return’ is a sentence that erodes the possibility of its own enunciation as testimonial memoir” (Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism* 162). It requires a projection of the self outside the space of the camp in order to use the verb “come back” to the non-camp world, yet the title is in the future tense, which perpetually suspends it in the space-time of the camp, as the notion of return is invoked only as a future impossibility.¹⁵ An important but critically unrecognized intertext is the source from which the phrase “*Aucun de nous ne reviendra*” is borrowed. Delbo stated in a 1974 interview that she was still in the camp when she decided to write her testimony: “J’étais à Auschwitz et je disais ‘si je rentre [. . .] j’écrirai un livre et j’en avais déjà le titre; c’était ‘*Aucun de nous ne reviendra*’, un vers d’Apollinaire [. . .] et je le publierai dans vingt ans.”¹⁶ The Apollinaire poem she refers to is “*La Maison des morts*,” in *Alcools*, which narrates the revival of forty-nine dead men, women, and children in a cemetery morgue, as witnessed by a shocked observer, who is moved to accompany the enlivened figures on their promenade through town. As the dead appear increasingly rejuvenated, some living city dwellers are drawn to join the group:

Nous traversâmes la ville
Et rencontrions souvent
Des parents des amis qui se joignaient
A la petite troupe des morts récents
Tous étaient si gais
Si charmants si bien portants
Que bien malin qui aurait pu
Distinguer les morts des vivants (50-57)

It is clear that “*La Maison des morts*” articulates some essential themes resonating with Delbo’s oeuvre: return, traversal, uncanny encounters between the living and the dead. Much like Delbo’s *spectres* or *revenants* (survivors of the camps who occupy a liminal position in relation to the worlds of the living and of the dead who perished in

¹⁵ For an extended and nuanced reading of the title and framing of *Aucun de nous*, see Trezise, “The Question of Community in Charlotte Delbo’s *Auschwitz and After*.”

¹⁶ “Charlotte Delbo en conversation avec Jacques Chancel” (1974), quoted in Brunetaux, 734. Brunetaux does not address the role of Apollinaire as intertext, focusing instead on the reasons for Delbo’s twenty-year delay in publishing her manuscript. Nathalie Froloff briefly addresses Apollinaire’s influence on Delbo’s poetics from a different perspective than my own, highlighting the topos of the *danse macabre* (142).

the camp), the distinction between corporeality and spectrality becomes imperceptible to the outward observer. As the living and the dead mingle, romantic links between the two groups start to form. The poet-witness overhears one such pair aboard a boat: *un mort* proclaims his love to *une vivante*, who is already married and must reject him. The title of Delbo's first volume arises in this context, as the dead lover responds:

Nous serions si heureux ensemble
 Sur nous l'eau se refermera
 Mais vous pleurez et vos mains tremblent
 Aucun de nous ne reviendra (159-62)

The dynamics of this moment in "La Maison des morts" brings another dimension to François Bott's description of Delbo's works as "un étrange poème d'amour" (8), expressing the impossible love between the living and the dead, and a vow to never be separated.¹⁷

This intertext is also at the heart of Delbo's reflection on the nature of the relationship between the camp and the city, the extreme and the everyday. "La Maison des morts" produces an uncanny juxtaposition of the spectral and the quotidian, which becomes the location of a miraculous border crossing between the realms of life and death. The poem begins:

S'étendant sur les côtés du cimetière
 La maison des morts l'encadrerait comme un cloître
 A l'intérieur de ses vitrines
 Pareilles à celles des boutiques de mode
 Au lieu de sourire debout
 Les mannequins grimaçaient pour l'éternité (1-6).

While "la maison des morts" is often read literally as referring to the cemetery's mortuary, the expression "la maison des morts" can figuratively refer in general to the final resting place of the dead, such as tombs, mausoleums, and necropolises.¹⁸ The

¹⁷ Delbo cites another poem from *Alcools*, "La Chanson du mal-aimé," in the final passage of *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*: "Et ma mémoire ne trouve que des clichés. «Mon beau navire, ô ma mémoire»...Où es-tu, ma vraie mémoire? Où es-tu, ma mémoire terrestre?" (179). Apollinaire haunts volume II as well, in a poem dedicated to Delbo's comrade Yvonne Blech, which evokes a youthful moment when they were "ivres d'Apollinaire / et de Claudel," but ends in the present of the camp: "Ma mémoire s'en est allée / et nos ivresses anciennes / Apollinaire et Claudel / meurent ici avec nous" (*Connaissance* 34).

¹⁸ The understanding of "la maison des morts" as the mortuary of the cemetery is at least partially supported by Apollinaire's previous version of the poem, in which the word "obituaire" systematically replaces "la maison des morts" of the *Alcools* version. Arguably more specific than a "maison des morts," an *obituaire* is indeed the place where dead bodies are preserved before burial, however, a secondary definition lists it as a synonym for a cemetery (*Trésor de la langue française*).

cemetery in the poem, then, is bordered by (“S’étendant sur les côtés”) and enclosed by (“l’encadrerait comme un cloître”) a space or structure that is nominally distinguished from it, which serves a function in relation to it (holding bodies that are destined for the cemetery), and which, in a certain reading, seems to replicate the cemetery itself. Additionally, the *cimetière* and the *maison des morts* clearly set the stage for the poem as unfolding in a place of remembrance, which also becomes the site of an uncanny convergence of disparate realms. This may be a provocative way of reading the dual spaces of Auschwitz and Oświęcim, as figured by Delbo – two spatially proximate, but incommensurate, spaces bearing a name that betrays themselves to each other. The aesthetics of spectrality as a mode of return, which traces a lineage from Apollinaire to Delbo, thus serves as the point of departure for Delbo’s model of testimonial literature.

Aucun de nous ne reviendra opens with an eleven-page prose poem entitled “Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ,” a text that differs in form and tone from the rest of the volume, and presents perhaps the most condensed and comprehensive tableau of the concentration camp system that Delbo offers in a single passage. As we have seen, the overall structure of *Auschwitz et après* is fragmentary, lacunary, episodic; Delbo’s writing is often disorienting in its intense proximity, startlingly intimate. Yet “Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ” traces in a broad arc the deportation, concentration, and execution of multitudes of victims. The narrating voice of this poem inhabits an exterior, elevated, and topographic point of view that Delbo infrequently exploits in the trilogy (although we will explore another example of this perspective below).

The omniscient point of view in “Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ” takes account of the flow of deportees into the concentration camp, describing their impressions upon arrival, whether it be day or night, summer or winter. Time passes in the poem, yet remains suspended in its simultaneity: it is a sort of *tableau vivant*, not of a single moment, but of all the moments of arrival – arrival that is also a departure. In other words, the poem constitutes a chronotope in which the temporal dimension is cyclical and simultaneous, while the spatial dimension is constant and static. The cycle of seasons is evoked, but the true temporal matrix at work here is one which marks time by the rhythm of new convoys of deportees, a constant convergence towards this center from various points of origin: “C’est à cette gare qu’ils arrivent, qu’ils viennent de n’importe où” (10).

The first two stanzas of the poem structure an opposition between a normal train station and a different kind of station.¹⁹ In the former, distinct groups of people

¹⁹ There are numerous analyses of “Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ” in the vein of this opposition between the normal and the extreme of the camp universe. Most of them focus on the different ways the poem produces cognitive dissonance and defamiliarization at the level of reception: see for example Jones, Rothberg, Parent, Schreiber, Trezise. However, I am interested in the use of spatial tropes (train station, cafe) in this structuring device insofar

arrive from a journey, or depart, or await and accompany acquaintances. The normalcy and regularity of these actions is put in relief by the intervention of the second stanza, which compromises these categories:

Mais il est une gare où ceux-là qui arrivent
sont justement ceux-là qui partent
une gare où ceux qui arrivent ne sont jamais
arrivés, où ceux qui sont partis ne sont jamais
revenus.

c'est la plus grande gare du monde. (9)

Thus, embedded in the opposition between typical and atypical is a collapsed opposition between arrival and departure, according to which one signifies the other, and both signify death. Not only is their difference as signifiers annihilated, but the substance of the place as train station is likewise dissolved and reconstituted. Over the course of the poem, we are told “C'est la plus grande gare du monde” (9), but “à cette gare-là on n'arrive pas” (10), and furthermore, “la gare n'est pas une gare, c'est la fin d'un rail” (11).²⁰ Ultimately, though, the cycle resumes in the penultimate stanza: “C'est la plus grande gare du monde pour les arrivées et les départs” (19).

This literal site of contradiction is also, significantly, represented as a geographic center: “c'est ici le centre de l'Europe” (12). On the heels of a catalogue of various origins of deportees, ranging from “des bords de la mer Noire et des bords de la Baltique des bords de la Méditerranée et des bords de la Vistule” (12), it is apparent that this is the center because all of Europe's populations flow into it. We might say that the deictic “ici” (which recurs, significantly, in the “entrer ici” of the final line), points to this poem as our point of entry into the camp – the introduction to and threshold of a space that is marked by paradox and destruction. Indeed, we are lent the vision of the relative few who, instead of arriving and departing (or departing by means of arrival) in the form of ashes, are condemned to enter the camp itself, where “entrer” and “savoir” bind together just as “arriver” and “partir” for the others.

Il n'y a que ceux qui entrent dans le camp
qui sachent ensuite ce qui est arrivé aux autres
et qui pleurent de les avoir quittés à la gare

as they construct a literal and symbolic center in the geographical imagination of the camp universe.

²⁰ Readers of Delbo often mistakenly refer to “Rue de l'arrivée, rue du départ” as a description of the “gare d'Auschwitz,” instead of the *Judenrampe*, which was the open space where the train tracks ended in front of the camp entrance, without even a platform for descent. Thus, the phrase “la gare n'est pas une gare, c'est la fin d'un rail” is in fact literal, while it is Delbo's use of the term “une gare” that is figurative. See Wieviorka, *Auschwitz, 60 ans après*, 81-2.

parce que ce jour-là l'officier commandait aux
plus jeunes de former un rang à part
il faut bien qu'il y en ait pour assécher les
marais et y répandre la cendre des autres.
et ils se disent qu'il aurait mieux valu ne
jamais entrer ici et ne jamais savoir. (19)

“Rue de l'arrivée, rue du départ” retraces, to a certain (and deliberately limited) extent, the trajectory of those who are arriving-departing, following them from the triage at the *Judenrampe* to the moment of entrance into the gas chamber. However, despite outlining their journey, Delbo's text does not encourage the reader's identification with the victims. We are allowed to accompany them, but ultimately remain outside, until we are directly interpellated in the two poems following “Rue de l'arrivée,” laced with a reproachful “vous qui savez.” We accompany the victims right up to the point of undressing for what they are told will be a shower, and the moment, “peut-être,” of realization. But there is no representation of the gas or the moment of death – perhaps Delbo marks her limits, retaining herself from a level of identification that would breach her own experience and that of her group.²¹ To this effect, she follows her subjects only through that which imitates her own experience – collective nudity, apparent shower room – “et peut-être alors tous comprennent-ils” (17). Unlike elsewhere in *Auschwitz et après*, where Delbo does not shy away from the cadavers she saw, what we have here is the pure and simple disappearance of these people, their absence corroborated by the repartition of their clothing and belongings, appropriated for use on other bodies.

This redistribution of goods is described in the future tense: “On habillera un orchestre,” “Une chef de block fera des rideaux,” “Une kapo se déguisera,” “On distribuera aux Allemandes” (17-8), each a demeaning mis-use (of schoolgirls' uniforms, of a rabbi's sacred cloth, and of a young couple's wedding clothes). And finally, the food brought by Greek women, given to recuperating Germans who dislike the olives: nourishment brought from home by those destined to die and then discarded by their murderers. The emphasis on circulation in this poem thus binds together the transfer of goods and materials with the deathly economy of extermination. However, in evoking the crematorium, we return to the present tense, the iterative of “tous les jours et toutes les nuits” (18). The constant smoke signaling the continuous annihilation is rendered in this eternal present, as is the dissemination of the ashes. The cyclical time of the death camp is marked by this distribution of human remains on its own landscape, the marshland:

Et au printemps des hommes et des femmes
répandent les cendres sur les marais asséchés

²¹ In other words, we might say that the poem narrates a space where the concentrationary and the genocidal overlap, but the poet refrains from passing into the realm beyond that allowed by her experience as a non-Jewish deportee.

pour la première fois labourés et fertilisent le
sol avec du phosphate humain. (18)

The process of extermination is thus incorporated into the natural through the rhythm of the seasons, and the thematic of circulation that structures “Rue de l’arrivée” is reinscribed on the ground of the site of annihilation. This cycle has a clear beginning (“la première fois”), but, in the perspective of this poem, no end in sight.

Like the volume itself, the poem ends with the conditional past tense: “il aurait mieux valu ne jamais entrer ici et ne jamais savoir” (19), anticipating the verbal transformation of the title that occurs on the final page: “Aucun de nous n’aurait dû revenir.” This retrospective stance reminds us of the temporal positioning of the trilogy as a whole, reflecting simultaneously on the past and on its conditions of remembrance, so that the representation of the past is inflected by its aftermath. This instantiation, however, marks what follows with a productive ambivalence. Once again, this poem represents not only the point of entry into the (textual) space of the camp, but a warning as well. If Delbo takes on here the figure of the poet greeting us at the gate, the pages immediately following constitute an explicit challenge to both our will and capacity for understanding. Furthermore, the question implicit in the end of the poem, as it grants us entry alongside (or perhaps thanks to) those unlucky few who survive the initial arrival, is whether the knowledge we obtain in textually traversing the space of the camp will be worth it – “valoir” the suffering for the unbearable knowledge obtained. If those who enter the camp say to themselves that they should have died instead, what kind of response can the reader have to the knowledge that the text presents?

Highlighting the importance of testimony as a potential vehicle of knowledge and transformation, Brett Kaplan reminds us that “Charlotte Delbo’s oeuvre is committed to analyzing the possibilities of translating memory into literature from which nonwitnesses can learn” (36). However, one of the apparent paradoxes of Delbo’s memoirs, as with much Holocaust testimony, is the difficulty, even opacity, of that process. This may be because, in Ross Chambers’s formulation, witnessing texts perform a cultural function of “pointing to” something that cannot be conventionally represented, due to its extremity: “an object by definition obscure, dubious, hard to envisage or realize” (xv). As we have seen, Delbo consistently problematizes the status of the knowledge obtained not only by nonwitnesses, but by witnesses themselves. Many scholars have explored Delbo’s simultaneous interpellation of the reader and her deliberate challenging of the reader’s capacity to understand her testimony. Anne Martine Parent describes the will to “transmettre malgré tout,” echoing Delbo’s own position on the idea of language’s failure or incommensurability, as she consistently rejected the idea that literature could not

represent what happened in the Nazi camps.²² Yet if readers can only hope to attain a condition of being “haunted” by unmastered knowledge, this may be due to the various ways in which Delbo’s text forecloses or limits the possibility of readers’ identification with the witness.

“Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ” opens the trilogy by staging the relationality of the witness, the dead, and the reader. The fiction of the text is what allows us to feel like we are entering the camp through this Dantesque function, but it is always forcing us to question the possibility of that presence, or the tenuous literary, fictional, textual web on which that presence relies. Indeed, as Patricia Yaeger elegantly demonstrates, Delbo’s writing carefully builds up our desire for identification and community, and beckons us with it, but abruptly “turns away,” by means of figurative language. This complex process of summoning and deflecting, demanding and denying the reader’s community may be one of the most difficult, painful, and necessary parts of the ethical responsibility of receiving testimony that forces us to be aware of the perilousness of our (constantly negated attempts at) empathy and compassion. If we can manage to maintain “proximity without intimacy” (Yaeger 415), and if the nature of community for Delbo is indeed an effect of such a proximity, as Caron and Marquart also argue (14), then the reception of testimony perhaps requires an awareness of reception as a constant navigation of the contested sites of witnessing. Delbo’s texts offer a specific imaginative geography for the reader to navigate, spatializing this model of witnessing and reception.

A poem in the second volume, *Une connaissance inutile*, reveals in a much shorter format how the issues of knowledge and ignorance, identification and estrangement, survivor and outsider, are articulated around a similarly centripetal, topographical vision of Auschwitz. Untitled, the poem begins:

Ce point sur la carte
Cette tache noire au centre de l’Europe
cette tache rouge
cette tache de feu cette tache de suie
cette tache de sang cette tache de cendres
pour des millions
un lieu sans nom. (37)

These seven lines mark a progression from the geographic to the figurative, and finally to the subjective – the dot marking location on the map evolving into the black mark, the stain, metaphorically expanding its material from ink on paper to fire, soot, blood, and ashes. The poem presents a cartographic vision of Europe ravaged by a nameless, destructive stain at its heart. The next several lines reinforce the anonymity of this place that is paradoxically also a site of confluence:

²² Reacting to the suggestion by an interviewer that Auschwitz might be too horrific to be expressed in words, Delbo responded “Il n’y a pas de mots pour le dire. Eh bien! vous n’avez qu’à en trouver – rien ne doit échapper au langage” (cited in *Les Revenantes*, 23).

De tous les pays d'Europe
 de tous les points de l'horizon
 les trains convergeaient
 vers l'in-nommé
 chargés de millions d'êtres
 qui étaient versés là sans savoir où c'était (37).

The topographic image of Europe is here set into motion, and as the poem continues, there is sustained emphasis on the enforced ignorance of the victims, dehumanized by the repetition of the verb *verser*:

versés avec leur vie
 avec leurs souvenirs
 avec leurs petits maux
 et leur grand étonnement
 avec leur regard qui interrogeait
 et qui n'y a vu que du feu,
 qui ont brûlé là sans savoir où ils étaient. (37)

Like “Rue de l'arrivée, rue du départ,” this poem is about displacement and disappearance as spatially registered phenomena. “Rue de l'arrivée, rue du départ” is above all about the camp as the nexus, the center of the network of movement of human bodies that culminates in “la plus grande gare du monde” that is nevertheless not a “gare.” But while “Rue de l'arrivée” focuses to a large extent on the tropes of terminus and convergence, “Ce point sur la carte” more succinctly prioritizes the temporal *décalage* around ignorance and knowledge – the missed knowledge of the victims, and the belated, presumed knowledge of bystanders. The end of the poem in particular puts into a place an ironic inversion of the subjects of knowledge. The final lines of the poem involve a shift to the present tense, after the past tenses of the above citation:

Aujourd'hui on sait
 Depuis quelques années on sait
 On sait que ce point sur la carte
 c'est Auschwitz
 On sait cela
 Et pour le reste on croit savoir. (37)

These lines, like the beginning of the poem we saw above, distinguish between geographical identification (“ce point sur la carte”) and experiential understanding (“savoir”). Designating “ce point sur la carte” with an unusually direct naming of the camp, the demonstrative “c'est Auschwitz,” ironically highlights the ignorance of postwar attitudes regarding the Nazi genocide, mocking the knowledge we presume to gain from geography. At the same time, the simple name *Auschwitz*, unknown to so many victims of genocide, belies the meaning that is retrospectively attributed to it.

While the narrative voice of *Auschwitz et après* sometimes – albeit briefly – occupies a position of omniscience whose all-embracing geographic vision that potentially coincides with that of power and mastery, this position is systematically undermined by the very disappearance of that totalizing voice, by its own inconsistency, with the frequent shifts to the first person, or to direct address of the second person, and with the self-reflexive indictment of the limits of that point of view. Though the panoramic gaze is often associated with the neutral eye of surveillance, this is nevertheless not the gaze of the *mirador*, as the narrating voice maintains a consistently ironic relationship to the concept of knowledge, constantly highlighting the difference between awareness and understanding, and the kinds of vision associated with them. Trezise reads the use of the third person in “Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ,” after the first person voice of the epigraph, as performing a progressive “eradication of particularity” that bears witness to the process of depersonalization that culminated in death for so many deportees (“Question” 880). In both cases, the supposedly neutral, omniscient voice problematizes the nature of its presumed objectivity.

The traditional correlation of vision, knowledge, power, and masculinity is well established, in a tradition of the social sciences dating back to the nineteenth century.²³ As feminist geographer Gillian Rose summarizes, “The geographical imagination thinks space can always be known and mapped, and that’s what its transparency, its innocence, signifies: that it’s infinitely knowable; that there are no obscure corners into which geographical vision cannot penetrate” (“Notes” 70). Indeed, “transparent space” is “one of masculinist geography’s most basic conceptual claims to truth” (Rose, “Notes” 78). The geographical imagination of Delbo’s texts, however, highlights precisely those “obscure corners” that compromise the connection between vision and knowledge. Yet the map evoked by Delbo is not set up to illuminate that which conventional mapping cannot – instead, the text ironizes the very paradigm of mapping that it simultaneously exploits, suggesting that the truth produced by geographic knowledge is of a different order than the truth that the survivor seeks to transmit. Furthermore, readers who are able to gain a sense of the knowledge that exceeds the map are confronted in turn with the tragedy of the impotence of such knowledge. As the volume’s title indicates, it is “une connaissance inutile.”

“Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ” and “Ce point sur la carte” express the geographic imaginary of convergence and centrality at work in *Auschwitz et après*. These are instances of how an omniscient or systematic vision of deportation is mobilized for an awareness of the totalizing nature of the camp system that can be obtained from that point of view – but is also, as we saw above, systematically

²³ For a critical history of the rise of geography as a discipline in nineteenth-century France, see Kristin Ross, “Spatial History,” in *The Emergence of Social Space* (75-99).

undermined by the text that follows. However, much more textual space in the first two volumes of *Auschwitz et après* is dedicated to depictions of the camp from an interior point of view, a narrating voice (at once individual and collective) that registers the experience on a more immediate level. This experience, as we see repeated often throughout Delbo's texts, is one of total ignorance regarding their new location or its significance upon arrival.

Not only is the concentration camp never directly named in the text of *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*, the city itself – the city we have identified as Auschwitz/Oświęcim – is also described as nameless near the beginning of the text:

C'était une plaine désolée
au bord d'une ville
La plaine était glacée
et la ville
n'avait pas de nom (25).

As we have seen, one of the most frequently evoked tropes about Auschwitz throughout the trilogy is precisely its anonymity and namelessness from the point of view of the prisoners. In the poem entitled "Auschwitz," then, the naming of Auschwitz the city is necessarily retrospective, the paradoxical naming of a "nameless" city. The naming of Auschwitz also ironically marks a spatial transition to an experience that takes place outside of the camp: "Cette ville où nous passions/était une ville étrange" (1-2).²⁴ The discordance for the reader initiated by the indication of Auschwitz as a city extends into the striking difference in tone. Preceding pages evoke images of nearly unspeakable horror, but the poem bearing the name "Auschwitz" has a removed, mildly curious quality, in which the normal and quotidian appear strange – strange because seen through the transfigured eyes of those who have encountered extreme horror. This altered vision (reminiscent of the surrealist estrangement of the everyday) is accentuated by the poem's position in the text, embedded between passages that emphasize the modalities of vision and looking in the context of the concentration camp.

The pages immediately preceding and following the poem present concentrated images of devastating scenes encountered in the camp, that provoke and engage the reader's attention by means of their excruciating detail and stillness, as though arrested in time.²⁵ The three pages preceding the poem "Auschwitz" all end with the command to the reader "Essayez de regarder. Essayez pour voir," while the page following the poem "Auschwitz" presents a short, focused scene entitled "Le

²⁴ For clarity in my close reading of this poem, I will cite it by line number instead of page number (it appears on pages 140-141 of *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*). Delbo's mixture of prose and poetry does not always make this a practical choice, but in this case, the text is clearly set apart as a poem by its format in free verse.

²⁵ This technique of Delbo's was described by Claude Prévost as "instantanés," or snapshots ("Tragédie" 14), and by Lawrence Langer as "prose sculptures" ("Introduction" xvii).

mannequin” in which the narrator watches a woman ravaged by the dog of an SS officer and tries to suppress her own identification with the body of the murdered woman: “Ne te regarde pas.” Echoing an earlier section entitled “Mannequins,” in which the sight of lifeless bodies triggers a childhood memory of seeing unclothed mannequins being unloaded from a truck (28-33),²⁶ the mannequin becomes a border-crossing figure in *Auschwitz et après* – a manifestation of the dehumanization of the inmates’ ordeal that travels in different spaces and times of memory by virtue of its metaphorical associations. In Chambers’s reading of the trilogy, such objects or places, like Alice’s abandoned leg or the *Appelplatz*, have the symbolic function in the text of performing a “relay” – that is, “they refer to disconnectedness as an effect of trauma but do so by figuring it, metaphorically or metonymically, in such a way as to make the disconnectedness itself readable as an index of pain, and hence produce some sort of reconnection” (210). I see the figure of the mannequin as also performing this symbolic relay, which Chambers convincingly argues is constitutive of Delbo’s testimonial poetics – with the added significance that it does so by serving as a point of contact between the disparate spaces of the urban and the concentrationary.

The metaphor of the mannequins for the dead also echoes Apollinaire’s “La Maison des morts,” where, like the figures in the window of a “boutique de mode,” the dead “grimaçaient pour l’éternité” (4-6). Apollinaire’s mannequins, occupying an indeterminate status between living and dead (as they are “attendant la sépulture” [13] but on the verge of coming back to life) are clearly in dialogue with the mannequins that are so central to structuring the interpenetration of camp and city in Delbo’s text, figures that bridge different times and spaces through the metaphorical connection with lifeless human bodies. Thus, “La Maison des morts” puts into relief, even within its first stanza, the thematics of (de)humanization, of the active but unreciprocated gaze, and most importantly for our purposes here, the proximity of two spaces in the realm of death. In addition to the complementarity of the sections “Mannequins” and “Le mannequin” in *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*, the city poem “Auschwitz” also has strong poetic reverberances with the Apollinaire poem. The “vitrines” and “boutiques” of the first stanza echo those of “Auschwitz,” in which the speaker seeks in vain to recognize her reflection, while the human figures in Delbo’s poem seem to be suspended in the intermediate space between life and death, between identity and facelessness. The urban space of Auschwitz/Oświęcim may well be a space that produces blurring, indistinction, or even erasure – albeit a spectral erasure, one that hinges specifically on the possibility or impossibility of mutual human recognition.

As I have proposed, this poem is remarkable because it is the unique use of the proper name “Auschwitz” in *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*, yet it refers not to the

²⁶ For excellent analyses of this passage, which I do not have the space to address at length here, see Chambers, *Untimely Interventions*; Parent, “Transmettre malgré tout;” Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism*; and Yaeger, “Proximity Without Intimacy.”

camp but to the city. I have shown in historical and theoretical terms why this unexpected naming is not paradoxical, but in fact a deliberate challenge to the tidy opposition of urban and concentrationary space – a challenge that is deeply rooted in Delbo’s political and philosophical engagements. Turning now to the poem itself, I would like to propose that the “city poem” of Auschwitz also occupies a uniquely productive position in Delbo’s *univers concentrationnaire*. A *mise en scène* of crossed paths and missed encounters in a space characterized by empty, reflective surfaces, “Auschwitz” may be read as a figuration of the city as a space of chiasmus, the criss-cross figure of rhetoric. The Auschwitz city poem dislocates the expected site of testimony, ironically making the camp nominative precisely when it is not the camp, but when what is at stake is an urban encounter, or the crossing of paths in the city.

“Auschwitz” describes the passage of a group of prisoners through the city on their way to their worksite for the day, the “silos de betteraves” on the other side of town (30-32). Initially, the town seems normal enough: women wear hats, curls in their hair, and stockings – “comme à la ville” (3-6). The city dwellers lack only one thing:

Aucun des habitants de cette ville
n’avait de visage
et pour n’en pas faire l’aveu
tous se détournèrent à notre passage (7-10)

Like the child with a canister of milk “qui s’enfuit en nous voyant” (14), the facelessness of the townspeople is no doubt a reference to the general desire on the part of civilians in areas near concentration camps to avoid acknowledging (perhaps publicly or privately, consciously or unconsciously) the atrocities being perpetrated in their vicinity. However, this poem represents much more than an ironic commentary on the determined ignorance of locals. This encounter with the faceless townspeople marks a point of crossing in the text, where the status of the relation between self and other, between the extreme of the camp and the everyday of the city, are put into question.

Chiasmus is an inherently spatialized trope, which marks the reversal of sets of terms, balanced by the figurative ‘X’ at the center. The syntax of this city scene is structured around two sets of desubjectivizing, visual encounters. The relationship between these two moments of failed recognition hinges on the central chiastic construction of the poem: “Nous regardions ces êtres sans visages / et c’était nous qui nous étonnions” (15-16). In the second term of the chiasmus, “nous” becomes both subject and object, resulting in a grammatically ambiguous expression: not only was it “we” who were shocked, but potentially, it is “we” who shocked “ourselves,” as the encounter with these faceless figures causes “nous” to turn, so to speak, and mirror itself instead.

In the second half of the poem, the emptiness of the faces of the townspeople is echoed in the space of the city:

Il n’y avait pas non plus de boutiques
 seulement des vitrines
 où j’aurais bien voulu me reconnaître
 dans les rangs qui glissaient sur les vitres.
 Je levai un bras
 mais toutes voulaient se reconnaître
 toutes levaient le bras
 et aucune n’a su laquelle elle était. (19-26)

After the faceless townspeople, who offer no “aveu” of identity (or of a gaze that could acknowledge the identity of the other), the group of prisoners is confronted with a failed occasion of self-recognition and individualization, replicating to a certain extent the denial of recognition from the townspeople. The speaker of the poem cannot distinguish her image from that of her fellow prisoners, as though the encounter with the estranging normalcy of the city reverberates in their own self-directed gaze, seeing themselves as others no doubt see them, an undistinguished mass.

For Marie Bornand, one of the few critics to remark upon this poem, the ironic language play of the dual signifier, Auschwitz, leads to a destabilization and expansion of the boundaries of the “espace Auschwitz” (102). The reader, in Bornand’s analysis, is thus forced to acknowledge her own complicity with the faceless inhabitants of the city, arriving at a “conscience intérieure” that compromises and mitigates the effect of historical distance (102). I argue, however, that it is in fact crucial that the reader does not identify with the faceless city inhabitants, even by virtue of our common status as non-deportees, any more than the reader identifies with, for example, the dummy-like lifeless bodies in *la maison des morts*. This poem is not about imagining how one would have reacted to crossing paths with a group of haggard, deathly concentration camp inmates. The chiasmus is precisely what creates intersection, reflexivity, and eventually a potential blurring of oppositions through exchange of properties: in this case, the concentrationary and the urban, the extreme and the everyday. Furthermore, the figuration of the city as a space of chiasmus invites a spatial reading, as opposed to an identificatory one. Reading this poem through the lens of space, in other words, allows the question of positionality in relation to testimony to no longer be a question of identification, but instead a question of proximity, traversal, and encounter.

Throughout the trilogy *Auschwitz et après*, we find a tension between depictions of the concentration camp as a separate, alien world, a concentrationary universe that functions by its own laws, and depictions of the camp as continuous with the city. Following the poeticization of “cette ville,” Auschwitz, narratives of transit incorporate the urban areas of Berlin and Paris, as well as the European landscape, into the concentrationary experience. Delbo’s interest in relaying the journey across

parts of Poland and Germany reflects an investment in depicting the continuity of the concentrationary and the everyday.²⁷ These passages bring to light what Simone Gigliotti has called “a displaced geography in Holocaust historiography,” by recounting experiences of mobility during the deportation experience that are “without a place, so to speak, in historians’ recognition of suffering sites and spaces of the victims” (*Train Journey* 23). Delbo’s testimony is unusual in its inclusion of not only cities but the landscape in between camps as part of the spatial experience of camp prisoners. Much like the “Auschwitz” poem, the other episodes in the trilogy that take place in urban spaces reveal the ways in which the concentration camp experience also permeates the city. In these passages, we are again dealing with a reflection on the nature of the traversal of urban space by denizens of the concentrationary universe, and above all, on the status of the gaze that is exchanged or avoided between prisoners and city dwellers as they cross paths. As we have seen, this motif of the disrupted gaze is essential to the structure of testimony for Delbo, a gaze that is always solicited (“Essayez de regarder”), but which we do not always have the strength to meet.

Like in the Polish city of Auschwitz, fellow travelers in the Berlin metro avoid the gaze and company of the women of Delbo’s group. While most civilians respond to the women with immense disdain, a few treat them as objects of pity. Even the Frenchman to whom the prisoners call out to from the train window rejects them: “[il] nous jette un regard désagréable, répond: « merde » et reprend sa course” (*Connaissance* 112). The camp inmates are a disruptive and unwelcome reminder of the contiguity of concentrationary and urban space. Delbo concludes, “Il nous fallait découvrir le fossé entre le monde et nous” (113). Indeed, Peter Fritzsche explains that “Trains and train stations offered both Germans and their victims frightening glimpses into the different spheres of life and death in the Third Reich” (227).²⁸ By depicting these spaces of transit, Delbo stages the intersection between the concentrationary and the everyday, to sometimes shocking effect.²⁹ As Andrew Charlesworth reminds us, the railway network that carried deportees to their fate

²⁷ Kathryn Jones astutely points out that Delbo devotes a considerable amount of textual space in the second volume to recounting their transport by train from Auschwitz to Ravensbrück, in relation to the relatively brief amount of time it constituted in her internment (42).

²⁸ See Fritzsche, “Intimate Knowledge,” in *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, on the encounters between camp prisoners and civilians in places such as railway stations, especially near the end of the war, when more prisoners are transported to neighboring cities to perform manual labor in the wake of air raids.

²⁹ The surprise of some readers at the description of Delbo’s group of inmates taking the subway in Berlin – alongside scandalized civilians – during the course of their transport to another concentration camp is an index of the extent to which the cultural imaginary continues to sequester the camps as distant and unbreachable sites.

(whether that be internment or death) “is virtually the same today in its topology and topography” (228), a pervasive reminder of the concentrationary regime etched into the European landscape.

The presence of Berlin (as well as Warsaw, represented in *La mémoire et les jours*) as “post-catastrophic cities” creates an urban poetics of decay and spectrality.³⁰ Reaching Berlin, the prisoners feel a sense of satisfaction at the “image effroyable” of the bombarded city (*Connaissance* 113), the “spectacle désolant” of the capital in ruins filling the deported *résistantes* with hope for a German defeat (*Connaissance* 118). Yet describing the landscape on the journey east to Ravensbrück, the camps seem to have invaded the space of the countryside, or the German countryside is indistinguishable from them:

La nuit vient. Le paysage se brouille aux vitres. Paysage d’usines, de hauts fourneaux (ou des crématoires encore?), de bâtisses noires, de campagne noire, avec des enclos de barbelés. Ou bien toute l’Allemagne est couverte de camps, ou bien tous les camps sont au bord de cette ligne-ci. Paysage désespéré.
(*Connaissance* 110)

The invasiveness of the concentrationary is evident here; the camps are literally built, almost seamlessly, into the networks of industry, finance, and transit. The industrial and the natural blur together (“Paysage d’usines”; “bâtisses *noires*”/ “campagne *noire*”), and then are enclosed by the camp signifier – “enclos de barbelés.”

In *La mémoire et les jours*, the German woman Hannelore also describes the camp system as having taken over the landscape:

Tout le territoire de l’Allemagne est couvert d’abcès purulents, de charniers, de marques honteuses : les camps. Ici, à Ravensbrück, à soixante kilomètres de Berlin, à l’orée de cette gentille petite ville, Ravensbrück – pour Berlin c’est comme Fontainebleau pour Paris – à côté de cette forêt pour promenades dominicales, ces atrocités : les expériences chirurgicales, les départs des vieilles et des malades pour des destinations inconnues : les transports noirs. (113)

The language of disease and decay (“abcès”) recalls the “tache noire” at the heart of Europe in the poem “Ce point sur la carte.” This also resonates with Rousset’s qualification of the concentrationary universe as “la gangrène de tout un système économique et social” (182), but here, the decay is projected onto the space itself, rather than abstractly onto the social and economic system. Hannelore’s outrage responds, moreover, to the audacious proximity of the camp – “à l’orée de,” “à côté de” a quaint town, a forest – the spatial juxtaposition of atrocity and innocence (or rather, of the invasion of space that is culturally coded as innocent).

A similar reference to the ironic coexistence of natural beauty and atrocity occurs in *Une Connaissance inutile*, where Ravensbrück is also likened to the scenic

³⁰ Hoffmann and Kohlrausch propose this term to describe the aftermath of wartime devastation and urban destruction in postwar Europe, using the cases of Berlin and Warsaw as the most prominent examples. See “Introduction: Post-Catastrophic Cities.”

forest and chateau of Fontainebleau. Observing their new camp, one of the deportees comments, « On pourrait se croire à Fontainebleau, » while another responds, « C'est moins impressionnant que les barbelés électriques » (121). The association with Fontainebleau ironically impacts the experience of space in Ravensbrück.³¹ After the long journey of Charlotte and her comrades through Poland and Germany, the arrival at Ravensbrück begins with a surprisingly innocuous description of the camp:

Des villas assez coquettes, disséminées sous les pins, donnaient au lieu un air de villégiature. C'était les villas des officiers SS du camp. Elles avaient été construites par les premières prisonnières, qui avaient porté les pierres à la main. Nous l'avons appris quand nous avons été dans le camp. (*Connaissance* 120-1)

The quaint appearance of the buildings is nevertheless connected to the violence of their origins and function. The point of this passage is not that looks can be deceiving, but rather, that the appearance of normalcy, we are learning, can also be 'normal' in the *univers concentrationnaire*. Indeed, the passage from Auschwitz to Ravensbrück performs an ironic reversal – the city is in ruins, but the camp looks like a resort town. This account of the arrival at the new camp gives equal weight to the strangely unassuming aspect of Ravensbrück and to the fact that the homes of the SS are literally built by the toil of slave labor. Their domestic space is not only inseparable from the concentrationary system, it is a product of its prisoners.

The chapter ends on another ironic note with the brief conversation of some of the deportees as they observe their new camp:

« On pourrait se croire à Fontainebleau, dit Cécile.

--Oh, Fontainebleau! Nous y allions camper presque tous les samedis, avec notre petite bande.

--Moi, si je rentre, le camping... »

La distance nous a paru longue entre la halte et l'enceinte du camp : un haut mur peint en vert.

« C'est moins impressionnant que les barbelés électriques », a dit Poupette. (121)

Taking the “air de villégiature” one step further, the first impression of Ravensbrück triggers a memory of Fontainebleau, the scenic forest and château outside Paris. As Jones remarks, “The ironic semantic and conceptual link between the camp as a site of atrocities and the campsite as a place of relaxation and pleasure ensures that a return to the latter would also evoke painful memories of the former” (43). Indeed, the woman who responds “Moi, si je rentre...” implies this contamination of any future experience of camping, hinging of course on the crucial “if” of survival. But the question at hand is not simply whether Fontainebleau will trigger painful memories of internment for survivors who might someday venture out camping.

³¹ For an analysis of Delbo's account of the journey to Ravensbrück as an ironic reworking of the discourse of travel and tourism, see Jones, 36-44.

Rather, the association with Fontainebleau helps shape the experience of space in Ravensbrück. The final irony is that this camp pretending to be a resort is less imposing, less “impressive,” does not signify horror or the concentrationary in the same way as the barbed wire of Auschwitz.³²

When Hannelore mentions the similarity of Ravensbruck and Fontainebleau, for example, it is to emphasize the extreme proximity of the camp to the capital city, and the sense of shame this should produce in any German. Or, as one of Delbo’s companions comments as they pass Oranienburg: “Ils n’ont vraiment aucune pudeur” (*Connaissance* 119). However, in *Une connaissance inutile*, it is not so much its proximity to the city as its replication of a touristic “air de villégiature” that makes Ravensbruck echo Fontainebleau. For geographer Claudio Minca, tourist and leisure camps are not so separate from the detention, concentration, or refugee camps that are as pervasive (albeit more invisible) in contemporary Europe: “They all seem to be driven by a variable mix of custody, care, and control, at times involving explicit and/or implicit forms of violence “(Geographies” 75).³³ In Delbo’s narrative, Fontainebleau as place of leisure is in turn contaminated by its resonance with Ravensbrück, indicating that even seemingly distant topographies and histories are, in the age of the camp, irreversibly marked by the existence concentrationary universe.

Just as the concentrationary universe is shown to envelop urban and natural spaces, *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* also offers three passages devoted to houses in the realm of Auschwitz. While these houses – as both architectural structures and symbolic, affective sites – have been overlooked by most studies of Delbo’s depiction of the camp, I contend that each of these passages uses the domestic space and structure of the house as a topos of the borderland between the concentration camp and the supposed normalcy of the outside world. Two of these passages create an encounter with residences of SS officers, while the other explores the devastated interior of a Jewish home in the vicinity of the camp, emptied of its inhabitants, a casualty in the progressive expansion of the territory of Auschwitz. These three houses mark domestic space as a domain within the concentrationary regime. Their presence in the concentrationary universe, like that of urban spaces, is essential to the geography of Delbo’s text-space of Auschwitz.

The first appearance of the house topos in *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* offers an iconic, prototypical image of a home, but the traits of innocence belie what inhabits it. In “La tulipe” (97-99), the house first appears in the distance, as the column of

³² Along similar lines, many writers have pointed out the ironically bucolic origins of the names of certain camps. Both Buchenwald and Birkenau, for example, are named for the birch tree groves located nearby.

³³ See Minca, “Geographies of the Camp,” for an overview of scholarship that discusses leisure camps through the lens of biopolitics.

prisoners struggle through a snowstorm while marching to a worksite.³⁴ First appearing like a ship on the horizon (97), the house comes into view, the only structure in the endless “paysage qui ne répond pas” (98). Its red bricks and smoking chimney make it the perfect image of a quaint home. Even more spectacular, a tulip is in the window, “Rose entre deux feuilles pâles,” presented as though onstage against the white curtain backdrop (“sur le fond des rideaux blancs”). When the women glimpse the tulip, “Les yeux brillent comme à une apparition” (98). The tulip seems to represent perfect, unattainable beauty (encased as it is between the glass of the double pane window), an unlikely bit of life, of Spring, in the Polish winter – this “désert de glace et de neige” (98). The vision of the pristine and magical tulip even seems to hover before their eyes, as they labor at digging a ditch in the frozen ground: “Au fond du fossé que nous creusions, la tulipe fleurissait dans sa corolle délicate” (99).

Since the women never again take the route which allowed them their brief glimpse of the tulip, their memory of it marks the house as a site of hope, a place near the side of the road they might one day pass again. Yet this highly structured narrative is ultimately one of disillusionment: “Quand nous avons appris que c’était la maison du SS qui commandait la pêche, nous avons eue notre souvenir et cette tendresse qu’ils n’avaient pas encore séchée en nous” (99). The disappointment is not registered in the text by the fact of never seeing the tulip again (on the contrary the knowledge of its existence now harbors a sense of hope, not of deception). The disillusionment comes with the knowledge of the context: the house is occupied by an SS officer. The tulip is now tainted. And finally, Delbo expresses the prisoners’ collective hatred – not for the Nazis specifically, but hatred for the memory of the tulip, and the residual tenderness in them that had been touched by it. The sense of hope in this passage was attached to the home as a symbol of domestic space, so the crushing of that hope becomes a reminder of the concentrationary regime’s colonization of intimate space, just as the house with the tulip becomes a signpost in the concentrationary universe.

Like “La tulipe,” “La maison” (*Aucun* 124-7) is about hope, the longing for the comfort of domestic space, and the relentless destructiveness of the concentrationary universe. In this scene, the inmates are working a field next to a partially demolished house and their guards, just as eager to escape the downpour, allow them to take shelter from the pouring rain:

Nous entrons dans la maison comme dans une église. C’est une maison de paysans qu’on a commencé à démolir. Ils démolissent toutes les maisons de paysans, suppriment les haies et les clôtures, nivellent les jardins en un vaste

³⁴ The march to various worksites is another leitmotif in the trilogy. The constant movement and displacement both inside and outside the camp serves as a counterpoint to the immobility of endless hours of rollcall, highlighting the frequent traversal of space. See Gigliotti, *The Train Journey* and “A Mobile Holocaust?” for innovative studies of mobility as an essential aspect of deportee experience.

domaine. C'est ainsi qu'on liquide la petite culture, ici. Les cultivateurs ont été liquidés d'abord. La maison est marquée d'un « J » à la peinture noire. Des juifs l'habitaient. (126)

This house, then, is a remnant, a remainder of the process of liquidation enacted on the land, which reproduces the violence performed on the human population. The former inhabitants were just the first element of the space to be liquidated, followed by the hedges, the gardens, and the houses. The house has been stripped of wood flooring, of windows and doors: its resources pillaged. The eradication of the human population is seen in light of the occupation of space.³⁵

As the women talk, the house regains its status of home, through the collective action of imaginary projection: “La maison devient tiède, habitée.” How easy it is for a house to feel inhabited once again, how a human presence transforms it, and even more so, the discursive process of language, as the women discuss how they would furnish the stripped space. However, the juxtaposition with the next section ironically undercuts any possibility that such relief could endure in the concentrationary universe. “Nous regardons la pluie en souhaitant qu'elle dure jusqu'au soir,” the passage ends – and indeed, as if in response, naturally following, the next section is entitled “Le soir.” But we find out almost immediately that it is not the same evening of the day spent in the Jewish house, because we find ourselves at a different worksite. On this day, fellow prisoners Berthe and Anne-Marie die under the blows of an SS guard, resulting in one of the most traumatic narratives of the volume: Charlotte and three other women must carry, without aid, their dead comrades the several kilometers back to the camp. Through the juxtaposition of these vignettes, Delbo teases us with the possibility of a realistic, chronological fulfillment of the hope expressed at the end of “La maison,” but relief is too brief, and ultimately impossible. “La tulipe” and “La maison” produce houses as figures of respite, relief, and normalcy, but that are ruthlessly cut down, their true foundations in the concentrationary universe laid bare.

“Le commandant” (*Aucun* 155-59) also presents an image of a stereotypically quaint home – a brick house with rose bushes, a lawn, and begonias (157) – that turns out to be the residence of an SS officer. This yard is the stage for a role-playing game acted out by two blond children – the sons, we learn, of the camp commandant. The children, aged eleven and seven, play a game in the roles of guard and camp prisoner. After the older brother, playing the guard, sends his smaller sibling to the ground

³⁵ In “The Topography of Genocide,” Andrew Charlesworth articulates the connection between houses and mass murder from another angle, pointing out that the first, experimental gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau were adapted from farmhouses – “But somehow the fact that the first Soviet POWs and Jews were gassed there evades us,” he observes wryly, “because what could a house, a home, have to do with mass murder?” (237). Charlesworth’s essay is a pioneering example of a geography-oriented inquiry in Holocaust studies.

with “un semblant de coup de poing” (158) and finishes off the “prisoner” with a kick that leaves him “la bouche ouverte, l’oeil mort” (159), the game ends. The older brother, “avec un signe de la baguette aux prisonniers invisibles qui l’entourent, ordonne : « Zum Krematorium », et s’éloigne” (159).

The juxtaposition of the officer’s home and the camp reveals a concise and highly charged image of the liminal domestic spaces that constitute the margins of the concentrationary. The passage ends:

Le commandant du camp habite tout près, à l’extérieur des barbelés électriques. Une maison de briques, avec un jardin de rosiers et de gazon, des bégonias aux couleurs brillantes dans des caisses peintes en bleu. Entre la haie de rosiers et les barbelés passe le chemin qui mène au four crématoire. C’est le chemin que suivent les civières sur lesquelles on transporte les morts. Les morts se succèdent tout au long du jour. La cheminée fume tout au long du jour. Les heures déplacent sur le sable des allées et sur les gazons l’ombre de la cheminée. (159)

Here, the home of the camp’s commander is situated outside of – but parallel to and contiguous with – the camp’s barbed wire border. In one sense, this allows the garden of this house to become the stage on which his little boys act out the positions of power they observe in the camp. This signals an important reminder: even if we think of the camp as an entirely closed space, if we imagine its borders to be the electric barbed wire described as the threshold of the home, this scene hinges on visibility. The boys are performing an imitation of something they have seen, not simply because they can partially see through the fence, but because, as we are told, the path leading to the crematorium is *in between* the rose bushes and the fence.

The three final sentences of this paragraph metonymically trace the process of extermination through increasing stages of distance: dead bodies pass by all day long (bodies that have been murdered), the chimney smokes all day long (burning the dead bodies), and the shadow of the chimney moves across the ground as the day goes on. The immense death-factory system is assimilated to the passage of time, the movement of the sun across the sky, so that the system seems cold, abstract, almost neutral – going through its cycle like the dial of a sun clock. This all culminates with the ironic apposition that is also the neutralized summary of the four preceding pages: “Les fils du commandant jouent dans le jardin. Ils jouent au cheval, au ballon, ou bien ils jouent au commandant et au prisonnier” (159).

The tone of this paragraph, in which human agency is progressively abstracted, and in which both the existence and the destruction of the prisoners is euphemized, is an ironic intrusion of the removed, factual voice of third person narration in the testimonial text. The cycle of extermination is assimilated, like in “Rue de l’arrivée, rue du départ,” to the natural passage of time. The presence of the SS as perpetrators is only perceptible through the medium of the children and the mimicry they play. Since, as Chambers reminds us, allegory and irony are related

tropes – both “ways of speaking with double tongue” (50), or doubling meaning – then what lies on the other side of this narration is an indictment exposing the complicity and the continuity of the two worlds that pretend to maintain their borders with a barbed wire fence and a rose hedge.

Delbo’s description of the commandant’s house coincides, in fact, with the account offered (nearly fifty years later) by the historical geographer Andrew Charlesworth, reflecting on the home of Rudolf Hoess, camp commandant at Auschwitz:

As he stepped from his back garden at his home in Auschwitz, Hoess crossed the boundary between home and work. On one side of the line he was a family man, who played with his children and swam with them in the Sola river just across the road. On the other side he walked the few steps to his office and a further few to the gas chamber. At the end of the day, he would cross the line back to the bosom of his family. (238)

The commandant’s home is a paradigm of “the solid bourgeois house with its boundary,” the domestic space forming a microcosm of the homeland that must be protected “from the world, from the Other, from the Jew” (239). Yet Delbo reminds us that this boundary – this threshold between the sacred space of the family and the place where genocidal violence is enacted in its name – is not only a mobile one, but a porous one. For Giaccaria and Minca, this “mobile threshold” is “a defining element of the very spatialities of the camp” (8). Indeed, the mobility of the threshold between the extreme and the everyday, as well as between the concentrationary and that which lies beyond it, such as domestic and urban spaces, is essential to understanding Delbo’s concentrationary universe. Beyond this, however, Delbo’s work invites us to consider the tainted reflection of the camp that is visible in the everyday. Like the camp inmates who raise a hand to acknowledge their own reflection in the windows of a storefront, and like the children of the commandant whose games perform the cruelty of power, these texts call for our recognition of the duplicity of the border between extreme violence and everyday life.

In this chapter, I explored the geographical imagination at work in Delbo’s texts because they articulate a vision of the concentrationary universe that involves a complex interpenetration of the world of the normal and the everyday, from which the camps are typically thought to be radically excluded. From examining the powerfully cartographical visions of the camp to the tropes of namelessness and unknowability that undermine them, we then explored how the concentrationary seeps into the everyday spaces of cities, landscapes, and homes. Furthermore, reviewing historical and geographical perspectives on the concentration-camp system allows us to see its imbrication in urban and industrial development: Auschwitz as metropolis (or *agglomération*), inextricably tied to Oświęcim, like sister cities.

This reframing of the camp system as a spatial network integrated within the urban geography of Europe also allows us to contextualize the significance of representations of the camps as uncanny or grotesque mirror-images of the city. The tenuous border between the barbed wire and the rose hedge in “Le Commandant” is an evocative figure for the refusal to place the camps in any resolved past, instead placing them next door, on the other side of the fence. The works of literature and film in this dissertation are united by their refusal to allow the end of the war to mark the historical closure of the era of the concentration camp, just as their insistence on geographic continuity – by means of spatial forms of relay between urban and concentrationary space – refuses the conceptual closure of the concentrationary universe.

The next chapter moves into the space of the camp through a different kind of figuration than we find in Delbo’s hauntingly evocative poetics. Camus’s allegorical play, *L’État de siège*, is a striking extension of the vision of Delbo’s concentrationary universe, imagining the resurgence of the concentration camp in the city center. Here we transition from a testimonial work that suggests the tendrils of the concentrationary reaching into the heart of everyday life, to a work of theater that identifies the State itself as the matrix of confinement, control, and biopower. The gaze of surveillance from the watchtower that Delbo alludes to (but undermines) will become central in Camus’s *L’État de siège*, as will the issues of governmentality, sovereignty, and exception. Camus’s geography of the concentrationary is an image of the city itself.

CHAPTER 2

Totalitarianism and States of Exception: The Plague in Camus's *État de siège*

The previous chapter focused on Charlotte Delbo, whose texts both probe and rupture the boundaries of the concentration-camp universe, problematizing the distinction between camp and city. As we have seen, Delbo's testimonial memoirs sought to make a history of suffering into a "weapon" in the present. Similarly, I will show that Camus's play *L'État de siège* (1948) – in which the concentration camp is not only a mirror of, but inscribed in urban space – is designed as an intervention in a historical moment still working through the political aftermath of the Second World War. Indeed, the history that Albert Camus refuses to see as closed is the era of fascism and totalitarianism in Europe – and not just Eastern Europe, much to the consternation of some of his critics. *L'État de siège* is an often-overlooked text in Camus's oeuvre, dramatizing the invasion of a Spanish city by a dictatorial figure named the Plague. Though it is typically read as a failed, theatrical adaptation of the famous allegorical novel, *La Peste* (1947), *L'État de siège* significantly departs from the allegory of plague in its famed predecessor, as it explicitly stages the emergence of a concentration camp in the city center. Engaging with the concepts of sovereignty (Schmitt), biopolitical power (Foucault), and the state of exception (Agamben), I will argue that the transformation of the city into a concentrationary space erodes the distinction between city and camp, laying bare their shared foundations in sovereign power and spatialized forms of bodily control.

In October 1948, *L'État de siège* opened at the prestigious Théâtre Marigny in Paris. *La Peste* had come out the previous year and was an immediate best-seller. In addition to being one of the most famous young novelists and a prominent voice in journalism in 1940s France, Camus was already a respected playwright, having produced *Le Malentendu* (1943) and *Caligula* (1944) during the Occupation. *L'État de siège* was produced in collaboration with Jean-Louis Barrault, the renowned actor, director, and member of the *Comédie française*. With music by Arthur Honegger and set design by the modern painter Balthus, the play seemed entirely destined for success – until it opened. It was universally lambasted by critics and closed after only twenty-three performances. While accounts of the play's commercial failure differ, one of the reasons for this might be the formal innovations that marked it as a departure from Camus's earlier plays, or even most plays being staged at the time.¹

Designed as a "spectacle total," the play required a huge, elaborate set mimicking an amphitheater. With dissonant, modern music and an eccentric melange

¹ For a detailed overview of the play's reception at the time of its premier, see Walker 1219-23.

of generic traits, Camus sought to combine all forms of dramatic expression, from the lyrical monologue to collective theater, including pantomime, simple dialogue, farce, and a chorus (OC II, 291).² Camus also writes that the play was inspired by both Elizabethan theater and the morality plays of the Middle Ages, a type of allegory in which characters personify moral qualities or abstractions in order to transmit moral lessons. But instead of Christianity, Camus's allegory intervenes in what he calls "la seule religion vivante, au siècle des tyrans et des esclaves, je veux dire la liberté » (OC II, 372). Despite this gravity of purpose, even today, *L'État de siège* is very rarely read or even referred to in most scholarship, perhaps due to its unanimously poor reception. This oversight is all the more unfortunate in light of the fact that, to quote Camus himself, "je n'ai jamais cessé de considérer que *L'État de siège*, avec tous ses défauts, est peut-être celui de mes écrits qui me ressemble le plus » (OC II, 372).

L'État de siège takes place in Cadix (Cádiz), Spain, in an unspecified time period that vaguely evokes the Middle Ages or premodern period. It depicts the arrival of the plague in the city, but in addition to the physical epidemic, the disease is personified onstage as a dictator who seizes control of the existing government and institutes an elaborate, bureaucratic system of repression. The Plague is accompanied by his secretary, a severe woman in a gray suit with a notepad listing all the inhabitants of Cadix. When she crosses out a name, a dull thud is heard and someone drops dead. A young man named Diego (played by Barrault) finally overcomes his fear and confronts the Plague, liberating the city. The play thus proposes an allegory of resistance to oppression, in the form of totalitarian dictatorship.

L'État de siège, however, tends to be overshadowed by Camus's most famous allegorical work, the novel *La Peste* (1947). Indeed, readings of the play as an obvious and transparent (and thus less aesthetically successful) allegory of totalitarianism are in stark contrast to much scholarship on its novelistic predecessor, which often highlights its multiple, overlapping, and even contradictory levels of meaning. The omission of *L'État de siège* from the Camusian canon, with its evocation of the concentration camp and the Nazi genocide, is all the more striking in light of the extent to which Camus's work looms large in the literature on Holocaust memory. In one of the foundational volumes in the field of trauma studies, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1991), Shoshana Felman dedicates two essays to Camus (the first on *La Peste* and the second on *La Chute*), in which the novels are seen to chart the course of 20th-century historical witnessing. Felman heralds *La Peste* as the inaugural text of the "Age of Testimony," whose task is to confront the horror of history and attempt to assimilate its trauma (114).

² Camus and Barrault, both deeply influenced by the writings of Antonin Artaud, sought to reintroduce corporeality to French theater. In *L'État de siège*, this was expressed in the extensive use of pantomime as well as the exaggerated physicality of some of the performances.

The formal shift in Camus's representation of the concentration camp from *La Peste* to *L'État de siège* is not only a generic shift from novel to theater, but also a shift in the framing and functioning of the allegory of the plague. *L'État de siège* extends the figure of the city as a space of radical confinement, staged in *La Peste*, and renders it more explicit as a depiction of the urban concentrationary. In other words, the confined city does not simply evoke the concentration camp in *L'État de siège* – the city *becomes* a camp. From the violence of invasion (invasion of the city by an occupying power; invasion of the body by the contagion) to the internalized violence of the plague-stricken and disciplined city, we see how the extreme inhabits the everyday of the city as well as the body.

La Peste chronicles the spread of the plague in modern-day Oran and the struggle to defeat the disease while preserving human life and dignity. Widely read as an allegory of the Occupation, the novel has been shown to function on multiple levels, with some readings focusing on the Holocaust as a primary referent, others on colonialism, or indeed on the coexistence of these multiple narrative frames.³ The question of the allegorical meaning(s) of the plague as figure for some kind of historical violence raises a set of political and ethical issues regarding representation that have been largely elided in the case of *L'État de siège*, but debated from many angles in the case of *La Peste*.

One of the most famous critiques of *La Peste* was articulated by Roland Barthes, who in 1955 argued that the novel lacks a historicizing framework and a political model of solidarity. The resistance depicted in the novel, according to Barthes, is a world of friends, not militants, with the doctor as the emblematic figure. In his attempt to prevent suffering and save lives, the doctor is the embodiment of Camusian resistance in the novel, which is thus not a sufficiently political one, because it seeks only to preserve life in the face of a metaphorical evil rather than overturn it.⁴ But in the case of war and oppression, asks Barthes, is it really enough to just bandage the wounds?: “Que doit faire l'homme devant l'assaut de l'homme? Que

³ Felman prioritizes the novel's dimension as Holocaust testimony, while others, such as Seth Graebner and Azzedine Haddour, highlight colonialism as the novel's allegorical referent. For an overview of these competing readings, as well as the pattern of “reciprocal blindness” between Holocaust and postcolonial studies of which they are symptomatic, see Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity* 61-69.

⁴ From an opposing perspective, this is precisely the kind of ethical stance that some readers, such as Shoshana Felman or David Carroll, find most laudable in Camus: the voice of the “healer” (Felman 118), and “the obligation to put people's health first, before religion and *before politics*” (Carroll 57, my emphasis), reinforcing the idea that the novel does not offer a fundamentally *political* model of resistance. Ève Morisi offers a nuance to these two positions in *Camus et le souci des autres*, arguing that Camus can best be understood as proposing an “ethics of care,” which finds its political articulation in the rejection of all forms of marginalization and dehumanization, and thus is not incompatible with a politics of revolt.

feraient les combattants de la Peste devant le visage trop humain dont elle doit être le symbole général et indifférencié?” (544). Of course, we should recall that in 1955, Barthes is writing in the wake of the public quarrel between Camus and Sartre over questions related to communism and political uses of violence.⁵ We should also recall that Barthes’s review comes eight years after the novel’s publication, when its status as a popular bestseller had already been cemented (indeed, Barthes writes the review for the *Bulletin du Club du meilleur livre*). If the Barthes of the 1940s and 50s was a self-avowed Sartrean and Marxist,⁶ these divisions in the left-wing intellectual and political culture of postwar France are an important backdrop to his critique. Tellingly, it is in response to Camus’s response to his negative review (in which Camus writes that he does not believe in “réalisme en art”), that Barthes positions himself as a historical materialist (“Réponse” 573).

Barthes’s claim that *La Peste*’s allegory would falter when applied to a confrontation with the human face of evil – articulated out of concern for its political efficacy in a new era of oppression – echoes the concern of Georges Bataille, who advanced a similar, more sustained argument in his 1947 review of the novel. Instead of being founded in *insoumission*, argues Bataille, *La Peste* only offers a vision of the inescapable, implacable misery of life, and the struggle with mortality – a struggle that cannot be won, but that grants inner peace to whomever chooses to continue to fight (albeit in vain). For Bataille, as for Barthes, this problem is rooted in the choice to represent evil with « une inhumaine épidémie » (Bataille, “La morale du malheur” 13). Responding to Barthes, Camus defends the novel by contending that, in a world in which “la terreur” has many faces, he chose no single face – no single historical referent – “pour mieux pouvoir les frapper tous,” allowing the allegory to maintain multiple levels of meaning (287). The questions of allegory, the representation of evil as a human or natural phenomenon, and the (de)historicization of his object all come to bear in strikingly different ways on the next iteration of an allegorical plague in *L’Etat de siège*.

Though *L’Etat de siège* was written and produced seven years before Barthes lamented *La Peste*’s displacement of the “visage trop humain” of oppression, the play offers a kind of response to this charge, by incarnating the allegorical Plague in the human body of a dictator. However, as we shall see, this creates a different set of tensions between the openness of potential meanings and the specificity of the individual character onstage. But the focus on dictatorship is not the play’s only

⁵ Sartre breaks with Camus in 1952. See Roland Aronson, *Camus and Sartre*, for the definitive account of their relationship. Though Barthes had previously praised *L’Étranger*, the 1955 exchange over *La Peste* marks the break between Barthes and the increasingly isolated Camus.

⁶ Or so he later claimed, at least from the perspective of 1971: interview in *Tel Quel* (1971), cited in Roger 175. On Barthes’s complex relationship to Marxism, see Philippe Roger, “Barthes with Marx.”

departure from the novel – it entails a deeper reflection on the relationship between political form and spatial forms of power. Unlike *La Peste*, the play does not use a quarantined city to allegorically evoke the carceral conditions of an occupied city. Instead, it insists on the potential for a concentrationary regime – with its distinctive barbed wire and watch towers – to arise within the city itself.

The play's title offers a specific framework for this reflection on crisis, totalitarianism, and the law. According to French legal code, the state of siege describes a situation in which a city or fort is besieged by an enemy, whether external or internal. That is, it applies equally to “un cas de péril imminent résultant d'une guerre étrangère ou d'une insurrection armée.”⁷ Its origins in the legal code date to the aftermath of the 1848 Revolution – at which time it was primarily a response to internal insurrection – and it was subsequently invoked during the Siege of Paris and the Paris Commune (1870-71). The state of siege, along with the state of emergency, are instances of the “state of exception” that has been theorized by thinkers from Schmitt to Agamben, when certain laws are suspended and greater power or latitude is given to the military, the police, and the executive.⁸ As Carl Schmitt writes at the beginning of his *Political Theology*, “sovereign is he who decides on the exception” (5). This conceptualization of the relationship between sovereignty and exception is dramatized in Camus's play, through the incarnation of the sovereign as the Plague. While *L'Etat de siège* is usually read as a critique of totalitarianism (and even presents itself as such), I will show that the play in fact offers a critique of governmentality itself, exposing the extent to which sovereignty is rooted in the exception.

⁷ French legal code can be consulted online at *Le service public de la diffusion du droit* (legifrance.gouv.fr). The articles of the law on the state of siege can be found at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000006539784&idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000006166913&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071307&dateTexte=20160526>

⁸ Interestingly, Agamben traces the camp's juridico-political structure of exceptionality along a historical timeline that closely mirrors the French laws on the state of siege. *Schutzhaft*, “the Prussian law on the state of siege that was passed on June 4, 1851 and that was extended to the whole of Germany (with the exception of Bavaria) in 1871,” provides for the internment or “protective custody” of individuals who have not committed any crime (“What is a Camp?” 38). 1848, the year that gave rise to the legal institution of *état de siège* in France, remains a significant historical intersection in the colonial context, as the year in which the departmentalization of Algeria separated “citoyens” from “sujets,” distinguishing between who is and is not subject to the punitive disciplinary system (which included forms of internment). See Sylvie Thénaut, *Violence ordinaire dans l'Algérie coloniale*. For a critique of Agamben's elision of the colonial in his account of the emergence of the concentration camp, see Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” and Jill Jarvis, “Remnants of Muslims: Reading Agamben's Silence.”

The theme of emergency is introduced even before the curtain rises, as the play opens with a musical theme evoking the sound of an alert siren (295). The siren remains the sonic backdrop to the beginning of the play, lingering as “un bourdonnement lointain” as the walls of the fortified city are cast in relief by the light of a passing comet. In the beginning, the inhabitants of Cadix argue about the meaning of the comet, some fearing that it announces the end of the world and others that it is “*signe de guerre*,” but they can only agree that it is bad, or even deadly: “*un sort sur la cité*” (295-6). However, in this first scene, the character Nada distinguishes himself as the Shakespearean madman-as-truth-speaker – the town drunk to whom everyone looks for interpretation of the comet. Declaring the comet an ill omen and a warning (297-8), Nada announces the principle that shapes his point of view: “*la vie vaut la mort; l’homme est du bois dont on fait les bûchers*” (297), evoking an unsettling image of human bodies being burned as a pyre that foreshadows the forms of bodily violence and instrumentalization that will be central to the new regime.⁹

At this stage, we receive our first impression of the kind of government that exists before the Plague’s invasion, when a herald announces the governor’s order in response to the comet. The official stance is that *nothing* happened and there was no comet – and “*tout habitant qui parlera de comètes autrement que comme de phénomènes sidéraux passés ou à venir sera donc puni avec la rigueur de la loi*” (299). This policy, relegating the comet’s existence to a cosmic past or future, is enforced by the officers of the *garde civil*, who appeared on scene immediately after the comet’s appearance to herd the townspeople back home. Here we see that the regime about to be replaced by the dictatorship of the Plague is not some ideal (or even neutral) state, but a place of negation, qui “*visé à tout supprimer*” (299), regulated by official language of the non-event. This language of denial, negation, and forgetting is often repeated during the first part of the play in various forms of *il ne s’est rien passé*, such as the Chorus who sings, “*Buvons jusqu’à l’oubli, il ne se passera rien!*” (301). The Governor of Cadix refuses the exceptionality of the comet, while also exercising the exceptional power of denying factual reality.

The scene in which the first victim of the plague is discovered is elaborately orchestrated, involving pantomime, the resurgence of the alert siren, two dull thuds marking the death, and the dramatic pronunciation of the words “*La Peste*” when the cause of death is identified (307). (Appropriately, the first victim is an actor in an itinerant theater troupe that had been performing pantomime in the background, as the scene takes place in the public square). The Priest tells the crowd that they are being punished for their sins, while the Astrologist explains the “*conjonction maligne de planètes*,” and the panicked crowd declares the end of the world approaching

⁹ The association of human bodies with wood also foreshadows the complex and unsettling figurations of post-Holocaust memory in Duras’s films, which will be addressed in Chapter 3.

(307). Alternating scenes between the *Palais du roi*, *Eglise*, and *Maison du Juge* offer the audience three different perspectives on how the different forms of power are responding to the crisis: the government, the Church, and the patriarchy (in the form of the bourgeois household).

Before the Plague arrives onstage as a personified character, the government is already responding to the epidemic by instituting orders of social control and surveillance: the first order forbids public gatherings and entertainment, “en signe de pénitence à l’endroit du malheur commun et pour éviter les risques de contagion » (313), combining religious and hygienic discourses. At this point in the play, the audience has already been led to see the Governor and his administration as untruthful, coercive, and corrupt. (For example: a magistrate assuring the Governor that for now the epidemic is mostly in the « quartiers extérieurs qui sont pauvres et surpeuplés. Dans notre malheur, ceci du moins est satisfaisant » [309]). Yet it is precisely at the moment when the Governor is beginning to exercise his power of suspending certain liberties due to the state of emergency (in other words, the sovereign enacting the state of exception), that the embodied figure of the Plague enters into the scene.

The Plague enters with his Secretary. When he introduces himself as “La Peste” and cordially requests, “sur le ton de la courtoisie,” that the Governor transfer his powers, the Governor of course refuses, forcing the newcomer to demonstrate his own powers. The Plague asks his Secretary to “procéder à une radiation,” and as she crosses something out in her notebook, a dull thud sounds as one of the guards drops dead (314-15). She explains that a victim’s body bears three marks : “Une marque, et vous êtes suspect. Deux, vous voilà contaminé. Trois, la radiation est prononcée. Rien n’est plus simple” (315), designating the passage from suspicion to contamination and finally execution, as delegated to the Secretary.¹⁰

The new dictator immediately begins issuing decrees in order for the citizens to begin to “vivre dans la réglementation” and “en plein obéissance des volontés de notre bien-aimé souverain,” introducing “surveillants, gardiens, exécuteurs et fossoyeurs” tasked with the “réglementation et assistance des citoyens” (317). The way in which the epidemic is managed through bodily control, discipline, and

¹⁰ Jean Cayrol, in “D’un romanesque concentrationnaire” (*Esprit* 1949, republished in *Lazare parmi nous* as “Pour un romanesque lazarien” [1950]), references this detail in the course of a lengthy evocation of the “univers démoniaque” of the concentration camp. Cayrol writes, “le présent ne tient qu’à une *lubie* de quelque personnage supérieur; le temps de tailler un crayon comme dans *l’État de siège* de Camus et l’on supprime l’homme” (83). Here, the Secretary’s pencil (which produces, as we know, immediate elimination) succinctly figures the bureaucratic arbitrariness of death in the camp. *L’État de siège* seems to have been at the forefront of Cayrol’s thinking when he designated Albert Camus as the “premier historien et chercheur” of concentrationary art (77). For more detailed readings of Camus as a “lazarean” author, see Birama Touré and Marie-Christine Pavis.

regulation will be familiar to readers of Foucault, since he used the account of quarantine measures in a plague-stricken city to begin his chapter on Panopticism in *Surveiller et punir*.¹¹ « A la peste répond l'ordre, » writes Foucault (199), that is, the order of discipline and analysis, of which the quarantined city offers a spatialized and topographic model.

In Foucault's analysis, the true object of panopticism is not sovereignty, but discipline: « Le panoptisme, c'est le principe général d'une nouvelle 'anatomie politique' dont l'objet et la fin ne sont pas le rapport de souveraineté mais les relations de discipline » (210). While the « political anatomy » on display in *L'Etat de siège* does offer an image of the disciplinary *dispositif* that will become the Panopticon, it is still ultimately routed through the figure of the sovereign himself. Or, perhaps the figure of the sovereign has not yet been dissipated by the internalization of discipline, as is the case in Panopticism, even though much of the Plague's dialogue ultimately reflects on (and fetishizes) that internalization. For Foucault, the «ville pestiférée» and the «établissement panoptique » mark the transformations in disciplinarity across 150 years of Western history (206). However, in Camus's allegory, modern and premodern elements of the disciplinary regime overlap and coexist, forming a complex reflection on the figure of the sovereign, the state of exception (siege), and the *dispositif* of biopolitical power.

The personification of the Plague as a dictator allows for the intersection between a reflection on sovereignty and the disciplining and management of bodies (while also referring to the cult of personality associated with totalitarian leaders). For example, in response to the governor fleeing and transferring power to the Plague, Nada says that the Governor was justified: « Selon son droit, peuple, selon son droit. L'État, c'est lui, et il faut protéger l'État » (318). This clever allusion to Louis XIV's *L'état, c'est moi* takes the logic of sovereign embodiment to its extreme. The Governor is the sovereign and therefore the embodiment of power, so he has to leave to be protected from the physical threat of the plague: *the State must be protected*. Yet in this world, the Plague is also an embodiment of sovereign power, for he bears the power to administer death. Nada responds to the people who exclaim that the Plague is now the State, « Qu'est-ce que ça peut vous faire ? Peste ou gouverneur, c'est toujours l'État » (318). The category of sovereignty is undisturbed by the passage of power from one sovereign (whether he be governor or dictator) to the next.

¹¹ It should come as little surprise that Foucault's analysis of the measures taken in response to the plague echoes Camus's depiction of plague-stricken cities, given that the two writers drew on the same or similar texts (such as Defoe's *Journal of a Plague Year*, as well as other historical and medical accounts of the epidemic). For a recent analysis of the resonances between Foucault and Camus on the plague, see Matthew Sharpe, "The plague and the Panopticon." Sharpe's approach differs from my own in that his larger goal is to mobilize Camus and Foucault in order to defend the concepts of reason, modernity, and Enlightenment rationality from their critics.

When the process of closing the city begins, so begins the process by which the city eventually transforms, not only into the confined space of surveillance and discipline that Foucault describes as the *ville pestiférée*, but into an urban, concentrationary space. Just as the transfer of power from the Governor to the Plague signals not a radical break in the form of power but a *ramification* of sovereign power (as we have seen, the suspension of civil liberties was initiated before the arrival of the dictator), the transition from the plague-stricken city to the totalitarian city is one of degree. The concentrationary regime is shown to be an endpoint or extreme of the trajectory that is initiated by the act of total confinement, undertaken by the totalitarian government. This is also the significance of the choice to incarnate the Plague as a dictator: as opposed to the figure of a contagious virus, which infects but lacks agency, the dictator executes, he administers death, and does so within an elaborate, bureaucratic system. *L'État de siège* is an enactment of the idea that totalitarianism brings the concentration camp into the city, that it domesticates or internalizes the camp.

If *L'État de siège* assigns a “visage trop humain” to a system of oppression, to quote Barthes, it is also at the expense of the model of contamination and biopolitical terror presented in *La Peste*. In the novel, the confluence of multiple legacies of historical violence “is not crystallized in characters but in figures of movement, contact, and contagion” such as rats, bacillus, and plague (Sanyal 69). In *L'État de siège*, the plague that begins as invisible, biological contagion – whose effects on the human body we see, but not its carriers or vectors – is then personified as a character (but a character who still stands for all dictators, or Plague itself). The mobility of contamination is, in the second half of the play, rendered as bureaucratic administration. But if the dialogue between multiple histories and multiple narrative frames (including the Occupation, the Nazi genocide, and colonialism) is enabled, in *La Peste*, by what Sanyal aptly calls its “viral figurality” (69), is that figurality – mobile, complex, and deterritorializing – effaced in *L'État de siège*? We can begin to address this question, and the specificity of the play’s historical and narrative frames, in what follows. As we shall see, the plague that infects the city of Cadiz is not just the dictator, the Plague, but the material, spatial, and biopolitical forms that oppression takes: the very structure of sovereign power. If sovereignty is rooted in the exception, then sovereignty also always contains the potential for the production of the concentration camp.

Indeed, while the play is notable for the ways in which Camus anticipates certain ideas of Foucault, and even Agamben, it is also remarkable in its demonstration of how, as the quarantine and regulations progress, Cadix develops into a distinctly concentrationary regime.¹² As the gates of the city close one by one,

¹² This includes details that, especially to an audience in 1948, would clearly allude to the persecution and genocide of the Jews, such as marking the houses of those infected “d’une étoile noire d’un pied de rayon” (although with the ironic inscription: “Nous sommes tous

the regime of regulation, surveillance and discipline augments incrementally, with new laws declared in between each closure: curfew, forbidding of aid to the afflicted, encouragement of citizens to denounce neighbors, etc. (319).¹³ “L’exode se précipite” as people try to flee the city, heading towards the sea, that “pays sans murailles et sans portes” (319). The chorus expresses the collective desire to escape “ces villes scellées comme des tombeaux et ces faces humaines que la peur a verrouillées” (319), as the closure of the city is reiterated at the level of the citizens’ bodies. The final new law declared before the last door closes mandates that since the contagion is airborne, even speech can be the vehicle for infection, so the remaining citizens must keep a wad of cloth soaked in vinegar in their mouths, « qui les préservera du mal en même temps qu’il les entraînera à la discrétion et au silence » (321). By enacting this parody of censorship as a literal gag in the mouth of each actor, Camus also turns it into a critique of the disciplining of the body that the regime seeks to enforce. The Chorus laments the closure of the city, singing of “Cadix comme une arène noire et rouge où vont s’accomplir les meurtres rituels” (321). Thus the arena or amphitheater, the center of public life and collectivity, is also the very site that is vulnerable to total enclosure, and then becomes the site of execution. The circular architecture of the arena, the very heart of the polis, is what allows for the concentration camp to be mapped onto the space of the city.¹⁴

Now that the chorus has been silenced and gagged, the Plague gives his first speech, addressing the people as their sovereign:

LA PESTE : Moi, je règne, c’est un fait, c’est donc un droit. Mais c’est un droit qu’on ne discute pas : vous devez vous adapter.

Du reste, ne vous y trompez pas, si je règne c’est à ma manière et il serait plus juste de dire que je fonctionne. Vous autres, Espagnols, êtes un peu romanesques et vous me verriez volontiers sous l’aspect d’un roi noir ou d’un somptueux insecte. Il vous faut du pathétique, c’est connu ! Eh bien ! non. Je n’ai pas de sceptre, moi, et j’ai pris l’air d’un sous-officier. C’est la façon que j’ai de vous vexer, car il est bon que vous soyez vexés : vous avez tout à apprendre. Votre roi a les ongles noirs et l’uniforme strict. Il ne trône pas, il

frères” [318]), calling for the ovens to be lit to burn bodies, etc. Also, in terms of biopolitical control, foodstuffs are only available to those who can “prouver leur loyal appartenance à la nouvelle société” (318-19).

¹³ It is worth noting that the set design included an elaborate mechanized system in the theater so that the city gates would slam shut during the performance, making the audience feel progressively more confined. See Walker 1216.

¹⁴ During WWII, public spaces designed to contain large crowds (such as stadiums) were commonly used as gathering points and even sites of internment in the process of deportation. The most notorious example of this in France is the *Vélodrome d’hiver*, a cycling stadium in Paris, where thousands were detained after mass arrests of over 13,000 Jews in July 1942 (now known as the *Rafle du Vél d’hiv*).

siège. Son palais est une caserne, son pavillon de chasse, un tribunal. L'état de siège est proclamé. (322)

In this speech, we see the way the language of the state elides causality, making the right to rule based on the fact of ruling. The act of reigning is what produces that right, just as the state of exception is what allowed the Plague to enter and take power, despite his (belated) declaration that the state of siege is now proclaimed. Additionally, the image of the sovereign as *fonctionnaire* is typical of accounts of totalitarian regimes (aligning closely with Arendt's analysis, although she will publish *Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1951, three years later). The Plague's emphasis on his status as « sous-officier », rejecting the accoutrements (such as the scepter) associated with the king or tyrant also contributes to the idea that the horrors perpetrated under a state of exception are embedded in the « rational » order of law. The distinction between « trôner » and « siéger » articulated by « Il ne trône pas, il siège » initiates the series of parallels that sets this dictator apart from a tyrannical « roi noir » of the past. Rather than a regal « palais » or « pavillon de chasse », he occupies a military barracks and a tribunal. But this expression has another significance in the mouth of a dictator who so loves wordplay: the homophony of « il siège » and the « état de siège ». Indeed, *siéger* can mean either to sit or to reign, a near synonym for *trôner* (which is defined, of course, as “siéger sur un trône”). But in the passage of *siéger* from verb to noun, we reach the other definition of siege as attack (external) or insurrection (internal). In the conflation of the two, we find the basic argument of *L'État de siège*: the act of ruling is a state of siege.

If the first act of the play dramatizes the dictator's assumption of power and sequestration of the city, it is in the second act that we truly see the transformation of the urban space into a concentrationary space. As the curtain rises, gravediggers are filling carts with dead bodies (which is an image easily pulled from medieval accounts of the plague),¹⁵ while on the other side of the stage, guards are forcing the crowd to line up, women and men separated, to be led into a « conciergerie » for inspection, evoking contemporary accounts of arrival at concentration camps (324). The Plague is bellowing orders for the conversion of the city: “Finissez de planter ma tour, la surveillance n'est pas en place. Entourez la ville de haies piquantes. [...] Allumez les fours, ce sont nos feux de joie. Gardes ! placez nos étoiles sur les maisons dont j'ai l'intention de m'occuper. [...] » (324). Here, the system of surveillance and enclosure is systematically developed – surveillance tower, barbed wire, occupation of homes – while hinting at the eventual incineration of bodies (gruesomely proving Nada's theory at the outset that “l'homme est du bois dont on fait les bûchers”).¹⁶

¹⁵ The role of *convoyeur des morts* was played by the famous mime, Marcel Marceau. Although there are no spoken lines and or indications in the stage directions about his performance, the scenes of grave digging and collecting dead bodies seem to have relied largely on stylized movement and physical expressivity.

¹⁶ We can also recognize from Delbo these spatial tropes of the concentrationary.

Perhaps one of the most telling elements of the domestication of the concentration camp is the internalization of the actions of occupation, concentration, and execution, rendered as reflexive verbs. This emerges as the dictator's new favorite slogan: « Concentrez-vous, exécutez-vous, occupez-vous ! » (335). He first expresses his delight upon discovering the dual meaning of *s'exécuter*: “Magnifique! On y trouve tout ! L'image de l'exécution d'abord qui est une image attendrissante et puis l'idée que l'exécuté collabore lui-même à son exécution ce qui est le but et la consolidation de tout bon gouvernement ! » (329-330). The victim rendered his own executioner becomes the mark of good government. With similar musings on concentration (“Je les ai concentrés. Jusqu'ici, ils vivaient dans la dispersion et la frivolité, un peu délayés pour ainsi dire ! Maintenant ils sont plus fermes, ils se concentrent ! ») and occupation (“Silence! Ne restez pas inactives! Faites quelque chose ! Occupez-vous ! »), the Plague concludes, « Ils s'exécutent, ils s'occupent, ils se concentrent. La grammaire est une bonne chose et qui peut servir à tout ! » (330). At the level of grammar, the dictator's subjects internalize the processes of occupation, concentration, and execution, while language is again instrumentalized for the ends of the State.

At approximately the midpoint of the play, Diego stumbles onto the stage and witnesses the new “monuments” the Plague has erected (indicated in *didascalie*): “On aperçoit en découpeure des cabanes et des barbelés, des miradors et quelques autres monuments hostiles » (333). Addressing the Chorus, Diego exclaims : “Où est l'Espagne? Où est Cadix ? Ce décor n'est d'aucun pays ! Nous sommes dans un autre monde où l'homme ne peut pas vivre » (333). At this point, the transformation of the city into a concentration camp is complete. While this transformation may seem to undo the exceptionality of the camp, here it maintains the radical otherness that is a trope of many testimonial descriptions of the camp (including, for example, Charlotte Delbo's evocation of « un endroit d'avant la géographie »).¹⁷ This « other world » encountered by Diego is marked, like the camp of Holocaust testimonies, by its inhospitality, making it antithetical to human life, but also by the vanishing of Cadix and Spain, as though eradicated by the arrival of the concentrationary regime.

Naming the Plague a “bourreau,” Diego calls upon the people of Cadix to resist, but they respond that they cannot, for “nous sommes devenus sages. Nous sommes administrés. Mais dans le silence des bureaux, nous écoutons un long cri contenu qui est celui des coeurs séparés [...]” (334).¹⁸ Having internalized the disciplining administration of the Plague, the people are incapable of resistance, but are not deaf to the painful cry of suffering. However, in *L'Etat de siège* (as is the case in *L'Homme révolté*), it is clear that revolt must begin with the individual, who leads others with his act of refusal. Near the end of the second act, Diego declares his

¹⁷ The designation of “planet Auschwitz” is another frequent instance of this trope, notably in the dramatic testimony of Yehiel De-Nur (Ka Tzetnik) at the Eichmann trial.

¹⁸ The trope of the cry will recur, not only in *L'Etat de siège*, but in other works by Camus that are haunted by historical trauma – notably, *La Chute* (1957).

refusal to the Secretary (“Je vous refuse de tout mon être!”), and identifies the methods that have subdued the populace : « J’ai bien compris votre système. Vous leur avez donné la douleur de la faim et des séparations pour les distraire de leur révolte » (347). But man, as embodied by Diego, has « une force que vous ne réduirez pas, une folie claire, mêlée de peur et de courage, ignorante et victorieuse à tout jamais » (347). The Chorus begins to tear off their gags, and Diego realizes that the mark on his body (which identified him as infected) is beginning to fade. (As typical in this play, the Plague’s forms of discipline and control always also manifest at the level of the body.) Finally, the Secretary admits the “malfaçon” in the machine: “il a toujours suffi qu’un homme surmonte sa peur et se révolte pour que leur machine commence à grincer” (348).¹⁹

If the play’s second act is in large part dedicated to a satirical depiction of the labyrinthine, bureaucratic forms of biopolitical control developed by the dictator, the third act revolves around Diego’s *prise de conscience*, as he discovers that the path to revolt must begin with overcoming fear. He calls upon the people to take off their gags and cry out with him, “Ô sainte révolte, refus vivant, honneur du peuple, donne à ces bâillonnés la force de ton cri!” (349), assimilating the cry of the oppressed into the cry of revolt. After extended dialogue with the Plague, Nada, and the Secretary, Diego’s rebellion saves the city, but he dies as a martyr. (In the words of the Plague : « Tu vois, il suffit d’un insensé comme toi . . . L’insensé meurt, évidemment » [360]). Diego dies to save both the city and his beloved Victoria, and we learn that pride and courage are the best weapons.²⁰ Despite this resolution, the end of the play is not as optimistic as it may seem, as the declarations of liberty occur against the backdrop of the former government’s return.

Once the Plague has acknowledged his expulsion from the city due to Diego’s willingness to sacrifice himself, the former government can be heard in the distance, returning to Cadix. The Plague mocks the people, foretelling no exit from the cycle of oppressive masters:

Voici vos anciens maîtres que vous retrouverez aveugles aux plaies des autres, ivres d’immobilité et d’oubli. Et vous vous fatiguerez de voir la bêtise triompher sans combat. [...] Un jour viendra peut-être où tout sacrifice vous paraîtra vain, où le cri interminable de vos sales révoltes se sera tu enfin. Ce jour-là, je régnerai vraiment dans le silence définitif de la servitude [. . .]. (363)

The reestablishment of the exiled government signals the return of the immobility and rejection of history that characterized the official response to the comet at the

¹⁹ The model of revolt presented in the play has been read as a direct transposition of Camus’s theorization of revolt in *L’Homme révolté*. For this approach, see Jean-Yves Guérin, “La représentation de l’état totalitaire dans *L’État de siège*,” and Monica Garoiu, “Le totalitarisme dans *L’Homme révolté* et *L’État de siège*. »

²⁰ Jason Herbeck observes that Diego is the first Camusian protagonist who must choose between life and death, thus raising the issue of sacrifice. See Herbeck 129.

beginning of the play. Nada (as cynical nihilist) rejoices in their return, reiterating the characterization of the old regime as not only blind but deaf to the suffering of others : « Au lieu de fermer la bouche de ceux qui crient leur malheur, ils ferment leurs propres oreilles. Nous étions muets, nous allons devenir sourds » (365). This deafness bodes poorly for the cries of suffering and revolt that Diego is marshaling among the people, suggesting that the sound of those cries alone will not suffice to attain the dream of freedom represented by borderless seas. The opening of the city doors means the return of the former government, but also the possibility of attaining the sea, and thus of actual liberation.

Nada also greets the returning rulers, « ceux d'avant, ceux de toujours, » with what he describes as a comforting new beginning and return to tradition: « on va pouvoir recommencer. À zéro, naturellement » (364-65). A fanfare announces the beginning of official ceremonies (mimed in the background onstage), and Nada declares, « Attention, ceux qui écrivent l'histoire reviennent. On va s'occuper des héros. [. . .] Les festins de la haine sont toujours ouverts, la terre épuisée se couvre du bois mort des potences, le sang de ceux que vous appelez les justes illumine encore les murs du monde, et que font-ils : ils se décorent ! » (365). The writing of history by the victors and the commemoration of heroism overlay the devastating landscape evoked here : a world littered with wooden gallows; walls illuminated by the blood of the just. Nada makes gruesomely explicit the irony of the official recuperation of the past.²¹ The « feasts of hatred » described by Nada go a step beyond the celebrations of the end of *La Peste*, where there is a similar effacement and recodification of the recent memory of resistance.

In the novel, firecrackers are set off to celebrate the end of the epidemic as the newspaper reports that a “monument aux morts de la peste” will be constructed. Yet this memorialization and fanfare is treated ironically by “le vieux,” who jokes wryly about how the officials will doubtless deliver speeches about “Nos morts . . .”, et ils iront casser la croûte” (OC II, 247). The pall of “oubli” is cast over the city in celebration, and Rieux decides to write this narrative, “pour ne pas être de ceux qui se taisent, pour témoigner en faveur de ces pestiférés, pour laisser du moins un souvenir de l'injustice et de la violence qui leur avaient été faites [...]” (248). *La Peste*, then, ends with a resolution to bear witness through narrative (hence the testimonial impulse that Felman rightly identifies at the heart of the novel). These are not its final words, however – like *L'Etat de siège* (but perhaps less vociferously), *La Peste* also leaves us with the specter of the plague's potential return:

Car [Rieux] savait ce que cette foule en joie ignorait, et qu'on peut lire dans les livres, que le bacille de la peste ne meurt ni ne disparaît jamais, qu'il peut rester des dizaines d'années endormi [. . .], et que, peut-être, le jour viendrait où,

²¹ The cynicism of this return (although Camus does not give the old government the privilege of addressing the audience) also points rather obviously to a critique of postwar government in France.

pour le malheur et l'enseignement des hommes, la peste réveillerait ses rats et les enverrait mourir dans une cité heureuse. (248)

The figure of the dormant bacillus which may one day awaken calls for our ongoing vigilance. However, the Plague in *L'Etat de siège* openly declares that future resistance will be in vain. Whereas the novel makes a case for memory and testimony as the way to prevent another epidemic, the end of the play does not focus on bearing witness – indeed, the play even lacks a singular character who would serve as the witness or chronicler of the past struggle, especially after Diego's death – but highlights instead collective action and a collective voice.

In response to Nada's claim at the end of the play that the endurance of the police across changes in regime represents the existence of justice (« les gouvernements passent, la police reste. Il y a donc une justice »), the Chorus responds, “Non, il n'y a pas de justice, mais il y a des limites. Et ceux-là qui prétendent ne rien régler, comme les autres qui entendaient donner une règle à tout, dépassent également les limites » (365).²² Sovereigns and governments may come and go, but for Nada, the police are the true embodiment of the forms of control, surveillance, and discipline that undergird society. The rejection of this stance by the Chorus, and thus the rejection of the displacement of governmentality onto the police force, illustrates Camus's vision for a collective life of the people outside those structures entirely – a liberatory potential represented by the opening of the city, allowing « le vent et le sel » to come « récurer cette ville » (365). Nada, the madman-turned-collaborator, throws himself into the ocean, and his « bouche menteuse s'emplit de sel ».

It is thus important to note that in identifying the way in which sovereignty (embodied by the sovereign as an individual ruler) is rooted in its own exceptionality, Camus does not simply call for a better government or better laws to replace the Plague. “Il n'y a pas de justice,” and the play does not call for a democratically elected

²² The Chorus's declaration of “limits” that must moderate both the excess of rules and the lack of rules is sometimes misread as Camus's equation of fascism and anarchism, the extreme right and extreme left. (Indeed, *L'Etat de siège*, like *L'Homme révolté*, is often interpreted as arguing that communism and fascism are completely equivalent, a view which fails to understand the nuances of the play's position on governance.) I suggest that this statement needs to be understood in the context of the perceived impasse during the Cold War between communism and liberalism, as embodied by the superpowers of the Soviet Union and the United States (thus, “ne rien régler” would refer not to anarchism, but free market capitalism). See also Camus's article in *Combat* (15 november 1945) which begins: “La France est en état de siège. Elle est en état de siège économique” (OC II, 637). Camus exhorts the country to avoid defeat under this *economic* state of siege and to refuse to serve “tel bloc contre tel autre,” but rather to act as an independant nation (638). On Camus's refusal of dualistic thinking and his attempt to navigate a “third way” to a radical politics as an alternative to Soviet-style communism and American-style liberalism, see Jeffrey Isaac, *Arendt, Camus, and Modern Rebellion*, especially chapter 6, “Swimming Against the Tide.”

president any more than it calls for another dictator. The cry of the people in its very collectivity is what remains.²³ The people's liberation is figured by their renewed contact with the sea, as the final lines of the play express:

Regardez, la mer furieuse a la couleur des anémones. Elle nous venge. Sa colère est la nôtre. Elle crie le ralliement de tous les hommes de la mer, la réunion des solitaires. Ô vague, ô mer, patrie des insurgés, voici ton peuple qui ne cédera jamais. La grande lame de fond, nourrie dans l'amertume des eaux, emportera vos cités horribles. (365)

The horrible cities built for oppression are washed away by the furious and liberating waters of the sea, that « patrie des insurgés, » homeland of the insurgents, which unites all the solitary rebels. The liberated people belong to the sea (« ton peuple »), not to the city – not to the concentration camp that the city has become. Or, perhaps « cité horrible » is just another term for camp; the camp itself is a wretched version of the city. These final words are in telling contrast to those of *La Peste*: « une cité heureuse » is the final image of the novel, the placid but forgetful city of tomorrow in which the deadly plague may one day reawaken. But in *L'Etat de siège*, it is not the specter of oblivion that threatens the future so much as that of *deafness* to the cries of suffering in these « cités horribles. » The void in power seems to be filled, but the final lines of the play leave open the ongoing revolt, and encourage the Plague's and Nada's interpretation of events to be defied. We do not know what will be left when the salty blade of the sea carries away the horrible cities – these cities that have become camps – but we know that it is borne by the joining of men, the union of the solitary.

Georges Bataille's intellectual engagement with Camus, which we have already glimpsed with his 1947 essay on *La Peste*, is preoccupied with the issues of law, State power, and rebellion. In a brilliant review of *L'Etat de siège* (that is perhaps as overlooked as the play itself), Bataille declares that « *L'Etat de siège* est une oeuvre à mon sens plus riche et plus digne d'attention que *La Peste* ». ²⁴ While the novel may be better executed, he writes, the play exceeds it in « l'ampleur de l'intention » (« Le bonheur, le malheur et la morale d'Albert Camus » 186). While Bataille found that the « sainteté » of the vain yet noble struggle against death in *La Peste* reduced it to bloodless cliché (« La Morale du malheur » 13), he sees the play as a more ambitious

²³ Michel Autrand has argued that the representation of collectivity – embodied onstage as the “personnage collectif” of *la Ville* – was among Camus's primary goals in staging the play. In contrast to my approach, however, Autrand finds this will to collective representation to be paradoxical in light of Camus's avowed intent to critique totalitarianism (69).

²⁴ Bataille's essay on *L'État de siège*, “Le bonheur, le malheur et la morale d'Albert Camus,” was published in 1949, two years after “La morale du malheur,” his critical review of *La Peste* (discussed previously). The titles of the two essays demonstrate the continuity in Bataille's philosophical reflections on Camus.

and more significant intervention in the issues of *bonheur*, *malheur*, and *révolte*. Unlike the complacent morality that Bataille finds in *La Peste*'s failure to confront evil with true rebellion, allowing it to turn into the impotent struggle against death, *L'Etat de siège* stages « le problème du bonheur et de la morale » by means of an extremely precise representation of the various forces that structure society (« les mouvements qui parcourent ou construisent la société » [187]). In other words, the catastrophe staged in *L'Etat de siège* (and which lost its social and historical contours in *La Peste*, according to Bataille's reading) is not a *disruption* of the social fabric of everyday life – rather, it *reveals* the nature of that social fabric by staging the tensions that traverse and make up society. The play is not about a disaster that befalls a community or an exceptional event (that arrives, changes the world, and departs), but about how exceptionality is built into law and governmentality.

Indeed, the play's contradictory, unresolvable conclusion reveals the complexity of Camus's engagement with the concepts of sovereignty and revolt. Many readers of *L'Etat de siège* focus on the protagonist's *prise de conscience* and the conjunction between individual revolt and collective liberation. However, Bataille dwells on the two complicating plot points that problematize the play's apparently triumphant resolution (in which the plague is forced out of the city). The first is the fact that the passage from individual to collective revolt necessitates Diego's death, and the second is the disconcerting fact that, as we have seen, « l'ordre établi », the previously exiled government, returns the moment the Plague leaves the city (Bataille 186). The ending offers only a partial victory, as the Plague threatens to return.²⁵ Indeed, the issue of governmentality is central to the « morale » of the play, its philosophical and political meaning.

Bataille suggests that the play's internal contradictions are symptomatic of Camus's own discomfort with the ills of the world that he so accurately depicts. This world – our world – is one that thrives on exploitation, in which one's happiness is paid for by the misery of others: in other words, « la loi d'un monde du travail » (187). In this society of labor and profit, happiness is not free, and *bonheur* must be paid for by *malheur* – the labor of others. Furthermore, the economic regulation of *bonheur* through *malheur* is also socio-political regulation, and the threat of *malheur* (misfortune, pain, misery, oppression) sustains the government's authority. It is no surprise, then, that « en temps de guerre il devient facile de gouverner : les régimes policiers ne peuvent se passer de l'état d'alarme – de menace de guerre – et il est clair que le malheur externe [...] aide à maintenir le malheur interne, que les bourreaux dispensent » (187). Hence, Bataille's philosophical interpretation of the forces of *bonheur* and *malheur* finds its material articulation in the state of emergency that is the play's premise.

²⁵ The threat of return that haunts the end of *La Peste* does not pose the same (political) problem for Bataille because he reads the plague in the novel as a figuration of death and mortality.

However, *malheur* is not just the external form by which power is exerted over the governed. It is also internalized : « le malheur pénètre intimement tous les hommes en l'espèce de la morale. La morale a les mêmes ressorts que l'État et la police, c'est l'État et la police intimes agissant atrocement en chacun de nous » (187). Morality is the internalization of state power – the 'intimate police' that inhabits individual subjects. Yet Bataille, like Camus, does not seem prepared to entirely dismiss any and all forms of morality as regulating human communities. The blind pursuit of *passion* (a term that for Bataille is part of the same semantic field as *bonheur*, along with *désir* and *caprice*) results in individuals obeying their passion with disregard for others. This logic gives rise to the need for governments and morals – « A tout le moins les gouvernements et les lois morales doivent limiter les désordres des passions » (187). Without laws to limit the caprice of human passion, there can be no civilized humanity (187-88).

Camus's work, of course, is governed by a distinct sense of morality (one of the most enduring images of the author is that of a moralist). But, as Bataille reminds us, his is a « morale de la révolte », or « morale rebelle » : a counter-morality, opposed to « l'ordre établi, au juge, à la punition ». In distinction to « la morale classique », which condemns violation of the law, the morality of revolt condemns « ceux qui étouffent l'humanité dans la loi » (Bataille 188). The problem posed by this rebellion is that it reaches a critical point where it becomes vulnerable to « un renversement parfait » : a reversal into condemnation and then punishment, thus returning to the position of hegemonic authority (188). In other words, the danger is that if the *morale rebelle* defeats the rule of moral law which it seeks to undermine, it becomes law itself. This « triste retour » is what is at stake for Bataille in the play's ending. Instead of staging such a reversal in *L'Etat de siege*, Camus's liberation remains incomplete due to the cynical return of the *status quo*. For Bataille, this ending suggests that Camus is uncomfortable with taking his morality of revolt to its logical conclusion, and we end up with a play in which the rebel must die and the old government comes back anyway: « La morale de Camus est une morale de la révolte, mais à renverser les fondements, il devient malaisé de s'appuyer » (188).

In the postwar period, revolutionary movements were being contentiously re-evaluated, particularly in light of the Soviet Union's repressive policies in Eastern Europe. To some thinkers, such as Camus, the USSR was emblematic of this potential for a liberatory movement to undergo a reversal and become authoritarian once it embodied the full power of the State. In *L'Homme révolté*, Camus argues that absolutes are always subject to such reversals:

La liberté absolue raille la justice. La justice absolue nie la liberté. Pour être fécondes, les deux notions doivent trouver, l'une dans l'autre, leur limite [. . .] Le même raisonnement s'applique à la violence. La non-violence absolue fonde négativement la servitude et ses violences; la violence systématique

détruit positivement la communauté vivante et l'être que nous en recevons. Pour être fécondes, ces deux notions doivent trouver leurs limites. [. . .] Toute crise historique, par exemple, s'achève par des institutions. (OC III, 311)

If revolt, for Camus, must « respecter la limite » (OC III 79), which we also see articulated by the Chorus at the end of the play (« il n'y a pas de justice, mais il y a des limites »),²⁶ it is important that collective memory is necessary to maintaining this limit: « La pensée révoltée ne peut se passer de mémoire : elle est une tension perpétuelle » - but if it is forgotten, we fall into tyranny or servitude (OC III, 79). Of course, the *ordre établi* wants to cultivate this forgetting – from the *oubli* that characterizes the regime at the beginning of the play, to the new beginning, “from zero,” that arises at the end.

This cyclical version of history, in which the traditional government always succeeds itself in the guise of a new beginning (and feeds on forgetfulness), is not only a critique of the rhetoric around postwar communism. In Camus's analysis, the countries who see themselves as freed of the extremes of the past are perhaps most vulnerable to the return of oppressive State power. Indeed, when *L'Etat de siège* was staged, many assumed that war was over and democracy had triumphed in the West. What seemed impossible to many critics at the time was the recurrence of fascism or totalitarianism (a concentrationary regime) in *Western* Europe. However, rather than a failed critique of totalitarianisms taking hold 'elsewhere' (as certain critics of the time would have it, which I will discuss below), the satire of *L'État de siège* refuses to allow the political critique to reside elsewhere, just as bringing the concentration camp into the city refuses to allow the concentrationary regime to be located exclusively 'elsewhere.'²⁷

L'Etat de siège stages the unsettling recurrence of the totalitarian plague in a time and place that most spectators thought unlikely in 1948: Western Europe. The significance of the play's Spanish setting has been addressed primarily in two ways: the reason Camus explicitly offers (the Franco dictatorship), and his sentimental

²⁶ A similar statement is made by Dora in *Les Justes* (1949), Camus's dramatization of the political and ethical conflicts among Russian revolutionaries: “Même dans la destruction, il y a un ordre, il y a des limites” (OC III, 22).

²⁷ Recall that for Shoshana Felman, the plague is able to represent the Holocaust due to its historical invisibility, its exceeding of established frames of reference; the novel is testimony to the impossibility of bearing witness. However, Felman relies on the idea that the plague in the novel is “an event without a referent” because the doctors state that the plague has “vanished from the Western world” and is therefore impossible in modern-day Oran (101-4). But here, the referent is not impossibility *as such* – the referent is the bubonic plague. What is seemingly impossible, and therefore outside frames of reference, is its *recurrence*. The plague is impossible because it is an event (referent) within the wrong historical and geographic frame.

associations with Spain as his maternal *patrie*.²⁸ While neither of these explanations are false, they fail to account for the complexity of meaning produced by the play's setting in time and space.²⁹ Still, the play's context of Spain in the era of Franco and the Cold War is the one that Camus foregrounded in his comments at the time (not unlike his affirmation of *La Peste* as an allegory of Occupation, without disallowing other meanings). The Spanish setting of *L'État de siège* became a point of contention regarding the representation of totalitarianism, which Camus addressed publicly. In November 1948, he penned a response to one of the play's critics, Gabriel Marcel, who criticized Camus for neglecting to choose one of the satellite countries of the Soviet Union as the play's location.³⁰ In the postwar era, the USSR was widely perceived as the newest and most significant site of the concentrationary regime, and the rumors of purges and the gulags became a touchstone in the quarrel over communism. In « Pourquoi l'Espagne ? » Camus vigorously defends his decision to denounce totalitarianism through Spain by reminding readers of the ongoing existence of the Franco dictatorship, as well as of the burden of guilt borne by France – not only for the defeat of the Spanish Republic, but even more so, for the surrender of exiled Republicans to the Nazis and their subsequent execution (“C’était Vichy, bien sûr, ce n’était pas nous” [OC II, 485], he remarks with caustic irony). Accusing Marcel and other oblivious Frenchmen of having “perdu la mémoire” (485), he calls upon us to “maintenir le souvenir d’une Espagne qui a été libre et que nous avons trahie” (486). As Richard J. Golsan observes, Camus refuses the historical closure of the end of the war. With Franco’s regime intact, “Little if anything separates this world from the prewar world of the fascist dictators” (412).

However, Camus does not simply insert the historical context of the Franco dictatorship as justification for the play's content. *L'État de siège* was intended to “attaquer de front un type de société politique qui s’est organisé, ou s’organise, à droite et à gauche, sur le mode totalitaire” (483-4). The play condemns “toutes les sociétés totalitaires,” wherever they may be (487) – the totalitarian *system* is the true object of the play (just as, in 1955, he will write to Roland Barthes that terror *in all its forms* was the object of *La Peste*). However, the text of “Pourquoi l’Espagne?” also gives rise to a slippage from the totalitarian state to the State itself as the basis of the

²⁸ For the most comprehensive outline of the figure of Spain in Camus’s thought – from the proximity between Spanish and Algerian identity, to his anti-franquist engagement, to his admiration of Spanish literature and theater – see Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi, “Camus et l’Espagne.”

²⁹ These explanations also do not account for the resonances between *L'État de siège* and Camus’s only other work – a play – to take place in Spain: *Revolte dans Les Asturies* (1936). Both plays represent an uprising in Spain (although the earlier play is not an allegory, but a militant depiction of a repressed workers revolt).

³⁰ Gabriel Marcel, in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 11 novembre 1948. Camus’s response appeared in *Combat* on 25 November 1948.

allegory: from “les terreurs de l’État totalitaire, qu’il soit russe, allemand ou espagnol,” we move to Camus’s identification of the deep reason for the ills at the base of society, “le mal de l’époque”: in no uncertain terms, he states, “Il s’appelle l’État, policier ou bureaucratique” (484). Here, as in *L’Etat de siège*, State power – that is, sovereignty – is at the root of the allegory.

Camus uses a similar logic to express the commonality among concentration camps – what Rousset called the *univers concentrationnaire* – that also links various iterations of the concentrationary regime to the atrocities committed during the Spanish Civil War. He insists that the memory of these events is not mutually exclusive: having expressed his condemnation of the Soviet camps, he writes, “ce n’est pas cela qui me fera oublier Dachau, Buchenwald, et l’agonie sans nom de millions d’hommes, ni l’affreuse répression qui a décimée la République espagnole” (484). In other texts of this period, Camus also invokes the memory of the Spanish Civil War in relation to the concentration-camp system in a way that argues more pointedly for their historical and geographic connectivity. In the preface to *L’Espagne libre*, a collection of essays commissioned in 1946 by Georges Bataille to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, Camus repeatedly uses the metaphor of an open wound to describe the impact of the Spanish Republic’s demise on his generation. This is a bodily image for the lack of closure of the violent events that preceded the Second World War – an image that, by the time of writing “Pourquoi l’Espagne” two years later, had decayed into the “gangrène” of forgetting (485).

Lamenting the apathy of the Western governments in allowing Franco to remain in power in this “monde sans mémoire” (669), Camus evokes the loss of the great poet Antonio Machado, who fled to France after the fall of the Republic, only to perish near Collioure “au sortir d’un camp de concentration (car nous avons aussi nos camps)” (667).³¹ By constructing the poet Machado as victim of a French concentration camp, Camus deliberately extends the geography of the concentrationary regime to French soil – an unusual gesture in 1946 France, where it would take at least until the late 1960s, by most accounts, to begin the process of working through the guilt of the Vichy years. Furthermore, the figure that Camus holds up as his representative victim of the French concentration camp is not only a poet but an exile, a refugee.³²

³¹ Machado is also referenced in “Pourquoi l’Espagne”: “Nous, nous avons placé seulement en 1938, le poète Antonio Machado dans un camp de concentration, d’où il ne sortit que pour mourir” (485).

³² While Camus claims that Machado died outside of a French concentration camp, it is unclear if this is historically accurate. Some accounts of the poet’s death indicate that he may have died of exhaustion soon after crossing border into France. In any case, it is true that the French used concentration camps for Spanish refugees – camps that, in France, were unprecedented in size and density. In 1939, Spaniards crossing the Pyrenees were stopped by

In a 1948 article (the same year as *L'Etat de siège*),³³ Camus again evokes Spain in the course of a denunciation of the ongoing existence of concentration camps, and calls upon other socialists and left-thinkers to do the same.³⁴ Here, Camus draws attention to the internment of a group of Spanish Republicans in the Soviet concentration camp at Karaganda (468). These prisoners (who, sadly, were not liberated until 1956) could be described as vestiges of the Spanish civil war who had migrated through concentrationary networks, arriving finally in the gulag. Thus, the choice to situate the play in Spain instead of the Soviet Union is not simply a case of the author shifting our focus from East to West, from one to another location deserving our attention. Rather, the shift in location actually produces a new frame for the allegory, one that is capable of multiplying meanings and references (in other words, a Camusian allegory *par excellence*). The continued existence of a dictatorship in Spain, and in particular the Spanish refugee as a migratory figure who becomes ensnared in the concentration-camp system, seem to have opened up Camus's thinking about the concentrationary regime as a matrix of oppressive political power that is articulated across different times and spaces. These are the historical frames in the mid-1940s under which Camus produced the image of the concentration camp embedded in the life of the city in *L'Etat de siège*.

While *La Peste*'s location in the quarantined city of Oran allows for the simultaneous allegorical evocation of the Occupation, Nazi genocide, and colonialism, the location of *L'Etat de siège* in Cadiz produces a different set of historical intersections, beyond the model of dictatorship.³⁵ One of the oldest cities in Western Europe, Cadiz is notable for its proximity to North Africa, on the southwestern coast of Andalusia, the southern-most region of Spain that has long signified, in the French imagination, the liminality between Europe and Africa. Spain's Moorish heritage allows it to be included in the imaginative geography of the Orient (Cadiz itself was under Moorish rule 711-1262), and this period of this city's

French authorities, underwent triage, and placed in camps or *centres d'accueil*, including at Collioure, the town where Machado died. Refugees considered dangerous or "undesirable" (such as anarchists) were placed in "special" camps (Salgas-Candoret 315). See Salgas-Candoret for a detailed account of the treatment of Spanish refugees in southwestern France. For a broader, authoritative account of practices of internment in France during this period, see Denis Peschanski, *La France des camps*.

³³ "Deuxième réponse à Emmanuel d'Astier de La Vigerie," in *La Gauche*, October 1948.

³⁴ "Il n'y a pas de raison au monde, historique ou non, progressive ou réactionnaire, qui puisse me faire accepter le fait concentrationnaire. J'ai simplement proposé que les socialistes refusent d'avance et en toutes occasions, le camp de concentration comme moyen de gouvernement" (467).

³⁵ To my knowledge, the specificity of Cadiz as the setting of the play has not been explored in previous scholarship.

history seems to be gestured to by the feudal setting of the play.³⁶ Cadiz also plays an important role in the history of Spain's consolidation as a modern nation-state. The Spanish Constitution of 1812, which resulted from the Spanish War of Independence to expel the invading Napoleonic forces, is alternately known as the *Constitución de Cádiz*. An important naval base, the coastal city of Cadiz was under siege by the French in 1810-12. Thus, the choice of Cadiz reveals an underlying history of French imperialism and invasion, as well as a more distant history of Moorish rule, creating allegorical connections that precede the framework of twentieth-century totalitarianism.

In terms of the built environment, the status of Cadiz as a fortified city is also significant, highlighted at the outset of the play when the alert siren sounds and the shadow outline of "les murs d'une ville fortifiée espagnole" are cast by the light of the comet (295). In *Speed and Politics*, Paul Virilio argues that in their conflation of military power and civilian life, fortified towns make visible "the occult permanence of the state of siege" (38). The militarization of the city walls physically manifests the state of siege, as the fortifications both materialize State power and allow for combat (internal or external) to be prolonged indefinitely (Virilio 35). The impermeability represented by the city walls attempts to counteract the potential for invasion, or in the case of disease, infection and contamination. The architectural fortifications of the city thus reinsert us in the context of the plague as virus. The necessity of the plague's containment, as we have seen via Foucault, is the birth of the conception of the state as an immunitary organism – and thus of biopolitical power.

As Susan Sontag observes, since the earliest accounts, plagues have always been associated with foreignness. The epidemic's origin and route is speculated about as it accompanies the flow of people and goods over the globe – thus its foreignness (intrusion) is also linked to circulation (Sontag 252). Here, the external mobility of the plague finds its conjunction with expressions of State power. For Virilio, the State's political power is most accurately and materially expressed in the police's function as "highway surveillance" – the surveillance and control of movement through space; traffic of both people and goods (39). In *L'État de siège*, as we have seen, the city walls provide for the internal containment of the populace; siege and quarantine become one. Indeed, as Foucault has shown, « La ville pestiférée, » with its systems of surveillance, « quadrillage spatial, » etc, is « l'utopie de la cité parfaitement gouvernée »

³⁶ For example, in his original preface to *Les Orientales* (1829), a sort of Orientalist manifesto, Victor Hugo writes, "l'Espagne c'est encore l'Orient; l'Espagne est à demi africaine" (580). It should be noted that this framing of Spain as a liminal cultural and (and thus ethnic/racial) space is not limited to 19th-century Romantics. In the essay that directly follows Camus's preface in *L'Espagne libre* (1946), the hispanicist Jean Camp asks, "est-elle la dernière avancée de l'Europe ou bien, selon un mot fameux, l'Afrique commence-t-elle aux Pyrénées?" ("Le Passé et l'essence de l'Espagne," 13).

(200). The perfectly governed city is not only a quarantined and disciplined city, but also a city under permanent state of siege.

The reflection on emergency, siege, and exception instilled in *L'Etat de siège* also implicates the complex status of the colony as an integral, and thus internalized part of the nation that nonetheless stands geographically outside it.³⁷ In particular, the colony's status as exception comes to the political foreground during the escalating wars of decolonization in the 1950s. As Fabian Klose demonstrates, this decade saw not only the "international codification of universal rights," but the exploitation of emergency laws by colonial powers such as France and Great Britain in order to implement unrestricted tactics for violent oppression (238). At the same time, this period was marked by the first international and humanitarian efforts to ensure that concentration camps would remain a thing of the past, such as the *Commission internationale contre le régime concentrationnaire*. Founded by David Rousset in 1950, the CIRC investigated the conditions of internment camps in Europe and North Africa in order to determine whether the concentrationary regime was being reproduced. However, as Emma Kuby shows, the Commission relied rigidly on a definition that was rooted in the Nazi concentration-camp system and the experience of its members as political prisoners (Kuby 357). The CIRC's investigation of French practices of internment in Algeria in 1957 finds that, despite the disturbing presence of barbed wire and watch towers, the camps in Algeria were not *concentration* camps, because concentration camps are, of course, "the product of 'totalitarian' regimes, not democracies" (Kuby 361). Instead, the Commission found that France was innocent of maintaining a concentrationary regime, precisely because France was in a *state of emergency* due to the "barbaric acts of terrorism" on the part of the Algerian rebels.³⁸ According to this version of "top-down" logic, the nature of the political system in place determines whether a camp is a concentration camp, as opposed to the structure of the space itself, the form of containment or violence it enacts.

The colonial "emergency" was in fact commonplace in what is now remembered as the twilight years of the French Empire. In the two years after the Liberation and defeat of Nazi Germany, the state of siege was declared in multiple French colonies: Algeria in 1945 (following the massacres at Sétif and Guelma); Vietnam in 1946 (marking the beginning of the *Guerre d'Indochine*); and Madagascar in 1947 (*mouvement indépendantiste*). France seemed to be losing control of its colonial

³⁷ In Schmitt's conceptualization, the sovereign is both part of the people (within the state), yet has the power to call for exception (outside).

³⁸ Kuby cites (in English translation) the "Conclusions de la délégation d'enquête en Algérie," published July 27, 1957 in *Le Monde*: "In an extraordinary situation, and in the fire of an armed rebellion that often is accompanied by barbaric acts of terrorism . . . the measures taken by the authority of the civil or military police [are] not always in conformity with the principles of respect for the rights of man which the French Government and all democratic nations claim to follow."

territories in the aftermath of World War II. Camus refers to the violence of colonial oppression in an article published in 1947 (the year of *La Peste*), “La Contagion.”³⁹ Connecting everyday racism to systemic racism and violence (such as torture), Camus suggests that the French are being “contaminated” on both the institutional and interpersonal levels with racist thought and racialized violence, specifically by deploying the kinds of tactics in Algeria that are in the same lineage as Nazi tactics for oppression. The figure of contagion that characterizes Camus’s major works in these years (*La Peste*, *L’Etat de siège*) is precisely what provides his allegories with the force to implicate postwar France – indeed, modern democracy itself – in an ongoing reflection on the exceptionality inherent in State power, which causes the specter of the concentrationary to haunt our cities.

The state of siege now has a renewed relevance in contemporary France, as the *métropole* has again become the target of deadly terrorist attacks. As Mayanthi Fernando and Catherine Raissiguier write about the attacks that took 130 lives in November 2015,

the French state responded by extending its powers of surveillance, detention, and deportation via constitutional reforms (including the possibility, abandoned for now, of stripping French nationality from dual citizens convicted of terrorism), parliamentary measures, and an extension of the state of emergency established after the November attacks. (126)

It is significant that when President Hollande declared a state of emergency the day after the November attacks, it was « only the second time that a state of emergency has been applied to the entire country (the first was after the failed OAS coup against Charles de Gaulle in April 1961) » (140).⁴⁰ The attack in Nice on Bastille Day 2016 sparked public debate about whether the state of siege should replace the (extended) state of emergency.⁴¹ The reluctance to declare the state of siege today may be rooted

³⁹ One of four short articles grouped together as “Deux ans après” in *Actuelles I*. These articles reflect on the political and memorial legacy of the two years since the defeat of Nazi Germany.

⁴⁰ See also Didier Fassin, “Short Cuts,” *London Review of Books* 38.5 (3 March 2016), at <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v38/n05/didier-fassin/short-cuts>

⁴¹ Frédéric Lefebvre (a deputy of the right-wing party *Les Républicains*) called for activation of the *état de siège* rather than prolongation of the state of emergency, leading to a polemic debate (which took place largely on Twitter) about the legal and human-rights implications for such a transition. Lefebvre’s call for the state of siege went hand-in-hand with a call for military action. See <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/decryptages/2016/07/19/25003-20160719ARTFIG00318-etat-d-urgence-etat-de-siege-etat-de-guerre-quelle-difference.php>

in the fact that, unlike emergency, siege presumes a specific enemy. France is today faced with the question of whether that ‘enemy’ is internal or external.⁴²

The question of integration is closely related to the legal function of exceptionality. In *State of Exception*, Agamben defines modern totalitarianism as “the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system” (2). Those who cannot be integrated, or who resist integration, into the nation must be expelled from within it, or kept at bay with borders (whether they be fortified city walls or barbed wire fences with surveillance towers and military patrols).⁴³ Both of these spatial forms of exclusion are staged in *L’Etat de siège*. As Camus’s various writings on Spain suggest, the issues of freedom of movement and the circulation of bodies on a global or transnational scale are also at stake in the problematic posed by the play.⁴⁴ Just as Camus found that the Spanish Civil War was retrospectively the initiation of the Second World War, the plight of Spanish exiles in 1938-9 was part of the massive refugee crisis that extended through the 1940s – a refugee crisis whose scale remained unmatched until the 21st century.⁴⁵ Across historical periods, States have managed, limited, and denied the circulation of refugees by means of camps. The reflection on power, surveillance, and enclosure that begins with *La Peste* and takes on a more distinct image of the camp form in *L’Etat de siège* allows us to see the outlines of a new history and geography of the concentrationary, one that stretches from the France of 1939 to the governments – both democratic and authoritarian – of today.

As we have seen, the internalization of *le mal* occurs on two levels in *L’État de siège*, as both plague and power, disease and discipline, from the level of the human body to the polis of the fortified city. While the body becomes contaminated by the plague and internalizes the discipline of *concentrez-vous, occupez-vous, exécutez-vous*, the city closes its gates, both to prevent contamination and exercise (spatial) control through enclosure. The ambivalence of the state of siege as applying to both an internal or

⁴² For a reflection on the construction of France’s non-white minorities as always outside the nation, despite being born and raised geographically within it, see Azouz Begag, “La France en panne d’intégration.”

⁴³ On the connection between the construction of walls as containment and fears of a crisis of sovereign power in the contemporary moment, see Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York: Zone Books, 2010).

⁴⁴ In fact, Virilio argues that “the rise of totalitarianism goes hand-in-hand with the development of the state’s hold over the circulation of the masses” (41).

⁴⁵ In January 2016, the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, announced that the global population of refugees, asylum-seekers, and displaced persons has reached approximately 65.3 million, surpassing for the first time in history the number of refugees after WWII.

external threat to the State's sovereignty is at stake in the viral nature of the plague as well – it invades and takes over the body from the outside, turning those who are infected into agents of contagion within the population. In *La Peste*, the plague remains a corporeal illness, a virus, whereas in *L'Etat de siège*, the invasion is also represented on the political level, as a coup by a dictator – but this personified figure is also met with a call for insurrection in response.

By situating his play in Spain, Camus refused to make the postwar concentrationary regime an Eastern-European, or Soviet, phenomenon. Just as Camus's play raised the question of "why Spain?" the location of the films by Marguerite Duras that are the subject of the next chapter produce similar questions. In the case of Duras's *Aurélia Steiner*, however, both the titles and filming locations reflect a willful dispersal of Holocaust memory, suggesting that locales from France all the way to Vancouver and Melbourne may be thought of as "places of atrocity" in the diasporic aftermath of the Holocaust. As a result, the issues of morality and individuality responsibility (which permeated the reception of *L'État de siège* by figures like Georges Bataille and Roland Barthes) will arise in much different form in the next chapter, as we evaluate a set of films that are more historically removed from the Nazi camps, but probe the ethical limits by which text and film can make them present to us.

CHAPTER 3

Les travellings sont affaire de mémoire: Circulating Memory in Duras's Aurélia Steiner

One of the main tenets of the “politique des auteurs” that emerged from the *Cahiers du cinéma* of the 1950s and 60s holds that film form is a matter of ethics – or in the well-known words of Jean-Luc Godard, *les travellings sont affaire de morale*. While Godard is often credited with this turn of phrase, it was in fact a younger member of the group, Luc Moullet, who had written four months prior: “La morale est affaire de travellings” (Moullet 14). The proliferation of the expression can be traced through Jacques Rivette’s short article, “De l’abjection,” to the Serge Daney essay that immortalized it: “Le travelling de *Kapo*.”¹ As a critical shorthand that distills a certain approach to cinema, *la morale est affaire de travellings* encapsulates the joining of ethical and aesthetic preoccupations in auteur theory. The tracking shot is a camera gesture that becomes the synecdoche for a style, and therefore, a worldview.

The *cabieriste* proposition about the inseparability of form and ethics emerges from a specific context: an interrogation of how cinema represents historical violence. Godard’s phrase arose in the context of a film that was hailed at the time as marking a revolution in French cinema: Alain Resnais’ *Hiroshima mon amour*, from the screenplay by Marguerite Duras.² Alongside *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), about the Nazi concentration camps, these films remain paradigmatic reflections on traumatic historical memory. Resnais remains a cornerstone in the debate over the depiction of historical trauma, as his works are invariably cited as counterpoints to less “successful” representations of the atrocities of war. Gillo Pontecorvo’s *Kapò* (1960) continues to bear the reputation of the “wrong” way to represent horror, thanks in large part to Rivette’s excoriation of the film as “abject” in its use of the tracking shot to aestheticize death in the concentration camp.

The opposition between Resnais and Pontecorvo has become a benchmark in what is now a decades-long series of debates around the morality of visually representing atrocity, marking a lineage that finds its most extreme expression in Claude Lanzmann’s prohibition of any actual images of the Final Solution. Even if the dictum *les travellings sont affaire de morale* has largely “been reduced to a cliché” (Saxton, “Tracking shots” 23), exemplifying an outdated critical *doxa* in French film

¹ Rivette’s article appeared in *Cahiers du cinéma* in June 1961, and Daney’s essay was published in *Trafic* in 1992.

² As François Lecointe summarizes, “*Hiroshima mon amour* est reçu comme une rupture dès sa projection à Cannes en 1959. Les critiques notent un âge nouveau dans le cinéma français, mêlant les cinéastes de la Nouvelle Vague et les cinéastes de la Rive gauche” (198). It was the first film ever to be the subject of a roundtable discussion in the *Cahiers du cinéma*: “Hiroshima, notre amour,” (1959).

theory, its persistence is an index of enduring arguments over the articulation of ethics and politics in film.³ However, this brief history of the place of the tracking shot in the debate over the ethics of cinematic representation is lacking an important intervention: Marguerite Duras's *Aurélia Steiner* (1979), two experimental, short films in which a meditation on the memory of atrocity is expressed in the form of *travellings*. Following the various incarnations of “the morality of the tracking shot” from Godard to Rivette and Daney, this chapter will offer a framework for understanding Duras's films in the context of debates over film and ethics, and the films that have served as the major points of reference in these debates (such as *Nuit et brouillard*, *Hiroshima mon amour*, and *Shoah*). This chapter will show how the tracking shot – which has a long history as a privileged device for cinematic experiences of landscape and urban space – becomes a formal mode of memory in Duras's films. Unlike *Hiroshima mon amour*, which thematizes its own aporetic impossibility as representation (“Impossible de parler de Hiroshima. Tout ce qu'on peut faire c'est de parler de l'impossibilité de parler de Hiroshima” [Duras, *Hiroshima* 10]), *Aurélia Steiner* roams between verbal and visual evocations of the concentration camp as originary site of trauma. By framing an analysis of *Aurélia Steiner* in the context of debates over cinema and morality, and emphasizing the specifically spatial dimension of the tracking shot, this chapter will explore what is stake in Duras's geographical imaginary of atrocity, in which violences perpetrated in Europe are remembered by means of spatial displacement (to Melbourne, Vancouver, and the North Pacific).

A tracking shot occurs when the camera moves through space while filming, distinguishing it from other forms of camera movement, such as the pan or zoom.⁴ The tracking shot's origin in early travelogue films, typically depicting the point of view from a moving vehicle, brings into focus the nature of cinema as a spatial apparatus. In these popular “moving camera shots,” writes Tom Gunning, “the actual movement seems to carry the viewer into the image. [. . .] It is no accident that one of

³ As Laurent Jullier and Jean-Marc Leveratto point out, the morality of the tracking shot has been invoked in French reviews of films ranging from *Schindler's List* (Spielberg 1994) and *La vita è bella* (Benigni 1998) to *La Question humaine* (Klotz 2007), *Shutter Island* (Scorsese 2010) and *12 Years a Slave* (McQueen 2013). See Jullier and Leveratto 4-5, 8. We can add to this list Harmony Korine's *Spring Breakers* (2013): when Stéphane Delorme, editor-in-chief of *Cahiers du cinéma*, mentioned the “morale de la mise en scène” in his comments about the film, he was promptly mocked by Antoine Katerji on the news website *Rue89*. In this case, the tenor of the debate illustrates the axiom's association with “highbrow cinephilia” (Jullier and Leveratto 1). See Stéphane Delorme, “Le Style et le geste,” and Antoine Katerji, « *Spring Breakers* dans les Cahiers du cinéma: l'idiotie considérée comme un art. »

⁴ An extended tracking shot is often referred to as a “travelling shot,” although the French term *le travelling* does not differentiate based on duration. For the sake of simplicity, I use the term “tracking shot” throughout.

the later terms for such camera movements would be the “traveling shot” (36). Indeed, as Giuliana Bruno comments about tracking shots, “the camera becomes the vehicle: that is, it becomes, in a literal sense, a spectatorial means of transportation” (20).⁵ In this sense, the vehicle-mounted tracking shots of Duras’s *Aurélia Steiner*, whether providing the view from a barge on the Seine or along abandoned train tracks in Honfleur, not only travel through space, but may also be described as a tactile probing or excavation of space. “Le travelling fouille le plan,” writes Élie During, “Mais si le travelling fouille le visible, il constitue du même mouvement l’espace qu’il explore” (691). If the tracking shot simultaneously constructs and penetrates space, then it also inserts the viewing subject into filmic space. It is not only an ethical gaze that is at stake in *les travellings sont affaire de morale*, but an embodied spectator, pushing beyond the question of what film makes visible to the issue of what it makes palpable, and to what experience of space it gives access.⁶

Godard had already commented on Resnais’s use of the tracking shot prior to his famous inversion of Moullet’s *formule* during the *Hiroshima mon amour* roundtable, declaring that « Alain Resnais a *inventé* le travelling moderne » (“Chacun son Tours” 38, emphasis in orig.).⁷ While Godard perceives an innovative newness in Resnais’s tracking shots, it is the relationship between subject matter and form that he evaluates in his reaction to *Hiroshima mon amour*. What is at stake in Godard’s discussion of the film is the capacity of certain formal techniques to suggest an *equivalence* between

⁵ On the emergence of cinema as a technology of space in relation to technologies of speed and travel, see also Edmond, “Moving Landscapes,” and Webber, “Moving Images of Cities.”

⁶ The tactile, corporeal, and spatial qualities of film – which are also highlighted by During’s choice of the verb *fouiller* – have been the subject of increasing critical interest in the past two decades, especially since the publication of Vivian Sobchack’s groundbreaking studies, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton University Press, 1992) and *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). See also Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000) and Jennifer M. Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), in addition to Bruno’s *Atlas of Emotion*.

⁷ Resnais is well-known for his use of what has been called a “subject-less tracking shot,” instead of a more conventional use of the shot “to follow a moving object, usually a person, so that the person remained the same proportionate size relative to the frame” (Vaughan 151). His early documentaries feature tracking shots that meticulously document immobile objects or places, devoid of human figures. Some examples include: shelves of books in the Bibliothèque nationale (*Toute la mémoire du monde* [1956]); paintings (*Van Gogh* [1948]); or the countryside surrounding Auschwitz (*Nuit et brouillard* [1955]). Godard is, of course, not alone in remarking upon the distinctiveness of Resnais’s tracking shots, although the technique belongs primarily to the first half of his career: “après *Mon oncle d’Amérique*, finis les fameux travellings” (Liandrat-Guigues and Leutrat 17).

disparate subjects. When Eric Rohmer, for his part, describes the vague “sensation de gêne” produced by the film as both admirable and “agaçant,” Jacques Doniol-Valcroze asks, “Moralement ou esthétiquement?” Yet it is Godard who interjects, “C’est la même chose. Les travellings sont affaire de morale” (“Hiroshima, notre amour” 5). Godard describes his shock at *Hiroshima*’s alternation between images of sex and horror, both of which are filmed with the same close-ups (such as in the famous opening sequence), resulting in a reciprocal exchange of properties that he finds to be not “immoral,” but “amoral” (11). For him, the lack of formal differentiation between eroticized and degrading flesh neutralizes the distinction between the two, and in turn, neutralizes the film’s moral content. The tracking shot is an emblematic – but not exclusive – manifestation of the equation of aesthetics and morality. The formal construction of a disturbing equivalence between subjects also defines Daney’s reflection on the topic, but only after Jacques Rivette writes about the use of an actual tracking shot in *Kapò* (albeit a brief one).⁸

The invocation of this maxim that has been more enduring – or at least the most memorable – is Rivette’s essay, “De l’abjection,” in which he argues that it is immoral to try to represent a subject like the concentration camp in a realist mode (54). Cinema can never approach true reality in this area, so its imitation is “dérisoire et grotesque,” voyeuristic and pornographic, leading eventually to the desensitization of the audience, rendering the horror being depicted as “somme toute pas *intolérable*” (54, emphasis in orig.). However, Rivette praises Resnais for avoiding this immorality: “on ne s’habitue pas à *Nuit et Brouillard* ; c’est que le cinéaste juge ce qu’il montre, et est jugé par la façon dont il le montre” (54). Indeed, as Griselda Pollock remarks, Rivette’s condemnation of *Kapò* as aesthetically and politically immoral on the basis of a single, brief tracking shot “has become an exemplary demonstration for auteurist criticism,” according to which the filmmaker is held responsible for the morality of the film he made (264). Thus, when Pontecorvo is judged for his aestheticization of death in *Kapò*, he is found to be morally abject:

dans *Kapo*, le plan où Riva se suicide, en se jetant sur les barbelés électrifiés ; l’homme qui décide, à ce moment, de faire un travelling-avant pour recadrer le cadavre en contre-plongée, en prenant soin d’inscrire exactement la main levée dans un angle de son cadrage final, cet homme n’a droit qu’au plus profond mépris. (54)

⁸ Antoine de Baecque notes that by inverting Moullet’s *formule*, Godard was the first to associate the expression with the visual representation of *atrocité* (and the rejection of aestheticism), whereas Moullet’s essay was invested in whether Samuel Fuller’s films were formally aligned with a fascist or anti-fascist *political* position, regardless of their content. See de Baecque, *La Cinéphilie*, 204-6. See also the discussion in Sylvie Lindeperg’s *Nuit et brouillard: un film dans l’histoire*, 237-39.

In Rivette's famous analysis of the tracking shot, this single camera gesture aestheticizes the violent death of an individual, and most importantly – by means of that aestheticization – renders it *tolerable*.⁹

“De l’abjection” figures prominently as a formative text for the film critic Serge Daney in his 1992 essay, “Le travelling de *Kapò*,” a meditation on coming of age in the era of cinephilia. Daney discusses the impact of both *Nuit et brouillard* and *Hiroshima mon amour* on his cinematic and moral consciousness (7-9). As the idea of abjection comes to structure his entire viewing practice, Daney describes the “symétrie complice” between the cinéaste and the spectator of a film that attempts to “montrer l’irreprésentable,” as does *Nuit et brouillard* (11). For him, the production and consumption of images of atrocity, bound together in ethical complicity, must be defined by the moment of “arrêt”: a necessary disruption, a failed gaze, a refusal to overcome the image’s failure to represent. Daney writes that the modern age, with its violences and atrocities, has ruptured the very integrity and availability of the visible: “La sphère du visible a cessé d’être tout entièrement disponible: il y a des absences et des trous, des creux nécessaires et des pleins superflus, des images à jamais manquantes et des regards pour toujours défaillants » (11). In the end, he concludes, “Le travelling [de *Kapò*] était immoral pour la bonne raison qu’il nous mettait, lui cinéaste et moi spectateur, là où nous n’étions pas” (18-19). In other words, Pontecorvo’s tracking shot penetrated into the visible sphere, denying its own limitations as an image of atrocity, seeking scandalously to give the viewer access to that space. The tracking shot “me ‘déportait’ de ma situation réelle de spectateur pris à témoin pour m’inclure de force dans le tableau ». Finally, we can read Daney’s words, ‘il ne faut jamais se mettre là où on n’est pas’ (19), as a recasting of the older imperative, *les travellings sont affaire de morale*. The displacement of the image – and the spectator – operated by the tracking shot promotes a dangerous equivalence between self and other, and suggests the availability of a realm of experience by obliterating difference.

A point that is often overlooked by critics of Daney is that in his analysis, aesthetic and cinematic form is, in itself, historical. “Abjection” can take a different form as both culture and media evolve; tracking shots are not the sole or universal

⁹ Some critics have contradicted Rivette’s claims about the tracking shot in *Kapò*, deeming his description of the shot inaccurate or exaggerated: see Paul Louis Thirard for perhaps the most virulent example. Others dismiss it as a reductive analysis, but one that is typical of cinephilic or *cabieriste* criticism of the period (fetishizing formal details to the detriment of plot): see Jennifer Cazenave, “Retour sur *Kapò*.” Similarly, Serge Daney is often criticized for blindly accepting Rivette’s position, despite (as he admits) never having seen the film himself. However, the self-awareness and the use of irony in Daney’s essay tend to pass unnoticed, and rarely is there attention paid to the fact that he returns, at the end, to a reevaluation of his youthful convictions, in order to suggest how a historicization of formal techniques can allow for a renewed critique of the ethics of form in contemporary media.

indication of morality. The example Daney uses to evaluate the shift from the 1960s to the moment in which he was writing (the early 1990s) is the televised “We are the World” concert, in which the technique of the dissolve allowed the images of rich and famous singers to be superimposed over images of starving African children: “Fondant et enchaînant stars et squelettes dans un clignotement figuratif où deux images essaient de n’en faire qu’une, le clip exécutait avec élégance cette communion électronique entre Nord et Sud” (18).¹⁰ The use of the dissolve violently imposes a single, equatable identity across difference, between people in cultural positions of power and marginalized victims of global crises, and suggests that “I can be where I am not” – that we can permit ourselves to occupy the position of victimhood, that such an identification is possible and permitted, when in fact, it is morally abject.

Daney’s understanding of the formal ethics of representing atrocity elaborates on the more generalized equation between aesthetics and morality that we find in Godard’s and Rivette’s articulations of *les travellings sont affaire de morale*. At the same time, Daney rejoins Godard by focusing on the unsettling *equivalence* produced by formal techniques – although in the case of *Kapò*, it is now the spectator’s own position that is at stake, as Daney sees the act of watching as an activity that bears an ethical weight parallel to that of the creation of images. One of the most prominent voices contributing to the debate over the representation of atrocity (specifically, the Holocaust) is Claude Lanzmann, who famously rejected the use of any archival footage or images that directly depict the Final Solution.¹¹ While many critics point to a continuity between Rivette/Daney’s position on the morality of *mise en scène* and Lanzmann’s injunction (the language of “abjection” finding its corollary in Lanzmann’s use of the word “obscene”¹²), a significant difference resides in the status of form and image. Unlike Lanzmann’s position, *les travellings sont affaire de morale* does not restrict which images should or should not be used, but suggests a judgement of *how* the image is used in the cinematic medium.¹³

¹⁰ The French term for ‘dissolve’ in cinema is *fondus enchaînés*, which, as in English, makes palpable the idea that the subjects of the two images are melded together by this process, visually blurring out their differences.

¹¹ Lanzmann famously stated that if he had ever encountered footage from the interior of an active gas chamber, he would have destroyed it. See “Seminar with Claude Lanzmann” and “Holocauste, la représentation impossible.”

¹² See Claude Lanzmann, “The Obscenity of Understanding.”

¹³ It is also somewhat ironic to equate their positions, given Lanzmann’s openly critical attitude towards *Nuit et brouillard* (he sees it as offering catharsis, and rejects Resnais’s use of archival footage), while Resnais’s film is held up by Rivette and Daney as the ‘right’ way to depict the camps. On Lanzmann’s objections to *Nuit et brouillard*, see Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity*, 101. It is also interesting to recall that Godard, for his part, is “*géné*” by *both* of Resnais’s films (*Hiroshima mon amour* and *Nuit et brouillard*), but for different reasons.

This ethical weight placed on formal technique over image content coincides with a recent turn in critical discussions of Holocaust representation, which, as Libby Saxton explains, “has shifted from the question of *whether* the event could or should be represented to the question of *how* it might adequately or responsibly be represented” (*Haunted Images 2*). Rather than concentrating on the ethical use or refusal of archival images, or on critiques of fictionalized, melodramatic reconstructions of the event,¹⁴ the focus on form resituates the conversation around the limitations of the image – as well as its (potentially unsettling, disruptive, violating) power. This conversation is of great currency, as evidenced by the growing attention to ethics in the field of film studies.¹⁵

Aurélia Steiner offers a particularly productive enrichment of our understanding of Holocaust cinema, in part because the films precede the release of Lanzmann’s documentary by six years, but their specificity tends to be overshadowed by the monumental *Shoah*. Duras’s films are deeply implicated in the discourses of film form, ethics, and images of atrocity that have constellated around the work of directors such as Resnais, Pontecorvo, and Lanzmann. While Serge Daney, *via* Rivette and Godard, conceives of the tracking shot as a mechanism that places us *in* the scene of violence, collapsing difference through a dislocation of space, Duras’s intervention operates in inverse fashion: rather than (immorally) using form to render images of atrocity tolerable, *Aurélia Steiner* casts otherwise benign, everyday images as unsettling, haunting reminders of the legacy of the Holocaust. In these films, Duras reworks the problem of the aestheticization of the intolerable by recasting the tolerable as the very site of horror.

It is something of a commonplace in scholarship on *Aurélia Steiner* to equate Duras’s and Lanzmann’s films aesthetically, and by extension, ideologically. In a broad sense, critics are right to detect a similar aesthetic in both films: images of empty landscapes coupled with voiceover to evoke the camps, suggesting through this disjunction an impossible image, an unrepresentable event.¹⁶ However, a focus on the dimension of space in *Aurélia Steiner* makes the divergence between Duras’s and Lanzmann’s work more apparent. Like Lanzmann, Duras is clearly engaged with the question of the nature (or even the possibility) of visual representation of the

¹⁴ Consider, for example, the extensive body of scholarship on films such as *Schindler’s List*, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *Life is Beautiful*, etc.

¹⁵ Important recent contributions to the field of cinema ethics (with varying methodologies) include: Jinhee Choi and Mattias Frey, eds., *Cine-ethics: ethical dimensions of film theory, practice and spectatorship* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Shohini Chaudhuri, *Cinema of the dark side: atrocity and the ethics of film spectatorship* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Ward Jones and Samantha Price, eds., *Ethics at the Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Lisa Downing and Libby Saxton, eds., *Film and Ethics: Foreclosed Encounters* (London: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁶ For the most extended version of this argument, see Jennifer Cazenave, “La voix-off au féminin: *Hiroshima mon amour* et *Aurélia Steiner*.”

Holocaust, but the equation of the two films obscures the specificity of the operation that Duras performs, which is a dislocation of the relationship between site and memory. On the other hand, Lanzmann's *Shoah* depicts what he calls "non-lieux de mémoire": sites where all overt material traces of events have been erased, but of which there is no perceptible visual trace (such as the verdant, empty field where we learn of a massacre that occurred in that very location).¹⁷ Crucially, the landscapes that Lanzmann films are the *actual sites* of atrocities that took place during the Holocaust, whereas Duras films in locations geographically separated from the camps themselves, and then names the films as even more distant locales, stretching the link between site and event, and multiplying the spatial and historical referents. This is apparent in my analysis of *Aurélia Steiner Vancouver* (filmed in northern France) and *Aurélia Steiner Melbourne* (filmed in Paris), in which the technique of the tracking shot acts as both form and figure of spatial and corporeal connection, virtualizing space to contain multiple histories, rather than meditating on the radical absence of images and physical traces, as in *Shoah*.

Aurélia Steiner constitutes the first explicit representation of the Holocaust or the concentration camps in Marguerite Duras's oeuvre. While the personal and historical reasons for this delay have been amply discussed by scholars since the 1985 publication of *La Douleur* (in which Duras describes her husband's return from Dachau), these films have received relatively little critical attention, and it is rarely discussed that Duras's turn to Holocaust memory first occurred on film. She does so through the fictional character of Aurélia Steiner, a young Jewish girl (and by the same name, her mother), born in the concentration camp (but whose parents perished there), now living in Melbourne or Vancouver.¹⁸ As the references to the Holocaust range from the allusive to the explicit, these films are not "about" the Holocaust so much as they circulate around and even exceed it. The geographic references span the globe, making of Aurélia a figure of diaspora, the product of an associative historical memory that emerges from the disjunction of place and event, image and text, resulting in constant movement between localized sites of trauma and expansive webs of aftermath.

Aurélia Steiner Melbourne and *Aurélia Steiner Vancouver* were released as films in 1979 in a group of four *court-métrages* (along with *Césaire* and *Les mains négatives*) and published the same year in a single volume, under the title *Le navire Night – Césaire –*

¹⁷ Describing, for example, the famous « château de Chelmno » that once housed part of the operations of the extermination camp, Lanzmann states, « Ces lieux défigurés, c'est ce que j'appelle des non-lieux de la mémoire » ("Les non-lieux de la mémoire" 290).

¹⁸ The *Aurélia Steiner* triptych also includes a third text, "Aurélia Paris," which was never made as a film, but which was adapted for the stage – a version of which appears in *La Douleur*. As I will be focusing on *Aurélia Melbourne* and *Aurélia Vancouver* primarily as films, the third text is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Les mains négatives – Aurélia Steiner – Aurélia Steiner – Aurélia Steiner.¹⁹ The four experimental shorts all share a similar format and style; while the *Aurélia Steiner* films are clearly marked as a pair, they were also originally conceived of as constituting a kind of loose unit or collection with *Césarée* and *Les mains négatives*. The four films were originally released together in one showing, forming together what Michelle Royer describes as “un réseau d’images visuelles et sonores qui engendre un nouveau spectacle » (26). Like *Aurélia Steiner*, *Césarée* and *Les mains négatives* couple poetic prose texts (read by Duras herself) with image tracks that bear a non-explicit, figurative relation to the subject of the text.²⁰ *Césarée* recounts the exile of Bérénice, Queen of the Jews, from the ancient city of Cesarea, while *Les mains négatives* describes prehistoric cave paintings and the ancient “cri d’amour” at their origin. (Like *Aurélia Melbourne*, these two films are also constructed of tracking shots in the city of Paris.) The prominent use of tracking shots in all four *court-métrages*, coupled with the subject matter, reflect an investment in the linkage between the thematics of memory and spatiality.²¹

The epistolary texts of *Aurélia Steiner* are addressed to an often ambiguous recipient, who takes the form of an anonymous, lost lover in *Aurélia Melbourne*, and Aurélia’s father for the majority of *Aurélia Vancouver*. The three texts (including the unfiled “Aurélia Paris”) are united by the identical signature/*envoi* at the end, which is only altered to name the different city that corresponds to each text:

Je m’appelle Aurélia Steiner

J’habite [Melbourne/Vancouver/Paris] où mes parents sont profeseurs.

J’ai dix-huit ans.

J’écris.

(*Navire* 135)

Strikingly, despite this geographical precision, neither *Aurélia Melbourne* nor *Aurélia Vancouver* were filmed in the cities for which they are named. The image track of *Aurélia Melbourne* is comprised of a sequence of tracking shots, filmed from a barge navigating the Seine river. In *Aurélia Vancouver*, Paris is replaced by Honfleur and

¹⁹ *Le navire Night* is separate from the group of short films, having appeared in theaters in 1978 as a feature-length film.

²⁰ The ambiguous genre of these texts is not often addressed by critics, and in most cases they seem to be regarded as prose. However, in his commentary for the Pléiade edition, Bernard Alazet more accurately describes *Césarée* and *Les Mains négatives* as “poème[s] en vers libres,” while *Le Navire night* and *Aurélia Steiner* are attributed to the genre of “récit poétique” (1659). Youlia Maritchik addresses the question of genre in a slightly different vein, emphasizing the hybridity and transgenericity of these works, which Duras herself designated as “texte théâtre film.”

²¹ Duras articulated her interest in the relationship between place and memory in 1976 during the televised interviews with Michelle Porte, *Les lieux de Marguerite Duras* (which appeared in print the following year), where Duras states that “la mémoire pour moi est une chose répandue dans tous les lieux et que je perçois les lieux de cette façon-là” (96).

Trouville, with both fixed frames and slow tracking shots providing images of the ocean, rocky beaches, clouds, trees, a disused train station, and domestic interiors. The viewing experience of the film is structured by this divergence between image and text, place and name. The dislocation of place and name, as well as the use of the voice-off, are typical markers of the generalized desynchronization of sound and image in Duras's cinema.²² A disembodied voice that speaks of loss and memory, Aurélia's voice emerges from a place that is not the one registered within the confines of the image.

The disjunction between sound and image is a formal manifestation of the tension between presence and absence, materiality and spectrality, that structures these films. The tracking shots move slowly and implacably, lingering over objects and places, while also (as Daney argues in relation to *Kapo*) inserting the viewing subject into filmed space, such that she has the sense of moving through that space. But no human bodies appear on screen to offer physical representations of the characters, nor any point of identification for viewers. Aurélia herself is made present only by means of the vocal narration that constitutes the voice-off of the films.²³ As Mary Ann Doane explains, the voice-off serves the construction of space in cinema, asserting the existence of space beyond the camera's gaze: "In its own way, it *accounts for* lost space [. . .] It validates both what the screen reveals of the diegesis and what it conceals" (167, emphasis in orig.). If a film's diegesis takes place in the "virtual space" constructed by both the visual and audible traits of the "cinematic situation" (Doane 166), then the diegesis of *Aurélia Steiner*, the virtual space that it creates and in which it unfolds, consists of the expansive (and not fully visible) space created by the conjunction of voice and image. Aurélia's voice speaks from a place that is not the one registered within the confines of the image; thus the virtual space constructed by the film is extended beyond the parameters of the screen. Interestingly, Doane's analysis also reminds us that the site from which Aurélia speaks is located in the "lost space" that is "concealed" by the screen; the voice-off gives an account of that space while also problematizing the kind of visibility offered by the cinematic image.

In the case of *Aurélia Steiner*, the interplay of vocal presence and absence intertwines with the narrative of loss and memory that emerges from this "lost space." In his classic study, *La voix au cinéma*, Michel Chion defines embodiment (*mise-*

²² Desynchronization is one of Duras's major traits as a filmmaker, an innovation that she pursued to greater degrees over the course of her career in cinema. See Güther 25-28.

²³ The distinction between "voice-off" and "voice-over" designates the connection of the voice to a diegetic figure (voice-off), as opposed to the omniscient or semi-omniscient voice of documentary narration (voice-over), which speaks from outside the limits of the diegesis about what is happening onscreen. Britta Sjogren argues that the term "voice-off" can encompass a wider range of filmic devices and phenomena, including the mutability and "multiple spatiality" of the voice in films that, like *Aurélia Steiner*, defy the classical narrative conventions of cinema. See Sjogren 7-9.

en-corps) as a 'contract' according to which the body and the voice each testify to the other's presence:

La mise-en-corps se réalise par l'assemblage simultané du corps visible et de la voix audible, une certaine façon pour le corps d'attester : « ceci est ma voix », et pour la voix : « ceci est mon corps », sorte de mariage par contrat, consacrant la fixation rassurante de la voix au domicile du corps. (118)

Yet in *Aurélia Steiner*, no body testifies to the voice, and the disembodied voice can only bear witness to absence. Just as Aurélia seeks the bodies of her lost lover and her deceased parents, her voice seeks a place in which to root itself, and by the same token, seeks a body. Corporeal absence is not only one of the obsessions of these films, but their condition of possibility. Unable to declare bodily existence, Aurélia's voice testifies to a loss that the image cannot satisfy, but in that longing for the "domicile du corps," the camera's gaze investigates and probes what remains of the material world in the wake of the radical elimination of human bodies during the Shoah.

If the virtual space constructed by the voice and the image in *Aurélia Steiner* can be read as the space of Durassian memory of the Holocaust, then the virtuality of this space is also significant, as it is between the materiality of the images onscreen and the haunting voice of Aurélia that Duras's reflection on Holocaust memory is located. The *Aurélia Steiner* films construct spaces where the spectral and the material meet, as they are traversed and inhabited by fragmented subjectivities, but also, importantly, come into contact with many concrete spatial signifiers, where the nature of space as lived and inhabited is often insisted upon, despite the absence of human figures. The effects generated by the dialectical relationship of sound and image heighten the figuration of history and memory, enabling certain images to function as metaphor and metonymy of catastrophe.

In order to evaluate how Duras's use of the tracking shot reconfigures the technique's role in the representation of atrocity, I will now turn to two extended tracking shot sequences in *Aurélia Vancouver* that specifically pose the ethical problem of identification. Unlike *Aurélia Melbourne's* tour of Paris from the point of view of the river, provoking general reflection on the historical relationship between the city of Paris (and thus the French nation) and the persecution of the Jews, *Aurélia Vancouver* evokes the visual imaginary of the Holocaust on screen. Neither film documents any historical remains of the camps or the Nazis' victims, but *Aurélia Vancouver* offers an indirect representation by deploying recognizable signifiers of the concentrationary regime, and producing visual metaphors for human bodies. By thrusting the spectator into the filmic space, these tracking shots become a means of transportation to the site of atrocity (however opaque and figurative). As the camera and the voice move through this expanded space, the question of the location of Aurélia's body and the locations of the bodies she is in search of is therefore also the question of our location, as spectators, in relation to that voice, and the memory it discloses.

Aurélia Vancouver is made up of a combination of tracking, slow pan, and still shots that document natural phenomena (such as clouds, lapping waves, rocky beaches, and trees), as well as a domestic interior space, a lumberyard, and an abandoned train station. Unlike the recognizable images of Paris in *Aurélia Melbourne*, the locations of *Aurélia Vancouver* bear no identifiable markers of place.²⁴ However, the latter film also incorporates a more clearly delineated narrative framework, alternating between the present tense of writing, and the narration of events that took place on the site of the “rectangle blanc de la cour de rassemblement” of a concentration camp (namely, Aurélia’s birth, and the death of her parents). In other words, an increase in the geographic specificity of the audible narration corresponds to a virtual emptying out of the specificity of place on the level of the image, which, I will show, opens this film up to a significant set of metonymical allusions to and associations with the Holocaust, vehiculated primarily by tracking shots.

The first of these sequences begins eight minutes into the film, following a montage of still shots and very slow tracking shots that document the sea, clouds in the sky, and large, craggy rock formations on the beach. Aurélia identifies herself and states, “Je m’appelle Aurélia Steiner. Je suis votre enfant. / Vous n’êtes pas informé de mon existence” (142).²⁵ A fixed frame image of stacks of felled logs in a lumberyard lasts for approximately forty seconds, until a cut to a closer shot renders more visible the numbers and markings on the cut ends of the logs (see fig. 1). The image of this mass of wood produces an association with the bodies of concentration camp victims, first by means of the numbers marked on them, evoking the tattooed forearms of Auschwitz prisoners, and secondly, through their sheer abundance in quantity – an accumulation of inert figures that are individually distinct, yet similar and iterative. The camera then initiates a slow, lateral tracking shot to the right. While the camera moves alongside the tattered piles of logs with various numbers and letters written on their stumps (which Madeleine Borgomano vividly describes as “les troncs coupés, mutilés” [170]), the association between the logs and groups of human bodies is reasserted, as we hear the words spoken, “parfois, d’autres que vous,

²⁴ In *Les Yeux verts*, Duras claims that her cinematic project (« Je suis dans un rapport de meurtre avec le cinéma ») has nearly attained the « image idéale, » which is to say, « neutre, » in *Aurélia Vancouver*. She describes the neutral image as “une image passe-partout, indéfiniment superposable à une série de textes, image qui n’aurait en soi aucun sens, qui ne serait ni belle ni laide, qui ne prendrait son sens que du texte qui passe sur elle » (93).

²⁵ While most critics seem to be unanimous in identifying the addressee as her father in *both* of the *Aurélia Steiner* films based on this citation, I suggest instead that this identity must be regarded as unstable over the course of the texts (see for example page 149, where “vous” refers rather clearly to Aurélia’s mother). The slippages of the second-person pronoun reflect the fragmentation of identity in *Aurélia Steiner*, which is not limited to Aurélia herself.

d'autres viennent" (143).²⁶ A train car emerges in the frame on the right, coinciding with the phrase, "Dans un monde où vous n'êtes pas en vie" (143). Attached to the train car is a segment with lumber stacked on it. At this moment, the concentrationary association between the stacked logs and the bodies of victims is amplified by the image of a train (one being put to use to transport these wooden bodies), thus evoking one of the most widely recognized signifiers of deportation, all while Aurélia's voice refers to the death of her addressee.



Fig. 1 : *Aurélia Vancouver*

During this tracking sequence, Aurélia describes how her erotic encounters with men take the place of an impossible reunion with the dead: "Dans un monde où vous n'êtes pas en vie ils peuvent me tenir lieu de notre rencontre" (143). The bodies of the living, in Aurélia's narrative, are presented as substitutions for the original loss of the father, just as the logs 'tiennent lieu' of the bodies of the lost. As the camera slows speed slightly after crossing parts of the lumberyard, we encounter another set of stacked logs with their cut ends exposed, facing the camera's gaze. Aurélia's voice announces, "Je leur donne mon corps" (144), as she refers to her serial erotic

²⁶ Citation modified to match film.

Note regarding citations: the published text of *Aurélia Steiner* contains quite a few divergences from the script that is recited in the films (e.g. changed word order, omissions, additions). My analysis focuses on the film version, but I will also indicate when parts of the published text that are not present in the film can nuance the interpretation or cast it in a different light. Footnotes will continue to indicate when citations of the film's monologue are modified from the published text.

encounters. Once again, these examples set up the repeated connection between human bodies – Aurélia’s body, her dead father’s body, the innumerable dead bodies in the camps, and more obliquely, her lovers bodies – and the stacked piles of wood, producing a metaphorical contamination or intersection of the violated, dead body and the eroticized body, as well as of the human and the inanimate. The tracking shot ends when the camera comes to a standstill, resting on the image of stacked wood, as the voice evokes the lover’s absent gaze: « Vous auriez pu être l’un d’eux sauf que vous m’auriez vue » (144). A cut to a still-framed shot of an empty train platform follows, lasting for one minute (see fig. 2), with the cut occurring on the words « celle-ci, ce corps laissé » (144), marking again the connection between the tracking shot of the logs and the concentrationary signifier of the train, all while the disembodied voice insistently overlays these images with references to corporeality.



Fig. 2 : *Aurélia Vancouver*

When interrogated about the *destinataire* of Aurélia’s « appel d’amour, » Duras described the film as « un appel à l’intérieur, un appel dans la mort. [. . .] N’oubliez pas aussi que les morts d’Auschwitz, les millions de juifs d’Auschwitz sont morts sans sépulture » (*Couleur* 190). The significance of the status of the Jewish dead as “sans sépulture” shapes how *Aurélia Steiner* approaches this crucial, physical absence – both of the bodies of the dead, and of a tomb or resting place where they can be mourned. In response to this, the film performs a recuperative action through figuration, by means of which the absent bodies of the dead become objects, or infuse spaces that evoke the site of their loss. Space takes the place of the face or body (only verbally evoked) as the site of identification. Their bodies are made virtually visible and

palpable, while we are convoked to the site of their destruction. This serves to *materialize* bodies that are fundamentally absent, casting a new light on one of the films' main themes: how the absent, beloved figure to whom Aurélia addresses her call can find a form of embodiment in others (bodies, places, things). It is in this sense that Aurélia describes her rendez-vous with lovers as her only way of reaching her absent father: "Je les rassemble à travers vous et de leur nombre je vous fais. Vous êtes ce qui n'aura pas lieu et qui, comme tel, se vit. De tous vous ressortez toujours unique, inépuisable lieu du monde » (157). The surrogate lovers are brought together through her father, who is reconstructed through the assembly of lovers – and yet it is her dead father who remains the single, "inépuisable lieu du monde" – an endless place, an inexhaustible site.

The transmutation of the lost into a figurative place that cannot be exhausted or emptied allows them not only to exist, but also to become generative. For Duras, this gesture may be seen as an attempt to undo their total eradication, allowing them to continue as sites of memory and affect. Yet their representation through the image of raw materials also poses the problem of their conscription into productivity – one that may disturbingly echo the death-producing regime of the Nazi extermination camps. Moreover, the representation of the Nazi's victims as logs corresponds, in the audio track, to the description of Aurélia's sequence of lovers and their endless replaceability, while imperfectly taking the place of the absent father. The promiscuity exhibited on both the formal and thematic levels by this seemingly indiscriminate mingling of figures suggests the uncontrolled spread of figuration across spaces, images, and objects, which threaten to overtake any sense of specificity of the Holocaust and its victims. But, as Martin Crowley has shown, the problem of identity in *Aurélia Steiner* (Aurélia's fragmentation across space and time) and the issue of the Holocaust's "exemplarity" are co-constitutive. Just as the Holocaust has resulted in "the apparent dismantling of the rules of representation," Crowley explains, "Aurélia Steiner figures the resulting impossible synechdoche in the field of identity: she represents the disturbance of this field by the traumatic event in her existence as paradox" (161). The film's generative impulse towards figuration, enacted by its tracking shots, can be understood not as a form of systematic substitution, but as the traumatic event's "multiplication into a metonymy of alternative sites and sufferers" (Crowley 157), necessitated by the Holocaust's challenge both to representation and to the ability of individual "sites and sufferers" to cope with the unbearable burden of its singularity. Aurélia becomes the avatar of the "multiplication of suffering" in Duras's work of this period (1979 to 1985), which Crowley characterizes as her attempt to grapple with the representation of historical trauma.²⁷ In order to pursue the questions of substitution and figuration, I will turn now to the second extended

²⁷ See Crowley, *Duras, Writing, and the Ethical*, chapter four: "Writing and Historical Trauma."

tracking shot in *Aurélia Vancouver*, which thrusts us once again into a space evoking the concentrationary regime.

The three primary narratives that intertwine in *Aurélia Vancouver* are Aurélia's sexual encounter with a sailor, the death of Aurélia's parents in the concentration camp, and a violent storm that devastates an unnamed seaside town. The sea's furor dominates the description of the storm: "Elle [la mer] a cassé, elle a fracassé, elle a crevé les murs, les portes, les vitres, elle a emporté des toits et la ville est restée ainsi, ouverte, béante sur le vent" (150).²⁸ Onscreen, the description of the storm is accompanied entirely by interior shots – roses, curtained window – of which the stillness, placidity, and interiority provide a complete counterpoint to the hurricane-like storm. Then, in the "blancheur livide" of daybreak, we learn that "les grands réservoirs à sel ont éclaté. Le sel s'est répandu dans la mer. Sa salinité est devenue mortelle. Elle est passée en quelques secondes de la vie à la mort" (151). Though not spoken in the film, the published text specifies further that this storm is in the North Pacific: the salt reservoirs burst « sous les coups de boutoir des longues lames blanches du Pacifique Nord » (151). The geography of violence that bears down on the city (here, we presume, the city of Vancouver) is identified by the ocean that marks it as part of a larger region, and which itself is weaponized, made violent like blades.

The film's second major tracking shot sequence accompanies descriptions of the storm, alternating with the narrative of her parents in the camp. The tracking shot begins as the speaking voice situates us at the "rectangle blanc de la cour de rassemblement" where Aurélia's father is being hung for stealing soup, but "trop maigre, trop léger, il n'arrive pas à se pendre de son propre poids" (151-152)²⁹; he cries out as Aurélia's mother dies. The camera sets into motion, following the tracks of an abandoned train station, overgrown weeds marking its disuse. After a few seconds of silence (traveling to the left, with the camera angled towards the right, registering the view of what is left behind in the distance), the speaking voice designates the space in a startlingly direct way, as the deictic "ici" seems to cut through the textual site of the "rectangle blanc" as well as the filmic site of the train station: "Ici, c'est l'endroit du monde où se trouve Aurélia Steiner" (152). As the empty train platform begins to come into view, the tracking shot is unhalting, and we pass by rows of cement pipes stacked upon each other geometrically, a visual echo of the piles of logs in the previous tracking shot, where they functioned as metaphor of the marked bodies of the dead in Auschwitz.

The movement of the camera begins to slow, as Aurélia's narrative returns to the city that was beaten by the storm. As the seawater withdraws from the city it had

²⁸ Citation modified to match the film. The description of the storm on pages 150-53 is the part of the published text with the largest amount of material that is *not* included in the film.

²⁹ This detail, as Duras herself has specified, was inspired by a scene in Elie Wiesel's 1956 novel *La nuit* (see *Les yeux verts* 178).

overtaken, the tracking shot comes to a close, but the camera remains at a standstill for a few seconds, framing the abandoned train station, with the stacks of pipes in the foreground: “Les plages sont recouvertes de poissons morts” (153). The audio-visual association of the pipes with dead fish functions as a second iteration of the association between dead bodies and inert, industrial materials. As a result, the visual echo between the logs and the pipes in turn constructs a parallel between the two corresponding narratives (concentration camp and natural disaster). The nexus of spaces that become overlaid in this portion of the film (the storm-ravaged city in the North Pacific, the white rectangle of the courtyard of the concentration camp, and the abandoned train station) maps a complex set of spatial signifiers, both real and figurative, which are united by the continuous movement of the tracking shot. The images of the train station allude to recognizable signifiers of deportation and the concentration camp system, while a different, spatial aspect of that experience is signified by the “rectangle blanc.” Additionally, it is difficult to avoid perceiving in the deadly waters of the North Pacific, as well as the beach covered with dead fish, an echo of the images of the aftermath of the atomic bomb in Japan, recounted in Duras’s screenplay for *Hiroshima mon amour*: “Un poisson non comestible. Des milliers de poissons comestibles enterrés” (*Hiroshima* 30). This complex network of references is given continuity in the movement between these spaces by the visual element of the tracking shot, which multiplies the vectors of loss and catastrophe by means of lateral motion and metonymic associations.³⁰

If, as Shoshana Felman argues, Lanzmann’s tracking shots in *Shoah* allow us to bear witness to the *absence* of bodies (“A l’âge du témoignage” 79), then what are we witnessing in the lumberyard and train station of *Aurélia Steiner*? While the lumberyard sequence places us in a setting in which logs obliquely signify the bodies of the dead, the tracking shot to the train station places us inside the train car as it moves along the tracks. As the voice proclaims that this is the location of Aurélia Steiner, the spectatorial position seems to coincide with that of the deportees, casting a backward gaze from the train arriving at the station. Indeed, Duras herself acknowledged the fact that the lumberyard and train sequences invoke the camp: “Je me suis dit que quelqu’un a dû voir le film et trouver ça honteux que la gare d’Auschwitz ait été oubliée à l’intérieur de la ville de Honfleur” (*Couleur* 184). It is through this “double-vision” in *Aurélia Steiner* that the representation of the Holocaust is made visible (and not just audible, via Aurélia’s narrative voice), giving the viewer the impression of seeing Auschwitz in Honfleur (or of seeing dead bodies in the lumberyard). But the fact that the train station is visibly empty and decommissioned also means that we only see the “gare d’Auschwitz” by means of figuration – a use of figuration that gestures to a ghostly presence while maintaining its distance. These tracking shots make us see things that are not what appear on screen, and thus invite us to move

³⁰ The geographic reference to the North Pacific and its salty floodwaters also makes *Aurélia Steiner* susceptible to association with Duras’s 1950 novel, *Un barrage contre le pacifique*.

through a space that paradoxically, uncannily, spectrally conjures the very site of atrocity. We bear witness to the genocide only via the figuration that makes these images concentrationary.³¹

For Herman Rapaport, the figuration that takes place during the tracking shot “purposefully exclude[s] or neutralize[s] the ethical relation between Jew and non-Jew” by “affirm[ing] things as merely present to themselves in the filmic now” (323). In other words, by making the logs metaphors for the dead, Duras thrusts the victims’ bodies into the here and now of the film, violating the division between past and present, and collapsing the “ethical relation” of distance into unwarranted proximity and immediacy. This reading offers a version of the idea that the tracking shot places us as spectators “là où on n’est pas,” to recall Daney’s phrase, or perhaps more accurately, it places the bodies of the dead where *they* are not. According to this line of thinking, the ahistorical mobilization of their bodies is unethical because it seeks to remediate their loss by making them present to us. However, the material presence created by the visual metaphor of the logs remains oblique and mediated, ultimately denying access to the bodies that it (and Aurélia) obsessively desires.

An illuminating comparison can be found in a scene in Resnais’s *Nuit et brouillard* that establishes a similarity between human bodies and cut wood. Emma Wilson describes the “tracking shots of corpses piled on a funeral pyre, collapsed among logs,” in which “[t]he pale faces of the dead, their mortified bodies, eerily resemble the logs among which they lie” (101). By filming the comingling of wood and bodies, Resnais’s film documents the way in which “the divide between the living and dead, and between once animate and always inanimate matter is eroded” (101). Wilson analyzes *Nuit et brouillard*’s “category disturbance” between living and dead – registered formally in the alternation of still and live footage – in relation to Agamben’s account of the *Muselman* as the figure of “bare life,” occupying a zone of indistinction between the human and the inhuman (100).³² Duras’s tracking shot in the lumberyard produces a similar category disturbance between “once animate and always inanimate matter,” but the human bodies are materially absent; they are not juxtaposed with the wood, but conjured by it. At the same time, the fact that this

³¹ Of course, this concentrationary vision also relies on historical knowledge and a received history of visual representations. The viewer has to be historically situated and culturally produced to be able to “see” Auschwitz in the film. In “Material Remains,” Emma Wilson makes a similar point about *Shoah*, arguing (along with Adolphe Nysenholz) that Lanzmann’s refusal of archival images relies in part on the images from *Nuit et brouillard* that have been retained in the collective imagination: “Lanzmann may withhold such images from us on screen but he still goes some way to screening them in our imagination” (91).

³² See Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*. For a thoughtful approach to *Aurélia Vancouver*’s fascination with the boundary between animate and inanimate, see Jonathon Whitehall, “L’Image menacée.” Whitehall’s formal approach is the inverse of my own, focusing on Duras’s use of still images that blur the boundary between film and photography.

scene is clearly archival footage distinctly places the spectator in a position external to the filmic space – unlike the famous tracking shot that opens *Nuit et brouillard*, in which color film situates the viewer geographically within the camp, and in the politically charged moment of the postwar present. The tracking shots of *Aurélia Steiner*, on the other hand, create an ambivalence between here and there, then and now, presence and absence, that remains ungraspable while also shockingly material and tactile, but that never resolves itself into a clearly articulated call, whether political or memorial. Duras’s figural representation of the dead as logs may result in a problematic ambivalence between offering a critique of the regime that turned human bodies into dead matter and raw material (as does the montage of *Nuit et brouillard*), and reifying that process.

Indeed, as many scholars have pointed out, the concentrationary atmosphere imbues the entire film, an effect that arises from the dislocation of spoken text and image, resulting in a haunting representation of the event that is so often described as beyond representation. Ophir Levy, for example, describes how, through the spoken word, Duras’s films « ont imprégné d’une pâle lueur génocidaire les images contemporaines des rues de Paris, des bords de Seine ou encore des plages de la côte normande » (177), capturing precisely the idea that it is a matter of words bestowing meaning upon images that would otherwise be neutral. This “pâle lueur génocidaire” is an apt description, but I suggest that it is not only the product of the (unidirectional) effect of the text on the image. Rather, it is the interaction between text and image that produces an “espace génocidaire” in *Aurélia Steiner*. This interaction of the audible and visual elements is not solely a matter of punctual correspondences. It is also articulated through the experience of time and duration in the film, which allows for belated correspondences, or an alternation between visual and audible content, that provides this “lueur génocidaire.”

The narrative of Aurélia’s origin in the concentration camp (“ma mère morte en couches”) provides an example of how the temporal relationship of belatedness between text and image produces a concentrationary effect. This story of Aurélia’s birth begins just after a sequence of three images of writing are projected on the screen, which Duras has described as the “image écrite” (Duras, *Yeux verts* 92). A series of handwritten words appear: “Aurélia,” followed by “Aurélia Steiner,” and finally, the number “200095.” As this sequence puts the name and the numbers into relation as forms of identification, the numbers constitute one of the most recognizable visual markers of Holocaust references that imbue the film. However, this sequence, so overtly referential of the Holocaust, is accompanied by an incongruous voiceover text: Aurélia’s description of the sea, and the “douce lumière” that enters as she opens her windows and doors (147). Thus, the verbal account of the concentration camp in this portion of the film is belated, because it occurs not during but precisely *after* the direct visual reference of the name and numbers. Once the image “200095” fades to black screen, there is a cut to a fixed-frame image of a

row of poplar trees, which remains motionless for exactly the duration of the following passage:

Ma mère morte en couches sous les bat-flanc du camp. Brûlée morte avec les contingents des chambres à gaz. Aurélia Steiner ma mère. Ma mère regarde devant elle le grand rectangle blanc de la cour de rassemblement du camp. Son agonie est longue. A ses côtés l'enfant est vivante. (147)

As the first appearance of Aurélia's mother in the oral narrative, the "image écrite" sequence is bestowed with a layer of meaning retrospectively (because her mother is also named Aurélia Steiner), while also associating the mother with the image of the trees. As with the shots of the stacked logs, there is a starkness about this image, due to its stillness, the uncanny similarity of the trees to each other, and their visual repetition (see fig. 3). We can also see these trees as an echo of the felled logs of the lumberyard, manifesting the living form that preceded the logs' status as dead, inert materials. This doubling of the figure of wood in its living and dead states calls attention to the two conditions that are representative of all biological matter: life and death. Wood, both living and dead, becomes an overdetermined figure standing in for the human subjects, both survivors and victims of the Holocaust, that *Aurélia Steiner Vancouver* invites us to see, hear, and mourn.



Fig. 3 : *Aurélia Vancouver*

Soon after the shot of the poplar trees, another "image écrite" appears, a handwritten transcription of the sentence, "Je ne peux rien contre l'éternité que je porte à l'endroit de votre dernier regard, celui sur le rectangle blanc de la cour de rassemblement du camp » (148). Indeed, the white rectangle of the screen on which

this writing appears echoes the “rectangle blanc” of the camp. Text and image join here, as the virtual space simultaneously becomes the material site of representation and projection, while also clearly referring to a distant site (the concentration camp). The white rectangle is both the site of origin (Aurélia’s birth) and the site of annihilation (her mother’s death – also named Aurélia). Everything in *Aurélia Vancouver* seems to surge out from the site of the rectangle – death, diaspora – despite its uncanny stillness and blankness.

Many commentators have consistently equated the rectangle with the concept of the unrepresentability of the Holocaust, pointing out that the edges of the rectangle would delineate the limits of representation. However, following this logic, the rectangle (of the camp and of the projection screen) would be the space of unrepresentability, whereas the screen is the *site* of representation itself. The rectangle at the center of the camp is hence the space of representation and the site of inscription (the words on the screen), that is also, importantly, just one in a series of images – images that are constantly being superimposed. To this end, Whitehall points out that it is actually the black screen, not the white, that is the refusal of figuration, “a non-figurative space” (75). Yet once again, the black screen that follows the “image écrite” is only momentary, giving way to the various images, both still and delicately moving, that alternate in the film. Indeed, Duras engages with the discourse of unrepresentability while also, paradoxically, treating it as a signifier and exploring how it can be inserted in systems of representation or figuration. The white rectangle, for example, deliberately alludes to the limits of representation, but it is also put to use in *Aurélia Steiner* as an incredibly mobile figure – it resonates not only in the film screen, and especially the *image écrite*, but in the piece of paper on which Aurélia writes her name for the sailor, and even, in the unfilmed “Aurélia Paris,” the small white tag of young Aurélia’s shirt, on which her name is written as well (*Navire* 178-9).

Les Yeux verts, the 1980 special issue of *Cahiers du cinéma* written by Duras, offers an account of her reasons for designating Melbourne, Vancouver, and Paris as the residences of Aurélia Steiner, an expression of the geographic dispersion of Jewish memory:

De partout elle appelle, de partout elle se souvient. Elle est à Melbourne, Paris, Vancouver. De partout où il y a des juifs dispersés, réfugiés, elle se souvient. Elle ne peut être que dans les lieux de cette sorte-là, où il ne se passe rien que la mémoire. Il ne se passe rien à Melbourne, à Vancouver. Et ce sont des endroits éloignés. C’est loin de l’Europe. Je les vois comme des endroits de survie. C’est blanc, des pages blanches. Rien n’y arrive. (156)

Evoking the “blancheur blanche” of the fog in *Aurélia Melbourne*, as well as the “rectangle blanc” of the concentration camp described in *Aurélia Vancouver*, the “blankness” of Melbourne and Vancouver makes them, according to Duras, the perfect locations for memory – places where nothing else happens, in fact, but

memory. The meaning ascribed to these sites is both an *absence* of particularity, and a total *presence* of memory. As Adrian Danks argues about the *Aurélia Steiner* series, “Each [film] carries a rather vague and clandestine relationship to the city that defines it. Thus, place is both essential to the identity of the text (how else to name it and declare its difference?) and curiously beside the point” (n. pag.). The randomness and “blankness” of these cities allow them to become, in Duras’s hands, saturated sites of memory. As Leslie Hill has shown, “place names in Duras function consistently – particularly, say, in *Hiroshima mon amour* – as shorthand ciphers for a series of catastrophic events that have somehow broken loose from the confines of geography and history” (97). Memory is distilled in the “endroits éloignés” of Melbourne and Vancouver, distant from the original site of catastrophe, but nonetheless, living “ciphers” of survival and aftermath.³³

For her part, Duras claim a deliberate absence of meaning in the choice of cities, remarking in an interview with Dominique Noguez that “Les images sont à peine recherchées. Ils ne choisissaient pas leur camp de concentration, les juifs. J’ai voulu ne pas choisir. Presque pas” (*Couleur* 183). Here, the asynchronicity that characterizes the films is rendered as an echo or reenactment of an aspect of the experience of deportation and concentration – the apparent randomness in terms of where Jewish deportees were sent, and their lack of agency in their fate. To follow this logic, the divergence between text and image may, according to Duras, manifest the profound divestment of power and self-determination that characterized deportation. And yet, moments later in the same interview, Duras seems to reverse this relationship between place and meaning, speaking of the Seine river as inspiration for the memory of historical atrocity:

Je ne sais pas pourquoi j’ai parlé des juifs. C’est l’eau. La Seine. Je pense qu’il y avait une relation avec les morts algériens d’octobre 1961. Je pensais à la Seine qui avait charrié les morts algériens. Et j’ai pensé à un courant de mort qui aurait traversé la ville. Paris a donné beaucoup de ses juifs. Les juifs de Paris valaient trois cents francs par tête. Je pensais, comme ça, à un mouvement général dans lequel se serait perdue Aurélia Steiner. (*Couleur* 184)³⁴

³³ These qualities are also highlighted when Duras describes the cities as “reserves of life”: “[Aurélia] est aussi bien dans les camps que dans ces villes froides et lointaines, ces réserves de vie » (*Couleur* 180).

³⁴ This text does not fully correspond to the recorded interview, *La caverne noire* (included on the DVD of the four *court-métrages*, and of which *La couleur des mots* is a transcription). In the original interview, the last two sentences printed here are not spoken, and in their place Duras says, “Paris a donné ses juifs. Les juifs de Paris..Je pensais comme ça à un mouvement massif dans lequel se serait perdue Aurélia Steiner.” It was most likely Duras herself who chose to expand and clarify the statement before publication of the interview, as the note from the editor states, “Le texte de ses entretiens a été relu, corrigé et parfois réécrit par Marguerite Duras” (23).

In a process of memorial association that can best be described as “multidirectional,” the Seine river triggers a reflection on the events of October 17, 1961, which in turn helps give rise to the memory of the mass deportation of Jews from Paris, which are linked by the common figure of the river, this “courant de mort” that cuts through the city of Paris. Indeed, as Michael Rothberg has shown, Duras’s journalistic writing also demonstrates a form of multidirectional memory, once again associating these two historical traumas (October 1961 and the Holocaust) through a comparative investigation of the spatial phenomenon of the ghetto.³⁵ While Duras describes the choice of Melbourne and Vancouver as sites that represent distance from Europe and places of survival, her decision to film *Aurélia Melbourne* on the Seine in Paris emerges from a specific sense of Paris as a site of atrocity, centered on the river itself. The network of sites of trauma and places of remembrance creates a spatial continuity between event and aftermath – a continuity that is unfailingly represented by global systems of water (rivers and seas).

Furthermore, it is significant that Duras describes the Seine as a site of trauma, which manifests the commonality between the Algerian dead and the Jews of Paris as “un mouvement général” and “un courant de mort qui aurait traversé la ville.” The river incarnates the metonymic association that connects Algerians and Jews, figuring that link as water. The Seine as a “courant de mort” (which recalls the description of the “fleuve ensanglanté” in *Aurélia Melbourne* [129]) is what allows it to mark a connection between different events – one which involved bodies that were literally thrown in the water, and the other that relies on the Seine as a signifier and synecdoche of Paris as the site of an injustice, in the case of the deportation of the Jews of Paris. The tracking shot filmed from a boat on the Seine river that structures the visual experience of *Aurélia Melbourne* thus manifests this “movement” that seems to be “general” in both a temporal and spatial sense, incorporating the memories of October 17, 1961 and the Holocaust, while also marking Aurélia’s dilution, her immersion, lost (“perdue”) in the crowded waters of historical trauma. This movement, then, is not unidirectional, but constitutes instead a kind of oscillation or shuttling between the universal and the particular. Moreover, Duras’s precision, “Les juifs de Paris valaient trois cent francs par tête,” highlights the conflation of monetary circulation and the circulation of bodies, since the quote evokes how the river “a charrié” the Algerians, but it is the metonymic connection between Algerians and Jews (via the river) that leads to the comment on Jewish bodies as objects with monetary value. This overlaying of two kinds of economies suggests a metaphoric

³⁵ In “Les deux ghettos” (November 1961), Duras juxtaposed interviews with Algerian workers living in the *bidonville* of Nanterre and a survivor of the Warsaw ghetto. Such an analogy was enabled by the “increasing racialization of public space in France during the war,” which illuminated the racial violence perpetrated in Paris in October 1961, allowing a “new understanding of the stakes of war and decolonization” to emerge (Rothberg 242). See *Multidirectional Memory*, pp. 236-245.

relation between the flow of capital and the flow of the river. The reflection on the circulation of bodies as products with exchange value expands and takes a different shape in *Aurélia Vancouver*, while also pursuing the same logic of metonymy established here.

Indeed, it is this nature of the river – its specificity as site of multiple historical traumas in French history, but also its non-specificity and generality – that is productive of the kind of memory embodied by Aurélia Steiner. In the same interview, Duras states:

Pendant ce voyage sur le fleuve, sur ce fleuve qui traverse une ville, une grande capitale de l'Europe, qui pourrait être Varsovie ou Paris, Aurélia appelle son amour disparu. Et alors, j'étends les camps, si vous voulez, aux charniers des guerres, aux terres équatoriales de la faim et de la misère. Il est sur ce versant-là du monde, perdu.

(*Couleur* 187)

The capacity of the river to be both a specific historical site and a metaphor for a larger (geographic and historical) phenomenon is highlighted by this river that traverses a European capital city. Just as Melbourne and Vancouver could have been anywhere, any “endroit de survie,” Paris represents a general category of sites of racialized violence. The geographic trait of the river (shared by many European capital cities), gives way to a more specific historical reference when Warsaw and Paris are the two cities compared, as though at random, due to the prominence of Warsaw as a major site of violence against the Jewish population during WWII and the overall struggle against Nazi Germany. Just as the Warsaw ghetto serves as a space that can also be used as the basis of comparison to the spatial politics of postwar France in “Les deux ghettos,” the river that runs through the French capital provides the basis for connection to different histories.

During the interview, Duras continues her reflection on the river, connecting it now to Aurélia's presence : “Ce jour-là, je dis qu'on parlait d'Aurélia partout. On entend son nom. Sous les ponts. On murmurait son nom. Elle était dans la mémoire de tous. Oui, le fleuve les emportait dans la barque funèbre. Vers la fin singulière du fleuve. La dilution universelle de la mer » (*Couleur* 187). Thus, the journey down the Seine river enacted by the filming of *Aurélia Melbourne* is a deathly voyage in a “barque funèbre” – as it is for everyone whose memory she inhabits, everyone in search of her, pursuing her voice, hearing her name. The river – which we have seen in its specificity as the Seine, and in its comparative mode linking Paris and Warsaw – is now identified by its “fin singulière”: like all rivers, it leads to “La dilution universelle de la mer.” The specificity of historical memories and sites of trauma is thus embedded in the network of commonality that is the global system of waterways, and the interconnectedness of memories (and experiences) of historical trauma is figured by the endpoint towards which that experience of specificity moves us: a universalizing immersion (dilution) in the primal body of the sea.

Aurélia is the figure of this dilution, despite her apparent location in specific cities: “Je la situe naissant là, à Melbourne, naissant au Cap, naissant à Vancouver, mais elle se dilue sur la planète. Elle se dilue, elle est partout. Comme tous les juifs » (*Couleur* 182). Aurélia’s voice, her call in search of “son amour disparu” is also what allows the camps to be extended (“j’étends les camps”³⁶) to spaces beyond them: “aux charniers des guerres, aux terres équatoriales de la faim et de la misère.” But for Duras, this extension, this dilution, is what characterizes the work of collective memory. It is what allows for Aurélia to be “dans la mémoire de tous,” and what allows for the memory of the Holocaust to be everywhere, to extend itself in space and time beyond the limits of the individual survivors. This generalization of memory, for Duras, is collective in the strong sense, touching not just the survivors and their descendants, but anyone with knowledge of the traumatic event: “Elle est partout, y compris dans les camps de concentration, Aurélia Steiner. Du moment que vous avez connaissance de l’existence des camps de concentration, vous y participez. » (*Couleur* 180). Is this “participation” that comes from knowledge of the camps a form of complicity with the system that produced them, or is it an inclusion in the memorial afterlife of survivors?

In *Duras, Writing, and the Ethical*, Martin Crowley articulates what Duras describes as “participation” in slightly different terms, through the concept of interconnection. Referring to her work from 1979 to the mid-1980s (in other words, roughly corresponding to the arc that begins with *Aurélia Steiner* and ends with *La douleur*), Crowley explains that “Duras’s writing of this period becomes the locus of an exploration of interconnectedness which drags the reader into its ethically valorized tangle” (170). Writing the interconnectedness of suffering is how Duras works through the problem of writing historical trauma. Significantly, Crowley describes the dominant trope for this gesture of interconnection as “rampant metonymy” (170), which, I suggest, takes shape cinematically as the tracking shot. For Duras, Aurélia’s “dilution” does not undo her singularity, but rather, her singularity is not physically bound to a single, human body; she is fragmented across space and time. Duras’s statement that Aurélia is “everywhere, including in the concentration camps” is parallel to “from the moment you know about the camps, you participate in them”: the spatial web that is Aurélia’s inhabitation of the globe mirrors the network of knowledge in the aftermath of the traumatic event.

What does it mean for us to “participate” in the camps, from where we sit (in both space and time)? Is this dilution, which figures our participation, something that puts us “where we are not,” to borrow Daney’s expression? Is it appropriative, an obliteration of difference? Before making that determination, let us consider Crowley’s invitation to first see the “generosity” of Duras’s gesture:

³⁶ Or synonymously, *diluted*, as the verb *étendre* can be used for liquids as well.

Threatened with oblivion by the traumatic event, the unique identity of each sufferer, like the singularity of the event itself, is preserved as ineffable by its multiplication into a metonymy of alternative sites and sufferers. The generosity of this move lies in its refusal to allow suffering to be limited, in its global alignment of a chain of real or potential sufferers, liable to share the burden of a suffering which is too great to be borne by any single site. (157)³⁷ In this analysis, Duras's exploration of interconnectivity draws links between subjects without promoting individual *identification* with sufferers. Indeed, the paradoxical nature of Aurélia's identity as fragmented across multiple sites resists the spectator's ability to project herself into Aurélia's position. We have seen a similar displacement of identification in the films, which lack any depiction of the most basic element of viewer identification and suture in cinema: the face.

From this perspective, it no longer appears contradictory that for Duras, the participation (or implication) of non-victims calls for the representation of collective trauma to take place on the level of the individual. Indeed, for Duras, as Claire Cerasi succinctly articulates, the individual "domine et même contient" the collective (180). Or in Duras's expression, Aurélia is the embodiment of particularity, the only means of access to the general: "c'est en allant au plus particulier des choses que j'atteins les autres choses. Je suis allée au plus particulier des Juifs en parlant d'elle, de cette enfant que j'adore, qui est Aurélia » (Duras, *Montréal* 74). The condition of collective memory for Duras seems to be its expression through the particular, but, perhaps counterintuitively, this condensation of the collective into the individual is what allows for the very mobility of that memory, once it has taken on its singular, symbolic form. For many critics, this entails a conceptualization of Aurélia Steiner as the Durassian figure *par excellence* of all historical trauma, suggesting that the "dilution" in *Aurélia Steiner* is not only a spatial dispersion, but also a total dissolving of the distinctions between victims of various histories of violence, across the space and time of human history.³⁸ However, Aurélia's instability as a figure, her fragmentation as a subject, her paradoxical nature, undermine the very terms of *singularity* and *identity*. These tensions are materialized in the spaces of *Aurélia*

³⁷ Crowley is discussing here *Été 80*, a hybrid text (journalism-memoir-fiction) written in the summer of 1980 (less than a year after *Aurélia Steiner*), in which references to the latter are often woven in between Duras's meditations on the two major international news stories on French television during those months: the famine in Uganda and the mass strikes in Gdansk.

³⁸ For example, Sandy Flitterman-Lewis writes, "The name Aurélia Steiner comes to symbolize, for Duras, that constellation of outsiders who bear the burden of historic pain" (271), and Jeanine Parisier Plottel sees Aurélia in an even broader sense as "emblematic perhaps of 'la douleur' and suffering everywhere, from Dachau to Lahore, outside and beyond" (Plottel 55).

Melbourne, as the contrast between the blank spaces of survival and the sedimentary buildup of history and violence in sites of trauma.



Fig. 4: *Aurélia Melbourne*

In *Aurélia Melbourne*, references to the Holocaust intersect with a larger network of allusions to historical violence. The film is constructed entirely of a sequence of vehicle-mounted tracking shots, forming a vision of the city of Paris from the point of view of the river that cuts through it – ranging from the outskirts, to the medieval center, to the open space and wooded shores beyond the city limits.³⁹ The camera’s focus over the course of the film consists largely of the surface of the water, the sky, the architecture that is visible from the banks of the river, and the many bridges that span it. Additionally, human figures appear at times on the bridges, their silhouettes “à contre-jour” (Duras, *Couleur* 184) marking the human population of the city as distant and separate, almost spectral spectators of the unfolding of the film. Or, in Duras’s words, the human figures are faceless forms, and “La caméra les avale, le fleuve les prend, les emporte” (*Couleur* 184), so that the visual marks of human subjects are overtaken by the primary force of both the camera and the river (which are equated syntactically in this formulation). In other words, the movement

³⁹ However, as noted by Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, even though the editing gives the sensation of a continuous tracking shot, it “is composed of images that represent different directions and non-contiguous spaces seen from this river in the heart of Paris. An engaging demonstration of the kind of ‘constructive geography’ which is achieved through editing and is the cornerstone of cinematic signification” (276).

of the water – and of the camera, which is borne by the river’s flow – constitutes the inexorable forward thrust of the film.

The speaking voice of *Aurélia Melbourne* first situates herself in a large room facing a garden, with a view of “cette forêt de roses” (118), but endlessly evokes various other sites across the globe – an unpredictable mobility that, when coupled with the constant displacement on the level of the image with the use of the tracking shot, gives an impression of perpetual, restless movement. The lament of “Où êtes-vous?” punctuates the text, as do references to the cries of a starving white cat, which becomes one of the leitmotifs of the text (until the animal’s sudden and symbolic death at the end). The location of the addressee remains a mystery, more mutable and contradictory than that of the speaking voice:

On dit que vous vivez sur une de ces îles des côtes de la France et encore ailleurs.

On dit que vous êtes dans une terre équatoriale où vous seriez mort il y a longtemps, dans la chaleur, enterré dans les charniers d’une peste, dans celui d’une guerre aussi, et aussi dans celui d’un camp de Pologne allemande. (119-20)

This text is recited during the passage of the camera beneath the vaults of a bridge, as the lateral tracking shot registers the fortress-like wall and the angles of the stone supports (see fig. 5). The visual effect is distinctly claustrophobic, as the underside of the bridge engulfs the space of the screen. This carceral imagery amplifies the effect of the text, as Aurélia’s voice enumerates the various mass graves where the anonymous addressee may now reside.⁴⁰ These rumored locations culminate with “un camp de Pologne allemande,” the most historically and geographically specific of the list; the various possibilities come to a halt with the concentration camp. And yet, the stunning slippage in this passage from life to death (“on dit que vous vivez” . . . “vous seriez mort”), from European island to tropical land, and from plague to war to concentration camp, then gives way to the vastness and immobility of the desert, providing counterpoint to the dizzying movement of the voice:

Je vois que ce n’est pas vrai.

Que lorsque je vous écris personne n’est mort.

Et que vous êtes là vous aussi dans ce continent désert. (120)

This “deserted continent” coincides with (and provides a location for) the capacity of writing to both freeze time and to conjure life, while also paradoxically allowing the two interlocutors to inhabit the same space (“vous êtes là vous aussi”). This writing that halts death also elaborates a lush, varied topography that is delimited by the rare references to national borders. Yet if this proliferation of potential places could be

⁴⁰ Michelle Royer has also written about the prominence of “l’espace carcéral” in Duras’s films, but to different ends, locating it primarily in the representation of interior, domestic spaces as the site of the oppression or imprisonment of women. See *L’écran de la passion*, 84-85.

disorienting in the text, it is anchored just as much by moments of geographic specificity (e.g. “la France,” “la Pologne allemande”) as by the image of Paris that flows by implacably. Indeed, *Aurélia Melbourne* is by turns confining and expansive, shuttling between a sense of enclosure to a sense of global vastness that defies borders.



Fig. 5: *Aurélia Melbourne*

Furthermore, the catalogue of sites recurs later, in slightly altered form, and in seeming response to the questions, “Mais qui êtes-vous?” “Comment cela se ferait-il? / Comment cela se serait-il fait?” (126):

A Londres, au cours de cette peste? Vous croyez?

Ou de cette guerre?

Dans ce camp de l’Est allemand?

Dans celui de Sibérie? Ou dans ces îles, ici? (127)

The search for the addressee’s physical location becomes overlaid here with an investigation of their identity (“qui êtes-vous?”), and a discursive roaming through the various sites that might be able to locate that identity. As we have already seen in the case of Aurélia, the stability of the link between place and identity is constantly undermined by the very proliferation of sites; for Aurélia as well as for her addressee, the fragmentation of identity manifests as geographic dispersion. As Stéphane Bouquet writes: “avoir un lieu est avoir un corps où se mettre” (177) – the equation between the quest for a place and the desire for bodily presence is quite apparent in *Aurélia Melbourne*’s search for the final resting place of the lover, who may be living or dead.

Meanwhile, despite the temporal and geographic range of the addressee's possible locations (in which plague and war seem to converge towards the spectral presence of genocide), Aurélia's narration thematizes a sense of isolation, by virtue of its form as an extended monologue – an epistolary lament with no response from the ambiguous addressee. This solitude is not only due to Aurélia's separation from her desired lover, but is suggested by geographic seclusion as well, ranging from islands to forests, deserts, and seas. If there is an arc or trajectory to this evocative, often elliptical narration, it is the movement from separation and isolation to a kind of contact or reunion, albeit an opaque and mediated one. Seeking to “annuler cette apparente fragmentation des temps qui nous séparent l'un de l'autre” (118), Aurélia seems to reconstruct the traces of the past, while also refusing the reality of its fragmentation (which is always described as only “apparente”). “Jamais, je ne vous sépare de notre amour. De votre histoire” (128), she insists, just as “je ne vous sépare pas de votre corps / je ne vous sépare pas de moi” (134)⁴¹. She describes the rumor that they were separated in the furnace of a concentration camp: “On dit que c'est dans ces crématoires, vous savez, vers Cracovie, que votre corps aurait été séparé du mien... comme si cela était possible...” (130). As the third and final direct reference to the Holocaust in *Aurélia Melbourne* (following “un camp de Pologne allemande” and “ce camp de l'Est allemand”), this moment in the film radicalizes the form of spatial enclosure that characterizes the camp, by locating the bodies of Aurélia and her interlocutor in the “crématoire” itself, which is therefore rendered as the crucial site of this traumatic separation.

Ultimately, however, the space of the concentration camp is not the dominant spatial reference in *Aurélia Melbourne*, although it occupies a much more central position in the narration of *Aurélia Vancouver*, as we have seen. This paradoxical state of simultaneous presence and absence, distance and unity, crystallizes at the site of the river (and ultimately, the fog that emerges from and covers it) – the only site where the two figures ever seem to truly coincide. Approximately midway through the text, we are summoned to listen to the surging water of the river:

Écoutez.

Sous les voûtes du fleuve, ce déferlement.

Écoutez...

Cette apparente fragmentation dont je vous ai parlé, a disparu.

Nous devrions nous rapprocher ensemble de la fin. (125-26).

Thus, the moments when the river is mentioned not only mark the indexical joining together of voice and image, as it inevitably points to the waters of the Seine at the

⁴¹ These lines appear in print on page 134, but they occur earlier in the film, and would correspond in placement to the beginning of page 132.

center of the image,⁴² but it also seems able to (momentarily, temporarily) close the gap or collapse the distance that marks the interlocutor's absence – a movement that will culminate at the end of the film.

In addition to offering what seems to be an opportunity for connection, *Aurélia Melbourne* identifies the river as the material site of historical violence:

On a tué beaucoup, ici.

On le dit.

Tué, oui.

Vous le saviez ?

Presque chaque jour. Pendant mille ans. Mille et mille ans.

Oui. Une fois. Mille fois. Cent mille.

Le fleuve ensanglanté.

On a mis en sang, on a enfermé, on a blessé.

Mille ans. (128-29)⁴³

A millennial history of violence bloodies the river, coloring the image of the Seine in the same gesture. Significantly, the camera is fixed at this moment on the Pont Alexandre III, whose ornate silhouette pierces the sky (see fig. 6), evoking the opulence of Empire. A deeper, historical reading of this image also reveals how this specific bridge connotes the power and wealth of both the French nation and of its late-nineteenth-century ally, Russia, as it is named for Tsar Alexander III and commemorates the Franco-Russian alliance. As we slowly approach, and eventually pass beneath the bridge, the camera lingers especially on the symbolic crest at its center. Thus, the reflection on the Holocaust and the narrative of loss explored by Aurélia's voice is embedded in a more general conceptualization of Western history, one that takes on greater specificity through its superposition over images of the heart of Paris, as national histories and narratives get pulled into the network of spatial references, and which, in turn, are designated by the transhistorical, "on a tué ici."⁴⁴

⁴² In addition to the voice, the aural dimension of the film includes background noise of water, groaning metal, and the boat's motor. The audibility of the river at this point contributes to the indexicality of the command, "écoutez."

⁴³ Citation modified to reflect the film.

⁴⁴ A similar point can be made regarding the part of the film featuring the cathédrale Notre Dame, when Aurélia refers to palaces: "Ils disent que tout avait été construit sur la terre. / Que tout avait été habité, occupé, par des peuples, des gouvernements. / Qu'il y avait des palais sur les rives des fleuves et, entre les palais, des fourrés d'orties, de ronces et des nuées d'enfants courants. Des femmes, maigres" (123). The palaces, inflected by the mention of governments, form a distinct visual analogy with the image of the gothic cathedral, which implies a connection between forms of power, and reflects on architecture as an expression of power.



Fig. 6 : *Aurélia Melbourne*

The movement towards coming together, dissolving the distance and obstacles that separate Aurélia and her addressee (which was initiated by the end of the “apparente fragmentation” [126]), is finally realized at the end of the text: “Un brouillard monte dans le jardin. / Il se répand sur le fleuve” (133), and it is “Par cette blancheur blanche, ce brouillard infini, que j’atteins votre corps” (135). These are the final words spoken before the formula ending of the film (“Je m’appelle Aurélia Steiner / Je vis à Melbourne” etc), but unlike the river, the fog is only textual, a manifestation that may emerge from the visual image (because the fog “se répand sur le fleuve” [133]), but is never tethered to it.

If the “brouillard infini” makes possible the contact with the body of the other (“j’atteins votre corps”), then it also bears a relationship, less directly, to the various histories of violence that mark the river. The concept of the river as site of history arises again near the end of the film, no sooner than to be covered by the fog:

Vous disiez : des histoires traînent le long de ce fleuve, de cette longueur fluviale si douce qu’elle appelle à se coucher contre et à partir avec elle.

Oui. Vous avez tout oublié. [Tout.

Comment faire pour que nous ayons vécu cet amour?

Comment ?

Comment faire pour que cet amour ait été vécu ?]

Un brouillard monte dans le jardin.

Il se répand sur le fleuve. (132)⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Lines in brackets occur in this place in the film, but can be found on page 134 of the text.

As the fog covers the river, just after « vous avez tout oublié », it is paradoxically associated with both reunion and forgetting. But it is not only by means of the fog that the lovers are reunited – “C’est par ce chat maigre et fou, maintenant mort, par ce jardin immobile autour de lui, que je vous atteins” (134). Furthermore, the “vous avez tout oublié” uttered at the end corresponds to a bucolic image in the film, showing the wooded banks of the river, beyond the city limits. We have completed our passage through the urban space, and it is at the point that the description of the fog is set in motion.

This « brouillard infini » may be seen as a kind of meteorological manifestation of memory (and paradoxically, forgetting), connecting disparate subjects by spreading over the river, which has taken on the form of both a localizable and generalizable signifier of histories of violence. There is a sense of continuity to the fog, as this dense substance that flows over the earth, eliding borders, and occupying the distance between sites. Indeed, from the fog in Melbourne to the storm that brings the flood in Vancouver, we are faced with the veritable meteorologization of history and memory.⁴⁶ The ocean and the river that have been the primary loci of *Aurélia Vancouver* and *Aurélia Melbourne* are doubled by the storm and the fog, in the sense that clouds and fog may be defined as atmospheric bodies of water (tiny water particles suspended in the air, fog differing from a cloud only in its nearness to the ground), but ones that are by definition vaporous, mobile, and ephemeral. To think of the fog this way – as *Aurélia Steiner* invites us to do – is to conceive of fog as not only a place, but a place in motion, a memory-place that moves and spreads over the globe, unhindered by boundaries or borders.

Like the river, the agonizing cat in the garden is another emblem of transhistorical suffering: “ces cris du chat lépreux, vous savez, celui aveuglé par la faim et qui appelle à travers le temps » (124). Its cries are also associated with the « bruit de la mer » that is audible « sous les voûtes du fleuve », that river that is so intensely marked by violent histories (124), but its cries are heard and ignored.⁴⁷ It dies in the garden as the fog rises (and Aurélia ignores it while it starves), but it is also part of what allows Aurelia to reach her lover (“C’est par ce chat maigre et fou, maintenant mort, par ce jardin immobile autour de lui, que je vous atteins”). This is a model of memory that hinges not just on a general forgetting, but a specific one – a loss of a life, a suffering body that must be ignored. To live in the aftermath of the

⁴⁶ In this, I concur with the insight of Philippe Azoury, who writes: “Il faudrait pouvoir parler de Duras en météorologue » (155).

⁴⁷ In the paratextual materials related to *Aurélia Steiner*, the cat also emerges as an intersectional figure of Durassian memory. Duras describes the cat as Jewish, like Aurélia (« Elle est le chat lépreux aussi, Aurélia Steiner. Ce juif, ce chat juif? » [*Les Yeux verts* 155]), while the cat’s leprosy references Duras’s memory of Indochina (via leprosy colonies, which she once described as the first concentration camps she ever saw [*find citation*], and which she depicts in the 1966 novel *Le Vice-Consul*).

Holocaust is to be rendered a bystander, whose ignorance or inattention may even become, according to *Aurélia Steiner*, a form of complicity (recall Duras's words: "from the moment you know about the camps, you participate in them").

The question posed by "comment faire pour que nous ayons vécu cet amour?" (with its specific temporality of the past subjunctive) is: what can possibly restore a past connection, and restore it *as* the past? For Duras, the fog may be the answer to this question (along with the cat), and it is the impermanence of both figures (the natural transience of fog, and the narrative death of the cat) that manages to produce the paradoxical presence-absence that is memory. As such, the fog is part of a figurative movement in the film that leads towards the impossible attainment of the body of the other. In other words this impossible union with the body of the lost may be a definition of historical memory for Duras. The meteorology of memory in *Aurélia Steiner* tracks the movement of weather (memory) elements across the globe. Because the bodies of the dead cannot be conjured (even though they are endlessly sought), the narrative voice instead conjures a fog that may be the only place where the "morts sans sépulture" could possibly reside.

As we have seen, Duras wrote that she chose to place Aurélia in Melbourne and Vancouver because "ce sont des endroits éloignés. C'est loin de l'Europe. Je les vois comme des endroits de survie" (*Les Yeux verts* 156). Despite the *Aurélia Steiner*'s diasporic vision – its will to disperse the memory of the Holocaust across across space and time – Duras also consistently maintains the sense of a singular, originary site or figure that remains unattainable and unrecoverable. In *Aurélia Vancouver*, this is the *rectangle blanc*, the father, while the cries of the neglected, dying cat seems to point to a residual and irrecoverable violence in the reunion imagined in *Aurélia Melbourne*. And yet, just as Aurélia speaks of the desire to attain the lost father by means of other bodies, *Aurélia Vancouver* reconstructs the site of destruction through the tracking shots of the lumberyard and the train station (even if it does so by means that it declares insufficient). Indeed, the lumberyard and the train station function like the lovers that come to replace the father – they stand in for the physical site, the place where the extermination happened. *Aurélia Steiner* relies, to a certain extent, on the fantasy of transporting us there – or rather, transporting it to us – but that desire can only be granted obliquely, ambivalently, and problematically, as if in recognition of the ethical compromise it entails. While some critics may ultimately find the film to be mere "sexual and textual fantasy" (Williams 58), the framework I have proposed hinges instead on the ethics of that transportation. The tracking shot makes visible the loss of the dead, and invites us to mourn them – but it does so, paradoxically, through a dislocation of the body. The unsettling impact of *Aurélia Steiner*'s tracking shots suggests that the film resists the kind of aestheticization that makes horror tolerable, to recall Rivette's critique of *Kapo*. But it does seek to place us *là où on n'est pas*, in Daney's words, as its tracking shots articulate unrepairable loss and desire through the thematics of reproducibility and surrogacy. If this desire to regain the

dead – like the desire to have access to the original place of atrocity – can only be fulfilled through surrogacy and substitution, then it risks overwriting, or even erasing, the original figure or site that is so longed for. The metonymic chain of association and figuration that, for Duras, makes the Holocaust available to representation is also predicated on a forceful identification, an “ethically valorized tangle” (Crowley) in which we, as viewers, become implicated.

CONCLUSION

The texts and films discussed in this dissertation illustrate the geographical imaginations of the concentrationary as a space in direct contact with everyday life. Across three chapters, we have evaluated the ethical and political stakes of representing the camps as continuous with (Delbo), emerging in (Camus), or layered onto (Duras) the everyday spaces of urban life. Each of these approaches can be read as ways of making the past an issue of the present; in that sense, they are works of memory. This gives us new insight into how the memory of the spatial forms of containment, regulation, and annihilation that characterized Nazi oppression shaped ways of thinking about and depicting everyday life. Each chapter evaluates imaginative works (memoir, fiction, theater, film) that show how the spatial configuration of the concentrationary infiltrates the city, the landscape, and domestic spaces. Yet the mobility and permeability of the threshold between the concentrationary and the everyday is also revealed by studies in historical geography, urban planning, and architecture.

Robert-Jan Van Pelt recounts that two Nazi architects, Hans Stosberg and Lothar Hartjenstein, spent nearly a year arguing over plans for the 1942 expansion of Auschwitz, “pushing the border between the city and the camp up and down between the proposed avenue and the perimeter of the camp” (112, qtd. in Giaccaria and Minca, 8). This anecdote offers a vivid image of the malleability and indeed the arbitrariness of the border between the camp and the city, as between the concentrationary universe and the spaces of everyday life. The construction and expansion of the concentration and extermination camp was a joint endeavor with urban and regional planning. Indeed, the architecture and infrastructure of Auschwitz would leave an indelible mark on Oświęcim and the surrounding area. Writing in 1955, historian Olga Wormser (who collaborated with Resnais on the research and writing of *Nuit et brouillard*¹) observes, “redevvenue Oświęcim, la ville est restée le centre industriel que les nazis ont créé.”² Even when the city is no longer Auschwitz, capital of Germanified Upper Silesia, the legacy of the concentrationary universe inheres in the industrial traces of the postwar period. The Polish city of Oświęcim that Charlotte Delbo and her fellow prisoners traversed one day en route to a worksite was already part and parcel of the concentrationary universe; indeed, camp-complex of Auschwitz was conceived to function with – and as – a city.

The beginning of *Nuit et brouillard* offers us a litany of place names that have become irreversibly tainted by the existence of the camps: “Le Struthof,

¹ Wormser was among the earliest analysts of the Nazi camps, and went on to publish the first doctoral thesis on deportation in France. See Lindeperg, *Nuit et brouillard: un film dans l'histoire* for a brief biography of Wormser as well as a detailed account of her work on the film.

² Unpublished memoir, quoted in Lindeperg and Wiewiorka 63.

Orientalism, Auschwitz, Neuengamme, Belsen, Ravensbrück, Dachau; Mathausen furent des noms comme les autres sur des cartes et des guides,” but no longer innocuous, these names on the map have become signifiers of the Nazi regime. Indeed, the traces of the extensive network of camps that colonized nearly all of Europe during the Second World War will not disappear from the map, for they are built into the landscape as networks of transit and urban space.³ The map of Europe today offers a different image of the “archipelago” of camps,⁴ but one that intersects with (and in some cases, disturbingly replicates) the systemic cartography referenced, for example, in Delbo’s “Ce point sur la carte.”

In the works of literature and film evaluated here, the camp presents a dark mirror to the city, or is a wretched version of the city, a “cité horrible” in opposition to the “cité heureuse” that more optimistically heralded a new tomorrow at the end of Camus’s *La Peste*. The Paris and Honfleur of Duras’s films are overlaid by the haunting presence of the camp, which, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, is no longer dissociable from even the most distant spaces of everyday life (including such far-flung locales as Vancouver and Melbourne). While Camus had to respond to the question “Why Spain?” at the outset of the Cold War, Duras’s later films raise the questions, “Why Paris, Honfleur, Vancouver, Melbourne?” Camus’s chosen location responded to a logic based in geopolitics and biopolitics, whereas Duras’s geographical dispersion of memory and survival was a gesture founded in the insignificance of place: after the Holocaust, all corners of the globe must be thought of part of the place of atrocity. The fog that overtakes the landscape at the end of *Aurélia Melbourne* is a borderless and mobile site of memory, radically reconceiving the fog of Resnais’s *Night and Fog (Nuit et brouillard)* that first brought the camps to the French public in 1955.

A recurrent theme in this dissertation has been the question of implication. Each of these works call upon us to rethink our relationship to the violent legacy of the camp regime. Delbo commands us, “Essayez de regarder. Essayez pour voir,” but while we may fail to fully meet her gaze on the unbearable images of Auschwitz, her writing also insists on that *attempt* to look as an ethical duty in the present. For Camus, the allegorical model of *L’État de siège* not only inserts the camp into the life of the city, but forcefully implicates postwar democracies in the ongoing potential for a concentrationary regime to emerge from the very structures of State power and sovereignty. Finally, if the cultural memory of the Holocaust and the Nazi camps

³ Andrew Charlesworth provocatively suggests that the European rail network is “the one true memorial to the Shoah in its extent, its topography and geometry” (232). While the actual sites of deportation and arrival (such as train platforms) in various cities and camps are today often unmarked and unremembered, the train tracks – that transported so many to concentration camps and killing centers – remain.

⁴ On today’s archipelago of camps, see Minca, “Geographies of the Camp,” as well as the maps of migrant detention camps on migreurop.org.

seems to be more distant and removed by the time Duras films *Aurélia Steiner* in 1979, that very distance gives rise to an obsessive desire for presence, which manifests formally as tracking shots that insert us into spaces that phantasmatically evoke the concentrationary regime. Over the course of these works, the issue of implication can be seen as transforming from an ethical imperative to seek knowledge without appropriation (Delbo), to a political imperative of vigilance (Camus), to the problem of recognizing our own status as bystanders without attempting, as Daney puts it, to place ourselves “là où on n’est pas” (Duras). Each author thus invites us, in distinct ways, to see the concentrationary in our midst, rather than imagining them to be cordoned off in a remote geography and historical moment.

The constellation of works presented here offer a mapping of the concentrationary that has gone largely unrecognized, but which can help us to think differently about the place of the camp in both past and ongoing histories of oppression and racialized violence. Describing the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, where sunbathing vacationers seem oblivious of the notorious refugee camp located alongside their landscape of leisure, Claudio Minca asks, “how are we, after Auschwitz, still able to metabolize the camps and remain fundamentally indifferent to their presence, implicitly rendering them as part of our everyday geographies?” (75). The imaginative works examined in this dissertation offer us ways of reading – not only texts, but also images and spaces – that can alert us to the ongoing presence of the concentrationary, and perhaps allow us to counteract and find ways to resist the simultaneous pervasiveness and invisibility of the camps in the 21st century.⁵

As we have seen, Camus’s *État de siège* depicts the continuity between totalitarianism and the preceding forms of government, which the dictator maliciously overtakes, like a virus taking over a body. Totalitarianism amplifies and exploits the means of discipline, control, and containment that were already inherent in the polis, both spatially and bureaucratically. As a figure for a totalitarian – and thus concentrationary – regime, the plague demonstrates how the infection of totalitarianism takes over the body politic and makes it ill, but does not fundamentally change its shape – rather, it exploits the legal and juridical structures already in place.⁶

⁵ An expanded understanding of the concentrationary regime has also facilitated inquiries into its historical relationship to (and even origins in) colonialism. See for example Thénault, *Violence ordinaire dans l’Algérie coloniale*, and the work of Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison: *Coloniser Exterminer* and “Les Origines coloniales.”

⁶ This analysis recalls David Rousset’s description of the concentrationary universe as the gangrene of an entire social and economic system, an infection capable of attacking any part of the proverbial body of human society, as well as the language of disease and decay in Delbo’s work that figures the camp system as an abscess on the European landscape.

One year before the October 1948 debut of *L'État de siège*, the first French translation of German-Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin's "Über den Begriff der Geschichte" ("On the Concept of History") was published in *Les Temps modernes*.⁷ Writing in early 1940, shortly before fleeing Vichy France,⁸ Benjamin declares, "La tradition des opprimés nous enseigne que l'état d'exception dans lequel nous vivons est en réalité la règle. Nous devons nous former de l'histoire une conception correspondante" (628). The "state of exception" that characterizes the Third Reich and its aggressive expansion are understood within a lineage of oppression – a lineage that instructs us to conceptualize history in terms of the "exception" that masks itself as exceptional and temporary. Benjamin articulates in temporal terms what Agamben would theorize spatially: the camp as a "permanent spatial arrangement" of the state of exception (*Homo Sacer* 169).

Recent events have only reaffirmed the relevance of Camus's analysis of governmentality and states of exception (which was perhaps informed by Benjamin's insight).⁹ As I write this, France remains in the "state of emergency" that was first declared in the aftermath of the terror attacks on November 13, 2015, and was extended by Parliament for the sixth and final time on July 6, 2017. The extension will end on November 1, 2017, after the adoption of an anti-terrorist law that will permanently inscribe several of the exceptional emergency measures into French law.¹⁰ The state of exception has indeed become the rule.

⁷ "Sur le concept de l'histoire," trans. Pierre Missac. In fact, this was the first translation into any language of Benjamin's text from the original German. An English translation would not appear until 1968, in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt.

⁸ In 1940, one year after the death of Spanish poet Antonio Machado at a French concentration camp, Benjamin crosses the Pyrenees in the other direction, hoping to escape the Nazi invasion. He dies just on the other side of the border, in Spain. The inverse itineraries of Machado and Benjamin result in the same fate: they both die as refugees.

⁹ While it is difficult to speculate, it seems quite likely that, as a writer and thinker deeply engaged in his present moment, Camus would have read Sartre's *Les Temps modernes* at this time.

¹⁰ See http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2017/07/06/les-deputes-examinent-la-prorogation-de-l-etat-d-urgence_5156770_823448.html

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- . *Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 2002.
- . *State of Exception*. Trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- . "What is a Camp?" *Means without End: Notes on Politics*. Trans. Cesare Casarino and Vincenzo Binetti. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Alazet, Bernard. "Notice: Le Navire Night - Césarée - Les Mains négatives - Aurélia Steiner - Aurélia Steiner - Aurélia Steiner." Marguerite Duras. *Oeuvres complètes III*. Paris: Gallimard, 2011. 1658-1678.
- Alvarez, A. "The Literature of the Holocaust." *Commentary* 38.5 (1964): 65-9.
- Azoury, Philippe. "30 000 ans devant la mer." *Filmer dit-elle: Le cinéma de Marguerite Duras*. Paris: Capricci, 2014. 144-161.
- Apollinaire, Guillaume. "La Maison des morts." *Alcools*. Paris: Gallimard, 1920. 39-46.
- Aronson, Roland. *Camus and Sartre: the Story of a Friendship and the Quarrel that Ended It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Autrand, Michel. "L'État de siège, ou le rêve de la ville au théâtre." *Camus et le théâtre: Actes du Colloque tenu à Amiens du 31 mai au 2 juin 1988*. Ed. Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi. Paris: IMEC, 1992. 57-70.
- Barthes, Roland. "La Peste, Annales d'une épidémie ou roman de la solitude?" *Oeuvres complètes I, 1942-1961*. Ed. Éric Marty. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002. 540-45.
- . "Réponse de Roland Barthes à Albert Camus." *Oeuvres complètes I, 1942-1961*. Ed. Éric Marty. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002. 573-74.
- Bataille, Georges. "Le bonheur, le malheur et la morale d'Albert Camus." *Critique* 33 (1949): 184-189.
- . "La morale du malheur: *La Peste*." *Critique* 13-14 (1947): 3-15.

- Begag, Azouz. "La France en panne d'intégration." *Contemporary French Civilization* 41.2 (2016): 273-77.
- Benjamin, Walter. "Sur le concept de l'histoire." Trans. Pierre Missac. *Les Temps modernes* 25 (oct. 1947): 623-34.
- Bond, Lucy, Stef Craps, and Pieter Vermeulen, eds. *Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2017.
- Borgomano, Madeleine. *L'Écriture Filmique de Marguerite Duras*. Paris: Editions Albatros, 1985.
- Bornand, Marie. "Pour une écriture de l'exil." *L'histoire dans la littérature*. Eds. Laurent Adert and Eric Eigenmann. Geneva: Droz, 2000.
- Bott, François. "Un étrange poème d'amour." Delbo, Charlotte. *La mémoire et les jours*. Paris: Berg International, 1985. 7-8.
- Bouquet, Stéphane. "Duras transgenre." *Filmer dit-elle: le cinéma de Marguerite Duras*. Paris: Capricci, 2014. 162-177.
- Brunetaux, Audrey. "Écrire *Auschwitz* et après: Genèse d'un traumatisme." *French Review: Journal of the American Association of Teachers of French* 84.4 (2011): 732-746.
- Bruno, Giuliana. *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*. New York: Verso, 2002.
- Caron, David and Marquart, Sharon, eds. *Les Revenantes: Charlotte Delbo - la voix d'une communauté à jamais déportée*. Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2011.
- Caron, David and Sharon Marquart. "Charlotte Delbo, ou la communauté qui revient." *Les Revenantes. Charlotte Delbo: la voix d'une communauté à jamais déportée*. Eds. David Caron and Sharon Marquart. Toulouse: PU du Mirail, 2011. 9-15.
- Carroll, David. "Les restes de la communauté - les femmes entre elles." *Les Revenantes. Charlotte Delbo: la voix d'une communauté à jamais déportée*. Eds. David Caron and Sharon Marquart. Toulouse: PU du Mirail, 2011. 148-65.
- Camp, Jean. "Le Passé et l'essence de l'Espagne." *L'Espagne libre*. Ed. Georges Bataille. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1946.

- Camus, Albert. *Oeuvres complètes* I-IV. Paris: Gallimard, 2006.
- Carroll, David. *Albert Camus, the Algerian: colonialism, terrorism, justice*. New York: Columbia UP, 2007.
- Cayrol, Jean. *Lazare parmi nous*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1950.
- Cazenave, Jennifer. "La voix off au féminin: Hiroshima mon amour et Aurélia Steiner." *Cahiers de narratologie* 20 (2011): n. pag.
- . "Retour sur Kapo: histoire d'une 'abjection'." *Critique et violence*. Eds. Éric Marty and Jérémie Majorel. Paris: Hermann, 2014. 51-66.
- Cerasi, Claire. *Marguerite Duras de Lahore à Auschwitz*. Paris-Genève: Champion-Slatkine, 1993.
- Chambers, Ross. *Untimely Intervention: AIDS Writing, Testimonial, and the Rhetoric of Haunting*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004.
- Charlesworth, "The Topography of Genocide." *The Historiography of the Holocaust*. Ed. Dan Stone. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 216-252.
- Chion, Michel. *La voix au cinéma*. Paris: Editions de l'Etoile, 1982.
- Cole, Tim. *Holocaust Landscapes*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Crowley, Martin. *Duras, Writing, and the Ethical: Making the Broken Whole*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Crownshaw, Richard. *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Daney, Serge. "Le travelling de Kapo." *Trafic* 4 (1992): 5-19.
- Danks, Adrian. "Don't Rain on Ava Gardner Parade." *Senses of Cinema* 59 (2011): n. pag.
- de Baecque, Antoine. *La Cinéphilie: Invention d'un regard, histoire d'une culture. 1944-1968*. Paris: Fayard, 2003.

- Debord, Guy. "Critique de l'urbanisme." *Internationale situationniste* 6 (1961): 5-11.
- Delbo, Charlotte. *Aucun de nous ne reviendra*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1970.
- . *Une connaissance inutile*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1970.
- . *Le Convoi du 24 janvier*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1965.
- . *La mémoire et les jours*. Paris: Berg International, 2013 [1985].
- . *Mesure de nos jours*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1971.
- . *Spectres, mes compagnons*. Paris: Berg International, 1995.
- Delorme, Stéphane. "Le style et le geste." *Cahiers du cinéma* 687 (2013).
<<http://www.cahiersducinema.com/Mars-2013-no687-2036.html>>.
- Doane, Mary Ann. "The Voice in Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space." *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*. Eds. Elizabeth Weis and John Belton. New York: Columbia UP, 1985. 162-176.
- Domarchi, Jean, et al. "Hiroshima, notre amour." *Cahiers du cinéma* 97 (1959): 1-18.
- Dunant, Ghislaine. *Charlotte Delbo: la vie retrouvée*. Paris: Grasset, 2016.
- Duras, Marguerite and Michelle Porte. *Les lieux de Marguerite Duras*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1977.
- Duras, Marguerite. *Hiroshima mon amour: scénario et dialogue*. Paris: Gallimard, 1960.
- . *La couleur des mots: Entretiens avec Dominique Noguez autour de huit films*. Paris: Benoît-Jacob, 2001.
- . *Le navire Night - Césarée - Les mains négatives - Aurélia Steiner - Aurélia Steiner - Aurélia Steiner*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1979.
- . *Les Yeux verts*. Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1987.
- . *L'été 80*. Paris: Editions de minuit, 1980.

- . *Marguerite Duras à Montréal*. Eds. Suzanne Lamy and André Roy. Montréal: Editions Spirale, 1981.
- During, Élie. "Travelling." *Dictionnaire de la pensée du cinéma*. Eds. Antoine de Baecque and Phillippe Chevallier. Paris: PUF, 2012. 689-693.
- Edmond, John. "Moving Landscapes: Film, vehicles and the travelling shot." *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 5.2 (2011): 131-143.
- Ezrahi, Sidra DeKoven. "Representing Auschwitz." *History and Memory* 7.2 (1995): 121-154.
- Fassin, Didier, and Richard Rechtman. *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Trans. Rachel Gomme. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Felman, Shoshana. "A l'âge du témoignage: Shoah de Claude Lanzmann." *Au Sujet de Shoah: le film de Claude Lanzmann*. Eds. Bernard Cuau et al. Paris: Editions Belin, 1990. 55-145.
- . "Camus' *The Fall*, or the Betrayal of the Witness." *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. Eds. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. New York: Routledge, 1991. 165-203.
- . "Camus' *the Plague*: Or, a Monument to Witnessing." *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. Eds. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. New York: Routledge, 1991. 93-119.
- Fernando, Mayanthi and Catherine Raissiguier. "Introduction: The impossible subject of *Charlie Hebdo*." *Contemporary French Civilization* 41.2 (2016): 125-144.
- Flitterman-Lewis, Sandy. "Nevers, mon souvenir: Marguerite Duras, History, and the Secret Heart of Hiroshima mon amour." *In the Dark Room: Marguerite Duras and Cinema*. Eds. Rosanna Maule and Julie Beaulieu. Bonn, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG, 2009. 259-283.
- Fogu, Claudio. "A 'Spatial Turn' in Holocaust Studies?" *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*. Eds. Claudio Fogu, Wulf Kansteiner, and Todd Presner. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2016. 218-239.
- Foucault, Michel. *Surveiller et punir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.

- Friedlander, Saul, ed. *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution."* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Fritzsche, Peter. *Life and Death in the Third Reich.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008.
- Froloff, Nathalie. "Ce poète qui nous avait promis des roses. . . (Sur une situation de la poésie de Charlotte Delbo)." *Charlotte Delbo, Œuvre et engagements.* Ed. Christiane Page. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014. 137-147.
- Garioi, Monica. "Le totalitarisme dans *L'Homme révolté* et *L'État de siège* d'Albert Camus." » *Journal of Humanistic and Social Studies* 3.1 (2012) : 23-33.
- Gelly, Violaine and Paul Gradwohl. *Charlotte Delbo.* Paris: Fayard, 2013.
- Giaccaria, Paolo, and Claudio Minca. *Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- . "Topographies/topologies of the camp: Auschwitz as a spatial threshold." *Political Geography* 30 (2011): 3-12.
- Gigliotti, Simone, "A Mobile Holocaust?" *Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- . *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust.* New York: Berghahn, 2009.
- Godard, Jean-Luc. "Chacun son Tours." *Cahiers du cinéma* 92 (1959): 31-38.
- Golsan, Richard J. "Spain and the Lessons of History: Albert Camus and the Spanish Civil War." *Romance Quarterly* 38.4 (1991): 407-416.
- Graebner, Seth. *History's Place: Nostalgia and the City in French Algerian Literature.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007.
- Guérin, Jean-Yves. "La représentation de l'état totalitaire dans *L'État de siège*." *Écriture(s) de l'histoire.* Ed. Gisèle Séginger. Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2005.

- Gunning, Tom. "The Whole World Within Reach': Travel Images without Borders." *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*. Ed. Jeffrey Ruoff. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. 25-41.
- Günther, Renate. *Marguerite Duras*. New York: Manchester UP, 2002.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *La mémoire collective*. Paris: PUF, 1950.
- Herbeck, Jason. "Prise de conscience et mise en scène dans *L'État de siège* : Anatomie d'un échec." » *La passion du théâtre : Camus à la scène*. Eds. Sophie Bastien, Geraldine F. Montgomery, and Mark Orme. New York : Rodopi, 2011. 127-139.
- Hill, Leslie. *Marguerite Duras: Apocalyptic Desires*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia UP, 2012.
- Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig and Kohlrausch, Martin. "Introduction: Post-Catastrophic Cities." *Journal of Modern European History* 9.3 (2011): 308-313.
- Hugo, Victor. *Oeuvres poétiques: Tome I*. Ed. Pierre Albouy. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Isaac, Jeffrey C. *Arendt, Camus, and Modern Rebellion*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1992.
- Jarvis, Jill. "Remnants of Muslims: Reading Agamben's Silence." *New Literary History* 45.4 (2014): 707-28.
- Jones, Kathryn N. *Journeys of Remembrance: Memories of the Second World War in French and German Literature, 1960-1980*. London: Maney Publishing, 2007.
- Jullier, Laurent and Jean-Marc Leveratto. "The Story of a Myth: The 'Tracking Shot in *Kapò*' or the Making of French Film Ideology." *Mise au point* 8 (2016).
- Kaplan, Alice, and Kristin Ross. "Introduction." *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 1-4.
- Kaplan, Brett Ashley. *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

- Katerji, Antoine. "Spring Breakers' dans les Cahiers du cinéma: l'idiotie considérée comme un art." *Rue89* (2013). <<http://rue89.nouvelobs.com/rue89-culture/2013/03/25/spring-breakers-les-cahiers-cinema-lidiotie-consideree-comme-beaux-arts-240838>>.
- Klose, Fabian. "Source of Embarrassment': Human Rights, State of Emergency, and the Wars of Decolonization." *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*. Ed. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. 237-57.
- Knowles, Anna Kelly, Tim Cole, and Alberto Giordano. *Geographies of the Holocaust*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.
- Kuby, Emma. "From Auschwitz to Algeria: The Mediterranean Limits of the French Anti-Concentration Camp Movement, 1952-1959." *French Mediterraneans: Transnational and Imperial Histories*. Eds. Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Todd Shepard. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 2001.
- Langer, Lawrence L. "Introduction." Charlotte Delbo. *Auschwitz and After*. Trans. Rosette C. Lamont. New Haven: Yale UP, 1995. ix-xviii.
- . *The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
- Lanzmann, Claude. "Holocauste, la représentation impossible." *Le monde*. 3 March 1994.
- . "Les non-lieux de la mémoire." *Au sujet de 'Shoah', le film de Claude Lanzmann*. Ed. Michel Deguy. Paris: Belin, 1990. 280-292.
- . "The Obscenity of Understanding: An Evening with Claude Lanzmann." *American Imago* 48 (1991): 473-96.
- Lanzmann, Claude, Ruth Larson et David Rodowick. "Seminar with Claude Lanzmann, 11 April 1990." *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991): 82-99.

- Lecoq, François. "Japon mon amour: Regards croisés France/Japon sur la mémoire filmique de la défaite japonaise de 1945." *Culture et mémoire: représentations contemporaines de la mémoire dans les espaces mémoriels, les arts du visuel, la littérature et le théâtre*. Eds. Carola Hähnel-Mesnard, Marie Liénard-Yeterian and Cristina Marinas. Paris: Ecole Polytechnique, 2009. 193-202.
- Le Cour Grandmaison, Olivier. *Coloniser Exterminer: Sur la guerre et l'État colonial*. Paris: Fayard, 2005.
- . "Les Origines coloniales: extension et banalisation d'une mesure d'exception." *Le retour des camps? Sangatte, Lampedusa, Guantanamo...* Eds. Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, Gilles Lhuilier, and Jérôme Valluy. Paris: Editions Autrement, 2007.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique de la vie quotidienne*. Paris: L'Arche, 1958.
- Lévi-Valensi, Jacqueline. "Camus et l'Espagne." *Espagne et Algérie au XXe siècle: Contacts culturels et création littéraire*. Eds. J. Déjeux and D. H. Pageaux. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985. 141-160.
- Levy, Ophir. "Se payer de mots? Godard, l'histoire, les 'camps'." *Critique* 814 (2015): 164-177.
- Liandrat-Guigues, Suzanne and Jean-Louis Leutrat. *Alain Resnais: Liaisons secrètes, accords vagabonds*. Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 2006.
- Lindeperg, Sylvie. *Nuit et brouillard: un film dans l'histoire*. Paris: Odile Jacob, 2007.
- Lindeperg, Sylvie, and Annette Wieviorka. *Univers concentrationnaire et génocide: Voir, savoir, comprendre*. Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2008.
- Maritchik, Youlia. "Ces mots à mille images..." *Dalhousie French Studies* 95 (2011): 55-64.
- Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15.1 (2003): 11-40.
- Megargee, Geoffrey P. "Editor's Introduction to the Series and Volume I." *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*. Ed. Geoffrey P. Megargee. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2009. xxxiii-xxxvi.

- Mesnard, Philippe. "Pourquoi Charlotte Delbo?" *Témoigner entre Histoire et Mémoire: Dossier Charlotte Delbo*. Paris: Éditions Kimé, 2009. 17-22. Print.
- Minca, Claudio. "Geographies of the Camp." *Political Geography* 49 (2015): 74-83.
- Morisi, Eve. *Camus et le souci des autres*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013.
- Moulet, Luc. "Sam Fuller sur les brisées de Marlowe." *Cahiers du cinéma* 93 (1959): 11-19.
- Moyn, Samuel. *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2005.
- Nadeau, Maurice. *Le roman français depuis la guerre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1963.
- Nora, Pierre. *Les Lieux de mémoire*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997.
- Page, Christiane, ed. *Charlotte Delbo : Œuvre et engagements*. Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014.
- Parent, Anne Martine. "Transmettre malgré tout: ratages et faillites de la transmission chez Charlotte Delbo." *Protée* 37.2 (2009): 67-77.
- Pavis, Marie-Christine. "Camus, écrivain lazaréen malgré lui." *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 113 (2013/4): 785-96.
- Perec, Georges. *W ou le souvenir d'enfance*. Paris: Éditions Denoël, 1975.
- Peschanski, Denis. *La France des camps, l'internement. 1938-1946*, Gallimard, 2002.
- Plottel, Jeanine Parisier. "Memory, Fiction, and History." *L'esprit créateur* 30.1 (1990): 47-55.
- Pollock, Griselda. "Death in the Image: The Responsibility of Aesthetics in *Night and Fog* (1955) and *Kapò* (1959)." *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais' Night and Fog*. Eds. Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. 258-301.
- Pollock, Griselda and Max Silverman. "Introduction: Concentrationary Cinema." *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais' Night and*

- Fog (1955). Eds. Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. 1-54.
- Prévost, Claude. "Entretien avec Charlotte Delbo." *La nouvelle critique* 167 (1965): 41-44.
- . "La tragédie c'est la politique (notes sur les camps nazis dans la prose française)." *La nouvelle critique* 167 (1965): 7-34.
- Rapaport, Herman. "Duras' *Aurélia Steiner*, or Beyond Essence." *Auschwitz and After: Race, Culture, and 'the Jewish Question' in France*. Ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman. New York: Routledge, 1994. 313-331.
- Rivette, Jacques. "De l'abjection." *Cahiers du cinéma* 120 (1961): 54-55.
- Roger, Philippe. "Barthes with Marx." *Writing the Image After Roland Barthes*. Ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997. 174-86.
- Rose, Gillian. *Mourning Becomes the Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Rose, Gillian. "Some notes towards thinking about the spaces of the future." *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*. Eds. Jon Bird, Barry Curtis and et al. New York: Routledge, 1993. 70-83.
- Ross, Kristin. *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009.
- . *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Rousset, David. *L'univers concentrationnaire*. Paris: Pluriel, 2010 (1946).
- Royer, Michelle. *L'écran de la passion: Une étude du cinéma de Marguerite Duras*. Mount Nebo, Qld.: Boombana Publications, 1997.
- Salgas-Candoret, Emmanuelle. "Une population face à l'exil espagnol. Le cas des Pyrénées-Orientales (janvier-septembre 1939)." *Exils et migration. Italiens et*

- espagnols en France. 1938-1946*. Eds. Pierre Milza and Denis Peschanski. Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1994.
- Sanyal, Debarati. *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2015.
- Saxton, Libby. *Haunted Images: Film, Ethics, Testimony and the Holocaust*. London: Wallflower Press, 2008.
- . "Tracking shots are a question of morality': Ethics, aesthetics, documentary." *Film and Ethics: Foreclosed encounters*. Eds. Lisa Downing and Libby Saxton. New York: Routledge, 2010. 22-35.
- Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Ed. and trans. George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Sharpe, Matthew. "The plague and the Panopticon: Camus, with and against the total critiques of modernity." *Thesis Eleven* 133.1 (2016): 59-79.
- Silverman, Max. "Hybrid Memory in the City." *Moving Worlds* 11.2 (2011): 57-66.
- . *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013.
- Sjogren, Britta. *Into the Vortex - Female Voice and Paradox in Film*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- Soja, Edward. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso Press, 1989.
- Sontag, Susan. "From *Aids and Its Metaphors*." In Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year*. Ed. Paula R. Backscheider. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992.
- Thénault, Sylvie. *Violence ordinaire dans l'Algérie coloniale: camps, internements, assignations à résidence*. Paris: Odile Jacob, 2012.

- Thirard, Paul Louis. "Pontecorvo est-il abject?" *Positif - Revue mensuelle de cinéma* 533 (2006): 61-62.
- Touré, Birama. "Adamov et Camus: un théâtre lazarien." *Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre* 2.226 (2005): 153-176.
- Traverso, Enzo. *The Origins of Nazi Violence*. Trans. Janet Lloyd. New York: The New Press, 2003.
- Treize, Thomas. "The Question of Community in Charlotte Delbo's Auschwitz and After." *MLN* 117.4 (2002): 858-86.
- . *Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.
- Urban, Florian. *Tower and Slab: Histories of Global Mass Housing*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Van Pelt, Robert-Jan. "A Site in Search of a Mission." *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*. Eds. Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994. 93- 156.
- Van Pelt, Robert Jan and Debórah Dwork. *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Vaughan, Hunter. "The Travelling Frame: The Tracking Shot in Resnais and Godard." *Framed!: Essays in French Studies*. Eds. Lucy Bolton et al. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007. 145-158.
- Virilio, Paul. *Speed and Politics*. Trans. Marc Polizzotti. Semiotexte 2006.
- Wachsmann, Nikolaus. "The Dynamics of Destruction: The development of the concentration camps, 1933-1945." *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories*. Eds. Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann. New York: Routledge, 2010. 17-43.
- Walker, David H. "L'État de siège: Notice." In Albert Camus, *Oeuvres complètes* II. Paris: Gallimard, 2006.

- Webber, Andrew. "Introduction: Moving Images of Cities." *Cities in Transition: the Moving Image and the Modern Metropolis*. Eds. Andrew Webber and Emma Wilson. London: Wallflower Press, 2008. 1-13.
- Whitehall, Jonathan. "L'image menacée: Trois moments d'Aurélia Steiner." *Photographies* 4.1 (2011): 67-80.
- Wieviorka, Annette. *Auschwitz, 60 ans après*. Paris: Éd. Pierre Laffont, 2005.
- . *L'Ere du témoin*. Paris: Plon, 1998.
- Williams, James S. *The Erotics of Passage: Pleasure, Politics, and Form in the Later Works of Marguerite Duras*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Wilson, Emma. "Material Remains: Night and Fog." *October* 112 (2005): 89-110.
- Yaeger, Patricia. "Testimony Without Intimacy." *Poetics Today* 27.2 (2006): 399-423.