

Franco-Algerian Memories in France and Questions of Gender

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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In memory of my grandfather, Arthur John Orchard, 1926 – 2014.

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Abstract

This thesis will explore literary representations of Franco-Algerian memories in France since the end of the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62), with particular concentration on the manner in which gendered identities are represented in these narratives of memory, and how these narratives themselves are gendered and gendering.

This study claims that theoretical links between memory and gender have not been fully explored. I will attempt to examine this overlooked area by focusing on theories of collective memory through a lens of Judith Butler's theory of gender performance, in which she argues that gender is not a natural quality, but a process that gains significance through enactment and repetition. Cultural theorists have identified that the ways in which societies and collective groups remember have become increasingly problematic in the wake of the traumatic events of the twentieth century (World Wars, Genocide, colonial war, mass migration). I will draw on the works of several of these theorists who focus on 'non-competitive' memory in the 20th century; namely, Marianne Hirsch, Alison Landsberg, Mireille Rosello, Michael Rothberg and Max Silverman. The works of these authors have been the basis for which I will argue that collective memory is process of mediation and enactment, in a similar manner that Butler's theory demonstrates that gender is not an attribute but an activity.

With the aid of these theories, I will examine how anti-colonial and anti-racists texts in French from the 1970s either contribute to or challenge narratives of memory that support gendered and gendering concepts. By studying the literary works of Rachid Boudjedra, Ahmed Kalouaz, Didier Daeninckx, François Maspero, Hélène Cixous and Leïla Sebbar, this project will attempt to tackle questions of gender in Franco-Algerian memories that have previously been ignored.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical and contextual overview

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the era of global empires appeared to be coming to an end. India, the jewel in the crown of the British Empire, achieved sovereignty in 1947 and was followed by a wave of decolonisation across the globe. France was not untouched by this surge of newly-independent nations with Morocco gaining independence in 1956. However, at the same time, in neighbouring Algeria, a bitter war for independence was still being fought. From 1954 to 1962, Algeria fought for independence in a brutal and far reaching conflict, finally ending with French defeat.

The memory of this war in metropolitan France still proves to be politically divisive.¹ Up until 1999, the *guerre sans nom* was only euphemistically recognised by France as *les opérations de maintien de l'ordre* (McCormack 2007: 6). French reticence to officially recognise the war is due, in part, to the fundamental challenge to French identity that came with the forging of an independent Algerian nation. Algeria was under French administration for 132 years and considered to be an integral part of France. Therefore, independence in 1962 represented more than the loss of a colony, but required France to redraw its national borders. Defeat in 1962 was reminiscent of the French *débauche* in 1940, producing a ‘certain idea of “la France de Dunkerque à Tlemcen”’ (McCormack 2007: 1). The loss of *l’Algérie française* required the reconception of the parameters of French identity, and produced a series of national reaffirming narratives that largely ignored the history of the war all together. This practice is not unique to the aftermath of the Algerian War. As Claire Gorrara argues, post-war Europe ‘saw the creation of a series of founding narratives, mythic constructs aimed

¹ The creation of a museum dedicated to the memory of ‘l’histoire de la France et de l’Algérie’ in Montpellier was met with various forms of opposition from both French and Algerian groups. The project was finally cancelled in May 2014 (Dejean 2014).

at rallying national communities after the trauma of occupation and civil war' (Gorrara 2009: 129–30). In *Le Syndrome de Vichy* (1987) Henry Rousso argues that the difficult memories of the Second World War, such as the extent of Vichy-Nazi collaboration and the role of French citizens in the deportation of Jews, are left out of collective consciousness. The trauma of the Algerian war has produced similar nationalistic narratives that obscure memories of French loss. Drawing on Rousso's text, Anne Donadey examines the connection between the occultation of collaboration in the Second World War and the effacement of the Algerian war from collective French memory, and labels it 'the Algeria Syndrome' (1996: 215). However, this does not mean that memory of the colonial war has successfully been effaced. As Alec Hargreaves argues, even 'if the "c" word was largely removed from French discourse, its semantic field nevertheless continued to reverberate in other ways' (2005: 3), such as in the language of political discourse. Additionally, the movement of Algerians to France looking for work and the testimonies of those who participated in the conflict all contribute to the survival of memories of the Algerian war in metropolitan France.

This thesis focuses on memories of cases where the Algerian War of Independence extended its arm to metropolitan France, such as the massacre of Algerians in Paris on 17th October 1961. When Algerian protesters peacefully took to the streets of central Paris, they were met with extreme brutality from the police. Since official files were often destroyed or corrupted (and because wounded and dying Algerians avoided going to hospitals for fear of the police) it is very difficult to calculate exactly how many Algerians died as a result of the attacks on 17th October. However, House and McMaster have estimated that in the month of September and October there were at least 120 deaths of Algerians at the hands of French police. Whereas other estimates are far less conservative, the exact figure will never be known (House and McMaster 2006: 167-168). Detained and deported, or beaten and drowned in the Seine, this massacre brought the realities of colonial warfare to French soil. However, the

massacre was almost instantly covered up by French officials and press (while not all journalists accepted this silence). Although memories of this event have not been completely effaced, it is nevertheless ‘a marginal memory in France, since it does not fit in with any of the various dominant memories within society’ (House and MacMaster 2006: 191). The ways in which authors have represented this massacre, as well as other cases of anti-Algerian violence, can give us insight into how France collectively remembers, or tries to forget, its colonial past.

Memory and gender; theoretical frameworks

Before I begin my analysis of literary examples of collective memory of the Algerian war, it is important to clarify what I mean by collective memory. Fundamentally, memory is the way in which human beings process information about the past. However, memory is not simply experienced by individuals, but plays an important role in the way that societies and communities function. The idea of ‘*mémoire collective*’ was popularised by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who argued that memory is a socially organised phenomenon:

La succession de souvenirs, même de ceux qui sont les plus personnels, s’explique toujours par les changements qui se produisent dans nos rapports avec les divers milieux collectifs, c’est-à-dire, en définitive, par les transformations de ces milieux, chacun pris à part, et de leur ensemble. (1997: 95)

What we learn from Halbwachs’s ‘*mémoire collective*’ is that as the social context of a community changes and evolves, so do the memories that are important to members of that group. Moreover, Halbwachs has argued that by remembering collectively, individuals can

experience events for which they were never present. This phenomenon is particularly important for the formation of national identities:

Durant le cours de ma vie, le groupe national dont je fais partie a été le théâtre d'un certain nombre d'évènements dont je dis que je me souviens, mais que je n'ai connu que par les journaux ou par les témoignages de ceux qui y furent directement mêlés. Ils occupent une place dans la mémoire de la nation, mais je n'y ai pas assisté moi-même. Quand je les évoque, je suis obligé de m'en remettre entièrement à la mémoire des autres, qui ne vient pas ici compléter ou fortifier la mienne, mais qui est la source unique de ce que j'en peux répéter. (98)

In Halbwachs's argument, the national group becomes a stage upon which certain events are commemorated and popularised in a collective narrative. It is thanks to this collective memory that individuals can commemorate, borrow, re-enact and therefore indirectly experience the memories of others. These shared memories, collective memories, engender the sense of belonging to a particular group, or even, nation. Indeed, for Benedict Anderson, nations are 'imagined communities'. Nationality requires the individual to partake in the socially-constructed cognitive manipulation of memories, so that individuals 'could see themselves as "nationals"' (2006: 140). Imaginatively 'remembering' an event that one never lived is therefore instrumental in the process by which individuals consider themselves a member of a wider group and identity.

Pierre Nora added to the debate surrounding this national construction of collective memories with his epic *Lieux de mémoire* project. According to his study, certain sites and places are imbued with particular commemorative purposes that reinforce a sense of national identity. According to Pim den Boer '*Lieux de mémoire* are also mnemotechnical devices, but

extremely ideological, full of nationalism, and far from being neutral or free value judgments [...] *Lieux de mémoire* were primarily part of the identity politics of the French nation and functioned to imprint the key notions of national history on the *outillage mental* of the French citizens' (2008: 21). For Nora, however, the political manipulation of commemorative sites is not the result of organic or natural memory. These *lieux de mémoire* exist because societies are *unable* to organically remember. And so, memory is artificially 'crystallised' in physical sites of commemoration. Indeed, for Nora, the proliferation of *lieux de mémoire* symbolises an 'effondrement' of memory:

C'est le monde entier qui est entré dans la danse, par le phénomène bien connu de la mondialisation, de la démocratisation, de la massification, de la médiatisation. À la périphérie, l'indépendance des nouvelles nations a entraîné dans l'historicité les sociétés déjà réveillées par le viol colonial de leur sommeil ethnologique. Et par le même mouvement de décolonisation intérieur, toutes les ethnies, groupes, familles, à fort capital mémoriel et à faible capital historique. (Nora 1984: xvii-xviii)

Nora argues that the conditions of a globalised world, fuelled by decolonisation, have contributed to the collapse of organic memory and driven the need to mediate memory across commemorative sites. This passage is one of the few references to colonial history in Nora's entire study as the 'nations nouvelles' of newly-decolonised countries remain 'à la périphérie' of the main focus of his study, namely France (Rothberg 2010: 4). Nora imagines France as being at the centre of French history and therefore marginalises the role that former French colonies have played in the formation of French identity and memory, spatially reinforcing a separation of their histories. He demonstrates the historical disregard for the way in which colonisation and decolonisation have contributed to the creation of western national identities. I will argue, however, that Franco-Algerian and French writers use their writing as a way to

‘remember’ events from French colonial history and that they stage these written commemorations in France in order to reintegrate these marginalised events into trans-national narratives of French and Franco-Algerian memory. It is in this way that memories of the Algerian war transcend boundaries of national and racial identity.

Since collective memory is considered to be a social phenomenon, the events that are commemorated collectively are normally constructed by the people who make up those groups. The question of how nationality, race and religion mediate the manner in which groups of people collectively remember has often been discussed in cultural studies. However, the way in which collective memory is gendered has been largely overlooked. Regarding memories of the world wars, historian Nancy M. Wingfield has argued that ‘collective memory of the world wars is both selective and essentially gendered’ (2006: 10). I suggest that this principle also applies to memories of colonial conflict. I propose that studying memories of colonial trauma through a lens of feminist theory may help us to understand how memories of the Algerian War and anti-Algerian racism have been marginalised. The notion that theories of gender and feminism can prove useful for memory studies has been put forward by Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, who state that:

gender, along with race and class, marks identities in space and provides a means by which cultural memory is located in a specific context rather than subsumed into monolithic and essentialist categories. Moreover, gender is an inescapable dimension of differential power relations, and cultural memory is always about the distribution of and contested claims of power. What a culture remembers and what it chooses to forget are intricately bound up with issues of power and hegemony, and thus with gender. (2002: 5-6)

In other words, the power structure that places French identity in a position of authority over Algerian identity, which in turn obscures memories of colonial conflict, is intrinsically related to questions of gender.

In this thesis, I take the work of Judith Butler as my major theoretical framework with regard to questions of gender. Butler's theory of gender performance builds upon Beauvoir's famous notion that 'on ne naît pas femme, on le devient' (2007: 13) by distinguishing between sex and gender. Sex is the biological definition of the human body as female or male whereas when we talk of gender we refer to an activity that creates female or male identities, and not an inherent or 'natural' attribute. In other words, gender is created, enacted and performed; it is not organically present in the human body. Additionally, Butler claims that gender is an action which must be enacted and repeated in order to gain significance:

Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. (2006: 191)

However, in my thesis, I am not solely interested in the ways in which the *body* is gendered, but how this gendered and engendering action produces gendered *memories* and *commemorative practices*. I intend to explore how collective memories of colonial trauma are gendered by exploring the way feminist theorists have shown that national identities and the idea of the nation state are gendered concepts:

All nationalisms are gendered; all are invented; and all are dangerous [...] in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to technologies of violence. As such nations are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind; as systems of cultural representation whereby people come to imagine a shared experience of identification with an extended community, they are historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed. (McClintock 1997: 89)

McClintock's observations highlight the constructed nature of the nation and that, subsequently, this construction is performed as a 'historical practice'. A gendered and gendering performance of nationalism and national identity supports certain tropes of national unity. For example, she goes on to argue that the nation is modelled upon the image of the patriarchal family which guarantees male power since 'the subordination of women to man and child to adult was deemed a natural fact, hierarchies within the nation could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature' (91). Whereas McClintock argues that gendered nationalism is constructed through 'historical practice', I postulate that, since national identities and groups are formed over the creation of a shared collective memory (as Halbwachs argues above), commemorative practices must also assist in the creation of a gendered nationalism and national identity. Furthermore, I suggest that these commemorative practices not only engender national identities but are surely gendered in themselves.

It is important to consider the following question when introducing feminist theory into the memory debate: how can we use gender as a category of analysis in memory studies without adding 'gender' as another identity battling for commemorative recognition? In other words, how can we talk about cultural memory from a gendered point of view without competing against other categories of identity, such as race, nationality, or religion? In order to attempt

to answer these questions and demonstrate the ways in which representations of post-colonial Franco-Algerian memory and questions of gender intersect, I will take the works of Marianne Hirsch, Alison Landsberg, Mireille Rosello, Michael Rothberg, and Max Silverman as the explicit framework for my thesis. Theories of memory put forward by these cultural critics provide arguments against the notion that collective memories are particular to certain groups of people; '[m]emories are not owned by groups – nor are groups owned by memories' (Rothberg 2009: 5). This contradicts the perspective put forward by the likes of Jan Assman who states that '[w]hereas knowledge has a universalist perspective, a tendency towards generalization and standardization, memory, even cultural memory, is local, egocentric, and specific to a group and its values' (2008: 113). This view contributes to the notion that memories are territorialised, that they belong to certain places and peoples, and creates a hierarchy of commemorative importance in which memories compete for recognition. In this competitive model, memories are mobilised like ammunition in battle in order to maintain a certain group's supremacy over commemorative territory. To avoid simply contributing to this 'memory war' I will use *non-competitive* models of memory as a theoretical framework. In other words, I argue that traumatic memories do not always solely belong to those who experience trauma first hand.

Marianne Hirsch's theory of *post-memory* offers an important starting point in our understanding of non-competitive memory theory. Hirsch defines post-memory as:

the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic event that can be neither understood nor recreated. (Hirsch 1997: 22)

For Hirsch, using examples from children of Holocaust survivors, memories of a traumatic event can be experienced by the descendants of those who lived this trauma first hand. Generational transmission of memory is interrupted by trauma, and so descendants of survivors rely on post-memory to commemorate the experiences of their family members; in other words, they ‘remember’ the trauma of their older relatives by reconstructing memory for themselves, be it via stories, artefacts or imagination. More importantly, the post-memory of an event is not simply a diluted version of the lived memory; post-memory ‘need not be absent or evacuated: it is as full and as empty, certainly as constructed as memory itself’ (Hirsch 1997: 22). Hirsch has argued, therefore, that memories of a ‘lived’ experience are as equally as constructed and mediated as *post-memories*. With her theory, she has legitimised memories that have been ‘borrowed’ by those who did not live the memory directly.

Michael Rothberg coined the term ‘multi-directional memory’ to begin to explain the way in which collective memories can be informed by, as well as inform, seemingly unrelated sites of trauma. This is possible since memory is ‘subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; [it is] productive and not privative’ (Rothberg 2009: 3). Memory is fluid and not fixed to certain groups, and therefore can transcend boundaries established by these groups, be it race, nationality, or religion. In this way, Rothberg demonstrates how memories of the Holocaust can inform memories of decolonisation, and vice versa. This ‘multi-directionality’ transcends the competitive model by suggesting that, for better or worse, memory does not respect such clearly defined distinctions such as nation, religion or race.

However, these theories of non-competitive memory are not without their criticisms, especially concerning the ethics of representing traumatic memory. For Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weilnböck this interest in traumatic memory is symptomatic of ‘the intellectual project of thinking against the grain of Western culture [... which has] turned into a self-

important and convenient academic pursuit, especially but not exclusively in the trendy celebration of trauma' (2008: 231). Their argument and discomfort with trauma studies seems to be in reaction to the boom in memory studies since the 1980s. However, they ignore how this interest in cultural trauma as an example of human relativism pre-existed a so-called retrospective intellectual celebration of trauma. As Max Silverman has argued in *Palimpsestic Memory* (2013), the idea that the oppression of colonised peoples echoed the brutality of the Holocaust and the occupation of Europe by Nazi forces was already prevalent at the time of decolonisation:

in the immediate post-war period when returnees from the camps, commentators on the catastrophe that had just occurred and the victims of colonial dehumanization were attempting to understand the nature of racialized violence and horror, the perception of interconnections between different moments of violence was an important part of the reappraisal of the human in the wake of extreme terror. (Silverman 2013: 4)

Silverman argues that historical narratives have overlooked this interconnectedness of sites of violence, resulting in the compartmentalisation of histories and memories of violence along ethnic and national lines. Silverman's theory of palimpsestic memory aids us in understanding that memories of different sites of trauma do not necessarily *compete* against each other (in his example, the Holocaust and French colonisation of North Africa). Instead, these different memories can inform and be informed by each other. Therefore, theoretical interest in traumatic memory is not simply a way to elevate memories of trauma 'into the status of a new master narrative' (Kansteiner and Weilnböck 2008: 229) but seeks to understand the complex ways in which sites of trauma can be shared across cultural, ethnic and religious groups without reducing the specificities of each.

The concern expressed by Kansteiner and Weilnböck in relation to the traumatic memory debate is also based on a belief that thinking about memory as mediated collapses post-traumatic stress with ‘[a] vague, metaphorical concept of trauma’ and therefore belittles the importance of original testimony (2008: 237). In making such a statement, they imply that there is a ‘pure’ form of lived memory that exists *before* mediation by the individual who remembers, and that when memory is re-presented artistically this re-presentation risks undermining the original memory. However, as Susannah Radstone argues, even privately experienced personal memories are mediated:

Memory is always mediated. Even involuntary, personal memory, in the sense, that is, of those unspoken memories that seem to emerge spontaneously and that accompany and give depth and texture to everyday life in the present, are mediated [...] even personal memory flashes, in all their apparent immediacy and spontaneity, are constructions mediated by means of complex psychical and mental processes. (Radstone 2005: 135)

Therefore, the debate on traumatic memory highlights that all memory is mediated and there is no single, ‘pure’ or correct version of the past. Indeed, for Mireille Rosello, the articulation of memory is always a translation and, therefore, can never be entirely objective:

Remembering, historicizing, making one’s account public, at least to oneself, demands a continuous act of translation [...] The past is always rewritten or retold because it was already once before written and told [...] And each ambition to tell the truth, even or especially if it is a sophisticated practice that includes one’s own subjectivity, is a form of instrumentalization. (2010: 17-18)

Rosello's argument is significant since she demonstrates that when we write about the past, we are instrumentalising it and therefore any original experience is utterly out of reach. Instead of claiming to show a true version of event, Rosello argues that narratives of memory can contain elements of the 'reparative':

what I call the reparative in narratives blends two implicit agendas. The goal is to invent or perhaps to recognize and celebrate, where it exists, a new type of 'breaking free'. It does not have to be a breaking free 'from' the past but a recognition that living with the ever-present past is unavoidable, that, therefore, the present is this so-called past of violence and guilt, but also that a welcoming of that heritage does not mean that we must reproduce it. (19)

In other words, the 'reparative' in narratives of memory (be it public, private, creative or otherwise) is the recognition that it is not possible to repair the past. Furthermore, by turning to the past 'reparative' narratives do not succumb to a melancholic repetition of history. For Rosello, the 'reparative' in memory accepts that the re-articulation of the past in the present is always mediated, ambiguous and therefore cannot be seen as a cure or a warning.

Halbwachs understood the importance of mediation of memory in stating that 'je porte avec moi un bagage de souvenirs historiques, que je peux augmenter par la conversation ou par la lecture' (1997 : 98). Although mnemonic technologies were fairly limited for Halbwachs (he only considers the transmission of memory via *la conversation* and *la lecture*) this position demonstrates that by using media we can broadcast certain memories and therefore reconstruct them. In Alison Landsberg's study of 20th century media and memory, *Prosthetic Memory*, she contributes to the idea that the original lived experience is not necessarily the principal or purest form of memory:

[u]nlike its precursors, prosthetic memory has the ability to challenge the essentialist logic of many group identities. Mass culture makes particular memories more widely available, so that people who have no ‘natural’ claim to them nevertheless incorporate them into their own archive of experience. (Landsberg 2004: 8-9)

What we can learn from Landsberg’s theory is that no memory is unmediated and therefore there can be no unequivocal true, pure version of memory. Indeed, by mediating collective memory we can recover an incomplete or limited understanding of the past. Furthermore, these collective memories are fluid and not fixed to specific groups: ‘prosthetic memories are transportable and hence not susceptible to biological or ethnic claims of ownership’ (19). Nor are they formed entirely according to Halbwachs’s ‘social frameworks’ that rely upon identity politics. Instead, they are ‘neither essentialist nor socially constructed in any straightforward way: they derive from a person’s mass-mediated experience of a traumatic event of the past [...] They are privately felt public memories’ (Ibid).

Literary case studies

Although Landsberg’s theory of prosthetic memory applies to technologies of mass media, cinema and television, I will apply her theory, as well as the others mentioned above, to *literary* case studies. Robinson has noted that ‘[i]nterest in the narrative representation of the past, in both historiography and historical fiction, has mushroomed since the 1960s’ (2011: x). Concern for memories of the world wars has sparked similar interests in other international conflicts and human disasters, such as colonialism, decolonisation and mass migration. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin’s classic *The Empire Writes Back* demonstrates the role that post-colonial literature has played in reanimating debate around the history of the British Empire and makes the case for post-colonial writers who write back against official,

Eurocentric memories of colonialism (1989). It is in this context of the memory boom that the novel has been transformed into a mnemonic device. This is possible since, as Jimia Boutouba demonstrates, writing is a way of remembering and challenges the lack of commemoration of colonial history:

Writing thus represents at once a commemorative gesture and a re-constructive effort [...] Silence, the absence of knowledge, and exile all epitomize a politically significant component of the legacy of the history of French colonization and the power structures it has produced to isolate and dominate the other. (2009: 234)

However, despite this post-war memory boom, there has been little critical work on the link between gender and the literary representation of these memories. If, as Boutouba argues, a lack of commemoration of colonial events produces ‘power structures [...] to isolate and dominate the other’, how do they isolate and dominate the sexual other? Furthermore, how are gender roles manipulated in order to accommodate this isolating and dominating process? A large body of critical work exists regarding Algerian women writers who write about memories of the Algerian War of Independence (see Alison Rice’s excellent *Polygraphies* 2012). For example Assia Djébar, whose body of artistic work has been invaluable in raising awareness regarding the role of women in the Algerian war and Algerian nationalism, has received much critical attention concerned with the subversion of the colonial gaze (Mortimer 2005), and the plight of women under Algerian nationalism (Hiddleston 2004). However, while Djébar’s oeuvre aims to retrieve the suppressed voices (and memories) of women in repressive environments, I will demonstrate in this thesis how narratives that depict memories of anti-Algerian violence are themselves gendered and gendering, and how the practices by which French and Franco-Algerian cultures commemorate the past are associated with a gendered hierarchy of power.

This study will analyse texts by Rachid Boudjedra, Ahmed Kalouaz, Didier Daeninckx, François Maspéro, Leïla Sebbar and H  l  ne Cixous. A feminist perspective on post-colonial narratives of memory may seem at odds with the authors I have chosen to study in this thesis; four out of the six authors are male, all write in French and only Boudjedra continues to live in Algeria. However, I have chosen these texts because they provide interesting and enlightening examples of the ways in which narratives of memory are constructed in a gendered and gendering ways, regardless of the sex of the author. In general, I have chosen these texts because they can be collectively categorised as anti-racist and anti-colonial. Some have been highly influential in bringing traumatic memories of the Algerian war, such as the 17th October 1961 massacre, into public recognition and, despite being written in French, challenge Eurocentric perspectives of 20th century history. However, above all, I have selected these texts because they produce, implicitly and explicitly, contrasting perspectives on narratives of memory as gendered or gendering. In other words, some of the authors studied in this thesis either rely on gender stereotypes in the representation of memory or perpetuate traditional gender roles associated with commemorative practices (Boudjedra, Daeninckx, Cixous), while others actually undermine gender stereotypes and demonstrate the limitations of employing gender binaries in narratives of memory (Kalouaz, Masp  ro, Sebbar).

In Chapter 1, I will discuss the two texts *Topographie id  ale pour une agression caract  ris  e* by Rachid Boudjedra (1975) and *Point Kilom  trique 190* by Ahmed Kalouaz (1984). Both these texts take place after Algeria won independence in 1962 and depict the murders of Algerians while in France. These texts shed light on the ways in which anti-Algerian violence in France post-1962 is symptomatic of the lingering presence of the memory of the Algerian war. In other words, post-colonial French metropolitan society is ‘haunted’ by its colonial past. Rachid Boudjedra was born and raised in Algeria, and has carved out successful literary

careers on both sides of the Mediterranean. Indeed, Farida Abu-Haidar describes him as a bipolar writer ‘whose writing straddles two cultures, French and Arabic’ (1989:40). His literature can be described as socio-political since it focuses on the treatment of socially excluded peoples in both Algerian and French societies. Like Boudjedra, Ahmed Kalouaz was born in Algeria but moved to France early in his life and only writes in French. Not as widely known as Boudjedra, Kalouaz writes about the situation of North-Africans living in France and has been described as a *beur* writer (*beur* signifying French descendants of North-African migrants in France) (J. D. Gauthier 1993: 653). However, his writing is more lyrical than usual *beur* narratives that became popular in the 1990s. Kalouaz poetically crafts intricate narratives that deal with loss and absence in everyday life, often drawing on human interest news stories, or *fait divers*, for narrative structure. At first glance, these two novels appear to be very similar; both take place in the public space of public transport (one in the Parisian metro, the other on a night train), and both depict the murder of an Algerian at the hands of French thugs. In comparing these texts, however, I will demonstrate how they differ in their attempts to subvert dominant memory narratives in France regarding the Algerian war. Whereas Boudjedra’s text re-enacts gendered tropes vis-à-vis colonial power structures, Kalouaz constructs a polyphonic narrative that moves beyond colonial gender binaries.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss two texts that deal with the memory of the 17th October 1961 massacre of Algerian protesters in Paris: Didier Daeninckx’s *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984) and François Maspéro’s *Les Passagers du Roissy-express* (1989). While neither of the authors have familial links to Algeria, they both attempt to bring to light the suppressed memories of colonial violence on metropolitan soil by describing the events of 17th October. These texts are also concerned with war-time memories of the deportation of the Jews and French collaboration with the Nazis. *Meurtres pour mémoire* has been praised for bringing these memories of war-time and colonial atrocities to light after being obscured by the

mythologising narratives of post-war and post-colonial France. The novel was a major success, won ‘the Grand prix de littérature policière of 1985 and heralded the start of a career that would see Daeninckx feted as the leading light of a new generation of "committed" roman noir writers’ (Gorrara 2005: 136). On the one hand, Daeninckx’s novel innovatively uses the *noir* tradition to bring historical crimes to light. On the other hand, the novel also inherits unhelpful gender stereotypes from the *noir* tradition. In contrast, Maspero’s text does not adhere to any particular literary style; part travel writing, part socio-cultural document. In *Les Passagers du Roissy-express* Maspero is the ‘voyageur étonné’, travelling across the Parisian *banlieue* with photographer Anaïk Frantz ‘examining in the process French national memories and identities’ (Jones 2009: 336). Maspero began his career publishing left-wing books, including anti-colonial texts during the Algerian War. *Les Passagers* is particularly concerned with countering stereotypes which depict the *banlieues* as impoverished wasteland inhabited by immigrants who offer no cultural value. Frantz’s photography and Maspero’s writing interact to create a pluralistic and shifting narrative that raises the problem of representing the cultural and sexual other as well as the politics of remembering.

In Chapter 3, the role played by gender in commemorative practices is more explicit since I examine two texts by female writers; the play *L’Indiade, ou l’Inde de leurs rêves* (1987) written by Hélène Cixous and *La Seine était rouge* (1999) by Leïla Sebbar. Cixous is one of the major thinkers of the 20th century, whose writing has challenged and revolutionised feminist theory. However, studies of Cixous’s oeuvre have focused on the notion of *l’écriture féminine* whereas her theatrical writings have been largely overlooked (Dobson 2002: 11). Furthermore, there has been little criticism of her work regarding colonialism and decolonisation (Marsh 2007: 165-6). I argue that her play *L’Indiade* shows that, when writers draw upon orientalist stereotypes when they represent the ‘east’, these representations are normally gendered feminine. On the other hand, Sebbar’s work is most often associated with

the deconstruction of orientalist stereotypes of Algerian women, ‘as critics have consistently underlined [her] work is concerned with the visual, aiming to deconstruct voyeurism, subverting the gaze and looking specifically at how this affects women’ (Stafford 2007: 15). I suggest that, in *La Seine était rouge*, Sebbar stages memory so that commemorative practice transcends tropes of binary genders. Whereas Cixous embraces the notion of an eastern, ‘feminine’ orality as being an alternative to western patriarchy, Sebbar’s text undermines binary distinctions in gender and genre by deconstructing the association of Algerian traditions of oral memory narratives with femininity.

CHAPTER ONE

Rachid Boudjedra and Ahmed Kalouaz: The ‘Haunting’ of Colonial Sexuality in Anti-Algerian Violence

Memory as a gendered activity

Judith Butler differentiates gender from sex by establishing that gender is not a biological fact or pre-existing characteristic. Instead, gender is an act or action which is constantly in the process of mediation. In making this distinction, Butler argues that the gendered body is performative, that ‘acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organising principle of identity as a cause’ (2006: 185). By identifying the gendered body as an ‘effect’ of ‘acts, gesture and desire’, we can understand that ‘gender is not an attribute but an activity’ (Moloney and Fenstermaker 2002: 194). Indeed, gender is an activity undertaken by individual and collective acts, crafted by rituals and actions (Butler 2010: 419), whether everyday social acts or textual enunciations, such as in film, art or in literature. Moreover, Butler’s argument demonstrates that the body does not naturally contain a gendered ‘essence’, but that the body *performs* gender and this performance is both *gendered* and *gendering* – in other words, the action both produces gender and is a product of gender.

Collective memory is also not an attribute but an activity which is performed in a similar fashion to gender. Memory does not exist naturally or biologically within a culture but is produced and reproduced through action and re-enactments. Like gender, memory does not fit easily into a single category as it is ‘subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative’ (Rothberg 2009: 3). I am not attempting to

collapse one category (gender) into another (memory), nor equate the process by which memory is produced with those that perform gender, since they are indeed different. While gender is a performed act, memory is a re-enactment of the past in the present. However, I do claim that they intersect. Memory and gender are both fluid and unstable processes of mediation and negotiation which acquire significance through their repetition and re-enactment. In this chapter, I propose that the processes that produce cultural memory and gender converge and are, at times, interdependent; that the act of memory can also be gendered and gendering. The examples that I will be examining in this chapter are texts which portray anti-Algerian violence in post-colonial metropolitan France. These texts portray racist violence as a 'haunting' of colonial violence, a mnemonic re-enactment of colonial power. However, I suggest that this re-enactment of the colonial past also mirrors the imagined gendered codes of colonial sexuality by which a 'masculine' and 'virile' France possessed a 'feminine' and 'violated' Algeria for 132 years.

Before I discuss these literary examples, it is important to establish how colonial national identities are coded according to sexuality. Colonisation is the physical, mental and geographical occupation of one group of people by another. In colonial discourse, the coloniser is able to justify this treatment of another group of people by imagining them as inferior, and therefore enabling their subjugation and dehumanisation. While it is obvious that colonial subjugation is performed on the assumption of racial superiority of the coloniser, it should not be overlooked that the colonised was also deemed inferior in terms of sexuality. The term sexuality here refers to more than questions of sexual relations, but customs, ideas and rituals associated with gendered bodies. I share Evelyne Accad's conceptualisation of sexuality as incorporating 'notions of territory attached to possession and jealousy' (1990: 2). In other words, within a colonial context, the process of occupying and possessing territory is also a symbolic act by which coloniser and colonised are sexually defined; the coloniser as

jealous possessor, and the colonised as the jealously possessed. The coloniser who possesses is envisaged in terms of masculine imagery, and colonisation is a symbolic penetration of new, virgin, and 'feminine' territory. It is important to recognise that analysing colonial hierarchies through a lens of feminist theory is not simply the facile collapsing of sexual and racial difference. Indeed, as Butler argues, analytical categories of 'race', 'sexuality' and 'sexual difference' can, and do, intersect:

Though there are clearly good historical reasons for keeping 'race' and 'sexuality' and 'sexual difference' as separate analytical spheres there are also quite pressing and significant historical reasons for asking how and when we might read not only their convergence, but the sites at which the one cannot be constituted save through the other. (1993: 168)

However, Butler approaches this issue with caution since although theories of gender and race are at times integral to each other, it is essential to bear in mind that 'the sexualisation of racial gender norms calls to be read through multiples lenses at once' (2006: xvii).

Mrinalini Sinha claims that Victorian fears of female sexuality are duplicated in the colonial creation of an 'effeminate Bengali' (1995). During the era of colonial expansion, both women and colonised people were considered to be incapable of autonomously controlling their sexuality, and therefore they had to be monitored and controlled by an external power structure – the coloniser and patriarch. Similarly, in Saïd's *Orientalism* (1978), the colonised are not only differentiated racially but also by notions of sexual difference:

An Arab Oriental is that impossible creature whose libidinal energy drives him to paroxysms of over-stimulation – and yet, he is as a puppet in the eyes of the world, staring vacantly out at a modern landscape he can neither understand nor cope with. (Saïd 2003: 312)

What Saïd's study shows us is that the construction of the Arab as 'puppet in the eyes of the world' defines his racial inferiority in sexual terms; his sexuality is overabundant, fecund and calls for the colonial intervention of the *mission civilisatrice*. I propose that the colonisation of Algeria by France resulted in a similar construction of Algerian and French identities according to opposing racial and sexual categories; in other words, the French are European and 'masculine' and the Algerians are Arab and 'feminine'. This sexual and racial differentiation was essential for the success of the colonial project. In order to successfully characterise the Algerian as racially inferior to the French, the Algerian must be also be sexually inferior through his lack of ability to control his 'libidinal energy'. By rendering the 'Arab' 'that impossible creature' the French coloniser creates an image which justifies his subjugation.

These colonial codes of sexual and racial difference were not confined to the colonial era, but continued to haunt texts which are typically considered to be anti-racist and anti-colonial. During the Algerian War for Independence (1954-62), Frantz Fanon denounced French colonisation in a series of writings. In *L'an V de la révolution algérienne* (1959), Fanon describes the effects of the fight for independence upon the Algerian people and links the control of Algerian territory directly with the control of women's bodies. The fate of the Algerian woman is tied to the war, not because she is a citizen of Algeria, but because the French possession of Algerian territory is equated to the possession of the Algerian woman:

Dans le programme colonialiste, c'est à la femme que revient la mission historique de bousculer l'homme algérien [...] c'est à la fois conquérir un pouvoir réel sur l'homme et posséder les moyens pratiques, efficaces, de déstructurer la culture algérienne. (Fanon 2011: 21)

For Fanon, then, the colonial project uses Algerian women in two ways. First, it is quite simply a means of seizing power from the Algerian man and, by extension, the Algerian nation. Fanon suggests that political power is usurped from the Algerians by the French through the possession of Algerian women. Second, Fanon claims that controlling women will enable the French not only to possess Algeria but also ‘déstructurer la culture algérienne’. This is problematic since the parameters of Algerian culture are confined within the borders of the woman’s body and perpetuates the caricature of the *Algérienne* as the keeper of Algerian heritage, memory and culture (Wolf 2010: 30). In both instances, the woman’s body is the battleground where French and Algerian men fight for control. Whether as the symbol for Algerian’s political fight for independence or cultural struggle, the woman is reduced to a merely synecdochic role in Fanon’s anti-colonial text. The Algerian woman’s political agency is bypassed by the symbolic function of her image – she is representative of the nation but does not have any agency of her own.

Fanon’s use of *l’Algérienne* to argue against French colonisation is an example of the way in which ‘woman’ is used as a metaphor for the nation, one which collapses *l’Algérienne* into Algeria without considering the needs of Algerian women as citizens in their own right. Rita Faulkner argues that Fanon ‘tries to get into the mind of the young Algerian woman, but perhaps he projects some of the colonized male view’ (1996: 849). Fanon does not only project ‘the colonized male view’, but unconsciously echoes the colonial tropes of Algerian sexuality, by including the woman-as-nation metaphor to portray Algeria a possessable, feminine territory. The substitution of the nation for a woman’s image is an ancient metaphor, a convenient symbol which unifies the nation. However, as Benedict Anderson argues, the national codes and images by which communities consider themselves as part of a nation, are not pre-existing or natural, but constructed notions (1983). Therefore, the woman-as-nation metaphor has consequences beyond how we view the nation, but this gendered language is

also significant regarding the way we view female citizens. Indeed, Fanon presents the struggle for Algerian nationhood against the French as a paradoxically gendered conflict, since it includes all Algerians and ‘oblige le peuple algérien à être constamment et totalement engagé dans la bataille’, and yet specifically affects Algerian women, since ‘la société féminine se modifie à la fois par solidarité organique avec la révolution, mais aussi parce que l’adversaire *taille dans la chair algérienne* [my emphasis] avec une violence inouïe’ (Fanon 2011: 102). The totalising consequences of the war for independence which implicated *all Algerians* are reduced to the fight for women’s bodies, to win back control over ‘la chair algérienne’. Land is equated to the woman’s flesh; nation and woman thus become interchangeable. By alluding to the rape of the nation as the rape of the female body and conflating woman and the entire nation of Algeria, Fanon undergoes what Faulkner calls ‘cultural confusion’ (1996: 849). In other words, Fanon’s critique of the barbarity of French colonisation as a kind of metaphorical ‘rape’ folds the notions of ‘race’, ‘sexuality’ and ‘sexual difference’ into each other. The racism of French colonials (their will to dominate the lesser Algerian race) is made possible by their sexism (their conviction that controlling women allows them to control the nation), but the specificities of this racialised sexism are glossed over. If we interpret this in the light of Butler’s theory of gender performance, although Fanon criticises the way in which the construction of *l’Algérie française* attempts to separate coloniser from colonised according to sexual codes, evoking the ‘natural’, ‘biological’ order of ‘masculine’ possessor and ‘feminine’ possessed, he himself ends up repeating these gendered codes of difference in support of the Algerian revolution.

I propose that the sexual metaphor of ‘woman-as-nation’ continues to be present in some post-1962 anti-colonial texts. This takes the form of a textual ‘haunting’ of colonial codes of sexuality and gender. I am borrowing the phrase ‘haunting’ from Laurent Dubreuil’s notion of ‘Hantises et doctrines impériales’ (2008: 49) and Michael O’Riley’s *Postcolonial*

Haunting (2007) to describe this phenomenon. Dubreuil uses the term ‘hantises’ to challenge the idea that there is a clear cut distinction between the ‘colonial’ and the ‘post-colonial’. ‘Hantises’ suggests a messy interaction between the past and present where the temporal divisions become blurred and certain codes and ideas from the colonial are re-enacted in the so-called ‘post-colonial’ period (Dubreuil 2008: 8). O’Riley uses the term in his analysis of the work of Assia Djebar to argue that ‘far from pure phantasmatic apparitions, [haunting is] quite literally a matter of life and death’ (2007: 2), since the contemporary violence between Arab and Western nations is part of an older and broader legacy of colonisation. Djebar’s work provides essential insights into the role of gender and memory in colonial and post-independence Algeria, and has received much critical attention from this point of view. My own discussion, however, will focus instead on literary examples of colonial ‘haunting’ in post-colonial metropolitan France: *Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée* (Rachid Boudjedra, 1975) and *Point Kilométrique 190* (Ahmed Kalouaz, 1984). These texts, published 13 and 22 years after the independence of Algeria, demonstrate how the spectres of colonialism return in the form of racist violence against Algerian immigrants. However, I argue that their portrayal of racist violence as a colonial legacy can also be ‘haunted’ by the metaphors of colonial sexuality. In other words, these texts are also affected by gendered notions of the Algerian man as sexually inferior or ‘feminine’ and the nation as a sexualised possession through the symbolism of ‘woman-as-nation’.

Before analysing these literary texts, it is important to underline *how* the tropes of colonial sexuality are transferred from colonial Algeria to post-colonial metropolitan France. The proliferation of racist violence and murder of North Africans in France since the 1970s is often regarded as a direct consequence of the Algerian war and the violent product of a growing nationalist resentment for the loss of an idealised *Algérie française* (Stora 1999, Donadey 1996, Cole 2005). In *Le Transfert d’une mémoire: de l’Algérie française au racisme*

anti-arabe (1999), Benjamin Stora claims that this nationalist nostalgia for the *paradis perdu* of a French Algeria is, in part, created according to sexualised categories. Algeria is idealised by French nationalism as a southern extension of France ‘avec ses bourgs perdus, ses crimes passionnels, une sexualité dissimulée et exacerbée [...] l’Algérie est une région emblématique de la solitude des passions, où la chaleur presque palpable des après-midi de canicule semble peser comme une fatalité’ (1999 : 23). The nostalgia for this imagined Algeria reinforces the colonial caricature of Algeria as a sexualised paradise, a land of erotic fantasy. However, this is more often associated with *pied-noir* literature and is not enough to explain why it returns with such vigour and violence in acts of racist murder committed by those who never had personal connections to Algeria. For Dubreuil colonial ‘haunting’ takes place at a linguistic level. The ‘possession’ of Algeria is not an unconscious or passive ‘fact’ of colonisation, but actively planned and enacted and continues to exist ‘dans la répétition différentielle de la colonie dans nos discours’ (2008: 36). The language of colonisation is repeated in post-colonial society and produces the memory of Algeria as *paradis perdu*. The racism of anti-Algerian violence is therefore an attempt to actively re-enact the colony, and therefore re-stake claims to French superiority while on French soil. I will suggest that Boudjedra and Kalouaz, both Algerian writers writing in French and publishing in France, do not only denounce racist violence but also question the language of colonisation which lingers in the anti-Algerian sentiment associated with France in the 1970s and 80s (and, indeed, visible today in contemporary arabophobic discourse).

Furthermore, the very act of violence becomes the site where memories of French colonialism are produced and the act by which the gender of the Algerian is performed *on the behalf of the Algerian*. In other words, the violence of anti-Algerian racism is the ritual by which the attacker re-enacts the colonial-era notions of the ‘feminine’ Algerian upon the bodies of Algerian immigrants. For Judith Butler, ‘one is not simply a body, but, in some

very key sense, one does one's body' (2010: 421) and therefore acts of anti-Algerian violence are a means to 'do' Algerian bodies on their behalf. To inflict violence upon another person's body is to violate their sense of identity, to choose for them who they are and how they are gendered. A parallel can be drawn between anti-Algerian violence in post-colonial France and colonial-era cases of torture. Joshua Cole argues that the French used torture since this intimate act of violence degrades the victim's sense of identity. More than a 'necessary evil' of colonial warfare, a simple technique for acquiring information, torture evokes the intimate bond that colonial France had imagined for 'feminine' Algeria. It is a pseudo-sexual act where the torturer has complete control over the body of the tortured:

Torture is an intimate violation of one person's body by another – it possesses the same sweaty closeness and proximity of an act of love, the same casual familiarity with the most private recesses of the body, its fluids, and smells.

(Cole 2005: 133)

On the one hand, torture mirrors the original colonial 'rape' of the Algerian nation-woman. On the other hand, torture acts as a reminder of Algerian sexual inferiority in the colonial hierarchy, and the ways in which their bodies could be detained, 'possessed' and violated at the will of the coloniser. The literary portrayals of racist violence are haunted by these codes of 'colonial sexuality' which are implicit in the use of torture. First, racist violence is a way to emasculate the victim, and second it 'reminds' the Algerian immigrant of his inferiority by physically re-enacting the primordial scene where in Algeria was 'colonised/raped'. In other words, the attackers perform and assign the Algerian's gender on their behalf, emasculating and depoliticising them in an attempt to reaffirm the sexual politics of colonisation that justified the patriarchal 'possession' of Algeria by France for 132 years.

To summarise briefly, gender is not a biological fact, but rather an activity. Similarly, cultural memory is constructed and therefore can be gendered or gendering. More specifically, it is important to consider how the colonisation of Algeria by France was conducted along gendered lines, producing a ‘colonial sexuality’ which lingers in anti-colonial texts, particularly through metaphors that describe the nation as a woman. Thus, when post-colonial texts ‘remember’ instances of colonial violence, they are ‘haunted’ by the codes of this ‘colonial sexuality’. I will examine the extent to which the spectres of ‘colonial sexuality’ haunt the language and imagery of the anti-racist and anti-colonial texts by Boudjedra and Kalouaz. How are these literary depictions of anti-Algerian violence in post-colonial metropolitan France presented as memories of the Algerian War? Are these memories ‘haunted’ by colonial sexuality? If so, the ‘haunting’ of the colonial in the post-colonial is not an unproblematic process, since the memories of colonial sexuality are directly transposed into the post-colonial period. In *Topographie* Boudjedra may overtly denounce the racist violence which attempts to reclaim the ‘natural’ hierarchy of French authority over an effeminate-Algeria, but does he go as far to deconstruct the woman-as-nation metaphor and other hauntings of ‘colonial sexuality’? If in *Point Kilométrique* Kalouaz re-presents the ghostly voice of an Algerian murdered in France, is he able to escape from a vision of history where the present is condemned to always be ‘haunted’ by the past? I will show that these writers, who share the same aim of denouncing anti-Algerian violence in post-colonial metropolitan France, differ widely in *how* they demonstrate this violence.

Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée

The plot of Rachid Boudjedra’s *Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée* follows the ordeals of an anonymous Berber-Algerian migrant lost in the Parisian metro who, after a day of failing to navigate his way out, is finally murdered by a gang of racist thugs at the

mouth of a metro station. Boudjedra's description of the metro and of the characters that inhabit this subterranean world is unforgivingly negative: it is a nightmarish place of endless corridors and eerie neon lights, with an undecipherable decor of alien signs and maps written in a language that the migrant cannot read. Everything about the metro is presented as a threat, from the other anonymous and hostile travellers, to the erotic images of half-naked women in advertisements plastered on the walls. For this migrant, death is the only escape from the hellish labyrinth of the metro.

Boudjedra offers an experience of the metro through the eyes of a migrant, newly arrived in Paris. Moreover, this migrant is an Algerian in the former colonial capital. Therefore, the migrant's perspective reverses the usual power relations of the colonial gaze – namely, that the coloniser looks upon the colonised and therefore controls the terms of representation – instead, the reader gazes upon the former coloniser through the eyes of this anonymous migrant. According to Gafaïti, this play of perspective is typical of Boudjedra's oeuvre, since he is a writer who 'excels in the game of mirrors, doublings [...] and reversal of signs' (Gafaïti 1992: 101). *Topographie* subverts this power relation in order to play upon the many stereotypical images held by French people regarding Algerians. In doing so, Boudjedra highlights the fact that post-colonial metropolitan France is still affected by the legacy of its colonial influence in Algeria and that French racism is 'haunted' by colonial codes. However, I question the extent to which this 'game of mirrors' or 'reversal of signs' goes to subvert these colonial images and whether the narrative supports a reductive vision of how colonial values were reproduced in the context of 1970s post-colonial metropolitan France. In his attempt to subvert French anti-Algerian racism, Boudjedra unintentionally reinforces colonial tropes that differentiated French and Algerians *sexually*, as well as racially. As a result, *Topographie* is a text that views the present as held hostage by the past, and that colonial values are directly transferred into post-colonial French society.

As the title of the novel suggests, the metro is the *Topographie idéale* for the migrant's murder; *une agression caractérisée*. Rather than a passive background against which the scene is set, the metro acts as a microcosm for post-colonial France's hostile relationship with Algerian migrants. The space and décor of the metro play a central role in the migrant's psychological trauma, his sense of cognitive paralysis, and violent death. This process can be seen to echo the act of colonisation. Fanon insisted that colonisation is not only an occupation of the land but also of the minds of the people who inhabit that land. In order to occupy a people, their social, historical and cultural identity must be effaced and replaced with an imagined identity of the coloniser. In *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961) Fanon depicts the negative psychological effects of colonialism on the colonised, warning that they linger even after decolonisation has taken place: '[l]'impérialisme [...] abandonne çà et là des germes de pourriture qu'il nous faut implacablement détecter et extirper de nos terres et de nos cerveaux' (2002 : 240). Despite the end of France's colonisation of Algeria in 1962, decolonisation does not signify the instantaneous end of its legacy, the 'germes de pourriture' resist and remain in the minds of the former subjects of the colony. As a psychiatrist, Fanon was particularly interested in clinical cases of mental illness stemming from the War of Independence; in Boudjedra's novel the mental breakdown experienced by the migrant is a symbolic re-enactment of this psychological colonisation.

In *Topographie*, the migrant's mental breakdown takes the form of a growing inability to remember recent events, or recognise where he is. For Seth Graebner, memory plays an important role in *Topographie* because the migrant's inability to process his experience of the metro is linked to France's inability to commemorate the events of the Algerian war; 'memory and an appreciation of history are together necessary to move successfully in the city' (Graebner 2005: 175). In other words, the migrant is unable to navigate the metro and read its signs since the referents and clues that would allow him to arrive at his destination

remain in the possession of the privileged Parisian users of the metro. Graebner draws upon Marc Augé's *Ethnologue dans le métro* (1986) which states that 'c'est bien un privilège parisien que de pouvoir utiliser le plan du métro comme un aide-mémoire, un déclencheur de souvenirs, miroir de poche ou viennent se refléter et s'affoler un instant les alouettes du passé' (1986 : 8). Therefore, in Graebner's view, because the migrant is not a Parisian, he cannot understand the historical and cultural significance of the names inscribed on the metro map, such as Bastille. When the migrant attempts to communicate with the other passengers in order to find out whether he is at the Bastille station, he is met with hostility:

il s'était retourné vers ces compagnons de voyage pour leur demander: BAS-TI-ILLE? [...] certains y voyant même une provocation, une sorte d'ironie interrogative dans un accent qui faisait vrombir les oreilles. (1975: 50)

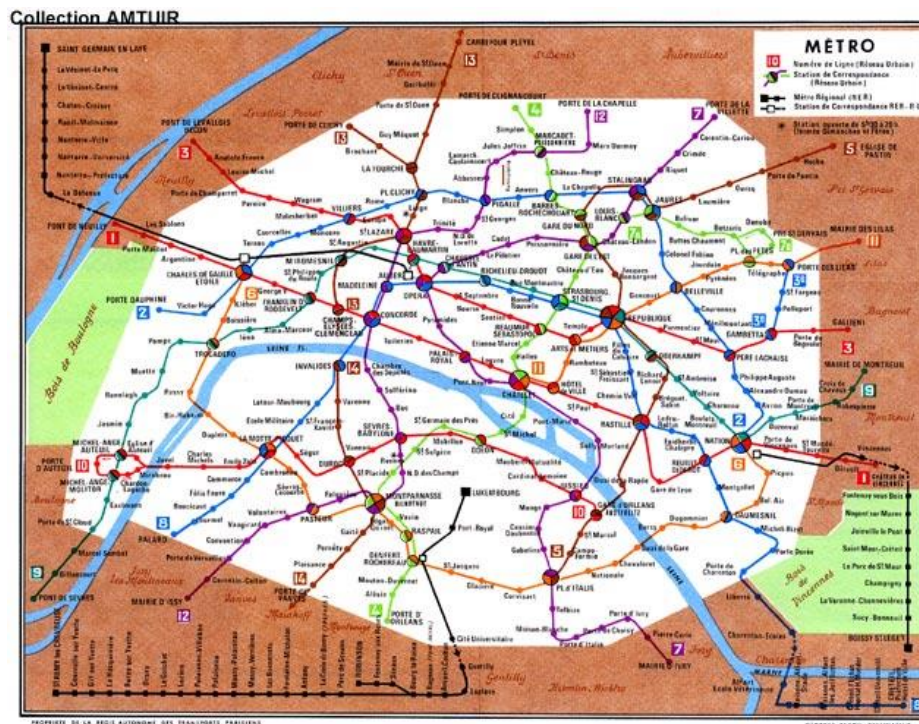
The other travellers in the metro are affronted by the question, since the answer appears so obvious. Bastille is a reference which is taken for granted, historically, linguistically and geographically. Therefore, the metaphor of the metro as a 'miroir de poche' does not apply to the migrant since his own history is not inscribed in its space. This amnesia, by which Paris does not recognise the Algerian and in turn the migrant does not recognise Paris, has fatal consequences for the migrant.

However, I propose that the immigrant's inability to manoeuvre around the Parisian metro is not simply because he is not from Paris, and therefore does not have the right *kind* of memory in order to acquire 'an appreciation of history'. Instead, the migrant's inability to negotiate the space of the metro is because his own memory is slowly effaced by the confusion and disorder of the metro's topography. The décor of the metro, its anonymous corridors, packed trains, interweaving lines and confusing maps seemingly ensnare the migrant by removing his capacity to understand how to navigate its systems. He is trapped in this 'piège comme une

souris prise dans une construction labyrinthique’ (Boudjedra 1975: 114-5). One recurring image in *Topographie* is that of the metro map, which is portrayed as an illegible maze of scrawled lines:

Où les lignes zigzaguent à travers des méandres donnant à la mémoire des envies de se délester d’un trop-plein d’impressions vécues depuis deux ou trois jours et se superposant les unes au-dessus des autres à la manière de ces lignes noires, rouges, jaunes, bleues, vertes, rouges à nouveau mais cette fois hachurées de noir, puis vertes et hachurées de blanc avec des ronds vides à l’intérieurs et des ronds avec un centre noir, puis des numéros, qu’il savait lire (10, 12, 7, 1, 2, 5, 3, etc.), puis des noms, les uns écrits en caractères plus gras que d’autres mais ... (19)

In this extract, the description of the metro is nonlinear and repetitive, mirroring the very structure of the map’s image itself as it appeared in 1974:



(Figure 1, Amtuir [no date])

The immigrant's thought processes and memory of the last few days are gradually effaced by the unintelligible images that construct the metro. The migrant's isolation is not simply an inability to read, but an inability to hold on to his own memories which instead become indistinct, dissolve, and are 'stolen away' ('se délester') by the lines of the metro map. The metro, a site of constant movement and activity, ironically immobilises the migrant's memory and cognitive functions. This cognitive paralysis in front of the metro map echoes the psychological effects of colonisation, whereby the diverse identities and heritages of the colonised people are replaced by a homogeneous notion of French superiority. The migrant's entrapment in the metro not only paralyses his memory but occupies it with the topography of the metro, including all the references to French history, culture and identity that exclude him. The migrant's disorientating experience of the metro is amplified by his 'otherness', his foreignness, but specifically his Algerian identity.

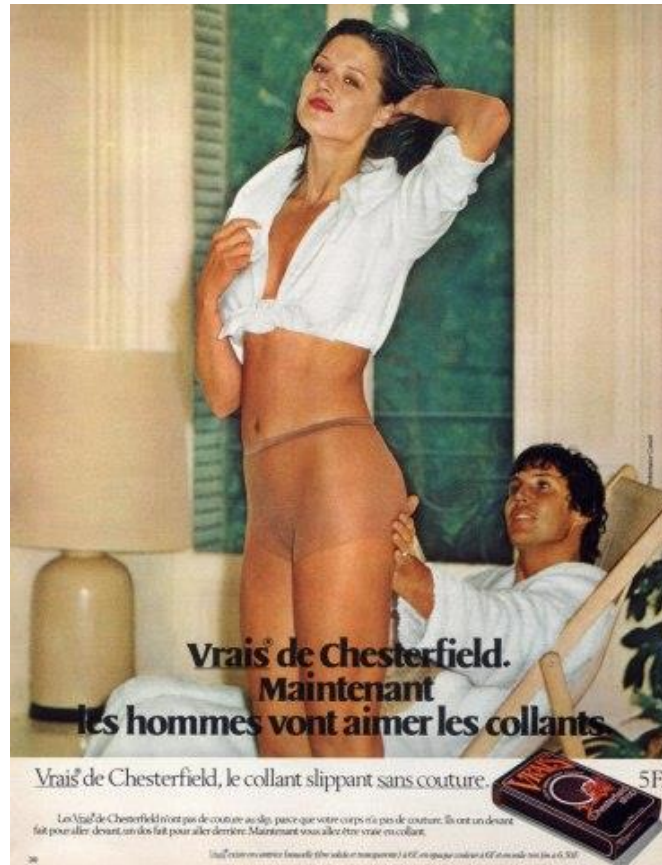
Haunting of colonial sexuality

While *Topographie* denounces French racism the narrative repeats the sexist stereotypes employed by colonial discourses and, as a result, the voices and bodies of French women are essentialised in order to denounce post-colonial racism. For example, following the migrant's murder, the police interview various individuals who came into contact with the migrant while he was lost in the metro. The police portray the migrant as a sexual predator rather than a victim of a racist attack. When the police interview a young woman who saw the migrant, they both repeat the colonial anxieties surrounding Algerian men: that the Algerian is a sexual threat since he is consumed by a libidinal energy which he cannot control. The young girl is disgusted by the interview, not because these accusations are untrue but because she is revolted at the idea of being sexually associated with an Algerian:

Je les aime pas. Je ne sais pas pourquoi mais je ne les aime pas. Les Noirs, c'est pas pareil. Ils sont beaux ! Des dieux ! Vous connaissez Jimmy Hendrix ? [...] Mais c'est faux! Il m'a même dit de vous raconter que le type m'avait reluquée. Bah! Rien qu'à l'idée ... Moi, vous savez je le sens. Et alors, je change de trottoir. Remarquez je ne suis pas. J'aime beaucoup les Noirs. Mais eux, c'est différent. (Boudjedra 1975 : 130-1)

The girl stops short before finishing the usual cliché, 'je ne suis pas raciste, mais ...'. Indeed, the passage is full of notable omissions. Throughout, the migrant is referred to generally either as 'le type' or by collective pronouns 'les', 'eux'. Although the words *algérien* or *arabe* are not mentioned, their presence is felt intensely through this elliptical omission. In *Arabicides* (1992), Fausto Giudice explains that the word *maghrébin* is used by those who believe *arabe* to be pejorative, but that both are generally used euphemistically to signify *algérien* (1992: 348). For Giudice this linguistic reticence to use the term *arabe* or *maghrébin* pertains to the reluctance to deal with the specificities of memories of the Algerian War which then, paradoxically, loom large behind this linguistic generalisation. A similar process is at work in the discourse of the young girl since, although she never utters the words *algérien* or *arabe*, the elliptical omission draws the reader's attention to the specific prejudice towards Algerian men. Although she claims not to be racist, her horror at being associated with an Algerian is juxtaposed with her admiration for 'Les Noirs [...] Des dieux!' She creates a racial hierarchy where the Algerian or Arab remains at the bottom, a prejudice born from a different kind of racism to one based on ethnicity: it is a racism which acts as a ghostly remnant of the colonial relationship between France as ruler and Algeria as colonial subject. Her horror at being sexually associated with the migrant highlights the colonial stigmatisation of Algerians who are seen as sexual and vampiric predators.

It is important to recognise that *Topographie* is not a novel that devotes its narrative to listing example after example of anti-Algerian racism in post-colonial metropolitan France. In a 1975 interview Boudjedra claims that he wrote the novel not only to criticise French attitudes to Algerians but also to combat myths held by Algerians surrounding migration to France, ‘le mythe de l’immigré enrichi, il n’est jamais enrichi mais relativement plus riche que ceux qui sont restés au pays’(WKetDZ 2013). Therefore, Boudjedra also ironises the expectations of Algerian migrants coming to France. For example, the phrase ‘Ils auraient dû m’avertir’ (Boudjedra 1975: 53) acts as a refrain throughout the narrative, voiced by the migrant whenever he is shocked by what he sees in the metro. One key example is his reaction to the eroticised advertisements that cover the walls of the metro’s corridors. They sell banal products such as tights and tampons, but because the migrant cannot read their slogans, ‘VRAIS DE CHESTERFIELD. MAINTENANT LES HOMMES VONT AIMER LES COLLANTS’ (52), these images add to the disorientating décor of the metro’s topography. In particular, when the migrant pauses to consider the advert of a half-naked woman, dressed in a white shirt and sheer tights, being touched by a man who admires her body/tights (see figure 2), he misreads the very purpose of the advertisement; that the sexualised woman is selling a product (Chesterfield tights).



(Figure 2, Noluck_boston 2012)

Instead, the migrant reacts with moral indignation to the advert's eroticism: 'la fille aux collants s'excitant vicieusement alors que l'autre lui caresse les fesses non moins vicieusement' (Boudjedra 1975 : 68). When the migrant misreads the image of the naked woman it creates a semiotic tension between the image in the advertisement and what it is trying to represent. The migrant is assaulted and horrified by what is supposed to be seen as enticing and alluring. The migrant's misreading of the advert becomes an allegory for his misunderstanding of France, and what awaited him at the other side of the Mediterranean. The eroticised body of the woman in the poster represents the hypocritical promise represented by France for Algerian migrants, simultaneously appealing and seductive, but completely off-limits, hostile, and even violent. Therefore, Boudjedra's focus upon the sexualised images of French women is not only a critique of French attitudes regarding

migrants, but they are used as an example of the myths surrounding France as a land of wealth and opportunity.

However, in instrumentalising the body of the woman in this way, Boudjedra is repeating the metaphor of ‘woman-as-nation’ used by colonials and anti-colonials alike. Just as the body of the Algerian woman is made into the symbolic site of the fight for control over Algeria (Fanon), it is the French woman’s body that becomes the site of colonial ‘hauntings’ for the struggle between Algerian independence and French sovereignty. The metaphor may have been reversed but its sexist codes remain the same. By collapsing *l’algérienne* into Algeria, the woman is reduced to a tangible object, her body interchangeable with notions of land and property. Similarly, the woman in the advert is objectified (not only as an erotic object that can be used to sell tights) but as a symbol of western sexuality and racism. Both actions work on the assumption that bodies can be owned, obtained and bought. Therefore, Boudjedra’s anti-racist discourse which employs this ‘game of mirrors’ and ‘reversal of signs’ is ironically haunted by the very same imagery that was used to justify the colonisation of Algeria, that the nation is a woman, sexual, fecund – an objectified possession.

Boudjedra reverses the colonial gaze so that the ex-colonised looks upon the ex-colonial woman. This direct reversal of the colonial gaze can be thought of as a trait of ‘Occidentalism’ writing. Occidentalism can be defined in a similar way to Orientalism; simply put, if Orientalism is about the discourse of the west vis-à-vis the east, then Occidentalism is the discourse of the east vis-à-vis the west. The Occidentalist objective is to criticise the globalising views of the west and demystify the fears of the east in western culture. Therefore, as Zahia Smail Salhi claims, Occidentalism is not necessarily anti-western but rather ‘the objective of such exposure is to change the ways in which the west views its “Others” and vice versa’ (2013: 269). However, both Orientalist and Occidentalist discourses have been revealed to fail in terms of their consideration of women. While the accusations that

Orientalist discourse victimises the eastern woman through exotic and sexual imagery are not unfamiliar, Laura Nader has also accused Occidental discourses of essentialising western society in their depiction of western women as instrumentalised sex objects (1989: 334). Therefore, Boudjedra's writing could be considered Occidental in that he is not definitively critical of French culture and society, and uses French language often in his writings not only to criticise France but also his native Algeria.² Furthermore, *Topographie* can be thought of as Occidental since his portrayal of French women arguably reinforces stereotypes of the western woman as sexually objectified and deeply fearful of the Arab man. Therefore, while Boudjedra's reversal of a racist perspectives aims to condemn the ghosts of colonialism that return in the anti-Algerian stigma in France, by instrumentalising and essentialising the bodies of French women in the process he has perpetuated gender stereotypes.

Topographie not only portrays a reductive notion of gender but also a reductive notion of how the past is transferred to the present in terms of memory. In an attempt to subvert French racism to demonstrate that it re-enacts colonial anxieties, Boudjedra simply reverses the colonial gaze and therefore repeats its short-comings. In an attempt to condemn anti-Algerian racism in post-colonial French society of the 1970s, and warn against such racist attitudes, Boudjedra views the present as directly re-enacting the crimes of the past. According to Catherina Dana, narratives of memory are 'conçu[s] comme une cure de ce qui a été et un avertissement de ce qui pourrait revenir : un appel constant à la mémoire du lecteur' (1998 : 16). Dana's perspective on memory narratives suggests that memory work is a way of working through the past to achieve a conclusive goal: either one of healing the past, or of preventing future generations from repeating the crimes of their ancestors. On the contrary, Mireille Rosello argues that this kind of narrative which acts as 'une cure' or 'un

² Boudjedra was cast into political exile when a Fatwa was issued against him in 1983 (Gafaïti 1999: 247).

avertissement' seeks to close memory down, and shut down all discussion surrounding the past by revealing a 'true' version of past events. Rosello claims that the 'reparative' in narratives looks for an alternative to the usual choice of 'either I should know the past because it is the only way of not reproducing its horror in the present (the 'never again' grand narrative), or I should live in the present to make sure the past horrors do not infect it' (2010: 22). What Rosello's argument tells us about narratives of memory, is that they can become trapped in their own rhetoric of either 'correcting' past mistakes or replacing the past narratives with new ones: they attempt to attain a single 'true' memory, which will enable the reader to attain either closure or an understanding of the perpetual repetition of history.

In *Topographie*, Boudjedra has produced a non-reparative narrative which shuts down the discussion on memory, since he presents post-colonial France as a society condemned to be haunted by history; one where the French re-perform the role of colonial masters in their stigmatisation of Algerian migrants and Algerian migrants will always be duped and victimised by the myth of a better life in the *métropole*. Although Boudjedra attempts to subvert post-colonial French society in a 'game of mirrors' we can see that, through an analysis of his presentation of women, the narrative is 'haunted' by images of racial and sexual difference that reinforce the divisions between French women and Algerian men. In an attempt to subvert post-colonial metropolitan racism, he ironically perpetuates colonial-era notions of women as synecdochic representatives of entire nations, without any agency or memory of their own. In this 'game of mirrors', colonial imagery is simply repeated and reflected upon post-colonial society.

Point Kilométrique 190

In the light of the limitations of *Topographie* and Rosello's notion of the 'reparative' in narratives of memory, I will now discuss Ahmed Kalouaz's *Point Kilométrique 190* (1986). Kalouaz's second novel is based upon the real life murder of Habib Grimzi, referred to in this text as H.G. In November 1983, Grimzi was taking the Bordeaux-Vintimille night train when he was viciously beaten and thrown from the speeding train by three candidates for the French Foreign Legion. In *Point Kilométrique* the crimes of the present are linked to the crimes of the past, since Grimzi, who dies during a racist attack in France committed by military personnel, was born during the violence of the Algerian War: '*J'étais venu au monde dans un désordre immense. Aujourd'hui, je sais que la patience est l'illusion du mort*' [emphasis in the text] (Kalouaz 1986 : 57). He is attached to history by birth and therefore to a legacy of colonialism and racism. His death is placed in a wider context of other crimes and murders; the deaths of Algerians in the War of Independence, the murder of Mohamed Diab and 'les autres [qui] me soufflent cette évidence' of racial hatred and violence (58). This concern for the colonial past and contemporary racism is a characteristic of what has been labelled *littérature beur*, a definition which is often employed to describe Kalouaz's work. *Littérature beur*, or texts written by the children of North-African immigrants living in France, can be defined by an interest in the mixed identities and histories of second generation Algerians in France, connecting the racism they experienced growing up to traumatic memories of the Algerian War of Independence. They write in order to satisfy an imperative to testify to a version of history which has been effaced, or devalued. Indeed, Grimzi's voice not only brings to light racist violence and murder present in France during the 1980s but, also, the legacy of the Algerian War.

However, *Point Kilométrique* does not attempt to trace a history of French racism, nor go into forensic detail regarding the motivations and consequences of Grimzi's murder. Instead, the

narrative centres on the posthumous recreation of the voice of the victim. Grimzi's voice is reconstructed through the plural voices of various other interlocutors; predominantly Sabine - a French journalist investigating his death, but also with extracts from the press and interventions from Grimzi's friends and his French girlfriend, H el ene. Kalouaz chooses to voice the victim, not through an omnipresent third person as in *Topographie*, but through an imagined first person of Grimzi, 'cette voix imaginaire de la m emoire, qui viendra n'importe quand, dessiner les traits de ma lumi ere  eteinte' (13-14), which is created from several different sources. For Zohra Bouchentouf-Siagh, the reconstruction of Grimzi's voice is the collective act of the group, 'son histoire pesant sur tous ses membres' (1999: 93). The memory of Grimzi's death and the historical violence that resonates therein belongs to more than just the victim, but is shared out via this mixed narrative. This allows for a plural and 'reparative' narrative that seeks neither to fix the past, nor repeat it. Therefore, while the memory of Grimzi does link this case of murder in post-colonial France with atrocities committed in colonial Algeria, the way in which Kalouaz portrays this re-enactment is more nuanced than a pessimistic repetition of history.

The plurality of narratives and perspectives encourages the notion that there is never a single narrative truth. Rather than attempting to reveal the reality or the truth of Franco-Algerian history, Kalouaz's narrative is interested in deconstructing the very notion of an absolute version of the past. The narrative centres on the voice of the victim who insists upon the need to testify:

*Pendant qu'il reste un peu de sang dans mon cr ane bris e, avant que
ma pens ee ne s' evanouisse.*

Il me faut dire d ej a.

Ce que je suis.

Ce que j'étais.

Bientôt. (1986: 13)

The temporal conjunctions and adverbs *pendant que*, *avant que*, *bientôt* imply the sense of urgency in the narrative's testimony. The poetic, lyrical style in which Grimzi's voice is written suggests the fleeting moments of transition between life and death, between 'je suis' and 'j'étais', and it is in this place of in-betweenness that Kalouaz focuses as he recreates the final hours of Grimzi's life. Alison Rice argues that written testimony of this kind does not attempt to reveal an unequivocal truth or deny falseness but is an attempt to connect with others: 'when a writer "takes to the witness stand" in the text, she necessarily adopts a stance. She assumes a position that is inclined towards others [...] Testimony is therefore, by definition, other-orientated' (2012: 9). Kalouaz is not attempting to 'correct' the dominant version of history or warn of the repetition of past crimes in society's future, nor recreate the 'true' voice of Grimzi. Instead, Kalouaz's narrative embraces the in-between spaces of life and death, knowing and not-knowing. Therefore, by 'taking to the witness stand' Kalouaz is not simply attempting to reveal the truth of who Grimzi was or why he was murdered. Rather, his decision to recreate textually the consciousness of a dead man implores the reader to discover the self through the other.

In this instance the other is Sabine. A young journalist called to take pictures of Grimzi's murdered body, she is deeply affected by this 'fait divers' and it haunts her for an entire year. This is portrayed as a kind of corporeal occupation – Grimzi lives inside Sabine, transported by her desire to understand this senseless murder, just as he was transported by the train to his death: 'Je guette le passager clandestine qui habite en moi depuis un an; pour que mes mots ne restent plus dans l'ombre' (Kalouaz 1986: 40). In order to ease the pain she feels since Grimzi's murder, she undertakes a re-enactment of his final journey, by taking the same night

train as Grimzi did, exactly a year later. Sabine's voice intermingles with the voice of an imagined Grimzi as they take the same journey 'together'. Sabine claims that in 'te cherchant, je me suis trouvée' (24) and so the narrative does not simply seek to eulogise or to honour the voice of the dead, but instead offers a model for encouraging reconciliation and understanding of the relation of the self and other. As Rice puts it, in writing about the other, 'the text cannot help but sing of those others and allow them to sing through the literary work as sources of inspiration' (2012: 1). Therefore, while *Topographie* and *Point Kilométrique* seemingly share a common motivation (written a decade apart they both denounce racist violence) they differ widely in their narrative approaches. Whereas *Topographie* uses the voices of various characters to demonstrate the repetition of a colonial past in the post-colonial present, Kalouaz creates a pluralistic narrative that seeks to complicate the relationship between the past and present, the self and the other.

Resisting gender binaries

Boudjedra and Kalouaz equally differ in their portrayals of women. The fact that the voice of Grimzi, an Algerian man, is narrated by Sabine, a French woman, is significant. Indeed, Hargreaves has noted that 'granted that the author is a man, one of the most striking features of Kalouaz's narrative is the frequent use of female narrators' (1997: 72). For Anna Maria Manga a classic characteristic of *littérature beur* is the important roles that women play in these texts. According to her analysis, there are two types of women in *beur* writing. On the one hand, there is the strong maternal presence which is normally representative of 'back home'. On the other hand, there are young French women who symbolise desired objects and 'l'intégration totale du protagoniste dans le nouveau pays, et de l'acceptation de ce dernier, la femme étrangère est un objet de désir et de lutte' (Manga 1995 : 58). Manga's analysis seems to support the notion that 'intégration totale' is possible, and even desirable, and that by

desiring French women, young men of migrant origin can renegotiate their mixed origins into a 'whole' French identity. In this sense, 'la femme devient l'outil fondamental pour donner la plus juste collocation au moi divisé du protagoniste' (61). Collectively, therefore, women are 'healers' for the male divided sense of self.

Manga's analysis fails to identify this symbolic use of women as reductive and simplistic. Kalouaz's use of feminine characters in *Point Kilométrique* is far more nuanced than Manga would have us believe. The mixing of imagined voices is not simply a way to use French women as symbols of a unified, but homogeneous, version of French culture into which 'beur' men can assimilate. Rather, Kalouaz uses a French woman to narrate the posthumous voice of an Algerian man to demonstrate that memory can be shared across boundaries normally associated with gender and with ethnicity. Sabine's year-long obsession with the memory of Grimzi's is not an attempt to 'heal' him, or to help assimilate the memory of an Algerian man into French commemoration. It is, in part, simply an attempt to connect with the dead man whose brutal death has affected her so deeply:

Te retrouver, avec un peu de chance, sur la couchette du bas. Effacer de ton regard la lente cécité, détacher de ta nuque les notes des musiques tues. Improviser une solitude colorée, essayer le sang sur tes cheveux. Caresser la blessure, avec le sable de mes doigts, la lenteur des nuits ensoleillées.

(Kalouaz 1986: 24)

In this extract, Sabine's memory lingers upon the corporeal details of Grimzi's appearance, evoking the moment when she first saw his broken corpse. For Roberta Culbertson, narration is an essential element in the demystification of trauma since 'telling, in short, is a process of disembodied memory, demystifying it, a process which can only begin after memories have been re-membered and the mystical touched by a buried self seeking its own healing'

(Culbertson 1995: 170). In other words, by narrating Grimzi's death, Kalouaz writes against the disappearance of Grimzi's memory but also avoids creating a mythic persona out of him.

Sabine's narrative not only attempts to recreate Grimzi's body but portrays a sensual portrait of this man by imagining his loving relationship with H  l  ne, his French girlfriend who he was returning to see in Marseille. She recreates in her mind the scene where H  l  ne waits in vain for Grimzi to arrive at the train station:

La gare s'est vid  e aussi simplement, dans l'aube du d  sir   teint. Avec les l  vres silencieuses et la frustration de peau. Sur ses seins, elle avait mis du parfum pour le retour. Le jour se l  ve. (Kalouaz 1986: 36)

Sabine imaginatively participates in their relationship by imagining H  l  ne's frustrated desire when Grimzi does not arrive at the station. She recreates an image of Grimzi which is defined by his humanity as a loving partner and works against stereotypes of Algerians as sexual predators and demystifies the taboos of sexual desire between Algerian men and French women (as they are portrayed in Boudjedra's text). Kalouaz therefore layers gendered, national and sexual identities in this pluralistic narrative. As Hargreaves argues:

By choosing protagonists and narrators foreign in some measure to himself [...] in preference to ploughing a 'safe' autobiographical furrow, Kalouaz imposes upon himself precisely the kind of imaginative effort which is required if such divisions are ever to be reduced or transcended. (1997: 73)

In this way, Kalouaz avoids using the story of Grimzi's murder as a symbol of all victimised Algerians, nor is his voice reduced to a symbol of the cyclical repetition of colonial violence in post-colonial metropolitan France. Similarly, Sabine is not instrumentalised as a reductive image of all French women. Instead, Kalouaz's use of a female narrator as a vehicle for plural

perspectives defies simplistic boundary notions connected to identity and allows for memory of trauma to be shared across identities.

Conclusion

To conclude, Rosello warns that ‘each narrative has, as one dangerous horizon, the possibility of participating in a cultural war and of re-establishing in the present moment, the divisive social formations that characterised the violent era that we seek to remember’ (2010: 25). Boudjedra’s text repeats and reinforces the divisions of colonial sexuality in his representation of post-colonial violence. The notion of French women as sexually objectified, yet afraid of ‘Arab’ men, is mobilised to denounce post-colonial French racism. However, this gendered perspective only further entrenches the difference between Algerian and French cultures. On the other hand, Kalouaz’s narrative can be called ‘reparative’ in that it invokes ‘an energy, a process, a specific set of narrative choices that propose to offer a conscious or unconscious strategy to a double process of recapturing and recovering’ (22). Through the narrative of a French woman, the memory of Grimzi, an Algerian man, is prevented from becoming a victim of amnesia. Sabine reimagines his voice from beyond the grave to demonstrate how memories can be shared across boundaries of nationality and gender. Although Grimzi’s murder is clearly linked to the crimes of the French colonialism, *Point Kilométrique 190* offers a narrative that does not reveal a single ‘true’ version of the past, or condemn the present to always be haunted by the crimes of the past. Kalouaz’s narrative uses female voices, not as ‘tools’ for healing, but to present a pluralistic perspective of the past that transcends the binaries of colonial sexuality, and subverts the taboos associated with Algerian men and French women.

CHAPTER TWO

Didier Daeninckx and François Maspero: Remembering 17th October 1961 and Masculine Subjectivity

Retrieving marginal memories

According to Pierre Nora, certain sites and places are invested with particular memorial significance by society. This is a result of a society's failure to collectively remember the past in organic ways. Therefore, sites are consecrated with particular commemorative purposes since memory is no longer a lived experience: 'il y a des lieux de mémoire parce qu'il n'y a plus de milieux de mémoire' (1984: xvii). If societies were able to relive memory organically 'il n'y aurait pas de lieux, parce qu'il n'y aurait pas de mémoire emportée par l'histoire' (xix). In other words, a *lieu de mémoire* is the way by which society can collectively express its memory, by crystallising this remembrance in space. Nora's epic study of French *Lieux de Mémoire* (1984) focuses on sites that reinforce notions of French national identity, be it from specifically singular notions of *La République* and *La Nation* to a more pluralistic perspective on French identity in the volumes entitled *Les France*. However, despite this vast study of various monuments to French identity in various forms, the project did not dedicate a significant amount of study to France's colonial past. As Michael Rothberg has put it:

Notwithstanding Nora's avowed interest in a 'polyphonic' approach (Realms I. p.xxiii), the collection ultimately puts forward a starkly limited conception of the nation purged of many of its imperial adventures and minoritarian inflections - purged, in short, of phenomena that trouble the linear narrative of historical progress and the stark opposition between history and memory. (Rothberg 2010:

4)

What we can learn from Nora's circumnavigation regarding colonial history from the *Lieux de mémoire* project is that, although Nora's analysis of French cultural memory is extremely important, historians still marginalise memories regarding France's colonial history.

If historiographers are increasingly aware of the marginalisation of colonial histories from the western historical canon, then the question of masculine subjectivity in historical narratives has also been increasingly debated. Judith M. Bennett has noted the importance of regarding historiography from a perspective of gender (in other words, how differently gendered groups and individuals experience history and are represented by historical narratives). This approach has been labelled by some as 'feminist' which, as Bennett notes, makes historians anxious, springing 'from our profession's discomfort with owning any political perspectives at all' (2006: 14). Nonetheless, it would be naïve to assume that history is anything other than a narrative that is presented to an audience and, therefore, can never be entirely apolitical: 'History is not, of course, simply "the past", and historians are not, of course unbiased reporters or god-like observers who simply reveal the past "as it really was"' (ibid). In other words, a gendered perspective on historiography does not attempt to fix or twist the conclusions drawn by dominant narratives of history, but accepts that a history which is made and written by a patriarchal society is not, in itself, the 'pure' form of the past.

I suggest that narratives of memory function in a similar way to historical narratives and that we need to question what role masculine subjectivity plays in dominant memory narratives. Indeed, it has been argued that the distinctions between history and memory themselves are not as polarised as Nora would have us believe, but intertwined and knotted. In their volume of *Yale French Studies*, Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal and Max Silverman argue for an approach toward post-war memory in terms of *nœuds de mémoire*:

A project orientated around *nœuds de mémoire* [...] makes no assumptions about the content of communities or their memories. Rather, it suggests that "knotted" in all places and acts of memory are rhizomatic networks of temporality and cultural reference that exceed attempts at territorialization (whether at the local or national level) and identitarian reduction. (Rothberg 2010: 7)

Therefore, in light of the notion of *nœuds de mémoire*, which argues that historiography and the study of sociocultural memory are more intertwined and knotted than initially thought, I postulate that a gendered perspective on memory should also be debated with regard to marginalised memories of colonial history.

In this chapter, I will analyse Didier Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984) and François Maspéro's *Les Passagers du Roissy-express* (1990). These texts represent in different ways the massacre of Algerian protesters in central Paris on 17th October 1961. These writers approach the subject of the 17th October massacre in order to combat the silence surrounding French colonial history, linked to national *chagrin* at the loss of *l'Algérie française*. Writing about this traumatic event becomes a way to reincorporate it into a wider context of national French memory, and counteract the Eurocentricity of Nora's perspective of French history: that colonial history remains peripheral to the construction of French identity. I do not propose to solely examine how the following works engage in uses of colonial and ex-colonial subjectivities, but I also wish to discuss how the texts engage, indirectly, with issues of masculine subjectivity. I will question the extent to which writers successfully represent gender inequality in their pursuit to reintegrate 17th October into national collective memory.

Jim House and Neil MacMaster have argued that, in relation to memories of the Algerian War, questions of how women remember and/or are remembered have been largely overlooked:

In both the memorial and historical work under way, women descendants of Algerian migrants play an increasingly visible role. However, more work needs to be done on how gender dynamics affect memory transmission and produce different symbolic investments in memory. Gender has seldom played a central role in analysis of memories of the Algerian War, and the male-dominated language of ‘younger brothers’ and ‘fathers’ used to describe the supposedly central relationships within the Algerian family and migrant communities more generally is often accepted unquestioningly. This has often removed women’s visibility from memorial activism, and their role in family memory. (2006: 326)

Therefore, I will engage with the works by Daeninckx and Maspero in terms of gender and the memory of 17th October 1961 to highlight two points: first, that a gendered perspective demonstrates the unequal ways in which women and men are recognised in memorial activity, and second, to stress that gender and memory are not separate categories of analysis. These texts can emphasise the intricate ways in which memories of trauma and gendered identities interact. Thinking of 17th October as a site of knotted crossings and connections, a *nœud de mémoire* (Rothberg, Sanyal, and Silverman 2010) can help us to consider the massacre beyond purely binary terms of French and Algerian, masculine and feminine. In other words, do these texts assign ‘masculine’ qualities to active remembrance and ‘feminine’ qualities to notions of forgetting and amnesia? By writing about 17th October and re-examining the French colonial past, have Daeninckx and Maspero also been able to challenge a patriarchal view of the past?

Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire* reconstitutes the lost memories of 17th October 1961, as well as those of the Holocaust, within the generic framework of a *roman noir*. Through the success of this novel, Daeninckx is often accredited with reopening of the debate on French national memory, especially concerning the role played by Maurice Papon in orchestrating the 17th October massacre and the deportation of Jewish men, women and children from France during the Second World War. Daeninckx successfully used the *roman noir* to bring these linked sites of trauma to the attention of the wider public. However, I will argue that Daeninckx's use of the *noir* style means that the characterisation of female characters echoes certain gendered tropes associated with the genre; namely, that women are either victims or vixens, and have little political agency. On the other hand, Maspero's *Les Passagers du Roissy-express* is keenly aware of the question of subjectivity. The product of a journey through the *banlieues* (Parisian suburbs) by Maspero and photographer Anaïk Frantz, the text draws connections between the dominant narratives of history with the lives of the diverse peoples who inhabit the *banlieues*. I argue that the politics of representation are brought to the forefront in this kaleidoscopic, postmodern narrative in which Maspero is highly conscious of his masculine subjectivity.

Meurtres pour mémoire

Didier Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire* has been praised for bringing to light the atrocity of the 17th October massacres, as well as revealing the role played by Maurice Papon (portrayed in the novel as the thinly fictionalised André Veillut) in the deaths of Algerians in the centre of Paris, as well as the deportation of Jewish children from Bordeaux (Toulouse in the novel). He has also been recognised as a champion of the *roman noir*. Labelled as 'l'écrivain des banlieues par excellence' (Rubino 2009: 6), Daeninckx often stages his fictional works in zones of urban exclusion and *Meurtres pour mémoire* is no different.

Moving from Paris, via Toulouse and Belgium, the novel concludes back at the scene of the crime (in Paris), where the murky underground of urban France meets institutional corruption at a national level. The novel's concern for wider narratives of French history and national identity challenges certain *noir* conventions; Daeninckx is able to depict institutional (wilful cover up of Veillut/Papon's crimes) and historical crimes (colonial violence and genocide) in order to expose a wider social *malaise* that had previously been occulted. Brigitte Gaïti cites the author stating that when *Meurtres pour mémoire* was published 'tout le monde était incrédule, j'étais obligé de fournir des preuves, de ressortir ma documentation' (1994 : 33). Therefore, Daeninckx is seen as a writer of firsts; for bringing 17th October 1961 into collective memory, but also for drawing the connection between this colonial repression on metropolitan French soil with the war-time deportation of hundreds of thousands of Jews via the Drancy camp, just outside of Paris. Daeninckx brings the *roman noir* and history together in this novel, and for Anissa Belhadjin, 'Daeninckx truly contributes a great deal to the knowledge of these facts through the success of his novel [...] Thus reality and fiction are tightly linked, with history furnishing matter for the novel' (2010: 67 – 68).

According to Jean-Paul Liégeois '[p]our Daeninckx, écrire est un acte de résistance, une manière de désobéir' (2008: 8), and this spirit of defiance is certainly present in the character Inspecteur Cadin. Modelled on the anti-heroes of American *noir* fiction, he fits Jopi Nyman's description of the hard-boiled voice as being 'a cynical first person narrator who, instead of commenting, prefers to report. He also [...] prefers action to thinking – there is no time for reflection in a hostile world' (1995: 68). For Josiane Peltier he is more than a detective and actually performs the work of an historian:

Inspecteur Cadin exemplifies the historian-detective at work, constantly searching for new fragments and altering the configuration of the narrative [...] History is the narrative of falsification, of a crime. The character of the

detective [...] becomes a tool for unmasking falsifiers as well as recovering and reassembling the missing debris of forgotten information. (2000: 271-72)

For Daeninckx, the detective's role is not only to catch the killer but also retrace the memories of the crime and, in turn, to give a voice back to those whose memories have been effaced. However, despite the important role that Daeninckx's fictive account of the massacre has played in 'returning' 17th October into public consciousness, the use of *noir* conventions is not without its representational limitations. Although the novel fulfils the *noir* convention of social progression, it must be noted that its depiction of women, at times, works against this progressive genre (Hamilton 2000: 39). The majority of the novel's narrative is dominated by the first person voice of Cadin himself as he describes the male dominated world of the French police. When female characters are introduced, few and far between, they fulfil the *noir* trope of being 'reduced to the roles of victims or vixens' (234). Indeed, according to Rubino 'malgré l'attrait qu'elles exercent sur l'inspecteur, les autres figures féminines ne sont pas très importantes dans ses histoires' (2009 : 76). It could be argued that the dominance of Cadin's voice is simply an inextricable feature of the *noir* genre; he is, after all, the detective and protagonist. Furthermore, the anti-heroes that Cadin is modelled on are so called due to their imperfect personalities and their willingness to break the rule book in order to solve the crime and get the girl. It is their rebellious nature that leads to the morally ambiguous conclusions of *noir* texts; the killer may be identified but the larger social ills that contributed to the crime linger in the background. As Belhadjin argues:

[T]he conclusion of the mystery novel celebrates the triumph of convention because the guilty party is found, punished, and social order is restored. By contrast, the roman noir calls that order into question. There is of course a murder, but it is motivated, and becomes in a way a pretext: what's more

important than the crime is the road that leads to the crime, and its implications. (2010: 61)

In this way, the macho persona of the hard-boiled detective may be another generic characteristic of the morally ambiguous world of the *roman noir*. However, the traditional gender roles assigned in *Meurtres pour mémoire* may actually work against Cadin's historically progressive investigation since, although it reveals amnesic attitudes towards French histories of violence and racism, the text does little to challenge the stereotypical notions of gendered identities.

The female characters in *Meurtres pour mémoire* confirm the usual stereotypes of feminine passivity and absence. One of the three significant female characters in this novel is Madame Thiraud, the mother of murdered historian Bernard Thiraud (to whose murder case Cadin has been assigned) and widow of Roger Thiraud, Bernard's father (also a historian who was murdered during the 17th October massacre). She has never recovered from the trauma of her husband's death and, when Cadin finds her sequestered in her dark apartment, she appears reduced to a 'mort vivant' (Daeninckx 1984: 117): '(e)lle semblait glisser sur le parquet, silencieuse [...] La pièce était plongée dans l'obscurité' (115). Daeninckx paints the picture of the tragic effects that traumatic experiences have on those left behind. Havisam-esque and confined to the domestic interior of her flat in the north of Paris, she embodies the Freudian model of mourning and melancholia: a 'cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, [and] inhibition of all activity' (1917: 244). For, although she witnessed the murder of her husband, she was powerless to warn or save him due to her pregnant body at the time: 'J'ai voulu descendre mais je parvenais à peine à traverser cette pièce à cause de Bernard ... Enfin, à cause de mon ventre' (Daeninckx 1984: 119). It is therefore thanks to Cadin's intervention that Madame Thiraud articulates her loss. By giving

testimony, she is able to retrieve some agency. According to Catherine Dana, she symbolises the victims of a national project to cover up the events of 17th October:

Dès le début de son enquête, [Cadin] bute contre le silence où se sont murées les instances officielles et surtout Madame Thiraud [... elle], en refusant d'ouvrir les volets, refuse de faire la lumière sur le crime, et en elle. Malheureusement, son silence envoie involontairement son fils à la même mort que son mari; en effet Bernard est tué pour les mêmes raisons que son père. Ce n'est que lorsque Cadin ouvre les persiennes et, dans un épisode qui ressemble à une scène psychanalytique, oblige Madame Thiraud à révéler ce qu'elle sait, qu'il comprend la vérité. (Dana 2004 : 175)

Cadin takes pity on Madame Thiraud, and ostensibly attempts to help her come to terms with her loss ('Ouvrez les yeux, je vous en conjure. Vingt-deux ans ont passé, vous n'avez plus rien à redouter' (Daeninckx 1984 :117)). However, it is only in Cadin's presence that she does so and she blames her husband's death on her pregnant, and therefore her gendered, body. Her victimisation reinforces associations of femininity with passivity and silence. Indeed, as Catherine Dana argued, the fact that Bernard falls victim to the same fate as his father is in part due to Madame Thiraud's inability to come to terms with her husband's murder. In this imagining, the widowed mother prevents the transmission of memory: 'rien ne passe plus par les mères, elles bloquent la transmission' (Dana 2004: 177). *Le passé qui ne passe pas* is facilitated by Madame Thiraud's widowhood and her inability to move on from her husband's death.³ It was her pregnant body that prevented her from intervening in the first instance, and as a widow she has lost her husband and her link to the public world (her son

³ This phrase 'Le passé qui ne passe pas' is taken from the text by Eric Canon and Henry Rousso : *Vichy : un passé qui ne passe pas* (1994). In it, they argue for the sober re-assessment of France's commemorative obsession with the *années noires* of the German Occupation and French collaboration.

was brought up by his grandparents). She has lost her agency and all that is afforded to Madame Thiraud is the pitying gaze of Cadin. Indeed, despite the fact that she is the sole eye-witness to any of the crimes committed in the text, she is quickly forgotten by the investigation's narrative. At every turn, Madame Thiraud's inability to complete the mourning process, and therefore internalise the memory of her dead husband, is due to stereotypical notions of femininity as passive and domestic.

Cadin also approaches Bernard Thiraud's fiancée, Claudine, for information as she was the last person to speak to him alive. However, his interest in Claudine soon goes from professional to sexual: 'Elle aspira une large bouffée d'air. Sa poitrine se gonfla, soulevant le corsage d'été. Mes yeux saisirent l'éclat noir et dentelé d'un soutien-gorge. Mon cœur abandonna son rythme de croisière et se lança à l'assaut des records' (Daeninckx 1984 : 136). Cadin's interior narrative is not abashed by his attraction, nor does he question the ethical implications of being sexually attracted to a witness. In fact, he admits that this is not the first time this has happened during an investigation, since he has fallen for a witness and even a victim in the past:

quand j'avais fait sa connaissance elle était allongée sur son lit, une balle de neuf millimètres venait de lui transpercer la poitrine. Le plus ringard des psychanalystes réussirait à soutirer dix ans de séances bi-hebdomadaires d'un paumé qui lui annoncerait un tel programme ! Eros et Thanatos, le couple maudit ! (70)

When Cadin falls in love, it is with passive women – even dead ones.⁴ Although Claudine resists Cadin's flirtations at first, she succumbs to his advances with alarming speed after the death of her fiancé, and her role in the text is transformed from witness to 'muse'. Like the

⁴ Inspecteur Cadin also falls in love with the girlfriend of the victim in Daeninckx's first novel, *Mort au premier tour* (1977).

late Bernard, she is also a historian and takes Cadin on a tour of ‘la zone’, the old walls of Paris that used to be home to the city’s population of social outcasts. She describes the changing nature of ‘la zone’, but notes how today it is still a site of exclusion in the city: ‘Les immigrés ont remplacé les romanichels, les jeunes chômeurs ont pris la place des biffins’ (1984: 133-4). Claudine’s observation illustrates the palimpsestic nature of the city, that the city’s landscape is not a blank space to be built upon, and how memories are superimposed over one another and interact. Additionally, in the novel’s epilogue, as Cadin and Claudine enter a metro station, workers are stripping posters from the walls of the station. Under the palimpsest of old posters, layered one over the other, Claudine points out an ageing poster from the German occupation, warning French citizens against aiding enemies of Germany (Daeninckx 1984: 215-216). Claudine voices a socio-historical perspective on the city’s space which serves to deepen the main concerns of the text, such as retracing the past, privileging marginal memories and exploring peripheral space. Critics have failed to recognise her importance to the text’s themes. Referring to Claudine as ‘la jeune fille’, Rubino remarks that Cadin’s interaction with Claudine is simply a short distraction from the main plot, which ‘évoque avec une pointe de nostalgie la périphérie d’autrefois’ (2009: 56). On the contrary, Claudine’s description of the palimpsestic nature of Paris’s cityscape goes beyond simple nostalgia and supports the novel’s project of bringing hidden histories to light and combating national amnesia.

However, despite the valuable role played by Claudine in this text in making important insights into history and memory in the city, her character is undermined by Cadin’s sexual interest in her. This reduces her purpose in the text to a love-interest and detracts from her role as an important developer of the text’s theme. Furthermore, although she is an historian she is accredited with little memorial agency for herself, since not long after the death of her fiancé she forms a relationship with the man investigating his murder. As Daeninckx

transforms her into the love interest of this detective novel, in which Cadin solves the crime and gets the girl, Claudine is brushed aside and she is remembered in the text for her sexual availability, silenced by the detective's desire: '[L]a jeune femme avait passé une robe; je vis pour la première fois des jambes lisses et dorées' (Daeninckx 1984: 202). Ironically, the text ends with Cadin questioning an emotional Claudine: 'Pourquoi pleures-tu? Tout est terminé, il faut oublier' (209). After spending the better part of the narrative retracing the past, and working against officially endorsed amnesia, this advice to simply forget everything seems misguided and actively works against the novel's epigraph: 'en oubliant le passé, on se condamne à le revivre' (7). Like the 'périphérie d'autrefois', the marginalisation of Claudine's memory reflects the failure of Daeninckx to fully consider the patriarchal nature in which predominant narratives of memory are articulated.

Rothberg praises *Meurtres pour mémoire* as a 'decidedly multidirectional text' (2009: 274) since it establishes a way for memory to move between seemingly disparate sites of trauma—the deportation of Jews during German occupation and the massacre of Algerians living in Paris during the Algerian War of Independence. However, Rothberg also claims:

the novel's conventional gender coding in which the male detective not only solves the case but wins the woman [... and] Cadin's exterior position as professional inspector marks the limit of hard-boiled memory. While the genre conventions of the hard-boiled narratives allow Daeninckx to "look away" at the events of history – thus uncovering metonymical links of complicity in and between the Algerian War and World War II - those same conventions also serve to contain complicity through a traditionally heterosexual resolution. (280)

In other words, Cadin's relationship and interaction with women in this text reinforce traditional gender roles; the helpless widow who can only be stirred to remember the crime she witnessed with help from the heroic detective, and the grieving fiancée who falls in love with the detective investigating the murder of her partner. Although Daeninckx has been rightly praised for using the *noir* genre to investigate historical crime as well as the usual murder mystery (transforming the *roman noir* into the *roman engagé*) it is important to note that this progressive transformation does not apply to his treatment of female characters. As Joanna M. Smith argues, this trait of having female characters as either vixens or victims dates back to Sherlock Holmes: 'Most of Doyle's women are either victims [...] or perfectly competent but apparently unable to stir without Holme's aid' (1991:79). This is hardly out of line with Victorian ideology but, I suggest, this gendered hierarchy of power in Daeninckx's novel is out of place with its wider anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-violence themes.

As well as undermining the memorial agency of female characters, I propose that Cadin's 'hard-boiled' characterisation has an indirect impact on the way the victims of the 17th October are represented. Daeninckx opens the text with chapters named after missing participants in the protests, whose names he found on a list of factory workers who did not return to work on the day following the protests. Daeninckx has claimed that he names these chapters after historical victims so that 'ça fonctionne comme si c'était les plaques tombales ou cimetières' since 'je crois que la pire des injustices c'est que des êtres humains disparaissent à tout jamais comme s'ils n'étaient pas passés parmi nous' (Classepam 2011). The chapters entitled 'Saïd Milache' and 'Kaïra Guelanine' mingle with the fictional chapters called after non-historical characters such as 'Roger Thiraud', seemingly to give back a voice to those who have been effaced from history. The names identify them as historically real people, but all other elements of their characters are part of Daeninckx's fiction. In particular, the way in which Daeninckx has chosen to characterise Kaïra Guelanine (25 year old female

inhabitant of the Nanterre *bidonville*) reveals the gendered characteristics attributed to activity and passivity. Kaïra is a victim, but she is not feminised or depicted as passive in the same way as Mme Thiraud. Instead, Daeninckx portrays Kaïra as a trouser-wearing headstrong woman, an active and feisty individual unlike the other women in the shantytown who ‘trainaient derrière elles une armée de marmots [...] dont le dernier pas en dehors du bidonville remontait à deux, voire trois ans’ (Daeninckx 1984: 21). Daeninckx paints a scene which claims that women in Algerian communities had many children, and only very rarely left the domestic space of the shantytown. The condescending tone used to describe the other women in the shantytown supposedly reflects Kaïra’s own disdain for the constraints applied to women in the Algerian community of Nanterre. Ostensibly, then, Kaïra’s willingness to participate in the FLN march is thanks to her rejection of the gendered expectations of her Algerian culture. The suggestion is that the other women of her age in the shantytown were unable to participate since they remained within the borders of Nanterre with their ‘marmots’. However, historically this was not the case, as women and families with children did feature among the protesters on 17th October (House and MacMaster 2006: 116). Furthermore, on 20th October, Algerian women continued to protest in the Parisian centre, even though, only days earlier, hundreds of Algerian men had been killed or detained for doing so (127). Daeninckx’s decision to characterise Kaïra in this way does tell us something about the gendering nature of his narrative. Daeninckx associates masculinity with political activity and, in order to enter the city centre, one must be masculine and political, which is why Daeninckx characterises Kaïra with ‘masculine’ attributes so that it would make more sense for her to be part of 17th October protests. Daeninckx seems unable to create an image of femininity that moves beyond the binary notion of gender which associates masculinity with action and femininity with passivity, or leave behind stereotypes of Algerian women as cloistered baby-makers. It is possible that Kaïra Guelanine, the historical person, wore trousers, did not have

children, and was disdainful of young Algerian women who did. However, the fact that Daeninckx chooses to portray her as such works within the confines of femininity being associated with apolitical passivity. Daeninckx fails to undermine this patriarchal power structure in his text, which amalgamates masculinity with political activity, and therefore he risks depoliticising the Algerian voices in his text, in particular the voices of Algerian women. To conclude, Daeninckx succeeds in demonstrating the multidirectional nature of memory by relating the massacres of 17th October 1961 to the deportation of Jews from France during the Occupation. Furthermore, Daeninckx is able to do so by using the *roman noir* genre to bring this marginalised memory and the involvement of Maurice Papon in these atrocities to wider public knowledge. However, in a text that is concerned with memory and the importance of remembering the past, the female characters are denied much commemorative agency. His text is heavily influenced by the masculine subjectivity of the hard-boiled detective, and adheres to the gender-based ideology in which women are defined *by* men. Without men, they are unable to actively commemorate the past – it is only through Cadin’s influence that they are able to remember (Madame Thiraud) or, conversely, encouraged to forget the past (Claudine). Furthermore, the text reinforces the association of masculinity with political agency. In order to leave the *bidonville* and partake in a political protest, Daeninckx has Kaïra cast off femininity as a symbol of repressive domesticity. Although Daeninckx successfully critiques the marginalisation of Kaïra’s memory and that of others like her, his characterisation of her creates a gendered hierarchy of power. To be active, one must adopt masculine attributes.

Les Passagers du Roissy-express

Les Passagers du Roissy-express (1990) documents François Maspéro’s journey along the Parisian RER B train line in the autumn of 1989, accompanied by photographer Anaïk Frantz. They leave the train at each stop, explore the area, meet the local people and then leave again,

recording their experiences in a variety of written and visual forms. The meandering travellers also wind between different disciplines and modes of expression; the text is not entirely a travel journal, neither fictional account nor socio-historical document, prosaic nor poetic. The narrative style mirrors the start-stop nature of their journey by resisting a single generic form. If we can criticise Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire* for commemorating the 17th October from the singular and masculine subjectivity of the hard-boiled detective, then *Les Passagers du Roissy-express* has been criticised for its over-abundant diversity of perspectives. According to Katherine Gantz, this reticence to fix upon a single genre and subject can be seen as a lack of commitment by Maspero, who only superficially refers to each group of people before moving on without paying due attention to their specificities. As a result, she claims, the interdisciplinary approach of the narrative does not go far enough to establish a detailed picture of the *banlieues* and 'the author's subject of study – the cultural 'Other' – falls victim to the unresolved and unexamined conflicts arising from his ever shifting movements between literary and social representation' (1999: 82-83). Although Gantz seems to suggest that Maspero is avoiding the question of 'Otherness' by leaving these issues 'unresolved and unexamined', I argue that this is precisely his intention. Maspero accepts that it is not possible to entirely answer with a single response the question posed by Edward Saïd 'How does one represent another culture?' (2003: 325). When we consider *Les Passagers* as a collaborative effort between Maspero's words and Frantz's photography, this text becomes more than the privileged ramblings of white middle-class artists in an impoverished area, but constructs instead a multivalent and polyphonic narrative that portrays the complex histories and memories of the *banlieues*.

As Kathryn Jones demonstrates, the journey taken by Maspero and Frantz's through the *banlieue* is as much a journey through time and memory as it is through space (2009: 340). The travellers, Anaïk and François, ceaselessly move from station to station, *cité* to *cité*,

creating a kaleidoscope of place and time. The narrative is careful to present a portrait of these places as they were in 1989, with glimpses into the history that shaped these places and the people who live there. This is a disorientating process (in time and space) of ceaseless *errance*. François poses the question:

serait-il possible de retrouver là-dessous les traces du passé [...] Mais qu'est-ce qui l'intéressait le plus: le dessous ou le dessus ? Le passé ou le présent?

(Maspero 1990: 16)

Thus, the journey becomes about retracing connections in a non-chronological, non-linear fashion, across seemingly disparate instances in time and places in space. The patchwork of genres in Maspero's text aids this sense of temporal shifting since, in visiting residential areas in 1989 such as Drancy and Aubervilliers, he simultaneously visits their historical past and, in doing so, excavates various traumatic moments in French history, such as the Holocaust and the Algerian War. This is hardly an unusual technique, but Maspero's use of historical references does more than provide historical context for the reader as it also stresses the interconnectedness of the past and the present, especially between sites and events which may seem completely unrelated to the reader. Maspero's plurality of places and times echoes the diversity of the cityscape itself, and allows the reader to interrogate representations of the sexual and cultural other in French society. According to Max Silverman 'Maspero's effort seems to be to seek *reconnections* through *dialogue* rather than submit to the atomization of disconnected voices' (Silverman 1999: 95). While critics have noted how Maspero and Frantz seek to create dialogue with the cultural other (the residents of the *banlieue*), I argue that they also highlight the difficulty in representing the sexual other. In doing so, they draw connections between racial and sexual alterity which highlight the complex connections between seemingly disparate sites of historical and contemporary discriminations.

Anne-Louise Milne notes that '[i]t is not obvious how Maspero stands with regard to this heterogeneous object. Is he author, editor, impartial observer? How much of the book is his text, how much more or less explicit quotation?' (2006: 489). Indeed, Maspero cautiously crafts the narrative voice in a self-conscious and ambiguous style. For example, from the start, Maspero is careful to argue that he and photographer Frantz embark on their project without any ulterior motive: 'Non, encore une fois, ce n'était pas une enquête. C'est juste un regard, le leur, et rien d'autre. Un regard attentif' (Maspero 1990: 22). For Anne-Louise Milne this 'emphasis on the free, almost haphazard nature of their gaze is problematic, however, for it tends to collapse all sense of structure dynamic, as if their presence in the situation they observe does not in itself shape these situations' (Milne 2006: 495). However, she does not recognise the irony in reiterating emphatically that theirs is simply a neutral 'regard [...] et rien d'autre', and then immediately following this with the disclaimer 'un regard attentif'. Gantz is also not convinced by Maspero's self-referential narrative voice; 'the author allows himself to explore the systems of power at play in the suburbs without ever acknowledging his own position of influence as an observer, and a critic in his own right' (Gantz 1999: 83). She neglects the self-awareness that Maspero employs in his narrative to bring these systems of power into question. Indeed, Maspero displaces the narrative 'Je' by referring to himself and Frantz in the third person; François and Anaïk function as narrative alter-egos for the writer and photographer. By writing himself into the narrative in the third person, Maspero *is* acknowledging his privileged position as a white, middle class male visiting the cultural other, and ironises this fact.

Awareness of the narrating self is, paradoxically, an important aspect of the narrator's representation of the other. In Jones's analysis of the *Rose des Vents* passage (where François and Anaïk are called over by two women) she notes that:

[t]he narrator deploys various types of speech representation in order to place himself in the role of a listener. The girls' views of life in Aulnay are conveyed in the form of a one-sided dialogue, in which only their answers are reproduced. These fragments of conversation can be read as representing many other voices; it is unclear whether both girls are speaking, or only one girl, and this creates a choral effect. (2004: 129)

For Jones, Maspero self-consciously removes his narrative voice from this passage in order to portray the inhabitants in a more autonomous and positive light. This self-conscious self-other dynamic is very clear when François and Anaïk meet Mme Zineb, in the *cité 3000*. In this passage, François is also painfully aware of the historical and colonial baggage he carries when he, as a French male, tries to represent the sexual and racial other:

Mme Zineb a les dents écartées, de celles qu'on appelle *dents du bonheur*, et une ligne bleue verticale sur le front. Elle habite Aulnay depuis vingt et un ans. Elle est née à Tlemcen. Elle a neuf enfants. Deux de ses filles sont là, elles rentrent du travail et les questionnent sur le leur. Vous travaillez pour *Oxygène*? Mme Zineb sourit: «Cela m'a fait chaud au cœur que tu me demandes de me photographier». (1990 : 48-9)

Their interaction is brief and yet, in terms of the narration, full of rich contradictions. The narrative perspective is constantly switching. At first, the narrative is from François's third person perspective, describing Mme Zineb ('Mme Zineb a les dents écartées') which then switches to Mme Zineb's perspective when she asks François and Anaïk 'Vous travaillez pour *Oxygène*?'. The question appears without quotation marks, and is therefore suspended in François's own narrative. The narrative then switches back to direct speech ('Mme Zineb sourit: « Cela m'a fait chaud au cœur [...]»'). The shifting narrative position makes it

difficult to locate a singular narrative voice. However, this technique does not assimilate Mme Zineb's voice to that of the narrator, in other words, 'François' does not simply speak over Mme Zineb. Instead, this interaction produces a disorientating effect that complicates the reader's understanding of the narrator's relationship with the other and demonstrates the limits of attempting to speak *for* the other. This is not a comfortable encounter for François. Mme Zineb invites the travellers to her apartment for tea but François refuses, stating how late it is but, in fact, 'comme le lui reproche ensuite Anaïk, parce qu'il est gêné' (49). The nature of Maspero's shifting narrative voice and his self-referential tone regarding his *gêne* demonstrate the difficulty of knowing and *representing* the other. Indeed, in Elspeth Probyn's chapter 'Anxious Proximities' this issue of approaching the other is not simply a spatial encounter but a conceptual one. She argues that concepts must be envisaged as spatial sites since this would be 'a recognition of their genealogical trajectories, and acknowledgement that concepts are not geo-politically neutral' (Probyn 2001: 179). Maspero seems to be operating in the same logic, whereby he recognises that by approaching the other spatially, he is also breaching conceptual boundaries; he is a French man and she is an Algerian woman, and along with that dynamic comes a long difficult history of colonial and sexual politics. Unable to place himself spatially in terms of the other, the narrative does the same, occupying various different positions in terms of Mme Zineb's voice. Maspero is demonstrating his awareness that he himself cannot be 'geo-politically neutral'. This avowal undermines his privileged position and does not submit to the illusion that one can simply voice the other, or directly speak on his or her behalf.

The polyphonic and inclusive narrative of *Les Passagers du Roissy-express* is very important regarding the passages which explicitly deal with French national memory. When Maspero describes the traumatic history attached to the town of Drancy (the site of a concentration camp where Parisian Jews were deported to Auschwitz), he is also keenly aware of other

traumas associated with this site, namely the marginalisation of immigrants who now live there. Maspero begins by describing the Drancy housing estates as a ‘pièce en trois actes’; ‘cité radieuse, cité de la mort, cité banale’ (1990 :175). The history of this site is presented as a palimpsestic layering of existences. Like the palimpsest, these layers do not efface one another but are intricately interconnected and seep into each other. For Maspero, ‘il n’a pas fallu grand chose pour repasser du camp aux HLM’ (186). The slippage from a site of death to a housing estate for ‘gens modestes, qui sont dans une grande majorité des immigrés’ is barely noticeable since these layers of memory go unacknowledged:

Cette histoire-là n’est certes pas leur histoire. Heureusement pour eux, car qui pourrait vivre ici, s’il fallait à chaque moment entendre dans sa mémoire résonner tant d’abjects échos ? (188)

Yet again, Maspero *ironises* the way in which we think about identity and the past. By claiming that ‘[c]ette histoire-là n’est certes pas leur histoire’ he is, in fact, *connecting* the memory of the Holocaust with the legacy of colonialism. In other words, Drancy is a *nœud de mémoire*, where memories of the Holocaust become intertwined and knotted with those of post-colonial migration and the marginalisation of these migrant groups. Maspero does not introduce Drancy as an isolated example of traumatic memory from history, but creates connections between seemingly disparate groups of people by asking the question ‘qui pourrait vivre ici?’ (Ibid). The rhetorical question again forces the reader to make the mental connection between the history of Drancy and its present-day inhabitants. As Silverman demonstrates, he ‘foregrounds the different relationships to city spaces of these middle-class intellectuals *vis-à-vis* those others (for the most part working-class and very often of immigrant backgrounds), their capacities for freedom and choice’ (1999: 167). Maspero exposes these layers of semantic, historical and topographical exclusion which are imposed upon the current inhabitants of Drancy, as well as the camp’s victims.

According to Rothberg's theory of multidirectional memory, we can understand Maspero's passage on Drancy as an example of 'the "revisiting" and rewriting of hegemonic sites of memory' (2009: 310). The memory of Drancy as a concentration camp informs current cases of discrimination, as well as our understanding of the deportation of Jews from France. Simultaneously, Maspero resists eclipsing the memories of the current inhabitants of Drancy with the memories of Jewish oppression and vice versa. However, he also draws connections between his *own* traumatic memory and this site of traumatic memory. As Margaret Attack argues, the image of the *banlieue* as a socio-cultural no-man's-land evokes the tropes of disappearance which 'has a particular poignancy in the context of the disappearance of his father in the Buchenwald crematorium' (2007: 451). This superimposition of memory and contemporary issues mixes the political with the personal since Maspero once lived in the *banlieue* of Paris himself, and lost his father to the Holocaust. While Drancy is used to reintegrate the *banlieue* into a wider narrative of French history by stressing the connectedness of the Holocaust and the legacy of colonialism, this description of Drancy is also a personal discovery – a kind of homecoming. The memories of past suffering are integrated with voices of contemporary marginalisation and also traverse Maspero's own personal tragedy. The result is a *nœud de mémoire* whereby Drancy becomes a knotted site of links and dialogues between Maspero, as the authorial self, and several other past and present sites of suffering, past and present.

Like Daeninckx, Maspero discusses the massacre of 17th October 1961 which can also be described as a *nœud de mémoire*; a knotted site of mingling memories and dialogues. He chooses to introduce the massacre into his narrative while François and Anaïk are in Aubervilliers. Although this area of Paris is not directly connected to the brutality that took place on 17th October, it is home to migrant populations and their descendants, many of whom are of Algerian origin. In Aubervilliers they visit a friend, Akim, and his family. A

casual conversation about life as an Algerian in France takes the narrative from Aubervilliers to the Nanterre shanty-town and finally the FLN demonstration on 17th October:

«Demande-leur, et tu verras, avait-il dit Akim. Ils sont tous passés par la rue de l'Union.» C'était dans les années 50 et 60, c'était en fait l' «adresse» du plus grand bidonville, avec celui de Nanterre, de la couronne parisienne. François l'a connu : pendant la guerre d'Algérie, il avait des camarades qui y habitaient. C'est de là qu'est partie l'une des colonnes de la grande manifestation du 17 octobre 1961. (Maspero 1990 : 256)

In this passage, Maspero superimposes several instances of social exclusion and racial discrimination; the contemporary exclusion of migrant populations living in Aubervilliers, the shantytowns that housed Algerian migrants in the 1950s and 1960s and François's memories of 17th October 1961. Recalling this memory at this point becomes a way for Maspero to draw links between contemporary Aubervilliers and his own memory of the 17th October massacre. After all, it was Maspero's publishing house, *Éditions Maspero*, that published Frantz Fanon's *L'An V de la révolution algérienne* and *Les Damnés de la terre*, amongst other well-known anti-colonial texts, many of which were banned at the time.⁵ Therefore, the night of 17th October 1961 is another memory which is personally evocative for Maspero. However, he portrays this memory in a way that includes other diverse sites of suffering which are not directly linked to him but to a legacy of colonialism and racial discrimination; the Nanterre *bidonville* and the isolation of Aubervilliers. In this fashion, as Silverman argues, 'François brings out his baggage (rather than hiding it in voyeuristic fashion) and expects others to bring out theirs' (1999: 92). François's 'baggage' may be

⁵ In Leila Sebbar's text on 17th October 1961, *La Seine était rouge*, she pays homage to Maspero (who is one of the dedicatees of the book) and his bookstore 'La Joie de Lire'. She stages a scene in an anonymous bookshop on rue Saint-Séverin (the address of 'La Joie de Lire'), which becomes a site of refuge for Algerians escaping police brutality on the night of the massacre (Sebbar 1999: 115).

personally resonant with that of the author Maspero, but this does not efface other memories at the same time.

Photographic subjectivity

Anaïk Frantz's photographic images, which break up the narrative at irregular intervals, aid in the construction of a dialogue between seemingly disparate places and people. As Dervila Cooke notes 'of the sixty or so images in *Les Passagers*, only three are of people photographed from inside their homes' (2008: 92). It is significant that these images show women occupying external, public spaces, traditionally assigned as masculine areas. Furthermore, the passage which describes the brutality of 17th October is illustrated with images of women and girls who inhabit Aubervilliers. The first photograph shows four women sitting closely together on a concrete railing outside a building. Smiling at the camera, they wear traditional African clothing and pose demurely, holding two children. The caption locates the women in Aubervilliers, in *La Maladrerie*, (a former shantytown whose name in English translates as Lazaret; a colony where the sick are kept isolated from the main population). The women are geometrically framed by the angular lines of the concrete railing and the rectangular bricks of the building behind them. The viewer is drawn into the image, which is given greater depth thanks to this geometric framing.



(Figure 3, Maspero 1990: 257)

The second photo is of four young girls. The two older girls on the left imitate the pin-up girl pose by placing their right hands on their heads, elbows out at a jaunty angle, with their left hands on their hips. The younger girls on the right contrast the poise of their counterparts on the left, as they slump shyly over the concrete lip of the balcony. Again, the image is carefully framed by the low angle of the shot and the balcony which separates the photographer from the girls. The viewer is distanced from the girls and the playfulness of their posing is exaggerated.



(Figure 4, 258)

Frantz's images project an image of feminine alterity which is optimistic and encourages the humanisation of the other. They celebrate the humanity to be found in parts of the French

capital which are normally ignored, politically and culturally. These photos deconstruct the received notions of the *banlieues* as isolated and excluded from the humanity and civilisation of the Parisian centre, as a ‘magma informe’ (Maspero 1990: 24), and playfully undermine tropes normally associated with women of migrant origin as symbols of suffering, silence and marginalisation.

Cooke argues that Frantz’s photography creates a positive interaction between the subject and the viewer: ‘Frantz often manages to include or suggest a lot in each frame, and the interaction with the text adds a further layer of complexity’ (2008: 97). Furthermore, the photographic image, which for Frantz is already an interactive activity, interacts textually with Maspero’s narrative. Maspero’s words and Frantz’s photography create a dynamic connection between the questions of racial discrimination (‘Ce fut une soirée de matraquage et de tuerie’ (Maspero 1990: 258)) and the portrayal of the racial and sexual other in the photographs. I propose that these photographs inform our understanding of how sites of colonial-era trauma (such as 17th October) are connected with more contemporary marginalisation in the *banlieue*. Placing these images of women alongside text describing the massacre of Algerians on Parisian soil opens dialogue between the history of state oppression in 1961 and the representation of contemporary women in France. However, this reading is not unproblematic. As Susan Sontag famously argued in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, photographs should not be thought of as entirely objective. Even though the photograph is captured by a machine, and not constructed like a painting or sketch, it is nonetheless a crafted perspective and therefore subjective:

the photographic image [...] cannot be simply a transparency of something that happened. It is always the image that someone chose; to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude. (Sontag 2003: 41)

Indeed, Cooke argues that ‘[d]espite Maspero’s suggestions to the contrary, Frantz does in fact participate in a sort of *mise en scène*’ (2008: 99). Nonetheless, I would suggest that this *mise en scène* is intentional. Maspero and Frantz highlight the fact that the photographic image is never an independent or objective artefact. As Andy Stafford argues, ‘[t]he photograph *always* invites another discourse, is never pure, is constantly surrounded by language (narrative, commentary, caption)’ (2007: 161). By framing images of women from the *banlieue* within a passage describing colonial oppression on Parisian soil, Maspero and Frantz are connecting two (seemingly unrelated) cases of discriminations – the violent suppression of peacefully protesting Algerians on 17th October and the economic and social exclusion of migrant women in the *banlieue*. Following this logic, Maspero and Frantz could be accused of simply superficially politicising the images of these women for their own subjective purposes. However, when we take into account the wider themes of the text, which seek to draw connections between ostensibly disconnected moments in history, and therefore bring together unrelated groups of people by highlighting a shared history, we can argue that these images of women do not simply add yet another example of contemporary discrimination to a list of historical exclusions. Instead, Frantz’s portraits of women encourage the reader to understand how different cases of social exclusion and discrimination (concerning different groups, at different times) are, in fact, interconnected.

Conclusion

By comparing *Meurtres pour mémoire* and *Les Passagers du Roissy-express* I have analysed the role that gender plays in the crafting of a multidirectional narrative of memory. In the case of *Meurtres pour mémoire*, the oppositional structure that associates passivity and forgetting with femininity, and activity and remembering with masculinity remains unchallenged. Although this text has been accredited with the ‘return’ of 17th October 1961

into public memory, the voices and memories of female characters in this *roman noir engagé* are marginalised in the narrative by Cadin's subjectivity. Contrastingly, in *Les Passagers du Roissy-express*, Maspero is very careful to avoid speaking *for* the sexual and racial other. The city is represented as a palimpsest of temporal and spatial layers in which memories of colonial and racial oppression, of the Holocaust and the Algerian war, intermingle in a multidirectional dialogue of memory. Frantz's photography enriches Maspero's narrative, by providing another complex visual layer to the text. By illustrating the passage describing the massacre of 17th October 1961 with the images of women from the *banlieue*, Maspero and Frantz draw connections between memories of colonial oppression and contemporary cases of gender marginalisation and, therefore, begin to trace the links between patriarchy and colonialism. Indeed, they borrow the memories of colonial violence to demonstrate that cases of gender and racial marginalisation are not just isolated to *les années noires* of Vichy France or the Algerian War. Instead, Maspero's text and Frantz's photography sensitively portray how these periods are intricately connected and that their legacies have continued well into the late 20th century.

CHAPTER THREE

Hélène Cixous and Leïla Sebbar: Gendered Memory and Staging

Gendered memories and exposing orientalist stereotypes

In their article 'Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction', Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith highlight the uneven development in theories of gender and memory:

Feminist readings of autobiography and memoir, and feminist practices of oral history, have struggled to define the gendered manifestations of these literary genres and have thus analysed gender differentiations in acts of personal and cultural memory. (2002: 3)

They identify the difficulty in defining a gendered approach to memory in literature, and argue that feminist readings have focused on how acts of personal and cultural memory differ according to gender. Furthermore, Hirsch and Smith argue that post-colonial women's writing, in particular, has posited gender as an important element of cultural memory. Memory has played an important role in women's *autofiction* and biography, forms which have often paid homage to oral traditions. By using oral traditions, or referring to them, women writers are able to reappropriate this art form, displaced and marginalised by colonisation, which valued above all the written form. We can surmise from Hirsch and Smith's article, therefore, that the genres and forms chosen by artists and writers play a central role in how cultural memory is differentiated according to gender.

In his seminal work *Orientalism*, Edward Saïd argues that genre and form equally play an important role in the differentiation of eastern and western practices. According to the orientalist framework, western memory practices, privileging the written word, are superior to the so-called Eastern memory practices of oral transference. Since oral

practices are ostensibly non-concrete, ephemeral and intangible, they are the perfect other to the written subject in its physical permanency. This orientalist model makes it a lot easier for the western written word to speak *for* the oriental. Saïd highlights this in his analysis of Gustave Flaubert's relationship with the courtesan dancer Kuchuk Hanem; 'she never spoke for herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history' (2003: 6). Flaubert thus spoke in her absence. Within this orientalist framework, eastern memories are thought to be absent and passive. Writing about the orient, then, becomes a way to speak *for* and therefore further silence the 'east'. If we take the example of Flaubert and Kuchuk Hanem, we can see that although Saïd does not explicitly elaborate this as such, the relationship between the east and west is a gendered one in which, ostensibly, the west is masculine and expressive, and the east is feminine and silent.

Oral traditions have played a significant role in post-colonial women's writing for two major reasons. First, writing about oral tradition privileges the generic forms associated with the culture of the formerly colonised peoples such as folklore, myth and song. As Saïd's theory of orientalism demonstrates, orality is often associated with non-western traditions, ostensibly veiled in mystery through its non-written form and endowed with a unique ephemeral power to transfer knowledge and memory from generation to generation. Frantz Fanon argues in *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961) that decolonisation offers formerly colonised peoples the opportunity to re-empower oral traditions, and by extension their national culture:

la littérature orale, les contes, les épopées, les chants populaires, autrefois répertoriés et figés, commencent à se transformer. Les conteurs qui récitait des épisodes inertes les animent et y introduisent des modifications de plus en plus fondamentales [...] L'exemple de l'Algérie est, à cet égard, significatif. A partir de 1952-53, les conteurs, stéréotypés et fatigants à écouter,

bouleversent de fond en comble leurs méthodes d'exposé et le contenu de leurs récits. Le public, autrefois clairsemé, se fait compact. C'est un authentique spectacle qui reprend valeur culturelle. (2002: 229)

According to Fanon, in the lead up to decolonisation Algerians were able to reinvent oral traditions beyond the stereotypical functions that colonialists had assigned them, and render them more authoritative. This has continued into post-colonial writings that attempt to displace the authority of western written traditions, by referring to oral history.

Second, orality has often been viewed as a feminine tradition. By using oral forms, post-colonial women writers reappropriate this generic form as particular to women alone. In Rachida Titah's *La Galerie des absentes*, 'les absentes' refers to Algerian women and to the notion that the Algerian woman is viewed 'dans l'imaginaire masculin' as 'un être définitivement archaïque, aveugle et muet' (1996: 13). However, for Titah, this is a misconception of women's power, which resides within the private spaces of the interior world:

L'Histoire avait pourtant, depuis longtemps déjà, introduit, surtout en milieu masculin, d'autres formes d'expression culturelle que l'oralité, formes utilisées dans les contacts avec les mondes extérieurs. Mais cela n'a pas diminué la force des traditions orales restées vives et tenaces à l'intérieur. Peut-être faudrait-il voir dans cette pérennité l'influence du monde féminin, monde de l'intérieur où règne exclusivement l'oralité, un monde maintenu en marge de l'évolution de la société et éloigné des vicissitudes historiques. (12)

In other words, the feminine world of private orality has been marginalised by History and the public, masculine world. Therefore, in order to displace the privileged position that

written testimony has held for western and patriarchal writers, post-colonial women writers have attempted to re-valorise the margins by making references to ‘eastern’ oral testimony.

Mildred Mortimer has argued that Franco-Algerian writer Leïla Sebbar is an example of women writers who empower oral traditions in order to displace colonial and patriarchal authority. Mortimer demonstrates that French and Algerian memory practices are often distinguished from one other in gendered and generic terms; that western memory traditions, specifically French, are defined by *écriture* (writing) and that eastern traditions, specifically Algerian, are defined by *kalaam* (speech). Furthermore, ‘the relationship between *écriture*, the written word in French, and *kalaam*, the spoken word in Arabic [...] links [memory] to concepts of public and private space (public = male, private = female)’ (1988: 301). Mortimer’s article is useful since it highlights the gendered distinction between the written tradition of the French coloniser, ostensibly masculine, and the oral Algerian tradition, ostensibly feminine. However, Mortimer overlooks the fact that Sebbar does not take these oppositions of male/female, French/Algerian, public/private for granted, but directly challenges such binaries in her writing. Indeed, ideas of western and eastern models of memory, as gendered binary opposites, rely upon the same orientalist power structure that Saïd criticised; that the association of ‘eastern’ women with the oral tradition synonymously links femininity with absence and marginalisation. This dichotomy that views eastern memory as oral and feminine, and western memory as written and masculine, fails to undermine a gendered hierarchy of commemoration.

In this chapter, I will show how Leïla Sebbar and H  l  ne Cixous have turned to the theatre and staging to escape from this binary tension of written and oral traditions associated with western/masculine and eastern/feminine modes of expression. First, I will demonstrate how Cixous posits the theatre as an ideal genre for bringing the self and the other into close proximity and for breaking down boundaries of nationality, class, race and gender.

However, I will also examine the orientalist limitations in her approach to ‘eastern’ theatre by analysing her work with the Parisian theatre company, *Théâtre du Soleil*, in particular the play *L’Indiade, ou L’Inde de leurs rêves* (1987). Cixous was born in Oran in 1937 to a Jewish German mother and a Jewish *pied-noir* father. Although she has written about her childhood in Algeria, for example in the short story ‘Pieds nus’ from Leïla Sebbar’s *Une enfance algérienne* (1997), my focus in this chapter is how *L’Indiade* sheds light on the ways in which questions of gender, memory and theatrical staging interact in a colonial context. While *L’Indiade* and the writings on the theatre discussed here do not directly deal with memories of the Algerian war and play out in a setting seemingly unrelated to Algeria, these texts nonetheless highlight Cixous’s preoccupation with questions of nationality, gendered identity and (de)colonisation. Second, I will suggest that Sebbar’s novel *La Seine était rouge* (1999) offers an alternative model to thinking about memory production as a gendered activity, since her narrative is constructed of commemorative practices that move beyond concepts of western *écriture* and eastern *kalaam* and their gendered ‘natures’.

L’Indiade, ou L’Inde de leurs rêves

Cixous is perhaps most famously known for *Le Rire de la Méduse* (1975) in which she coined the term *écriture féminine*, a form of writing that ostensibly allows women and men to write in a non-phallogentric language. Critical work on Cixous’s writing has largely been dominated by engagement in her theories of *écriture féminine*, which have been accused of essentialism (Binhammer 1991: 66). As a consequence, Cixous’s work on the theatre has been overlooked, despite the fact that it offers important insights regarding her ideas on identity and selfhood. As Julia Dobson argues:

Theatre becomes, for Cixous, a scene (both of writing and performance) in which a new relationship between self and other can be represented most fruitfully and articulated most successfully. (2002: 11)

The theatre, interdisciplinary by nature, has played an important role in Cixous's interest in exploring plural identities. I propose that Cixous's work in the theatre also engages with questions of memory.

During her time working with the *Théâtre du Soleil*, Cixous's interest in the ways in which countries deal with the legacy of colonialism came to the forefront of her work. *L'Indiade, ou L'Inde de leurs rêves* (1987) is one such work, which dramatises the political processes that led to Indian independence and partition with Pakistan in 1947. By situating her work in the era of decolonisation and new nation building, when the politics of national and religious identity were of paramount importance, Cixous explores notions of the self in relation to the nationhood. The prologue to this play begins with a series of interrogations:

HARIDASI (*au public*)

Hello!

Where do you come from?

Which country?

Where is your husband?

What are you doing here?

What is your name? etc.

QUELQU'UN

Et vous? (Cixous 1987 : 19)

The fourth wall is immediately shattered as the play opens with Haridasi demanding identification from the audience. Performed in Paris but set in India during the final

decades of the British Raj, these initial questions are in English, the colonial language of India. Haridasi then switches to French, the language of the rest of play, after an off stage voice retorts ‘Et vous?’. This series of questionings, directed at the audience, forces the spectator to be aware that this play is as much about how individuals identify *themselves*, as well as how we identify the *other*. In other words, although set in a foreign land, in a different decade, the audience member is invited to question his/her own sense of self in relation to the other as much as who Gandhi and Nehru were.

For Dobson, Cixous’s choice of the partition of Pakistan and India as a site for this exploration between the self and other is not unproblematic, but overall successful in that:

[t]his fluid and fertile displacement is intended to undermine dialectical structures of difference which rely upon the binary opposition of self and other, a movement which Cixous suggests is a necessary realignment before writing for the theatre [...] To imagine oneself as a subject of different cultural, economic, social and sexual discourses may indeed work to disturb concepts of difference, hierarchy and the relationship between the individual and the world. (2002: 49 –50)

For Cixous, then, the theatre enables the playwright to speak across boundaries of cultures and backgrounds and question the audience’s identification with its own selfhood as well as the exterior world. Ostensibly, the theatre’s liminal quality, as an in-between expression of both written and oral traditions, allows Cixous to connect with the other, even if this other cannot read or write:

Comment moi, qui suis de l’espèce des lettrés, pourrais-je jamais donner la parole à une paysanne illettrée sans la lui reprendre, d’un coup de mon verbe, sans l’enterrer d’une de mes belles phrases? (1987: 253)

In Cixous's opinion, the theatre (the oral and visual enactment of the written word) is the answer – by combining these seemingly disparate elements of written and oral testimony, the theatre apparently liberates words from the tyranny of written expression so that they can be shared democratically, despite the literacy and (to an extent) financial means of the audience. Indeed, Joanna Sullivan argues that ‘unlike oral societies, in which anyone can participate in oral traditions, novels require both producers and receivers who are literate and possess the financial means to write, publish, and purchase’ (2006: 179). Theatre, as opposed to other purely written forms of expression, is for Cixous the site *par excellence* for transgressing boundaries of class and nationality.

Performing memory; *lieu du crime, lieu du pardon*

In terms of memory, the plural and interdisciplinary style of the theatre allows the audience to access sites of traumatic memory that may not be available in other literary forms. In *L'Indiade* Cixous stages the traumatic process by which India won its freedom from British rule, but was also torn asunder by the birth of Pakistan. In the years following Partition in August 1947, 14.5 million people were displaced and an unknown number killed in the resulting violence. Although Cixous does not represent the particulars of this violence in *L'Indiade*, she does argue that the theatre is a privileged site for the representation of such trauma, since it is paradoxically a *lieu du Crime* and also a *lieu du Pardon*:

L'énigme de la méchanceté, de la cruauté humaine, celle des autres et la mienne, c'est cela que nous venons demander au Théâtre de nous révéler. Car le Théâtre, c'est le lieu du Crime. Oui le lieu du Crime, le lieu de l'horreur, aussi le lieu du Pardon. Que nous donne-t-il à voir? [...] Tous les excès que je mets à la porte de mon appartement: le suicide, le meurtre, la part de deuil

qu'il y a dans toute relation passionnément humaine: soif et faim. (Cixous 1987 : 257)

In other words, when trauma is staged by the theatre, it re-enacts the crime of the trauma itself (*lieu du Crime*). Simultaneously, this re-enactment mediates the traumatic memory (that is to say, presents the memory via a medium – the theatre) and therefore metonymically works through this trauma (*lieu du Pardon*). Therefore, Cixous's description of the theatre as a site of crime but also forgiveness, posits the idea that by performing memories of trauma – those of others as well as of the self – one can work through this trauma.

Furthermore, Cixous's *lieu du Crime, lieu du Pardon* theory supports the notion that memories of trauma can be re-enacted even if (as it is the case of *L'Indiade*) the trauma was never lived by the performer/playwright/practitioner/audience member him or herself. Alison Landsberg applies the term 'prosthetic memory' to instances where technologies of mass media (cinema, television, and today the internet) enable individuals to acquire memories of events they never lived:

Prosthetic memories originate outside a person's lived experience and yet are taken on and worn by that person through mass cultural technologies of memory. The idea of prosthetic memory, then, rejects the notion that all memories – and, by extension, the identities that memories sustain – are necessarily and substantively shaped by lived social context [...] Prosthetic memories are neither purely individual nor entirely collective but emerge at the interface of individual and collective experience. They are privately felt public memories. (2004: 61)

I propose that a similar process can be seen in the theatrical staging of traumatic memory. Although theatrical audiences can hardly be called a 'mass' public, nonetheless, the staging

of historical moments of trauma and violence through the theatre broadcasts these memories to a wider audience. This also has gendered consequences, since private memory (what Mildred Mortimer associated with feminine *kalaam*) can be felt publicly (in the masculine domain). Cixous herself, in taking on the topic of Indian independence and partition in 1947, is prosthetically performing the memories of these events as a way to explore the relationship between the self and other.

On the other hand, Dominick LaCapra warns against the unceasing ‘retelling’ of memory rather than working through the past. Focusing on cases of traumatic memory he speculates that:

undecidability and unregulated *différance*, threatening to disarticulate relations, confuse self and other, and collapse all distinctions, including that between present and past, are related to transference and prevail in trauma and in post-traumatic acting out in *which one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes* [my emphasis] [...] Any duality (our double inscription) of time (past and present or future) is experientially collapsed or productive only of aporias and double binds. (2001: 21)

LaCapra views the performance of trauma as the ‘collapsing’ of the present with the past, which results in an unresolvable aporia and, therefore, the mindless repetition of a traumatic event through its (re)performance. LaCapra’s argument against ‘unregulated *différance*’ (Derrida’s infinite deferral of meaning whereby the boundaries between self and other are blurred) stems from the belief that the performance of traumatic memory would then result in ‘the indiscriminate generalization of the category of survivor’ (xi). In other words, he warns against mediated re-enactments of trauma, since these can only ever do a disservice to

those who survived the traumatic event. By this logic, in staging the trauma of the political process that led to the partition of India, Cixous perpetuates the traumatic memory and collapses the experiences of those who lived and survived the event with those of the audience. LaCapra's concerns neglect the convincing argument that *all* memory is mediated and therefore can be appropriated by those who have never experienced, or lived, the remembered event 'first hand'. For Hirsch and Smith, whether lived or not, the 'original' memory always remains out of bounds:

An act of telling and listening, performing and watching, it is, most importantly, an act of retelling or, in the language of performance, of "twice-behaved experience". And *it acknowledges the unavailability of the original experience* [my emphasis] and the fragmentary and mediated nature of the reconstruction. (Hirsch and Smith 2002: 9)

Like Landsberg's theory of 'prosthetic' memory, Hirsch and Smith demonstrate that there is no pure, unmediated, primordial form of memory.

Nonetheless, we must acknowledge that Cixous's *L'Indiade* is not an entirely unproblematic example of how memory can be shared across different identities and groups. According to Dobson, the notion that the theatre is a utopian space that can transcend cultural subjectivities for a universal sense of history or humanity comes at the cost of '[t]he problematic positing of an essentialised Indian subjectivity':

Cixous expresses no concern as to the possible pitfalls of the representations that we might communally witness, nor does she contest the positing of a homogenous body of spectators who remain free from elements of divisive difference, such as gender, race, class or sexuality, that might impact upon their experiences of the play. For Cixous, theatre's disregard for the everyday

banality of our lives and its rediscovery of some lost essence of humanity can but transcend all such difference. (2002: 61)

Dobson does not attempt to excuse Cixous's overlooking of cultural difference, since, she claims, this is an integral component of her project to transcend cultural and historical chasms. Nonetheless, despite the agreed objectives of *Théâtre du Soleil* being that 'the focus of the political action in today's work must transcend national boundaries [...] the plays themselves proved disappointing' (Bradby and Delgado 2002: 125). *L'Indiade* does not satisfyingly 'transcend national boundaries' because it presents an essentialising view of Indian subjectivity in relation to the west.

The use of Indian subjectivity can be viewed to be part of the wider trend of the *Théâtre du Soleil's* *gout pour l'orient*. Cixous wrote *L'Indiade* in collaboration with director and creator of *le Théâtre du Soleil*, Ariane Mnouchkine. Mnouchkine has claimed that she was drawn to Asian theatrical traditions which value the actor as a vehicle of metamorphosis. However, she says that this 'oriental' quality is not limited to Asian theatre alone, since this is a notion supported by the major European practitioners of the 20th century: 'L'Orient, pour le théâtre, est une constante ! Brecht a toujours touché de ce côté-là. Et Artaud, quant à lui, disait simplement : " Le théâtre est oriental "' (Kiernander [no date]). However, there is a danger in associating theatre with specifically 'oriental' qualities and therefore endorsing stereotypes about 'eastern' peoples and societies. In other words, in celebrating theatre as 'oriental', is Mnouchkine endorsing the kind of orientalism criticised by Saïd? One could argue that Mnouchkine and Cixous are simply participating in a longer theatrical tradition. Indeed, Kiernander states that Ancient Greek theatre used the Orient as the staple to represent the 'other'. In order to assist in this 'othering' of the Orient, oriental characters were assigned feminine qualities; 'Asia is represented [...] by the character of a weeping, tragic heroine' (1993: 123). According to Kiermander, Cixous and Mnouchkine

both deal with Asia and continue to associate the continent with the feminine but ‘the setting is no longer orientalist in the traditional fashion; it no longer operates as a representation of alterity’ (125). Kiernander argues that Cixous and Mnouchkine avoid orientalist stereotypes by employing ‘eastern’ staging techniques (not relying on blackouts or curtain drops for the scene changes), and by letting the audience members become acclimatised to the ‘eastern’ setting through the play’s four hour duration. According to this logic, unlike other western plays that deal with the east, the ‘easterners’ do not appear alien since the audience becomes accustomed to them.

However, simply because an audience is familiarised with ‘eastern’ staging technique does not mean that these staging techniques themselves are not orientalist. Furthermore, the problematic aspects of *L’Indiade* are not solely due to the use of India as a setting for the play, or Cixous’s desire to produce a work that transcends national boundaries. Rather, it is the endorsement of orientalist notions of the east as feminine, sacred and mystical. Cixous’s feminisation of the east is present above all in her portrait of Gandhi as the ‘antique déité sans dents, vieille mère sans mamelles, dernière preuve de l’existence des dieux’ (Cixous 1987 : 148). For Judith G. Miller, Cixous’s Gandhi is the incarnation of the ‘Medusan hero’:

beyond gender, both mother and lover, infant and old man [...] He is the embodiment of the sum of all the maternal metaphors from ‘Le Rire de la Méduse’: an empowerer, a nurturer, a person who laughs freely and whose laughter sets free. (Miller 1999: 136)

In this sense, Gandhi’s non-violent struggle for Indian independence and campaign against Partition is the ideal metaphor for Cixous’s own interest in feminine subjectivity. According to Cixous, ‘l’acteur est toujours un peu saint, un peu femme: il lui faut donner la vie en se

retirant' (1987: 265). Thinking as a woman is therefore the threshold for thinking about the other, since, as Abigail Bray puts it, '[t]he autonomous specificity of the sign (woman) is therefore the threshold to a thinking otherwise' (2004: 45). Cixous's play therefore attempts to invest feminine power in the most famous figure of Indian history in order to empower femininity and eastern traditions over western and patriarchal ways of thinking (as symbolised by the British Raj).

However, this characterisation of Gandhi (the eastern, feminine heroine resisting western, imperial patriarchy symbolised by the British Empire) relies upon binary oppositions of male and female, west and east:

Clearly Cixous felt the need to confront corrupt Western patriarchies with other models, and believed [...] Gandhi defied the conventional definitions of power by offering something 'feminine' that was both holy and heroic. But her excessive static and verbose plays could only account for the political process through which they lived in terms of simplified binary oppositions.

(Bradby and Delgado 2002: 256)

In other words, although Cixous intends to stage a history of Indian independence as a way to explore new perspectives on the self as inherently connected to the other, the way in which this piece is staged reduces these complicated allusions and connections to an essentialist theory: that in order to liberate oneself from the tyranny of patriarchal western thought, we have to embrace the contrary, the eastern and the feminine.

To conclude briefly, Cixous privileges the theatre as the site *par excellence* for the performance of trauma since its interdisciplinary form (both oral and written) creates a liminal space between traditions normally associated with the binaries of male, female, west and east. In terms of memory, the theatre, therefore, also holds the possibility for

being at once a *lieu du Crime* - in other words, the site where the trauma is (re)performed – and a *lieu du Pardon* – the site where the act of performance works through this traumatic memory. The liminal and paradoxical nature of theatre allows the self and the other to come into close proximity so that the memory of trauma can transcend boundaries of identity. However, *L'Indiade ou L'Inde de leurs rêves* demonstrates an essentialised notion of the east and femininity. Indeed, the play risks endorsing an orientalist vision of eastern countries as sources of an undefined feminine power. In her presentation of Gandhi as a symbol of a feminised alternative to western power structures, Cixous has repeated certain stereotypes associated with both femininity and the east. Therefore, while attempting to challenge and undermine the binaries that exist in traditional power structures, Cixous has, in fact, reinforced these dichotomies.

La Seine était rouge

Bearing in mind the limitations of Cixous's presentation of gender and the east in *L'Indiade ou L'Inde de leurs Rêves*, and the merits of her theory on the theatre as a *lieu du Crime*, *lieu du Pardon*, I will now examine Leïla Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge* (1999). The notion of the stage as *lieu du Crime* (traumatic memory) and *lieu du Pardon* (the working through of this memory) is useful since Sebbar imbues her written narrative with references to the theatre, film and staging. The novel is structured around the filming of a documentary about the 17th October massacre, and although there are no images in the text, Michel LaRonde claims that 'la fiction "avale" en quelque sorte la représentation visuelle' (2007: 145). In this way, 'les deux médiums l'écrit et le visuel, entrent quelque part en combinaison dans le processus de retour sur mémoire' (Ibid). However, there is also an important play on oral and written media in this text which combines oral testimony with mixed media (such as graffiti, film and theatre) to bring questions of gendered practices of commemoration into consideration.

The novel's variety of mixed media supports the range of narrative perspectives in the text. The novel focuses on the projects of three young people born long after 1961: Amel, the daughter of Algerian immigrants living in France, Omer, an Algerian journalist exiled in Paris, and Louis, a French filmmaker who is the son of two *porteurs de valises* (French anti-colonialists who worked with the FLN). The three young adults engage in the same topic from different perspectives transforming the novel into a series of negotiating methodologies for commemoration. The fictional text presents a model for how memory can cross groups of people who differ according to class, gender and ethnicity, regardless of whether they lived these memories 'first-hand' or not. This interdisciplinary style and mixed narrative engenders an ambiguity in the text which allows memory to be transferred across groups and move 'multi-directionally' (Rothberg 2009). This opposes the idea of a competitive model of memory, where memories 'belong' to specific groups of people.

The motif of mixing and crossing, what Cornelia Ruhe has identified as 'la "mythologie croisée"' (2003: 122), is a central theme in Sebbar's writing. Indeed, Sebbar has characterised herself as *une croisée*, a play on words that delivers several meanings in French; a cross-roads, crossed, a cross-breed (Huston and Sebbar 1986: 138). Born in Algeria, but brought up by a French mother and Algerian father, Sebbar now lives and writes in Paris. However, she returns to Algeria in her writing, whether it is through the Algerian War, the status of Algerian immigrants living in France or, as in *La Seine était rouge*, via memories of colonial violence on metropolitan soil. *La Seine était rouge* is a novel that functions as *une croisée de mémoire*. By overlapping the voices of diverse peoples in a variety of media, the text functions as a cross-roads of different memories (some lived, some recreated, but all mediated) of the 17th October massacre. Michel Laronde argues that this multivalent perspective is essential for reconstructing the past:

On se rend compte que le processus d'anamnèse est un travail collectif mais qu'il repose sur des témoignages individuels à intégrer en une perception et dans une perspective collective et que ce travail demande des témoins aux positionnements politiques, sociaux-culturels et ethniques différents. (2007: 152)

The *croisée de mémoire* is therefore facilitated by the intermingling of diverse narrative perspectives, each with their own style and medium. The lack of stability in the narrative style and its constant shifting of perspectives and presentation render the notion of singular identities or fixed memories ambiguous. A breakdown of homogeneous identities is essential for Sebbar's project of undermining gendered binaries in commemorative practice, since, as Eric Touya de Marenne argues, it is the 'ambiguity surrounding identity and the relation between people [which] triggers the breakdown of racial and ethnic binary oppositions, and engenders the idea that every culture possibly contains within itself traces of the other' (2011: 85).

Thinking of this text as *une croisée de mémoire* is significant in terms of gender in two ways. On the one hand, it highlights the limitations of placing memory practices in positions of binary opposites and deconstructs the notion of masculine *écriture* and feminine *kalaam*. On the other hand, *une croisée de mémoire* presents an alternative to a binary structure of gendered memory since it encourages pluralistic and interdisciplinary ways of remembering. Whereas Cixous turned specifically to the theatre as a liminal genre between written and oral traditions, Sebbar refers to staging, cinema and theatre (as alternatives to traditions of western *écriture* and eastern *kalaam*) within the written narrative. Therefore, notions of staging and performance play an important role in how Sebbar *writes* the memories of 17th October, while also challenging notions of gendered commemoration. First, I will analyse in more detail how Sebbar's interdisciplinary style encourages the reader to view memory as fluid and non-

competitive, or, in other words, how memory can be shared across disparate groups of people. Second, I will discuss the way in which Sebbar re-stages *lieux de mémoire*, inscribing post-colonial and gendered significance into the national monuments of Paris. National monuments are deconstructed as sites of colonial, but also gendered, oppression. Finally, I will discuss the role of theatricality in *La Seine était rouge* and propose that this novella demonstrates ways in which traumatic memory can be performed. That is to say, that memory can be seen as a performative re-enactment of the past.

La Seine était rouge derives its title from the events of 17th October 1961, where the bodies of the victims of a massacre committed by Parisian police were dumped in the river Seine. The mention of the river Seine in the title also emphasises the importance of fluidity in Sebbar's writing. Echoing the river's flowing movement, the text reconstructs memories of this event through a mixture of discourses, interweaving oral and written testimonies from a variety of fictional sources. The need to rearticulate memories of the massacre is driven by young people in the text; the children and grandchildren of those who originally experienced the trauma. In particular, Amel and Louis begin their investigations into the past because, when they approach their mothers on the topic, they are met with silence and a will to forget. Therefore, in order to remember the massacre, these teenagers must first realise that traditional and generational modes of remembrance are closed to them. Rothberg observes that these young people are dissatisfied with the 'significant gap between their experiences and life stories and those of their parents, which they attempt, with inevitably mixed success, to overcome' (2009: 299). Historian Benjamin Stora suggests that the gap in the *passage de générations*, between the experience of the (grand)parents and the experience of children, encourages the younger generation to investigate more deeply:

De leur côté, les jeunes générations éprouvent le besoin de s'inscrire dans une généalogie, dans une filiation, de savoir quelle a été l'attitude de père ou du

grand-père dans cette guerre. Cette situation-là s'observe dans la jeunesse française, mais aussi dans la jeunesse d'origine algérienne. (Cited in McCormack 2007 : 47)

In order to understand the 'gap' that separates them from their (grand)parents, Amel and Louis learn to reject the limited version of the past that has been passed on to them by their families and national institutions. Amel's 'gap' is linguistic. Her mother and grandmother, who witnessed the massacre of 17th October, only talk about it in Arabic, a language which (like Sebbar) Amel does not speak:

Si elle demandait ce qu'elles se disent dans l'autre langue, "la langue du pays" dit Lalla, sa grand-mère lui répondrait comme chaque fois: "Des secrets, ma fille, des secrets, ce que tu ne dois pas savoir, ce qui doit être caché..." (Sebbar 1999: 13)

The oral transmission of memory, or the lack of it, is above all associated with maternal figures. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I cited Catherine Dana who draws a connection between Amel's mother's reticence to testify to the events of 17th October with the silence of Madame Thiraud in Didier Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire*; 'rien ne passe plus par les mères, elles bloquent la transmission' (Dana 2004: 177). Dana's analysis of Amel's mother does not take into account that Algerian women in particular are traditionally regarded as the keepers of familial memory. Therefore, although there is an 'importance de la parole – de la parole féminine surtout – comme fil conducteur de la mémoire' (Marie- Françoise Chitour 2003: 63), this *fil conducteur* cannot continue its path via Amel, since she does not speak her parents' native language. Whereas her mother is Algerian, Amel is also French and hence, *une croisée* of identities and commemorative practices. If we consider that the oral tradition is above all associated with women in Algeria, Sebbar seems to be presenting the limitations of

characterising women as the privileged guardians of oral memory associated with the interior world of private domesticity.

As a result of this tension between the matriarchal guardians of memory and the young heroine of mixed identities, Amel flees the domestic interior and turns to the city in order to create her own memory of 17th October. Running away from home, Amel accompanies Omer as he walks through Paris and graffiti over commemorative plaques. These graffitied messages commemorate the unacknowledged victims of French colonial violence and offer alternatives to the traditional narrative of French national monuments:

ICI DES ALGÉRIENS SONT TOMBÉS POUR L'INDEPENDENCE DE
L'ALGÉRIE LE 17 OCTOBRE 1961. (Sebbar 1999 : 118)

As Anne Donadey claims 'la géographie se révèle [...] être un élément important de la reconstitution de l'histoire enfouie' (2003 : 193). Indeed, as Amel and Omer move through Paris they trace and challenge sites of national memory in the French capital, layering their own memories of colonial oppression over official commemorations sanctified by the French state, in what Rothberg claims to be a 'metonymical expansion of memory' (2009: 300). However, these are not memories that were ever lived by these young people, born long after the Algerian war ended. Marianne Hirsch has called this phenomenon as 'post-memory', or second or third generational memory, which allows the child, or grandchild, to experience the cultural memory of an event in which he or she is only indirectly involved (Hirsch is particularly concerned with the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors). Hirsch specifies that: 'The aesthetics of post memory, I would like to suggest, is a diasporic aesthetics of temporal and spatial exile that needs simultaneously to (re)build and to mourn' (1997: 245). Amel is exiled from her family's memory, while Omer is exiled from Algeria, taking refuge in Paris. Together, they mourn and re-build by rewriting the memorial plaques

and re-perform a memory that has been denied to them, not just by the French state, but also by their own family. It could be argued that, by fleeing the domestic space inhabited by her Algerian mother and grandmother, Amel is rejecting the matrilineal transmission of oral memory that characterises Algerian commemorative practices. In terms of gender, has Amel rejected feminine *kalaam* associated with Algerian culture in favour of reappropriating masculine, western *écriture*? Indeed, the graffitied commemorations to Algerian victims use a similar rhetoric to French post-war commemorative discourse (with its references to fallen heroes, resistance and independence). It could be argued that these post-memories are simply being written over the official version of French history and that Amel and Omer are *writing back* to France (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989: 32), and therefore reappropriating the written word as the official site of colonial memory.

However, Sebbar does not present this process so simplistically. Amel does not exchange Algerian orality for written commemoration. Rather, she demonstrates the need for Amel to find her own commemorative practice, one which is not pre-defined by her ethnicity, nationality or gender. Importantly, the graffiti left by Omer and Amel is visual as well as textual. As I suggest above, the written word is interwoven with references to other media throughout the text. For example, an oral testimony given by Amel's mother, who is being filmed by Louis for a documentary film he is making on 17th October, intermittently interrupts the text. The phrase 'Amel entend la voix de sa mère' (Sebbar 1999: 23) haunts Amel's movements through the city as she rewrites memorial plaques with Omer. Her mother's voice becomes a refrain in the narrative and thus her memory production draws from both the written and the oral cultures of memory. The mother is not simply a figure of silence, as Dana argues, but eventually is able to give a testimony of her experience of the massacre for Louis's film. Furthermore, Louis also films Omer and Amel's graffiti and therefore visually traces their movements around the city. These narrative layers (the oral

testimony of Amel's mother as an eye witness to the events, Amel and Omer's commemorative graffiti on the city, and then Louis's cinematographic tracing of their movements) interweave and interconnect. Therefore, not only is there a layering of voices, but Sebbar layers modes of expression and media one over the other to create an interdisciplinary chorus of memory. It is this staging of *une croisée de mémoire*, or crossroads of memory, which allows Sebbar to move beyond the conception of memory practices in terms of binary oppositions; as either *kalaam* or *écriture*, feminine or masculine.

Staging memory in the city

Sebbar's text directly challenges the gendered ways in which the city's national monuments represent women, manipulating images of femininity for politicised and nationalistic narratives. Michel Winock's contribution to Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* examines how the images of Jeanne d'Arc have been re-appropriated for various nationalistic narratives (Wincock 1984: 676). However, using images of femininity as synecdoche actually excludes women from any political agency, as being a woman is to *represent* signification, not to *articulate* it – in other words, to be seen and not heard. Rashmi Varma argues that non-white women are further removed from political agency due to the link between colonial discourse and sexual politics. He states that:

if the black man experiences himself as an object, the black or native woman is twice removed from subjectivity, situated as she is within the overlapping structures of patriarchal native and colonial societies. (2012: 13)

Although Varma is correct to suggest that the experiences of identity politics differ for men and women, I would go further in saying that the structures of patriarchal and colonial oppression do not simply 'overlap' but are interdependent. The structure of colonialism is

such that it relies on the notion of the western patriarch as the head of the colonial ‘family’ which infantilises and, furthermore, feminises the colonial subject in order to depoliticise him or her. In this manner, Sebbar’s representation of this particular instance of colonial trauma also engages with gendered hierarchies of oppression.

For example, as Amel considers a statue of Marianne, the allegorical figure of *la République*, she confronts these masculinist representations of French memory to further complicate the binaries that exclude her from western commemorative practices on two levels: as a woman and as an Algerian. ‘Une femme géante, debout, comme dressée face à l’ennemi, courageuse. Elle tient un drapeau, l’étendard de la victoire ? de la défaite ?’ (Sebbar 1999 : 55). This site is particularly important, since as Amel remarks to Omer, ‘la statue a été le point de rendez-vous des Algériens le 17 Octobre 1961’ (56). The Marianne statue’s symbolic resonance as the embodiment of republican values is rendered ironic since it was the meeting point for a protest against the tyranny enacted by the same republic. This colours the Marianne, not as a harmless romanticised symbol of republicanism, but as the feminine face of violent colonial tyranny. Indeed, it recalls the fact that Marianne is the symbol of the same French republic that colonised North Africa, as this 1911 cover of *Le Petit Journal* demonstrates:



(Figure 5, Cent ans [no date].)

Not only does Sebbar’s deconstruction of the Marianne statue act as a reminder of French colonial legacy, but highlights the stereotypes of women as symbolic, but ultimately passive figures used to ‘define the limits of national difference and power between men’ (MCclintock 1997: 89). Omer, however, fails to recognise the importance of gender in resisting colonial legacy and misses this connection between the statue of Marianne and the protest of Algerians in 1961:

Ils s’asseyent au café de France. La statue de Marianne est visible, de loin.
 Amel tourne une boucle de ses cheveux, regarde Marianne, ne dit rien. “Tu boudes? Les filles capricieuses”. (Sebbar 1999: 54)

Omer misreads Amel's contemplation of the statue for girlish angst, and the image of Marianne is juxtaposed with Omer's comment 'les filles capricieuses', ironically repeating the patriarchal misrepresentation of women. Thus, Amel's interaction with the traditional monuments found in the city centre does not only challenge French amnesia regarding its colonial past but renegotiates the terms of gender by which these memories are represented.

Another way in which Amel's characterisation renegotiates the gendered representation of memory practices is through her identification with Antigone, the eponymous heroine of Sophocles's 5th century B.C. play. Antigone is the daughter of the incestuous union of Oedipus and his mother Jocasta. The play takes place in the wake of the battle of Thebes where Antigone's outcast brother Polyneices perishes and is denied proper burial by their uncle, Creon. Antigone rebels against her tyrant uncle to bury the corpse of her brother, signifying an act of rebellion against not only the law and government, but also the gods. At the end of *La Seine était rouge* Amel, Louis and Omer meet in Egypt, where Omer claims he is writing a play in which Amel is the heroine. In this play, the heroine digs a grave for the bodies of her twin brothers against the will of the army, whose soldiers guard the bodies. It is in this way that Sebbar metaphorically refers to Sophocles, casting Amel as Antigone. After all, Amel's interest in the theatre is a significant aspect of her character: 'Moi, c'est le théâtre. Je peux te réciter Sophocle en grec' (1999: 40). In the countless reproductions of Antigone's rebellion against Creon's law, Antigone has been rendered the prototype of resistance to tyranny and a symbol of ancient civil disobedience (Tiefenbrun 1999: 35). In her essay 'After Antigone: Women, the Past, and the Future of Feminist Political Thought', Catherine A. Holland notes that it has often been to Antigone:

that feminists have turned in their efforts to engage and contest the marginal place assigned to women in the western political tradition, an occasion to reflect upon both perils and the promise of trying to speak as feminists from

within a tradition that does not easily accommodate feminist thought. (1998: 1109)

Antigone's resistance has gendered consequences as she contests the universal law of masculine authority represented by her uncle-tyrant, Creon. However, the metaphorical reference to Antigone as a symbol of feminist rebellion is not entirely unproblematic. Judith Butler has discussed the limitations of reappropriating Sophocles's Antigone as a feminist heroine:

Antigone's deed is, in fact, ambiguous from the start, not only the defiant act in which she buries her brother but the verbal act in which she answers Creon's questions; thus hers is an act in language. To publish one's act in language is in some sense the completion of the act, the moment as well that implicates her in the masculine excess called hubris. And so, as she begins to act in language, she also departs from herself. Her act is never fully her act, and though she uses language to claim her deed, to assert a "manly" and defiant autonomy, she can perform that act only through embodying the norms of the power she opposes. Indeed, what gives these verbal acts their power is the normative operation of power that they embody without quite becoming. (2000: 10)

In other words, Sophocles's Antigone is only able to defy Creon, perform a deed and 'publish' this act in language, by borrowing the 'manly' qualities that the law represents in the first place. Antigone, in this respect, cannot easily be reappropriated as a symbol of feminine heroism or gendered civil disobedience. Therefore, in metaphorically referring to the myth of Antigone, does Sebban overlook the limitations of reading Antigone as a feminist hero?

Whereas Sophocles's Antigone could only use the 'manly' language and action of Creon's law in order to defy that same law, Sebbar's Amel strives to construct her *own* memorial practice which then allows her to symbolically bury her dead. Rothberg argues that there are two consequences to the reference to Antigone as 'Amel-as-Antigone serves as an agent at the level of the story and an embodiment of the text's metonymical rhetoric' (2009: 305). Therefore, it is not the character of Antigone that is important, rather, how this intertextual reference to a Greek tragedy metonymically acts to inform the reader of the themes of cultural memory practices. Amel's identification with the *theatrical* persona of Antigone constitutes a form of re-appropriation of mixed media: both oral and written. The binary modes of cultural memory (either, written and French or, oral and Algerian) are not available to Amel, who is *une croisée* of the two identities. Therefore, Amel performs her own version of Antigone as a form of interdisciplinary re-appropriation of both oral and written practices. She does not entirely embrace 'feminine' *kalaam*, nor 'masculine' *écriture* (the language of Creon): instead, Amel turns to theatrical staging as a liminal site of inclusion. As Cixous's writing on the theatre has shown, the theatre is also potentially a *lieu du Crime* but also *du Pardon*. Amel-as-Antigone refers to a performance of trauma which can be seen as a way to move towards reconciliation of her *identité croisée*. For Anne Donadey this is a positive movement since 'reconciliation can only occur when the conflicting memories of all those [who] are involved in a traumatic event are woven together into a collective narrative of the past deed of violence' (Donadey 2001: 33). Thinking about memory as a performative act based upon interdisciplinary, multifaceted modes of expression allows the inclusion of various cultures and identities; *une croisée de mémoire*. Amel performs her own *croisée de mémoire*, a cross-breed of French and Algerian memory traditions, a cross-road between *écriture* and *kalaam*, and therefore a crossing between gendered memory practices.

Conclusion

To conclude, Hélène Cixous's writing on theatre postulates that theatre is an ideal space for the working through of traumatic memory, since it allows the self and the other to come into contact. Furthermore, the theatre can offer a chance to work through trauma performatively since the stage is not only the *lieu du Crime* (site of trauma), but also the *lieu du Pardon* (metonymically working through). However, in her own play, *L'Indiade, ou L'Inde de leurs rêves*, she presents an essentialist vision of femininity and the East as the ideal alternatives to a western patriarchal and colonial power system. On the other hand, Leïla Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge* uses theatricality to overcome the binaries of west and east, *écriture* and *kalaam*, masculine and feminine. Her text sensitively recreates the voices of those who witnessed the trauma of the 17th October massacre, whilst creatively reincorporating the perspectives of young people trying to connect to a tragedy that took place long before their births. I have argued that Sebbar's text can be understood through the notion of *une croisée de mémoire*, a pluralistic and interdisciplinary performance that mixes media, voice and identity to demonstrate how memory is shared across various groups of people. The city becomes a stage where memory can be acted out (*lieu du Crime*), as well as worked through (*lieu du Pardon*). Through the characterisation of Amel as Antigone, this *croisée de mémoire* becomes a theatrical performance. Amel re-appropriates the heroine, Antigone, as a symbol of resistance to both patriarchal and colonial narratives. This theatrical reappropriation allows her a mode of expression which rejects the perpetuating concept of Algerian women as the mythologised keepers of oral memory but is careful to resist the election of feminine figures as the microcosmic symbols of national narratives. Overall, Sebbar's text offers a model of memory which stages various perspectives of the past that do not compete or efface each other within a competitive model, but are in fact interactive and coexisting.

CONCLUSION

I began this study by suggesting that there is a lack of work on the link between memory studies and gender theory. I then proposed that theories on collective memory and gender interact and argued that thinking about post-colonial and anti-colonial memory narratives from a perspective of gender can help us to understand the way in which memories are mediated at collective and national levels and reinforce or challenge assumptions about gender roles. In other words, collective memory is both gendered and gendering.⁶ I considered how anti-colonial narratives contribute to or undermine gendered and gendering collective memories by studying the works of French and Franco-Algerian writers who deal with memories of 17th October 1961 and anti-Algerian violence post-1962.

In Chapter 1, I drew on Saïd's *Orientalism* to argue that the orientalist relationship with the 'east' is a gendered one; specifically that in colonial Algeria, the 'Arabs' are perceived as feminine and submissive, directly opposed to the masculine and virile Europeans (Saïd 2003: 12). Ironically, this gendered relationship is also supported by anti-colonial rhetoric which saw colonisation as rape, thus equating women's bodies with the colonised nation. For example, the bodies of Algerian women were seen as political currency in the fight for control over Algerian territory (Fanon 2011: 21). As a result, female bodies are the site not only of European colonial fantasy criticised by Saïd but, also, the site of nationalising myths on behalf of the ex-colony. This dynamic haunts *Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée* by Rachid Boudjedra: while presenting the tragic plight of an anonymous Algerian in Paris, the narrative inadvertently repeats orientalist gender tropes, where the woman's body is the site of struggle between western and eastern patriarchy. However, these tropes are problematized in *Point Kilométrique 190* where Ahmed Kalouaz re-presents the

⁶ A feminist concern for the gendered nature of national memory is not a recent phenomenon. On 26th August 1970, nine women unfurled a banner at l'Arc de Triomphe declaring 'Il y a plus inconnu que le soldat, sa femme'. This small protest marked the birth of *Le Mouvement de libération des femmes françaises*.

ghostly voice of a murdered Algerian man through the narration of a French female journalist. Kalouaz's pluralistic narrative includes both French, Algerian and male and female perspectives that promote the 'reparative' in narratives of memory (Rosello 2010). I have proposed that when a writer's representation of gender moves beyond traditional binaries, he or she is better situated to undermine the sexualised taboo of relationships between French and Algerian people, and demonstrate the fluid, deterritorialised and shared experience of collective memory. In other words, the poetics of their writing shed light on the politics of commemoration and representation, and by choosing a poetics of fluidity and ambiguity these writers support the notion that traumatic memory is not a single narrative but can be remembered from various perspectives simultaneously.

While all the texts in this study can be grouped as anti-colonial or anti-racist, I have argued that some of these texts make essentialist assumptions regarding gender and commemorative agency. In Chapter 2, I suggested that the cultural and traumatic upheaval in France caused by the Algerian War of Independence produced a deep reluctance to deal with memories from this period. The massacre of FLN protesters in Paris on 17th October 1961 is one such memory that had only recently been brought to light, thanks in part to Didier Daeninckx's novel *Meurtres pour mémoire*. In this novel, Inspecteur Cadin uncovers the details of this massacre and calls it 'un Oradour en plein Paris' (Daeninckx 1984: 81) creating commemorative links between the German occupation of France and French colonial atrocities. However, in using the *roman noir* style Daeninckx inherits some of the gendered tropes associated with this genre; namely that the hero is the masculine, hard-boiled detective while the female characters fulfil the roles of vixen or victim. As Sabine Vanacker has pointed out:

In its portrayals of the single, male hero, the traditional hard-boiled novel rhetorically presents a particular model of masculinity. It distils masculine identity

out of its negative, the foreigners, criminals, and the women the detective encounters. (2000: 247)

In Daeninckx's novel, female characters exhibit little political or commemorative agency (Madame Thiraud, Claudine), and when they *are* politically active, they take on masculine qualities to do so (Kaïra). In other words, Inspecteur Cadin's masculine subjectivity dominates the novel's narrative. On the other hand, in *Les Passagers du Roissy-express*, François Maspero is very aware of his subjectivity and highlights the difficulty of representing the cultural, racial and sexual other. In this work, he also makes connections between different sites of traumatic suffering, such as the Drancy concentration camp, 17th October 1961 and contemporary sites of social isolation in the *banlieues*. By analysing scenes where Maspero and Frantz represent women in the *banlieues* I have argued that, through a subtle and complicated interaction between text (the words of Maspero describing 17th October) and photo (Frantz's photographic representation of women living in the *banlieues*), the text connects sites of historical suffering with contemporary women living in the *banlieues*. Both *Meurtres pour mémoire* and *Les Passagers* add to the argument that memory is multidirectional (Rothberg 2009) and non-competitive. However, in my comparative study of these texts we can also see the different roles played by masculine subjectivity in the construction of these narratives of memory.

My analysis of the texts by Rachid Boudjedra, Ahmed Kalouaz, Didier Daeninckx and François Maspero illustrate the ways in which narratives of memory can be used either to reinforce or challenge traditional notions of gender difference. Memory and gender are both crucial conceptual elements in the nation-building exercise and the construction of identities within and *without* the nation. Saïd claimed that '[m]emory and its representation touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and of authority...[Memory] is to some considerable extent a nationalist effort premised on the need to construct a

desirable loyalty to and insider's understanding of one's country, tradition, and faith' (2002: 176). In *Between Camps* Paul Gilroy argues that gender plays a similar role to Saïd's notion of memory as a 'nationalistic effort', since gender is fundamentally linked to the creation and maintenance of national belonging:

Gender differences become extremely important in nation-building activity because they are a sign of an irresistible natural hierarchy that belongs at the center of civic life. The unholy forces of nationalist biopolitics intersect on the bodies of women charged with the reproduction of absolute ethnic difference and the continuance of blood lines. It connects men and women, boys and girls to the larger collectivity toward which they must orient themselves if they are to acquire a Fatherland. (Gilroy 2004: 127)

Thanks to the family's safeguarding of traditional gender roles (the paternal figure head at the hierarchical zenith ensuring patriarchal control) it symbolises the ideal model upon which the nation can be built. I have argued that, on the one hand, post-colonial and anti-colonial narratives of collective memory can unwittingly reinforce traditional gender roles (Boudjedra, Daeninckx). On the other hand, by being aware of the gendering and gendered characteristic of memory narratives, some writers are able to question narratives of memory and offer up new perspectives on how we remember (Kalouaz, Maspero).

This study also suggests that when historians talk of European memory it is maintained in the form of historical discipline; it is written, canonised, and masculine. On the other hand, memories from ex-colonies are gendered as feminine through the emphasis on memory (Nora 1984: xvii-xviii) as well as oral traditions and folklore (Hirsh and Smith 2002: 3). The theatre occupies a liminal space between the written text and oral performance and therefore can be seen to bridge the gap between so-called western and eastern commemorative practices. In

Chapter 3, I questioned whether the theatre also bridges the gendered difference in western ‘masuline’ writing, and eastern ‘feminine’ orality by examining how H el ene Cixous and Leila Sebbar look to the theatre and theatrical/cinematic staging in their representations of colonial memory. Cixous has argued that the theatre is simultaneously the site of crime and forgiveness, and offers a way for individuals and groups to work through memories of trauma. Her play, *L’Indiade, ou L’Inde de leurs r eves*, dramatises the history of Indian decolonisation. India is personified by the non-violent activist and civil disobedient Mahatma Ghandi, who is portrayed as the Medusan hero; the oriental, feminine alternative to western patriarchy. However, this perspective relies on essentialist notions of both the east and femininity as mystical sources of wisdom and power. However, in Sebbar’s *La Seine  tait rouge* the heroine, Amel, transcends memory practices that are associated with particular national identities and genders (Algerian = oral and feminine, French = written and masculine). She takes to the streets to ‘perform’ her own post-memory (Hirsch 1997), using the city as a stage and Antigone as a theatrical alter-ego. She and Omer graffiti over the commemorative plaques of Paris in order to commemorate Algerian victims who have died at those sites. This in turn is filmed and then relayed back to the reader through the metanarrative of the novel. In this way, Sebbar’s text mixes performative disciplines, cultures and perspectives to break down restrictive binaries associated with gender and commemorative practices.

The notion of memory as performative is a crucial link between memory studies and gender theory. Jay Winter has argued that collective memory is a performative act:

Memory performed is at the heart of the collective memory. When individualists and groups express or embody or interpret or repeat a script about the past, they galvanize the ties that bind groups together and deposit additional memory traces about the past in their own minds. These renewed and revamped memories frequently vary from and overlay earlier memories,

creating a complex palimpsest about the past each of us carries with us.

(Winter 2010: 11)

Winter's conception of 'memory performed' highlights an important overlap in memory theory and Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. While Winter claims memory is both a product of a group and produces that group, Butler maintains that gender is both the product of an action and an action in itself. Therefore, both memory and gender are double processes; simultaneously 'product' and 'producing'. Crucially, for Butler, gender acquires signification through acts and repetition:

In what sense, then, is gender an act? As in other ritual social dramas, the action of gender requires a performance that is repeated ... There are temporal and collective dimensions to these actions, and their public character is not inconsequential; indeed, the performance is affected with the strategic aim of maintaining gender within its binary frame – an aim that cannot be attributed to a subject, but, rather, must be understood to found and consolidate the subject ... Although there are individual bodies that enact these significations by becoming stylized into gendered modes, this 'action' is a public action. (Butler 2006: 191)

Therefore, although each individual is gendered and gendering through their acts and enactments, gender is also a 'public action'. The works of Cixous and Sebbar studied in this thesis support the idea that memory is both a 'public action' and a gendered performance. In *L'Indiade* as the actors perform the history of Indian independence, they also perform reductive notions of a 'feminine' and 'mystical' east. Whereas in *La Seine était rouge*, when Amel goes out to 'perform' her memory, she partakes in a complex palimpsest of the memories of others which creates a knotted site of intersecting and interacting narratives of

memory – *une croisée de mémoire*. These different narratives are voiced or enacted in different ways, and through different media; written, oral, and visual. Therefore, while the performance of memory in Cixous's play can be criticised for maintaining orientalist binaries regarding gender and Asian cultures, Sebbar's text is an example of a pluralistic and polyvalent site of memory which denies such binaries.

This thesis has extended the argument that memory narratives are fundamental in the construction of national, religious and ethnic identity, by suggesting that memory narratives also reinforce gender identities, as well as being *gendered* in themselves. This study supports the argument that 'the art of memory for the modern world is both for historians as well as ordinary citizens and institutions very much something to be used, misused, and exploited, rather than something that sits inertly there for each person to possess and contain' (Saïd 2000: 179). Therefore, it is essential that we continue to study the ways in which narratives of collective memory are constructed, mediated and sometimes abused for divisive, racist and, indeed, sexist purposes.

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