The Ethics and Politics of Hospitality in Contemporary French Society: "Beur" Literary Translations.

By

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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.

To my parents:

Fatouma Laachir (1954 - 1991)

Ahmed Zian Laachir (1944 - 2001)

Your kindness, generosity and love have always enlightened my way. thank you.

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Abstract

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The thesis examines the issue of the ethics and politics of hospitality in the French contemporary context in relation to the diasporic populations of the descendants of post-war North African immigrants or the 'Beur', using an approach which combines philosophy, sociology and literature.

I argue that the concept of hospitality has been framed by the enduring effects of colonial legacy, the legacy of the 'camp-thinking' mentality marked by bio-cultural kinship and the ties of blood or 'race' as the basis for belonging to a nation. I maintain that hospitality is exactly the anti-logic of the camp-thinking mentality in its rejection of closure and overdetermination by keeping the political open to the ethical. Even though a *hiatus* between the ethics and the politics of hospitality exists, the two can not exist separately. I argue that this aporia does not mean paralysis, but in fact, it means the primacy of the ethics of hospitality over politics, and thus, keeps alive the danger of hostility in the making of the politics of hospitality by means of 'political invention' that respects the uniqueness of the Other and that does not exclude him/her every time a decision is taken.

The language of deconstruction and its political and ethical rejection of nationalisms, borders and centres reflects the experience of those who are marginalised at the peripheries of societies, whom I call the hyphenated peoples or diasporic populations like the Beurs. But at the same time, this language enables them to assert and articulate their own existence, their own politics and identities in a way that opens new possibilities of resistance to violence and exclusion. Jacques Derrida's concepts of marginality, diaspora, translation and democracy-to-come express the experience of minority diasporic groups such as the Beurs in France.

I attempt a close deconstructive reading of the Beur texts in order to trace their translations of the contradictions of French hospitality and the way the Beurs have been 'racialised' as an 'external group' threatening the supposed 'purity' of the French national culture by their physical, cultural and religious 'difference' though they are French citizens with strong affiliations with France. I argue that with their mixed origins and cultural multiplicity, the Beurs resist the authority of the 'constructed' and 'mythical' national purity and cultural determinism, since their position at the threshold between communities (the French and the North African immigrant communities) and national camps (the French and the North Africans) allows them to offer a basis for solidarity that transcends ethnic absolutism and national belonging. I argue in my thesis that it is the diasporic populations such as the Beurs in France that can open up hospitality to an attitude beyond nationalistic determinism and xenophobia.

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Abbreviations

Begag, Azouz: *Le Gone de Chaâba*	1986	Gone
Begag, Azouz: *Béni ou le Paradis Privé*	1989	Béni
Begag, Azouz: *Quand on est mort c'est pour toute la vie*	1998	Mort
Belghoul, Farida: *Georgette!*	1986	G.
Boukhedenna, Sakinna: *Journal Nationalité: Immigrée*	1987	Journal
Charef, Mehdi: *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed*	1983	Thé
Charef, Mehdi: *Le harki de Meriem*	1989	harki
Houari, Leila: *Zeida de Nulle Part*	1985	Z.
Houari, Leila: *Quand tu verras la mer*	1988	Q.
Immache, Tassadit: *Une Fille sans histoire*	1989	F.
Immache, Tassadit: *Le Dromadaire de Bonaparte*	1995	Drom.
Immache, Tassadit: *Presque un frère*	2000	Pres.
Kalouaz, Ahmed: *Point Kilométrique 190*	1986	Point
Kessas, Ferrudja: *Beur Story*	1990	B.
Kettane, Nacer: *Le Sourire de Brahim*	1985	Brahim
Sebbar, Leila: *La Seine était rouge*	1999	Seine
Tadjer, Akli: *Les ANI de "Tassili"*	1984	ANI

Son, wherever Racism exists, wherever oppression exists, anybody who lives complacently in its shadows is guilty and damned forever.
William Gardner Smith.

The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.
Hugo of Saint Victor

Man, this dialectical phenomenon, is compelled to be always in motion...Man, then, can never attain a final resting place and take up residence in God...How disgraceful, then, are all fixed standards. Who can ever fix a standard? Man is a "choice", a struggle, a constant becoming. He is an infinite migration, a migration within himself, from clay to God; he is a migrant within his own soul.
Ali Shariati

Chapter One

General Introduction

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(a)- The Emergence of the Beurs

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Chapter One

General Introduction

Isn't hospitality the madness of our contemporary world? To praise hospitality just when, in France and almost every where else in the world, the main concern is to restrict it, from the right to asylum to the code of nationality! Disturbing, excessive like madness, it resists all forms of reasons, including raison d'état.
René Schérer (1993, 7-8).

Already I know all about the "reality" that supports History's progress: everything throughout the centuries depends on the distinction between the Selfsame, the ownself...and that which limits it: so now what menaces my-own-good...is the "other". What is the "Other"? If it is truly the "other", there is nothing to say; it cannot be theorized. The "other" escapes me. It is elsewhere, outside: absolutely other. It doesn't settle down. But in History, of course, what is called "other" is an alterity that does settle down, that falls into the dialectical circle. It is the other in a hierarchically organized relationship in which the same is what rules, names, defines, and assigns "its" other. Hélène Cixous (1986, 70-71).

1- Introducing Hospitality

Hospitality as an ancient tradition with ethical imperatives has become politicised in Europe and the New World in the last two decades. Strict hospitality laws have been issued in the last two decades to 'protect' rich States from any form of visitation from poor countries since they are perceived as potential economic immigrants that may threaten the economic, social and political stability of the host countries. European popular imagination, for example, has been haunted with images of Europe being swept by foreigners, economic and political refugees perceived as 'welfare-scroungers', 'job-snatchers' and 'threats to security' (*Economist*: May 2000, 25-26-31). Some politicians have started to encourage these fears to get more votes especially the extreme right wing movements,[1] which have been gaining more ground in local and parliamentary elections. The increasing

[1] Even the centre right for example in the UK and Germany are trying to play the immigration card. William Hague, the previous Conservative leader in the UK claims that 'bogus asylum seekers' are 'flooding' the country and that Britain should keep them in detention till they are 'sorted out'. The German conservative leader Jürgen Rüttgers has expressed the same view claiming that Germany should take care of its own children instead of importing Indians. This was his response to the

popularity of leaders of extreme right wing parties such as Pim Fortuyn in Holland, Le Pen in France, Jörg Haïder in Austria (whose party is already sharing power with the government), who all publicly voice their xenophobia and racism against those perceived as foreigners, are alarming examples of the return of exclusionist popular nationalism and fascism to haunt postcolonial Europe.

Since the 1990s, the issue of hospitality has come to be analysed in France specifically from various perspectives: sociological, philosophical, historical and literary. Edmond Jabès's *Le Livre de l'hospitalité* (1991) identifies the phenomenon of hospitality as singular, changing and mysterious, but haunted with the dark shadows of past hostilities, especially anti-Semitism. Tahar Ben Jelloun's *Hospitalité Française*-- first published in 1984 and republished in 1998-- is an attempt to understand the mechanisms behind the increasing xenophobia in France with the racist assassinations of young Franco-Maghrebians. Ben Jelloun (1984, 16) stresses that France needs to confront and recognise the horrors and bloodshed of its colonial past in order to develop a healthy relationship with its supposed 'colonial Other', a relationship free of resentment and hatred. Ben Jelloun refers specifically to North African immigrants and their descendants in France as heirs of this colonial memory of rancour. Julia Kristeva (1988) argues that at a time when France has become a melting pot of different cultures, the question that imposes itself on us, and which will have been the moral touchstone of the 20th century, is how to live with others without absorbing or rejecting them. Kristeva suggests that the first step towards integrating the difference of the Other is to admit that this 'Other' or 'foreigner' is within us or part of us and we must learn how to cohabit with him/her. Kristeva stresses the importance of considering the personal psychic life of the human subject in its social context as an important step towards the analysis and 'curing' of xenophobia.[2]

René Schérer's *Zeus hospitalier: Eloge de l'hospitalité* (1993) focuses on fictive hospitality in Homer's *Ulysses*, Aeschulus's *The Suppliants*, Diderot's *The Nun*, Pierre Klossowski's *The Laws of Hospitality*, Pier Pasolini's *Teorema*. Writing at the time of the restrictive 1993 Pasqua laws, Schérer stresses the ethical aspect of hospitality that stands against any restrictions. Other sociological books have raised the injustices of the State coercive laws on hospitality, such as Didier Fassin's, Alain

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German Chancellor's (Gerhard Schröder) call for recruiting around 20,000 professional high-tech specialists from India (*Economist*: May 2000, 19-25).

Morice's and Catherine Quiminal's significant collection of *Les Lois de l'inhospitalité* (1997).[3] The influential philosophical work of Jacques Derrida with its deconstructive strategies remains unique in opening up hospitality towards new and multiple possibilities. Derrida stresses that hospitality is marked by 'aporetic crossroads': "crossroads where a sort of double bifurcation. double postulation. contradictory double movement, double constraint or double bind paralyses and opens hospitality, holding it over itself in holding out to the other, depriving it of and bestowing on its chance..." and thus keeping it alive to the dangers that hospitality entails which is that of hostility (Jacques Derrida 2000, 15).[4] It is this 'aporetic double bifurcation' of hospitality that I appropriate in my research in relation to the Beurs or the Franco-Maghrebians literary translation of what I call the 'hyphenated' double bind of their identities.

My use of the term 'hospitality' is strategic and due to many reasons. Ironically, the French legislation tends to prefer the use of the term 'hospitality laws' to immigration laws emphasising each time it comes up with one of its restrictive regulations that this law "ne porte aucune atteinte aux règles traditionnelles de l'hospitalité françaises, à l'esprit de libéralisme et d'humanité qui est l'un des plus noble aspects de notre génie national."[5] My use of the term 'hospitality' and not immigration/racism in contemporary French society is also because of the term's accommodation to the different perspectives with which I want to analyse the issue. My priority is not a history of immigration and racism in France. I use the concept of hospitality as a trope for tracing philosophically, sociologically but mainly through the reading of Beurs' literary texts, the aporia of post-war diasporic populations who though suffer from xenophobia and racism still resist and subvert any authoritative delimitation in the name of a hospitable multiplicity. Hospitality,

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[2] For an analysis of Kristeva's preoccupation with the issue of foreignness and the relationship she establishes between the concept of the nation and psychoanalysis, see Mowitt (1998) and Kristeva (1988, translated in English in 1991).

[3] Many sociological books have been devoted to the study of immigration issues in France besides the influential work of Etienne Balibar, Gérard Noiriel, Abdelmalek Sayad, and Michel Wieviorka, such as C. Withol de Wenden's *Les immigrés et la politique* (1988), Mohand Khallil's *L'intégration des maghrébins en France* (1991), and Dominique Schnapper's *La France de l'intégration: Sociologie de la nation en 1990* (1991).

[4] Jacques Derrida's "Hostipitality" in *Angelaki* (2000) is based on a paper Derrida delivered in Istanbul (at the workshop "Pera Peras Poros", Bosphorus University, 9- 10 May 1997). The French version of this paper cannot be traced; therefore, it is only in this case that Derrida will be quoted in English.

therefore, is not solely used to think about issues of immigration and the reception of the immigrants by their 'host' countries, but it is a concept that allows the opening up of the debate towards more important and sophisticated issues of living together with people of 'different' cultural, religious and social affiliations. More than ever before, the world is a melting pot of different cultures and thus we are confronted with the theme of how to survive with the Other or those perceived as Others without seeing them as a threat or danger. The problem is that of co-existing, how to live with the other, or in Alain Touraine's (1997, 11) words "Pourrons-nous vivre ensemble? Égaux et différents?" In this research, I deconstruct the supposed binary oppositions that 'traditional' thinking of hospitality entails, namely, the relationship between the 'host community' (in this case France) and the 'immigrants' (North Africans). I use a Derridean approach to hospitality which refuses its closure and overdetermination in a host/guest relationship and which disrupts those binary oppositions and allows the opening of hospitality. Following Derrida's deconstruction of the concept of hospitality, I argue that the descendants of North African immigrants in France, the Franco-Maghrebians or the so-called Beurs, represent a translation of Derrida's concept of hospitality as their diasporic, in-between position allow them to open up hospitality beyond national or ethnic camps. The problem of xenophobia and racism, which is not limited to Europe but its intensive visibility in Europe, especially in France as our case study, in the last decades after the horrors of colonialism and fascism, raises a crucial question about the relationships between communities of different 'race', religion and culture. The 'us' and 'them' differentiation-- camouflaged in various discourses: 'ethnic' (soft word for 'racial'), 'religious', but mainly cultural terms-- is marked by a degree of xenophobia, fear and racism. Technological and communicative revolutions, economic and political upheavals, such as de-industrialisation, unemployment, poverty, and the mass displacement of populations are all factors that have "once again invited many to find in populist ultranationalism, racism, and authoritarianism reassurance and a variety of certainty that can answer radical doubts and anxieties over self-hood, being, and belonging" (Paul Gilroy 2000, 155).

The 1951 Geneva Convention states the right of asylum seekers to be received in Europe without restrictions; however, many European governments believe that the

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[5] This expression appeared in an official text in a 1938 decree, which restricted immigration laws at

numbers of those seeking asylum, which has risen considerably since the Eighties, are economic refugees in disguise (*Economist*: May 2000, 19-25). Tough immigration laws have been introduced to deter any 'potential' economic refugees and to build the image of a non-penetrable Europe. Therefore, more than ever in the west, the ethics of being 'hospitable' to the foreigner in one's land is surrounded by a suspicious silence on the part of individuals and by strong violence on the part of the Nation States with their repressive legislation systems. The movement of non-European nationals such as Africans, Middle Easterners and Asians are perceived with mistrust as potentially undesirable 'guests' in the rich North, whereas the movement of capital, goods and 'tourists' is unlimited towards countries of the South. The imbalance of this relationship calls for an analysis of the relationship between hospitality and capital, property, especially the national one. Citizens of rich countries can be easily granted 'hospitality rights' whatever their destination, but those of poor countries are restricted in their movement and their hospitality rights are very limited. Immanuel Kant (1957, 21) suggests universal hospitality as a condition of perpetual peace and world citizenship. The globe is a sphere in which we are bound to live with each other's company or to move from one place to another and this can only be guaranteed through the right to reciprocal hospitality. It is only through hospitality that humanity can gradually be brought closer to a constitution establishing world citizenship and thus perpetual peace. Kant dismisses hospitality as philanthropy and insists on its being a right or a 'natural law'. He criticises colonialism and the 'inhospitable actions of the civilised' referring to the commercial states of Europe which advanced its economic exploitations of lands seen as 'virgin lands' or lands without inhabitants (Africa, the Cape and America), and also for the way they used their military superiority to subdue the local populations of the newly discovered lands (ibid., 20-21). However, Kant still links hospitality with commerce in "Of the Guarantee for Perpetual Peace", (1957, 32) in which he argues that though 'nature wisely separates nations', it is trade and commerce that subdue the spirit of war (which is for him the state of nature). It is through the power of wealth that States find themselves forced to pursue 'noble causes' and thus to search for peace, but Kant does not address how peace may be decided differently between those who have money and those who have not. Thus,

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the time in order to 'preserve' the State's interests. See Derrida (1997b, 5).

his metropolitanism is exclusive to certain powerful states that pass the law to the rest of humanity.

Even though Kant's ideas of cosmopolitanism. universal hospitality and the common rights to the surface of the earth shared by all human beings have been very appealing to contemporary debates on democracy and citizenship, his 'racial theories' sit uncomfortably and embarrassingly with his claims to metropolitanism marked by exclusiveness. His democratic aspirations could not contain the black 'race', as his raciological ideas about the inferiority of the Negro and his warning against the dangers of racial mixing contradict his cosmopolitanism.[6] Kant's universal rights of citizenship and hospitality are exclusive to those who are recognised as having a 'universal self'. Thus, those who are not recognised as having the particular cultural and corporal attributes that announce their possession of a universal self were exempt from the moral and civic rules of conduct. In other words, if their 'race', religion, colour or nationality deprived them of access to human universal selfhood, they would be in great danger (Gilroy 2000, 61). Humanity therefore was restricted to specific territorial boundaries of racialized nation-states. The history of this brutal Western exclusionary humanism is bluntly clear in the history of slavery and colonialism. Though Kant shows resistance to the project of colonialism, his ideas about the black 'race' and its inferiority weakens his democratic hopes and dreams: "His raciological ideas blend the physical and the metaphysical into a powerful and elaborate argument which sits awkwardly alongside the compelling feature of his cosmopolitanism" (ibid., 59). It is this exclusionary aspect of hospitality that interests me in my thesis as I question the exclusion and marginalisation of the descendants of the North African immigrant communities despite their French citizenship from French society on the basis of their 'cultural', 'ethnic', 'religious', and social affiliations that are deemed incompatible with the 'French values'.

We are all familiar with raciological thinking and its brutal consequences that existed long before the coming of scientific racism at the end of the eighteenth century, and we are also aware that the latter had contributed immensely in

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[6] Kant has developed those ideas in a number of his works, especially *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798) and his 1775 essay "On the Different Races of Man" (see Gilroy 2000, 59 for an extensive discussion of Kant's raciological thinking).

transforming race-thinking into a coherent, systematic. rational and authoritative project. Scientific racism had joined 'race' with rationality and nationality, knowledge and power, it had consolidated and was consolidated by the demands of imperialism (Edward Said 1994b, 8). We are also familiar with the catastrophic consequences of raciological 'rationalised' thinking in the aftermath of Nazi genocide that has influenced the way the crude forms of biological racism have been exchanged for a more subtle cultural and national racism (Gilroy 2000: 32). This 'New Racism', as it has been called by researchers,[7] focuses more on the homogeneity of the nation and its authentic cultural life threatened by new-comers who are seen as being out of place and whose very existence jeopardises the stability and symmetry of the nation. This New Racism emphasises the fantasies of the bond of blood and belonging.[8]

Ultra-nationalist groups based on racialized politics have gained more popularity in recent years, especially in Europe and America. Anti-racist movements need to do more than just establish the shameful links of these movements with their evil fascists antecedents as that would not embarrass them let alone defeat them (Gilroy 2000, 62). Once again, ethical and political inhibitions against the use of 'race', interchanged with the much softer and politically correct 'ethnicity' as a means to 'classify' people and set boundaries and hierarchies between them, have diminished.

The concepts of 'race' or 'ethnicity' and nation have become closely articulated, with each granting legitimation to the other. This has resulted in what Paul Gilroy describes as 'camp-mentalities' that work through appeals to 'race', nation (as a kin group supposedly composed of uniform and interchangeable family groups), and absolute cultural identity. The lore of blood and the value of national and ethnic purity uses biopolitics to regulate the 'fertility' of the nation and to exclude those who are not seen as part of the 'kin group' (Gilroy 2000, 127). Women's bodies

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[7] See Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (1988); P. A. Taguieff (1988b); Zygmunt Bauman (1991); Gilroy (1987).

[8] Gilroy (2000, 34) argues that this era of New Racism is being changed by the revolution in technology and genomics, which have changed the nature of this raciology to focus on the cellular and the molecular. Racial biological determinism conditions common interests, sociality and behaviour by looking at their inscription in cells or arrangements of molecules. The recent scientific revolutions in the study of the human genes and its relation to techno-science and biotechnology have had a strong impact on the status of the old eighteenth century essentialist concepts of 'race' and how it is understood but those important changes have not been given due consideration by those writers on 'race'.

become the testing grounds for this regulation in the sense that women are charged with the production of absolute ethnic difference and thus the purity of national blood (ibid.). Thus, "the debates about immigration and nationality that continually surface in contemporary European politics have regularly presented the intrusions of blacks, Moslems, and other interlopers as an invasion. They can be used to illustrate each of these unsavoury features" (ibid., 83). Culture, therefore, is fixed within the national camp and thus denied any possibility of development (always seen as homogenous and pure). In other words, national camps are locations in which specific versions of solidarity, belonging, kinship, and identity have been invented, practised and controlled.

We have inherited these types of nationalisms that invoke this mode of belonging marked by 'camp-thinking mentalities' with their common understanding of notions of collective solidarity, of self and other, friend and enemy, etc. In my thesis, I argue first that the concept of hospitality has been framed by the enduring effects of colonial legacy, the legacy of this 'camp-thinking' mentality marked by bio-cultural kinship and the ties of blood or 'race' as the basis for belonging to a nation. And second, I argue that hospitality is exactly the anti-logic of the camp-thinking mentality in its rejection of closure and overdetermination.

I use Derrida's deconstruction of hospitality in the Western tradition, which is marked by the paternal and the phallogocentric, or by the logic of the master/host, nation, the door, or the threshold. Hospitality-- as we will carefully examine in the next chapter-- deconstructs itself precisely when it is put into practice as it lives on the paradox of presupposing a nation, a home, a door for it to happen but once one establishes a threshold, a door or a nation, hospitality ceases to happen and becomes hostility (Derrida 2000, 6). Thus, hospitality is marked by a double bind and its impossibility is the condition of its possibility. It stays on the threshold that keeps it alive and open to new-comers. I argue in my thesis that it is diasporic populations such as the Beur diaspora in France that can open up hospitality beyond nationalistic determinism and thus keep it alive to the dangers of hostility. Derrida stresses the aporetic relationship between unconditional hospitality or ethics which starts with risks (as the guest can be anyone at anytime), and conditional hospitality

or politics which starts with the calculation or controlling of these risks.[9] However, if this calculation means the closure of all boundaries, not only territorial but also cultural, social and linguistic, this would means the death of the nation. If the Other by definition is incalculable, political calculations have to include a margin for the incalculable. In other words, if Derrida (1997a, 13) refuses to close down hospitality to the logic of 'paternity' and (its extension the nation) or the *logos* because hospitality is the anti-logic of the *logos,* that is, of closure and determinism. the Beur diaspora in France in their in-between position precisely deconstructs the myth of 'natural nations' which are composed of 'uniform families' that reproduce 'absolutely distinctive cultures' (Gilroy: 2000, 123). The Beurs or the Franco-Maghrebians, French nationals of North African descent, problematise the cultural and historical mechanisms of belonging to France as they provide an alternative to notions of blood, 'race' and bounded national culture. With their mixed origins, cultural multiplicity, they resist the authority of the 'constructed' and 'mythical' national purity and cultural determinism, since their position on the threshold between communities (the French and the North African immigrant communities) and national camps (the French and the North Africans) allow them to offer a basis for solidarity that transcends ethnic absolutism and national belonging. Thus, they offer an alternative to "the stern discipline of primordial kinship and rooted belonging" (ibid.). They also problematise the belief in common memory as the basis of particularity as they reveal the contingent political dynamics of commemoration especially in their relation to their parents' colonial and anti-colonial memory. They interrupt the idea of genealogy and geography as the basis for belonging to a nation because of the double bind of their own identities. Like hospitality, the Beurs stay on the threshold between the 'imagined' national camps, so they resist national calculability, authority and determinism and thus open themselves to all forms of translations between cultures, languages and communities. Displacement and un-rootedness, however, is a very painful experience marked by experiences of exclusion and marginalisation as the Beurs' literary works demonstrate. As hospitality remains open to the possibility of hostility, diasporic populations are not forever immune to the dismal allure of absolute ethnicity, nationalism or racial purity or to the discourse of cheap corporate

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[9] The calculation of these risks will be different from one party to another; for example, the xenophobic politics of the extreme right wing will be different from the supposed 'xénophile' politics of the Left (Derrida 1999a, 123-137).

multiculturalism and banal hybridity.[10] Cultures of diaspora, however, have offered resistance to authority, power and national encampment as they fall within the in-between position that can enrich the idea of culture as a mutable and travelling phenomenon and thus keep the possibility of hospitality alive as they resist the authority of nationalist and conformist determinism.

The term 'diaspora' originates from the Greek meaning to scatter or to sow. It was used in the beginning in the New Testament to refer to the spreading of the gospel. In Medieval times, it was used to refer to the resettlement of Jews outside Jerusalem, but in recent times, the term has been applied to refer to large-scale migrations or displacement of populations such as the African diaspora, or Palestenian diaspora. Diaspora today is used to refer to a 'universalized state of homelessness', and displacement (Bryan Cheyette 1996, 295). I use the concept of diaspora in my research to refer specifically to the condition of the descendants of post-war North African immigrants, who were born and brought in France, a country with which they have strong links. I do not use the term diaspora to refer to the nostalgic relationship of a population to a lost homeland (that is, the Maghreb in this case), since I argue that though the Beurs feel some connection with their parents' homeland as the land of their ancestors, they have strong affiliations with France. In most of the Beur texts that I have analysed, Beur protagonists decide to take a journey back to their parents' homeland in an attempt first, to find solace for their disappointment at being rejected in France, and second, to establish links with their parents' homeland. But most journeys end with disillusionment, as they discover that they cannot fit in those 'alien' societies where they are also rejected as 'foreigners'. The Beurs are diasporic populations in France as they are French citizens with certain common but diverse cultural and religious 'Maghrebian' identifications that come from their common history and the history of their parents' migration to France.

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[10] Paul Gilroy (2000, 178) argues that the Black Atlantic diasporic populations have fallen into the trap of succumbing to the absolutist notions of nationalism and cultural difference. Black Atlantic vernacular cultural expressions of hip-hop and rap that have been marked by demands for liberation and justice "have taken a back seat in recent years to revolutionary conservatism, misogyny and stylised tales of sexual excess."

2- Situating the Debate: The French Contemporary Context

(a)- The Emergence of the Beurs

North African post war immigration to France came as a result of the enduring effects of French colonial policies on the one hand and the shortage of labour in France after the war on the other. The immigrants in the forties, fifties and sixties were mostly single male workers. Abdelmalek Sayad (1999) believes that the North African immigration to France is the product of the destructive consequences of the modernisation of the villages that had started during the colonial time and that had broken its traditional organisation pushing the peasants to proletarisation and poverty. France has refused to consider the phenomenon of North African immigration as being historically bound to colonialism. When France ordered the stopping of labour immigration in 1973 (following racist attacks on the workers in Marseilles), family reunion started and thus a new phase in the history of immigration began (Catherine Wihtol de Wenden 1995, 243-4). The immigrants and their families were located in very poor housing conditions in the form of *bidonvilles* and then transferred to *cités de transit* ending finally in *HLM banlieues* on the periphery of French society with more or less the same poor housing conditions.[11] With the end of economic prosperity of *les trente glorieux,* the immigrants started to be seen as a 'problem' and the theme of immigration started to acquire an increasing degree of visibility within French public life, especially at the beginning of the 1980s (Wihtol de Wenden 1995, 244). Hospitality and immigration were never part of the political debate in France until the events of 1961 in Paris (demonstrations by Algerians calling for Algeria's independence), the petrol crisis of 1973, and an increasing number of racial assassinations of young Franco-Maghrebians (Ben Jelloun: 1984, 24). However, as Neil MacMaster (1995) suggests in his research, the inter-war period (the 1920s and 1930s) in France knew the development of anti-Maghrebian racism, especially within certain State institutions and written sections of the media.[12] This racism, that was linked with the 'criminalization' of the North African immigrants and that had long been

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[11] See Abdelmalek Sayad (1995), Michel Laronde (1993), M. Hervo and M-A. Charras (1971).
[12] For a detailed analysis of this argument, see Chapter Four, Section Three of Jim House's unpublished Ph.D. thesis: *Antiracism and Antiracist Discourse in France From 1900 to the Present Day* (1997, 166- 182).

established in the colonies as part of the French colonial idealogy, still continues to haunt contemporary France as we will see in Chapter Six, Section Three of this thesis.

If the immigrants were considered for a long time as a temporary foreign labour force and thus had to be kept outside political and social affairs, the most recent realisation of their settlement in the host countries has produced a 'sociological approach' that still grants them a marginal place in society as their figures are used to 'strengthen' the coherence of the main community and thus reinforce the dialectic of proximity and distance which situates the immigrants and their families in a position of social foreignness and territorial exteriority (Necira Souilamas Guénif 2000, 85). A more thorough scholarship that focuses on the cultural and social domination of the immigrants has appeared, questioning and challenging the French fragile republican values on integration, and issues like national identity, alterity and racism and how the figure of the 'Maghrebian immigrant' raises the issues of social relations based on difference.[13] However, the cultural specificity of North African immigration has been little studied until now as it has been constructed in terms of the 'double culture', that is, a culture that can not integrate with the French one because of their irreducible differences. The emergence of Islam in the public sphere has made Islamic rituals visible and thus has raised the idea of its incompatibility with French 'secular' values.

For a long time, the North African immigrants have remained faceless and invisible in French society. But by the 1980s, the invisibility of the single male migrant workers of the 1950s and 1960s has been strongly challenged by their descendants or so-called Beur[14] who have been marking the public space with their various artistic, literary, political and social interventions. The word was first used in naming radio-Beur founded by young Franco-Maghrebians (with Nacer Kettane) in 1981 and then the word started to be used in the press as a name for the young

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[13] See Noiriel (1988), Sayad (1991), (1999), Schnapper, (1991), Touraine (1997), Stora, (1999), Khosrokhavar (1997).

[14] The term Beur was first coined using the verlan or language of the urban *banlieues* which functions as a back-slang (*à l'envers*) of the French or Arabic language. In the case of the Beur, the word *arabe* becomes *rebe and* then *ber* in reverse and thus Beur. Nacer Kettane, the president of Radio Beur and a Beur novelist himself, claimed the term to refer to "un espace géographique et culturel, le Maghreb, et à un espace social, celui de la banlieue et du prolétariat de France" (Nacer Kettane 1986, 21).

descendants of Maghrebian immigration. However, in the French context, these youths are usually called 'second generation immigrants', or 'young Arabs' (for example, the Petit Larousse defines the word as a second generation Maghrebian immigrant) with all the political and social implications this definition can entail.[15]

Thus, the Beurs[16] are still perceived, like their parents, as immigrants, which implies the exclusion of these young people from French society, as they are seen as having the same status as their parents though they have not migrated from anywhere.[17] They are defined by their belonging to the context of their parents' immigration and thus linked to the history of their parents, which constitutes a part of their identity but not the only element of it. This is done for the purpose of classifying them in the same economic roles as their parents (never to climb the social ladder) and thus deny their 'Frenchness' (Laronde 1993, 54), but one day France has to face the fact that they are French citizens (Begag and Chaouite 1990, 82). The debate as to whether they can be integrated into French society is still ongoing, while most, if not all of them believe that they already constitute a part of that society. The problem is that of refusing to recognise that the ideal of integration as belonging 'to a de facto historical and social entity' does not correspond to 'a mythical national type' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 223). The debate about how to define 'integration' has been ongoing in France since the 1980s.

The use of the term 'Beur' by the Beur themselves is quite controversial but it aims at expressing a possible identity that is neither 'Arab' (the term is charged with many not necessarily positive connotations in the French context), nor 'French', as total naturalisation is also charged with betrayal in the Maghrebian communities. Therefore, the term Beur expresses the rejection of rigid classification: neither Arab nor French (Begag and Chaouite 1990, 82). However, the term as taken by

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[15]Michel Laronde (1993, 51-2-3), Azouz Begag and Abdelatif Chaouite (1990, 83).

[16] The term Beur is sometimes replaced with that of *Rebeu*, which as Necira Souilamas Guénif (2000, 37) argues, is a *verlan* form of beur and is used as a reaction to the latter seen as too "politically correct". It is used by those who define themselves in relation to a stigmatised territory or origin. It is a form of contest of the beur or "beurgeoisie" and used in conjunction with another word: *hittiste* (joining the term *hit*, 'wall' in Arabic with the French prefix 'iste' and meaning "les tenurs de mur" and it reflects the linguistic hybridity of those young people, at the same time translating the *mal-être* of a young generation). It reflects the social and spatial immobility of these young people and their inactivity that push them to the walls of their block of flats (*immeuble)* (ibid.).

[17] See Bouzid (1984) and see also Françoise Gaspard and Claude Servan-Schreiber (1984), Begag and Chaouite (1990).

politicians and the media becomes a tool for stigmatisation.[18] In my research, I use the term Beur strategically to refer to the descendants of the North African immigrants in France in their collective formation of diasporic communities that refuse to be held outside the French national hearth as 'immigrants outsiders' whose alterity is irreconcilable with the French 'national identity'. The Beur emphasise their 'insideness' to France, while being aware as a diaspora community of their parents' colonial anti-colonial history and its legacy.

One can not draw a general image of the descendants of North African immigrants in France, especially in terms of their political beliefs, opinions, and social status, as that would be to homogenise the itineraries of individuals and their different responses to their social and economic situations. But it does mean that these young people do not share a certain common history[19] (parents' immigration and colonial history, working class background, *ZUP, HLM* and *cités* of the *banlieues* at the periphery of the French society, ethnic stigmatisation, etc.). Therefore, while reinforcing the diversity of the Beur situation, one cannot avoid stressing their common origins and cultural values, which are diverse (Berber-Arabic-Islamic-North African). However, the endogamy of the culture is challenged daily by the life and saturation within French society and culture. The descendants of North African immigrants in France have tried to politicise their existence in French society by rejecting their political and cultural representations in French institutions that still consider them as 'foreigners' despite their French nationality and ID. This is expressed through political marches such as the famous 'Marche des Beurs' in 1983 and 1984 and through protests against discrimination in housing, education and employment; also through artistic expression in the form of novel writing, music and filmmaking (Winifred Woodhull 1993a, 16-17). The important political changes that occurred in France in the 1980s helped the resurgence of Beur literary and artistic creativity. When the socialists gained power in 1981 (under François Mitterand), they immediately stopped a law that disallowed immigrants from establishing association, without the approval of the Ministry of the Interior (Alec Hargreaves 1993, 28). With this ban lifted, and funds being provided, a real cultural

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[18] Begag and Chaouite (1990, 83) wonder what is the reactions of Jewish communities in France to their children being called "feujs" (verlan of Juives) as their social position is much stronger and can not be compared to that of North Africans.

[19] See Begag and Chaouite (1990, 84).

explosion took place among the descendants of the North African immigrants that included all domains, literature, theatre, music, film industry, etc.[20] In this research, it is the Beurs' literary creativity that is the subject of study in their multiple translations of the contradictions and ambiguities of French hospitality.

(b)- "The contradictions of French Hospitality"

France is different from other European countries in what can be seen as its long history of hospitality and early embrace of foreigners as immigrants, settlers and even as citizens. [21] This willingness to accept and integrate foreigners as citizens is claimed to be part of the Republican tradition inherited from the French Revolution whose 'Declaration of Human and Civic Rights' and the belief in 'Liberty, Fraternity, Equality' were put forward in 1789. The French historian Gérard Noiriel (1988, 4-7) argues that the phenomenon of immigration in French society should not be seen as external to 'French history' but as an internal constitutive part of that history. Looking at the origins of the French nation, one perceives that all members of today's French population (the population resident in the French national space) are in fact the products of an historical process of immigration (Noiriel 1992, 43-44). The country has been known for its tradition of hospitality, and immigration has always been an important element within the construction of the modern French nation in terms of the formation and progress of French economy, society and nation-state.[22] Thus, it is rather arbitrary and xenophobic to differentiate between *les Français de souche* (seen as the 'real' French, the ones that belong to the country, the descendants of the Gauls) and others seen as 'false' French, descendants of immigration and thus of 'foreign' origin (ibid.). This distinction visibly applies to the descendants of North African immigrants because of their supposed cultural and physical difference and non-European origins.

France had welcomed throughout the late Nineteenth and the early Twentieth Centuries a large number of immigrants from surrounding European countries such

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[20] For an overview of this cultural resurgence, see Michel Laronde (1989).
[21] See Catherine Wihtol de Wenden "Immigrés" in *Encyclopaedia Universalis* (CD-ROM). See also B. Stasi *L'Immigration, une Chance pour la France* (1984), Ben Jelloun *Hospitalité Française* (1984), A. Corderio *L'Immigration* (1984) and other works.
[22] See B. Stasi (1984), and A. Corderio (1984).

as Belgians, Italians. Portuguese and Poles. After the Second World War. it had opened its doors to non-European immigration from countries of the ex-colonies especially from North and West Africa. The previous influx of immigrants from European countries are considered to have successfully integrated into 'French culture' whereas the most recent influx from the ex-colonies. especially from North Africa, have turned out to be 'un-assimilable' in nature, mainly because of the claim that their Islamic cultural background obstructs such an integration. Popular and political discourse in France does not always respect the official distinction between immigrants and foreigners. This is due to the confusion of the term 'immigré' ('immigrant') with that of 'étranger' ('foreigner') despite the fact that the official definition of the term 'étranger' excludes immigrants who have obtained French nationality through the process of naturalisation. Moreover, popular and political discourse on immigration issues tends to confine the term 'immigrant' to signify people of non-European origin, especially North Africans and their descendants. Therefore, 'the problem of immigration' in fact names a specific community (i.e. North Africans) which is represented as a threat to national culture and identity (Max Silverman 1992, 3). Immigration was favoured for those who would not risk 'bastardising' the French identity, especially those of European origins. Therefore, the selection of future immigrants, depending on the 'fictitious' notions of the degree of their assimilation, is seen as an important factor in allowing progress. In fact, opinion polls in France since the 1930s have shown the existence of hostility towards immigrants from European origins but the increase of this hostility is directly linked to moments of economic crisis (Jim House 1995, 88).

The 1993 Pasqua laws in France clearly exposed the French government's hostility towards immigration though they were claimed to be the expression of an increasingly xenophobic public opinion on immigration issues.[23] These laws have demonised those perceived as 'illegal immigrants' or the *sans-papiers* whose case came into the open in the summer of 1996 when around 300 African women and men took refuge in the church of Saint Bernard in Paris as they were threatened by deportation to their home countries on the basis of their 'illegality' *(des clandestins)* on French soil (Didier Fassin 1996). The French public was presented. through the intensive media coverage of the event, with the monstrosity of the immigration laws

[23] See Sami Nair (1997) for more details.

that not only strongly deter the arrival of any new immigrants but also worsen the life of the long-term immigrants and turn them into 'those without papers'. Even though the police evacuated the church late in the summer of 1996, the movement of the *sans-papiers* has established itself as an important public marker of the injustice of the immigration laws and thus voiced the suffering of those seen as undocumented aliens.[24] "The defeat of hospitality"[25] marks the contemporary history of France and most countries of the rich North giving way to certain politics of suspicion, fear and insecurity.

If France is seen as being capable in the past of integrating waves of different immigrants from Europe without any serious problems,[26] the present situation is different in the sense that the republican model seems incapable of accommodating and integrating ex-colonial 'subjects' of North African origins as full citizens. One has to be very cautious, however, in talking about a 'system of integration' in France, as it implies the existence of a coherent structure which has actually been lacking in France. In other words, there is no crisis in the system of integration, because there has not been any 'effective' integration in the past. The debate about a successful integration system of the working class during the 1930s and thus the decline in the present moment should be avoided (House 1995, 88). It implies the loss of a golden past, which is exactly the discourse of the extreme right wing that regrets the loss of a past 'cultural unity', destroyed by the arrival of the new immigrants (Muslims).

The French, however, claim that there is a certain 'threshold of tolerance' that immigration or immigrants should not cross. The phrase implies the 'belief' that

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[24] For a detailed analysis of the issue of the sans-papiers, see Didier Fassin, Alain Morice, and Catherine Quiminal (eds.) *Les lois de l'inhospitalité: Les Politiques de l'immigration à l'épreuve des sans-papiers* (1997) and also Gérard Noiriel *Réfugiés et sans papiers: La République face au droit d'asile, XIXe-XXe siècle* (1998).

[25] A term used by Sophie Wahnich (1997b, 107).

[26] This is a debatable proposition as it suggests that there was no racism and disrimination involved in the process. J.E.S. Hayward (1983, 21) argues that the "the obsession with national unity betrays an easy sense that the peoples which make up France may have been swallowed but not wholly digested". The ongoing negotiations between what can be called 'French unity', that is, 'a unitary state' and 'French diversity' or 'a divided nation' has started since the establishment of the Republic. The idea of a unitary state presumes that 'an integrated society' can be the basis of political institutions (ibid., 2). The historian Eugene Weber explains as "The fact is, the French fuss so much about the nation because it is a living problem, became one when they set the nation up as an ideal, remained one because they found they could not realise the ideal. The more abstractly the concept of France-as-nation is presented, the less one notes discrepancies between theory and practice" (ibid.).

strong concentrations of immigrants or ethnic minorities in specific places (or ghettos) are believed to be an obvious reason for social conflict (due to the transgression of 'the threshold of tolerance' (Silverman 1992, 74-75). This argument is based on the as yet unproven hypothesis that ordinary people become racist as a reaction to the increased visibility of immigrants around them, an attitude usually exacerbated in times of economic crisis.[27] In 1989, François Mitterrand announced in a television interview that the threshold number of immigrants in France had been reached.[28] A lively debate in the French media followed, which focused on 'the problem of the immigrants'[29] and the risk of crossing 'the threshold of tolerance'.

Max Silverman (1992, 96) argues that Mitterrand's declaration was not very 'diplomatic' as it came at a time when public opinion was divided about the headscarf issue (three Franco-Maghrebian Muslim girls contentiously wearing headscarves in a strictly 'lay' public school.) Moreover, the term *seuil de tolerance* had previously been identified by the left as a racist expression used by the right to describe 'ethnic relations'. This implies a consensus on the part of the left and right about the ideas determining this *seuil* (threshold), also indicating a growing consensus about immigration as a major problem for French society. The neo-racism that is sweeping Europe in general and France in particular is therefore related to what Etienne Balibar calls 'external groups', the ones blamed for crossing 'the threshold of tolerance', that is, immigrants from non-European origins,[30] some of whom have been living and integrating (despite their cultural difference) in Europe for a long time (Balibar 1997, 326). Of all European countries, however, France seems to resist most strongly the historical and social transformations of migration. This is manifest in its refusal to recognise the ethnic and cultural plurality of its society that today constitutes part of what may be called its 'Frenchness'.

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[27] For more details, see John King (1995, 187) and Silverman (1992, 97-98).

[28] Silverman (1992, 95). For a thorough analysis of the issue, see Françoise Gaspard, and Farhad Khosrokhavar: *Le foulard et la République* (1995).

[29] My own use of the word 'immigrants', referring in particular to the Maghrebian ethnic community, is strategic, following French usage in which the word '*immigré*' is rather negatively connoted with labour, as opposed to the positive meaning of '*immigrant*'.

[30] For a detailed analysis of the argument of North African immigrants' crossing France's *seuil de tolerance*, see my article: "Crossing the 'Thresholds of Intolerance': Contemporary French Society" in *Cultural Studies: Interdisciplinarity and Translation* (2002).

It seems that "the less the population designated by the category of immigration is effectively 'immigrant', that is foreign, not only by its status and social function, but also in its customs and culture, the more it is denounced as a foreign body" (ibid., 334). The idea of the 'threshold of tolerance' clearly reflects the fear of French society of a multi-cultural, multi-racial national identity. It illustrates the refusal to recognise those transformations and thus constitutes a refusal of its own history. Therefore, in Abdelkebir Khatibi's words (1993, 6), "tolerance, intolerance, and their borders combine themselves into an art of living. We tolerate the other only if he does not threaten to disturb our territory, our singularity, and our memory. This is often an untenable position for the reason that the conflict between real or imaginary territories is a relation of power."

Strongly influenced by the Revolution and its 'Declaration of Human and Civic Rights', French Republicanism[31] is based on egalitarian principles that defend social justice and equality, stress the sovereignty of the people and encourage their participation in public life (J.E.S. Hayward 1983, 22). However, the political environments which have conditioned the 1789 Declaration have changed, and thus, it is problematic to see the Declaration as 'the application of universal rights' (House 1997, 50). Rather, the Declaration should be seen as opening a space for the values of liberty and equality to be realised. Therefore, one witnesses the constant tension that has been taking place in French society between, on the one hand, the announcement and belief in those principles and their non-realisation on the other.

The tension between the ideals of the Republic, which as a political ideology, strongly endorses the concept of a nation that is not based on ethnic exclusiveness (as opposed for example to Germany) (Silverman 1992) and the actual implementation of these ideals, has been clear in France ever since the Revolution. The core of French Republicanism is "its emphasis on citizenship rather than race or ethnicity as the defining condition of membership of the national community"; thus, the 'jus solis' and not the 'jus sanguinis' as a condition of acquiring French

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[31] Republicanism as a political ideology was highly controversial during the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century and went through a process of changes in its construction, but has triumphed in the twentieth century and become widely supported by the French public mainly

citizenship (Sudhir Hazareesingh 1994. 87). However. the French State has been creating 'a dominant identity'. by "secreting norms of cultural belonging" and by "also acting to shape the identities of dominated groups" (House 1997, 58). This French exclusionism is precisely what is translated and resisted in Beurs' literary texts as they suggest a more hospitable conception of French nation. French identity and French culture.

3- Beur Literature

Being torn between two cultural identities and languages, (their parents' origin and French society), and at the same time not being able to fit into one category or another, Beur cultural creations --especially the literary one-- have come in response to the double bind of their identities. Despite all the obstacles encountered by young Beurs in terms of the marginality of their social and economic background, the obstacles faced in school, family problems, racist and xenophobic attitudes from French society, they have managed to write their presence within French society.[32] It is a young literature that has came to light at the beginning of the 1980s and it is a literature of the margins as it comes from the social and spatial peripheries of the French society. Almost all the authors have a common background of living in the suburban outskirts of the French main cities, especially Paris, Marseilles and Lyons in HLM banlieues marked by social and cultural exclusion (Begag and Chaouite 1990, 100). Their texts are marked by a certain decentralised perception about their parents' life and French society. How does this literature translate its complex relation with the centre or with the national? How does it negotiate or deconstruct its relation with the dominant culture? How does it construct the parents' culture? How does it relate to the parents' colonial history?

Beur narratives are built in an in-between world: home and French society. Their identity is always unfinished, in the making, and they are marked by uncertainties

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because of its supposed egalitarian principles, its respect for the rights of man, individualism and citizenship (see S. Berstein and O. Rudelle 1992, 11).

[32] André Videau (1988, 10) argues that the emergence of Beur literature is a 'normal' and 'modest' phenomenon that if exaggerated will risk being denaturalised. He claims that the appearance of the Beur is logical, taking into accounts their inner presence within French society, and their ability to

whether national, cultural or linguistic. Beur novels as a form of cultural and literary expression are crucial as even though they have common points, they reveal an increasing lack of consensus concerning issues such as identity, solidarity, and community. I am not looking at them as if they are embodying "a special 'ethnic' essence" because that would suggest notions of "the absolutist definitions of culture" and of appropriating if not monopolising forms of cultural creativity (Gilroy 2000, 179). Therefore, I emphasise throughout my analysis of Beur texts the diversity of their positions. Even though most Beur texts are marked by common perceptions of issues such as exclusion from French society, inferiorisation of the parents' culture of origin, challenging the contradictions of French citizenship, re-reading of colonial memory, *le mal de vivre* and *le racisme ordinaire*, they translate these issues using various strategies that stem from their diverse social positions. Despite the fact that the common denominator of 'ethnicity' links all Beur texts in their attempt to fight exclusion from French society, class and gender divisions within the Beur diaspora are strongly present in some Beur texts. I attempt to show class divisions within the Beur community in Chapter Four, Section Two of my thesis in my analysis of Azouz Begag's *Quand on est mort c'est pour toute la vie* (1998). In other Beur texts such as Mehdi Charef *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* (1983), class plays an important role in uniting characters from various 'ethnic' backgrounds in their fight against social exclusion. In Chapter Five, Section Three and Four, I focus on gender as an important aspect that-- besides ethnicity and class-- shapes the Beur(ettes)' own strategies of survival in Leila Houari's, Ferrudja Kessas's and Sakinna Boukhedenna's texts.

One cannot claim Beur literature to be Francophone for the main reason that it is the product of French society itself. Beurs texts are *romans français* and not *romans écrit en français* (Michel Laronde 1993, 6) as the Beur inscribe their experiences within the complexities of what they may consider as their 'Frenchness'. It is a post-colonial literature that displaces and re-shapes the notions of centre (post-colonial France) and periphery (marginalised ethnic North African communities) in different ways. Stuart Hall (1996, 246) argues that one of the most important aspects of the concept of the post-colonial is that of drawing attention to the fact that colonisation deeply contaminated the culture of the colonisers and was always inscribed within

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invest in the urban suburbs where most innovative cultural events take place and where they can

them. Post-colonial perspectives may imply a reading of different cultural practices to free them from colonial ideologies, but it in no way means a return to a pure set of 'uncontaminated origins', as the "long-term historical and cultural effects of the 'transculturation' which characterised the colonising experience have proved to be irreversible" (ibid., 247). Coming from a Maghrebian colonised culture and being born and culturally immersed in the French culture, the Beur demonstrates that a shift has been made from the binary oppositions of difference to that of différance in terms of the 'double inscription' of the breaking down of the inside/outside dimension of the colonial system on which the histories of imperialism and contemporary racism and exclusion have thrived for so long. Hall also argues that the post-colonial "is not only marking it [the transition] in a 'then' and 'now' way. It is obliging us to re-read the very binary form in which the colonial encounter itself has for so long been represented. It is obliging us to read the binaries as forms of transculturation, of cultural translation, destined to trouble the here/there cultural binaries forever" (ibid.). Hall's idea reflects the richness of the Beur literary experience as they represent this deconstruction of the binary opposition from within the French cultural scene itself since they are themselves a cultural translation or a transculturation that interrupts any form of 'originary' culture. Therefore Hall argues that the post-colonial, as a term, does not simply provide a description of a 'then' and 'now' or a 'here' and 'there' or a 'home' and 'abroad' perception but rather "it produces a de-centred, diasporic or 'global' re-writing of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives" (ibid.).

Beur literature can also be seen as a minor literature. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1986, 18) define minor literature in relation to Franz Kafka's literature not as a 'specific literature' but rather as "the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great or (established) literature." Moreover, it is a "literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of scepticism: and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" (ibid., 17). Even though Beur novelists are grounded in a context that is different from that of Kafka-- (as a Jew in Prague having to leave his

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negotiate ways of expressing and accommodating their cultural disruption.

mother tongue and write in a language that was foreign to him, the German language)-- such as the legacy of colonialism, parents' migration, exclusion. and cultural displacement, their literature marks their condition of being a marginalised community searching for its 'voice' to be heard. Thus, Beur literature is a minor literature that does not come from a minor language but that which "a minority constructs within a major language" (ibid., 16). It is to do with the forces that determine the relationship of the authors with the languages in question in terms of how the language of a minor literature is "affected by a high coefficient of deterritorialization" (ibid.).[33] The Beur texts deterritorialize the French language in order to reterritorialize it into a minority language by playing with it, opening it up to new images and styles, using words and expressions from the parents' mother tongue (Arabic and Berber), dialects, verlan, incorporating argot and inventing new idioms, that is, experimenting with form and language in order to suit their own 'translated selves'. Moreover, as Reda Bensmaia (1995, 220) puts it "there are minor literatures because peoples, races, and entire cultures were in the past reduced to silence. Minor literature appears therefore as the practical manifestation of that very voice" which is the voice of people who wants to speak their differences, "differences between what the state wants them to be and what they themselves want to experiment with". Beur literature is an expression of showing different thinking and multiple belongings inside a French society that bases itself on cultural and national uniformity. Minor literature becomes a space where this national identity is negotiated, deconstructed and deterritorialized.

4- Methodology

My thesis is based on inter-disciplinary research that combines philosophy, sociology and literature. I do not attempt to find a clear definition of hospitality as a concept as I appropriate Derrida's deconstructive language that "we do not know hospitality" with all the philosophical implications this sentence can entail and my research tries to unravel it by opening up hospitality to its various 'acceptations' or meanings (Derrida 2000, 6). Acceptation is a word that "lives at the heart of the discourse of hospitality" as it emphasises the idea of welcoming and receiving: 'accepto' or 'recipio', receive and welcome always in a new way or 'anew' or "the

[33] See also Reda Bensmaia (1995, 215).

readiness to repeat, to renew, to continue" (ibid., 7). The use of Deconstruction as a strategy of reading the ethics and politics of hospitality and of reading Beur texts is due to the fact that Deconstruction itself, as a contemporary French philosophy, resulted from the complex Franco-Maghrebian encounter (Robert Young 2001, 421) and it thus provides strategies for exploring the issues that I address in my thesis such as the aporia of hospitality in its ethical and political dimension which is translated through the diasporic experience of the Beurs in their resistance to exclusion, to authority and nationalist conformism. Jacques Derrida came from the margins of colonial Algeria (the city of El-Biar near Algiers) to the centre of France, Paris, where he experienced the 'excessive centralisation' of the French system marked by uniformity and symmetry (ibid., 417). His rebellion against this system is marked in his intellectual project, which re-examines the relationship of writing to centralisation through Deconstruction: a form of cultural and intellectual decolonisation. The deconstruction of the many forms of 'centricisms' such as logo-, phallo- or structural becomes clear in relation to the French rational and central administrative system. Derrida analyses the way human sciences and structures are organised around centres, origins and forms of 'presence' and thus power while they remain problematically open to people like Derrida himself, that is, those who cross boundaries, such as diasporas, migrants, nomads, gypsies, etc. (ibid.).

Inhabiting a French language that was not his own, Derrida was thrown into a perpetual process of a translation with no original to reveal the alterity of the French language. In his writings, Derrida clearly demonstrated his problem with 'belonging' as he could not find a place either with the non-Jewish community in which he wanted to be integrated and the Jewish communities, which he felt, were closed upon themselves. This is where Deconstruction's language of the Other and the dispossessed comes from. Derrida refers to himself as a cultural and political Marrano[34] as he has no fixed boundaries. Robert Young (2001, 425) expresses this in terms of the "the internalised violence and historical artifice of the colonial power's cultural and political systems" that Derrida had internalised: "You were other to them, othered by them, and hence your desire to detect or inscribe alterity

[34] Marrano is the name given to a pig and used to refer to the Jews forced under the Inquisition to convert to Christianity and eat pork but they kept their faith in secret. Derrida even points to his being a *marrane* of French Catholic culture, but not even one who can affirm his 'Jewishness' secretly as he doubts everything (see Young 2001, 425).

within them, to show you could find it. you could find yourself there already at their very heart."

Concepts of diaspora, marginality and difference have constantly emerged in Derrida's work. They reflect a certain experience of outsideness insideness, an insideness in outsideness that blurs the fixed and rigid notions of nationality, belonging and identity, which precisely reflects the Beur condition. Derrida's concept extends to the social and political experience of minority groups, in Young's words: "the minority has a deconstructive relation to the majority" (ibid., 421). The Beurs' situation, however, is not saturated in colonial Algeria at the height of the French colonialism that had set a clear opposition between the coloniser and the colonised (the Algeria that Derrida was brought up in), but that of contemporary France where they are born and brought up and where they are legally seen as French citizens but still suffer from exclusion, marginalisation, the violence of the colonial system on the basis of their supposed 'cultural difference'.

I attempt a close deconstructive reading of the Beur texts in order to trace their aporias and contradictions in relation to certain issues that predominate in their texts. Therefore, my appropriation of philosophical and sociological analysis comes as a 'supplementarity' in the sense that texts have meaning "on the basis of belonging to a supplementary and 'indefinitely multiplied structure' of contextualisation and incessant recontextualisation" (Gayatri Spivak 1987, 23). There are no origins for interpreting the texts but in Gayatri Spivak's words, "only supplements of a supplement, even supplements at the origin, that different and deferral interpretations of the texts and that is what the historical approach to texts fails to understand. The law of writing is a law of 'surprise' in the sense that the writer (whether a philosopher or a historian or a literary man) is 'taken by surprise', i.e., the one who writes will always be saying 'more, less, or something other that what he would mean'" (ibid.).

Because Beur literature is a recent phenomenon, it has not yet received enough attention by scholars. Michel Laronde and Alec Hargreaves[35] devote whole books

[35] See Laronde's: *Autour de Roman Beur: immigration and identité* (1993) and *Ecriture décentrée: La langue de l'autre dans le roman contemporain* (1997) and Hargreaves' *Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France: Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction* (1991).

to the analysis of Beur literature. While their works are certainly valuable in setting the ground for analysing Beur texts, I find their approach limited either by Laronde's 'scientific' reading of the texts that treat them more like sociological documents on the Beur's status in France and Hargreaves's excessive focus on the biographies of the authors than the texts themselves, to shed light on the contents of the texts.

Even though most Beur texts are marked by some autobiographical elements, most Beur novelists refuse to call their texts autobiographies. For example, in Azouz Begag's *Le Gone de Chaâba* (1986), the main protagonist has the same full name as that of the author: Azouz Begag and the story is narrated retrospectively, but the title page of *Le Gone* describes it as a novel and not an autobiography.[36] Hargreaves (1991, 42) maintains that "most, though not all, Beur narratives may be loosely described as autobiographical novels, for there is a strong but never complete resemblance between the stories represented in them and events experienced in real life by their authors." Even though most Beur texts show certain links with the lives of their authors, they never display complete similarities. Therefore, Beur novelists draw from their own raw experiences in life to create their protagonists, but they also invent new fictional processes that translate their various clusters of identification. In my research, I do not reduce Beur texts to their biographical origins. I agree with Gayatri Spivak when she claims that to make a distinction between the printed book and its 'author' will ignore the lessons of deconstruction. She claims that "one kind of deconstructive critical approach would loosen the binding of the book, undo the opposition between verbal text and the biography of the named subject" and thus consider the two as "each other's 'scene of writing'" (Spivak 1999, 115). Therefore, such a reading will consider the written life and the book as a production in 'psychosocial space' or "the life that writes itself as 'my life' is as much a production in psychosocial space" (ibid.). Spivak recognises criticism not only as "a theoretical approach to the 'truth' of a text, but at the same time as a practical enterprise that produces a reading as part of a much larger polemic" (Spivak 1987, 30). Deconstruction's idea of being within the text

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(Republished in 1997). Charles Bonn's works focus more on literature produced by Francophone writers, see *Littératures des Immigrations 1. Un espace littéraire émergent, Études littéraires maghrébines*. Vol 7, (1995) and *Littératures des Immigrations 2.Exiles croisés, Études littéraires maghrébines*. Vol 8, (1995).

[36] For more details, see Alec Hargreaves (1991, 40-41-42).

suggests that the notion of the text and the writer "are variously affected, inscribed and governed by a logic of text, of supplementarity or contextualisation, which can never be saturated or arrested" (Nicholas Royle 1995, 22). Therefore, deconstructive strategies are employed so to interrupt fixed categories and identities and to open up their various possibilities instead of categorising them as subordinate or oppositional. I attempt to read in Beur texts the strategies of negotiation between (and within) the central and marginal cultures and also 'the means of translation' between cultures that help to avoid categorising diasporic peoples in a stable and fixed identity based on a language, origin or religion and thus to focus on the means by which Beur protagonists constantly invent their identity and "legitimate their status as subjects of their own history" (Woodhull 1993, 12).

Laronde's definition of the Beur literature extends to include not only the young Franco-Maghrebians, but also those novelists (French, like Michel Tournier or Maghrebian, like Leila Sebbar) who write about the Beur condition in France (Laronde 1993, 6). Hargreaves claims that Beur literature should only include those authors who are Beur themselves, that is, those born or brought up in France from immigrant parents and who share certain socio-economic factors such as poverty, and the illiteracy of the parents. I agree with Laronde that the 'ethnic' meaning of the term *Beur* should be enlarged to include all the works written about the Beur. Hargreaves is limited by the idea that you have to belong to a certain group in order to write about it whereas if one reads the novels of Leila Sebbar and Michel Tournier, one is fascinated by the style and the beauty of their writing about the Beur.

The selected Beur texts will be read in a 'contrapuntal' way, which will focus on the versatility of the texts to include constraints, limits and prohibitions and to produce a complex topography of the text (Said 1994a, 385-6). Said's contrapuntal reading means that texts and worldly institutions are seen as working together with historical influence. The translations of processes of exclusion and marginalisation within French society, are countered by strategies of resistance and thus possible subversions of the centre. I am not reading these texts as mere translations of identity, as I agree with Said's idea that "When photographs and texts are used merely to establish identity and presence-- to give us merely representative images

of the Woman, or the Indian-- they enter what [John] Berger calls a control system". But "With their innately ambiguous, hence negative and anti-narrativist waywardness not denied, however, they permit unregimented subjectivity to have a social function: fragile images [family photographs] often carried next to the heart, or placed by the side of the bed, are used to refer to that which historical time has no right to destroy" (ibid., 405). In other words, these texts will be seen in the light of their escaping categorisation, authority, hostility, etc.

In my thesis, I use the trope of translation-- or what I call Beur literary translations of the aporia of hospitality-- in a strategic way since it allows the opening of various routes that I can pursue. First, I equate the process of being 'hyphenated' or being Franco-Maghrebian with translation, as will become clear in Chapter Five. This idea of being 'translated' (between languages, cultures, communities) implies-- as in translation-- that something can be lost but also that something can be gained; a condition that has its own limitations and frustrations (of being excluded and marginalised) but has also its own freedoms, that of resisting authority and stabilisation. Derrida (2000, 6) strongly links hospitality with translations, since he perceives translation to be an "experience of hospitality, if not the condition of all hospitality in general."

The trope of translation also implies there is always a deferral of meaning that can not be stabilised as, like identities, it is always in the making. But its most important aspect or etymological derivation is the importance of, first, the idea of moving across and how that moving across in Beur texts is crucial and has to do with the idea of diasporic population as a possible translation in itself. Second, the crucial aspect of the trope of translation is to question the notion of rootedness, or the 'original' which is a myth. The difference between the original text and its various translations is the various identities that the text requires. The Beurs focus on this plurality of belongings and the shuttle between their various selves depending on the context they find themselves, in as the identities they construct for themselves are at odds with the ones constructed for them by the dominant community. Thus the idea of breaking free from any certain cultural grounding or any form of ethnic, cultural or linguistic essence.

5- Structure of the Chapters

Chapter Two and Three focus on the philosophical debate about the issue of the ethics and politics of hospitality in relation to the concept of democracy. They prepare the theoretical and philosophical grounds for the rest of the chapters as they introduce the debate, in Chapter Two, on the aporia between the ethics and politics of hospitality and in Chapter Three, about the mechanisms of exclusion lying at the heart of the concept of democracy which delimits the possibility of hospitality.

In Chapter Two I attempt a deconstructive reading of the concept of hospitality that destabilises the notions of the host/guest by drawing on Derrida's idea that the host/guest can not be known or determined as a concept because the Other/guest cannot lend him/herself to 'objective knowledge' as the Other is always absolutely Other, beyond calculation, and thus, "hospitality gives itself to thought beyond knowledge". The aporia that imposes itself here is that, on the one hand, hospitality is offered to the Other as a 'stranger', but on the other hand, "if one determines the Other as stranger, one is already introducing the circles of conditionality that are family, nation, state, and citizenship. Perhaps, there is an Other who is still more foreign than the one whose foreignness in relation to language, family, or citizenship" (Derrida 2000, 13). That is the 'double bind' or the meeting of hospitality with aporia. I argue that the distinction introduced in Derrida's works between, on the one hand, unconditional hospitality or 'absolute desire for hospitality' and on the other, conditional hospitality or the rights and duties that condition hospitality ("a law, a conditional ethics, a politics") is not a distinction that 'paralyses' hospitality. In fact, it aims at directing our attention to find an 'intermediate schema' between the two, "a radical heterogeneity, but also indissociability" in the sense of calling for the Other or prescribing the Other. To keep alive the aporia between the ethics (*the* law of hospitality) and the politics (the laws of hospitality) is to keep political laws and regulations open to new changes and circumstances and to keep alive the fact that hospitality is always inhabited by hostility.

Chapter Three traces Derrida's philosophical reflection on the issue of democratic politics to reveal the political and philosophical roots of western democratic politics

and its exclusions in order to come to an understanding of the issue of hospitality and its politics. In *Politiques de l'Amitié*, Derrida opens the issue of democracy to question and how it is based on 'androcentric' axioms that exclude the 'Other'. The aim is to uncover the hegemony of such exclusion through a close reading of the canonical philosophical concepts of democracy and through opening the question of friendship and fraternity which are the basis of the Greek concept of democracy inherited by the West. I argue that Derrida uncovers xenophobia at the heart of the concept of democracy which is based on the 'autochthonous', the 'homo-fraternal' or the notion of the 'natural birth' *(phùsis)* or structure of kinship and unity and which encourages nationalism, ethnocentrism, racism, etc. and thus excludes the non-fraternal. Derrida dismisses the tie of birth (or blood) that is supposed to ensure the 'social bond', what Derrida calls 'the genealogical condition of the social bond' which is always constructed. Political discourse calls for a re-naturalisation of this 'fiction' through fraternisation or nationalisation. Such 'deterministic politics' of 'fraternity' saturated within the autochthonous does not leave a space for the Other, or for hospitality: "la chance d'une effraction ou d'une hospitalité absolues, d'une décision ou d'une arrivance imprédictibles" (Derrida 1994, 122-3). Derrida's hypothesis is democracy-to-come that would be hospitable to the alterity of the Other and that would eradicate from its roots the 'homo-fraternal' orientation: "il s'agirait donc de penser une altérité sans différence hiérarchique à la racine de la démocratie" (ibid., 259). It is democracy-to-come, based on hospitality-to-come for the non-fraternal, a democracy, a hospitality whose essence will remain 'indefinitely perfectible', hence always 'insufficient and future' that belong to the time of the 'promise'.

Chapter Four attempts a close reading of selected Beurs texts so as to reveal the mechanisms imposed by the French rhetoric of belonging which pushes them outside the 'national hearth' as 'foreigners'. Though the French concept of citizenship is theoretically inclusive, it is in fact exclusive for those like the Beur, with a different physical appearance. The Beur protagonists question the way cultural conformity and 'blood affiliation' is set as a condition for belonging to the French nation. The exclusion of the French Muslims or the harkis in no less severe than that of the descendants of the North African immigrants. I argue that though the Beur protagonists strongly condemn the way their communities are racialized as

a minority group, they use various strategies to resist the roles assigned to them because of their 'origin' and which contain them in fixed and rigid identities and thus open to hospitality beyond the rhetoric of the national.

Chapter Five draws its concept of the hyphen or the Beur's hyphenated identities from most of the Beur protagonists' insistence on their being *ni français ni arabe*, since they can not fit into both national descriptions and since they fall in-between the national in the space of the hyphen of being Franco-Maghrebian. However, inhabiting the space of the hyphen does not imply outsideness for the Beurs, but rather resistance to patriotic reductionism. A close reading of the selected Beur texts reveals how the Beur protagonists unconsciously see themselves as 'translated persons' that move between linguistic, cultural, and social spaces. I argue that the Beur identities are marked by the 'disorder of the hyphen' as they are held hostage to two cultural spheres represented to them as irreconcilable and incompatible. The hostility towards their parents' culture, seen as inferior, marks that disorder further. However, the movement of the hyphen is a movement of translation that open up possibilities to hospitality and plurality. The Beur protagonists search for identification as they suffer alienation from both their parents' culture and the French one. The Beur(ettes) or young women suffer from a further alienation that has to do with another marker of their identification which is that of gender.

In Chapter Six I argue that though the age of imperialism officially ended with the dismantling of the French Empire after the second World War, there is a shared sense that colonial structures are still exercising considerable cultural influence on the present moment. Some selected Beur texts focus exclusively on certain historical events of their parents' colonial and anti-colonial memory as "they feel a new urgency about understanding the pastness *or not* of the past, and this urgency is carried over into perceptions of the present and future" (Said 1994a, 6). I argue that the importance of recovering this colonial and anti-colonial memory is strategic for the Beurs to lay the dead corpse of the past to rest and work towards the future. The Beurs attempt to redraw a new map for the history of France in which their post-colonial immigrant parents are seen as historic figures bound to the French imperial past and not as intruders with no relation to their 'host country' and where their descendants would stop being seen as immigrants. The Beurs' deconstruction of

French official monolithic colonial history gives voice to individual narratives in the sense of writing history from the point of view of those who have been written out of this history, the displaced and the excluded, a minority history or counter-narratives to official histories. France has excluded from its official memory the active participation of its colonial subjects in its defence in the First and Second Worlds Wars and other wars. Such deletion compels the Beurs to rebel and retrieve their ancestral voice. The violence of the Algerian war, especially the event of 17th October 1961 marks most of the Beur texts, which links this past violence with the present violence in the *banlieues.* Colonial violence, prejudice and hierarchy are sill exercising strong effects on the life of the youth of the *banlieues.* The Beurs suggest a pluralistic and inclusive approach to historical memory that would contribute in forging alliances and hospitality with the various communities instead of encampment.

Chapter Two

The Ethics and Politics of Hospitality

1- Hospitality: Opening-up to the Face of the Other

(a)- Hospitality and Levinasian Ethics

(b)- Levinasian limitations: "The Alterity Content" of Otherness

2- The Aporia of *the* law and laws of Hospitality

(a)- "We do not know what hospitality is"

(b)- *Pas d'hospitalité*: *the* law and the laws of hospitality

Conclusion

Chapter Two

The Ethics and Politics of hospitality

Je crois qu'en effet l'hospitalité implique, pour l'hôte reçevant et pour l'hôte reçu, d'être d'abord hospitalier à l'autre en soi. Les comportements xénophobes et antihospitaliers peuvent d'ailleurs s'analyser comme ceux de personnes qui ont des difficultés avec l'étranger en eux, avec leur propres fantômes, tandis que ceux qui ont le goût, le talent ou le génie de l'hospitalité sont ceux-là mêmes qui acceptent la multiplicité en eux, qui savent traiter avec l'étranger en eux, sous de multiples formes. Derrida (1999a, 139).

L'hospitalité, c'est la culture même et ce n'est pas une éthique parmi d'autres. En tant qu'elle touche à l'éthos, à savoir à la demeure, au chez-soi, au lieu du séjour familier autant qu'à la manière d'y être, à la manière de se rapporter à soi et aux autres, aux autres comme aux siens ou comme à des étrangers, l'éthique est hospitalité, elle est de part en part co-extensive à l'expérience de l'hospitalité, de quelque façon qu'on l'ouvre ou la limite. Mais pour cette raison même, et parce que l'être-soi chez soi (l'ipséité même) suppose un accueil ou une inclusion de l'autre qu'on cherche à s'approprier, contrôler, maîtriser, selon différentes modalités de la violence, il y a une histoire de l'hospitalité, une perversion toujours possible de La loi de l'hospitalité (qui peut paraître inconditionnelle) et des lois qui viennent la limiter, la conditionner en l'inscrivant dans un droit. Derrida (1997c, 43).

1- Hospitality: Opening-up to the Face of the Other[1]

In his reference to the history of hospitality, Derrida chooses to focus on Western, European traditions as he dwells on the Judaeo-Christian understanding of cities of refuge, which are mentioned in the Bible as a place of refuge for the 'resident alien', or 'temporary settler'. Related to this is the medieval tradition of the city of refuge that opened its doors to all comers (Derrida 1997c, 43-4). Derrida also identifies the cosmopolitan tradition that he claims is common "à un certain stoïcisme grec et à un christianisme paulinien" whose inheritors were the Enlightenment philosophers of whom Kant is the most outstanding with his ideas on cosmopolitan peace and world

[1] Even though in Levinas' *Totalité et Infini*, the occurrence of the word hospitality is rare, Derrida (1997d, 49) claims that Levinas has developed a vocabulary of hospitality, and thus, at the end, hospitality becomes the name "de ce qui s'ouvre au visage, de ce qui plus précisément 'l'accueil'.

citizenship being restricted to the conditions of universal hospitality (ibid., 47).[2] While Derrida dwells on Judaeo-Christian traditions of hospitality as 'Abrahamic religions', he does not mention the long and rich traditions of hospitality in Islam. Even though one can argue that Derrida usually 'inhabits' the structures of the tradition he is most familiar with, one can also establish a link between these traditions on the basis of their proximity. For example, in Islamic culture, the concept of *adab* (which represents the ethos of Islam) has as its root meaning the idea of inviting or gathering together for a banquet. Its secondary meanings manifest the importance of entertaining guests in pre-Islamic Arabia and as part of the Islamic way of life, since, for example, Muslims are supposed to help and entertain the 'children of the road' or those who are strangers, the passers-by, travellers, etc. *Zakat* (charity or alms) should be given to them: "throughout Islamic history, it was considered a religious and social duty to invite travellers into one's home and to take care of them" (Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick 1996, 306).

If France since the Revolution has tended to distinguish itself from other European countries by portraying itself as a country of asylum seekers, the motives behind this opening up policy have never been "purement 'éthiques' au sens de la loi morale ou de la loi du séjour (ethos) ou de l'hospitalité" (Derrida 1997c, 27). An economic resonance has been behind this policy, as the decrease in the birth rate since the middle of the eighteenth century has been behind France's 'liberal' policies in matters of immigration, especially when it is in desperate need of workers. This certainly was clear in the case of the 1960 migration when migrant workers mostly from North Africa were needed. Moreover, the right to asylum in France has only

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[2] Martha C. Nussbaum (1997, 29) traces Kant's debt to ancient Stoic cosmopolitanism, as she claims that ancient Greco-Roman philosophers like Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and Cicero have influenced Kant's notion of cosmopolitanism. The Stoics construct the image of the world citizen or *Kosmopolitês* based on the idea that one dwells in two communities, the local community of one's birth and "the community of human argument and inspiration" which is in Seneca's definition: "truly great and truly common, in which we look neither to this corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our nation by the sun". Though Kant differs from the Stoic philosophers in so many aspects, one can say that his ideas of world cosmopolitanism and hospitality are directly influenced by Stoic philosophy especially in his views of the right to "communal possession of the earth's surface" owned by all human beings and the possibility of "peaceful mutual relations which may eventually be regarded by public law, thus bringing the human race nearer and nearer to a cosmopolitan constitution" (ibid., 37). Kant is also influenced by the Stoics such as Marcus and Cicero when he claims that cosmopolitan law is "a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international law" and also when he claims that "the peoples of the earth have thus

recently become juridical as it was only in 1954 that the definition of the asylum seeker (which was limited to those persecuted because of their defence of liberty) was broadened to include those whose lives were threatened by reason of race. religion or political opinion. The supposed ethical principles of the Enlightenment have been strictly controlled by juridical institutions as the (demographic and economic) interests of the nation states have restricted them (ibid., 27-9).

This absence of ethical considerations is analysed in a number of Derrida's works on hospitality. He criticises what he calls the 'conjugal model', or the paternal, phallogocentric and national model of hospitality that predominates in 'western' notions of hospitality and the relationship to the guest or host, which is based on the idea of the host as the master of the house, or of the nation, the 'father' or the 'boss' who determines the laws of hospitality. Hospitality "s'agit toujours de répondre d'une demeure, de son identité, de son espace, de ses limites, de *l'ethos* en tant que séjour, habitation, maison, foyer, famille, chez-soi" (Derrida 1997a, 133). Derrida reveals the question of the 'where' of hospitality that dramatically questions the supposed essential stability of the 'hearth' and the subject as *'ipse'*, that is why, the use of the threshold, the limit, the step beyond the threshold and the border haunts Derrida's texts. Anne Dufourmantelle (1997, 58) argues, that "elle traduit l'impuissance d'avoir une terre à soi, puisque la question se retourne à l'endroit même d'où l'on se croyait assuré de pouvoir commencer à parler. Elle pose la question du commencement, ou plutôt de l'impossibilité du commencement, d'une origine première incontestée où le logos s'inscrirait."

Drawing on Benveniste's etymological analysis of the term hospitality and its origins in Indo-European languages, Derrida (1997a, 45) argues how *hostis* reveals the strange crossing between enemy and host. This is due to the troubling analogy in their common origin between hostis as host and hostis as enemy and thus between hospitality and hostility or what Derrida calls *hostipitality*: hospitality carrying within it the danger of hostility. If hospitality as a concept carries within it its own contradiction: hostility and if "hospitality is a self-contradictory concept and experience which can only self-destruct (put it otherwise, produce itself as impossible, only be possible on the condition of its possibility) or protect itself from

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entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a

itself, auto-immunise itself in some way, which is to say, *deconstruct* itself--precisely-- in being put into practice" (Derrida 2000, 5), how can we talk about a politics of hospitality? If hospitality carries the danger of hostility: 'hostipitality' as Derrida calls it while he tries to keep us alive to the dangers of fixing the threshold of hospitality and its meanings: a fixation that results in hostility or violence at the moment of welcoming the guest, how can the right to universal hospitality be guaranteed? Can one offer hospitality and remain the master of the house, the master in one's household, one's city, one's nation and one's state? Can we speak of an ethics of hospitality? Or in other words, how can we regulate in a specific juridical and political set of laws the infinite and unconditional hospitality? How can we implement this ethics as a regulatory power behind politics or laws?[3]

To attempt to answer these questions, I shall trace Derrida's deconstruction of the 'conventional' concept of hospitality which disrupts the boundaries of the guest/host and the understanding of the family or national hearth in hospitality and thus opens hospitality to its various 'acceptations'. I shall refer to the Levinasian concept of ethics which has been widely proclaimed recently as the epitome of modern ethical considerations. In *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas* (1997d), Derrida appropriates and goes beyond, in his own deconstructive terms, Levinasian thoughts, especially his concept of the Other and how it interrupts the self-same in hospitality, which reflects the philosophical proximity of the two thinkers. I shall provide another critique of Levinas based on what Robert Bernasconi calls the 'alterity content' of Levinas' concept of the Other, which falls into the same trap it tried to criticise, that of privileging 'western' cultures over other cultures. I advance this rare criticism of Levinas as a philosopher of modern ethics, because first, it is significant to draw on the limits of such ethics towards the non-European Other, and second, because Levinas's privileging of the superiority of Judeo-Christian cultures over other 'inferior' cultures is widely reflected in the French context where the Franco-Maghrebians still suffer from the representation of their ancestors' cultures as being marginal and inferior, as we shall see in Chapter Five of the thesis. Derrida introduces the absolute irreduciblity between the ethics of unconditional hospitality,

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violation of the laws in one part of the world is felt everywhere" (ibid., 39).

[3] The 'certain places' that hospitality and its quasi-synonym 'welcome' point us to, Derrida argues, are the places of the 'birth of the question', places between the ethics, politics and law (Derrida 1997b, 45).

which is based on the absolute welcome of the Other without any restrictions, and the politics of conditional hospitality, which is based on the restrictions of law making. Even though the *hiatus* between the ethics (*the* law) of hospitality and the politics (the laws) of hospitality exists, the two cannot exist separately. This aporia does not mean paralysis, but in fact, it means the primacy of the ethics of hospitality over politics, and thus, keeping alive the danger of hostility in the making of the politics of hospitality by 'political invention' that respects the uniqueness of the Other every time a decision is taken (Derrida 1997d, 147).

(a)- Hospitality and Levinasian Ethics

The name of Emannuel Levinas has been closely associated with ethics in recent philosphical debates though he is accused of ignoring institutions and politics. Levinas suggests in *Totalité et Infini* (1961) that politics must always be criticised from the point of view of the ethical and that the ethical makes a move towards politics whenever there is a third party: law, government, institutions, justice, etc., but this does not mean that the political should lose its ethical foundation: the ethical subject that does not reduce everything to its selfsame. In trying to avoid the trap of falling within the tradition of Western ontology and the way knowledge is constituted through the comprehension and appropriation of the other, Levinas suggests a theory of respecting the Other instead of 'mastering' him/her, that is, a theory of desire that bases itself on infinite separation instead of negation and assimilation.[4] It is a theory of finding a place for the Other or a relationship with the Other beyond the scope of knowledge and mastery. Levinas attempts to change the conventional tradition of the relation to alterity as an appropriation of the same in its totality to a different mode of relation based on respect of the infinity and heterogeneity of the Other. But does Levinas's ethics work differently from the ontology he is criticising? What are the limits of Levinasian ethics?

Levinas identifies hospitality with "le recueillement dans une maison ouverte à Autrui", a recollection as welcome (*accueil*). He claims that "le chez-soi de la demeure" does not mean to close oneself off, but rather a 'desire' towards the transcendence of the other (Derrida 1997d, 163). Levinas recognises that there can

[4] For a detailed analysis, see Robert Young (1990, 13-17).

be no welcome of the other or hospitality without this radical alterity which in turn presupposes 'la séparation infinie'. Therefore, "le chez-soi ne sera donc plus nature ou racine, mais réponse à une errance, phénomène de l'errance qu'il s'arrête" (ibid., 164).

Therefore, hostility towards the other ("l'oubli inhospitalier de la transcendance de l'Autrui") testifies to the very thing it denies, which is transcendence and separation, and therefore hospitality and language (ibid., 168).[5] For Levinas (1961, 283) the "l'unité de la pluralité c'est la paix et non pas la cohérence d'éléments constituants la pluralité"; therefore, plurality as peace is what allow to define plurality as 'la séparation radicale', which is not that 'd'une communauté totale'. Levinas's concept of peace moves at the same time away from and towards Kant whose understanding of peace is purely political (Derrida 1997d, 170).

For Kant (1957, 23), universal hospitality is a condition of world citizenship which is "a supplement to the unwritten code of civil and international law, indispensable for the maintenance of public human rights and hence also of perpetual peace." Therefore, cosmopolitan law, whose scope and form are limited to the conditions of universal hospitality, is not a utopian way of thinking about law but rather, it is a means of transforming national and international law into "a public law of humanity" (David Held 1997, 243). But Kant does not call for limitless hospitality as he restricts hospitality to the right of 'temporary sojourn', a 'right to associate' or to exchange goods and ideas. It is limited to a 'right of visitation' and excludes a 'right of residence' or right to citizenship; the latter should be based on treaties between states (Derrida 1997d, 155).

Kant's universal hospitality as a condition for world peace does not leave any space for any form of ethical consideration as it solely based on the 'legal' or the juridical. In the light of this, Derrida (1997d, 155) accuses Kant of restricting hospitality to state sovereignty, as he defines it as a law: "l'hospitalité universelle y est seulement juridique et politique."[6] Kant limits universal hospitality to a number of juridical

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[5] Levinas (1961, 282) claims in *Totalité et Infini* that "l'essence du langage est amitié et hospitalité".

[6] It is surprising that Derrida does not make any attempt to clarify or even remark in passing on the accusations of inhospitality that Kant has made against the inhabitants of the Barbary Coast and the Bedouins of the Arab tribes (Kant 1957, 21). Both parties are excluded from the laws of hospitality though historically speaking, the piracy of the Barbary Coast was the result of continuous European

and political conditions, (it is first limited only to citizens of states, it is only temporary, etc.) which, though institutional, are based on a common 'natural right' of the possession of the surface of the earth. For Kant there is no 'natural peace', and the state of peace must be 'instituted'. However, as Derrida argues, Kant's peace carries within it 'la trace de la menace' which it wants to break (real or virtual war), thus "contaminant ainsi la promesse par la menace" that is found at the heart of the promise (Derrida 1997d, 158). The institution of peace, thus, carries within it the threat of a warlike state of nature.

Unlike Kant, Levinas introduces the disjunction between the host and the guest, the host becoming the guest of the guest in his/her own home as the home of the other, that is, to be welcomed by the face of the other that one intends to welcome.[7] In *Totalité et Infini* Levinas criticises the 'tyranny of the state' when hospitality becomes part of the state or becomes political because even though this becoming political is a response to the call of the third and a response to an 'aspiration', it still deforms the I and the other and thus introduces 'tyrannical violence'. Politics, therefore, should not be left on its own, because in Levinas's words (1961, 276) "elle les juge [le moi et l'Autre qui l'ont suscitée] selon les règles universelles et, par là même, comme par *contumace.*" In other words, the political renders the face invisible at the moment of bringing it into the space of public phenomenality. Robert Bernasconi (1999b, 79) argues that Levinas's face-to-face relation with the other "provides a basis for an ethical questioning of the political" and "serves as a corrective to the institutions and the laws of political society". To be able to account for the singularity of the other, Levinas clearly distinguishes the third party from the third person so that "my relation to the Other in his or her singularity and my relations to the other Others were conjoined in a single structure" (ibid.). Thus,

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attempts to capture North African coastal cities. As for the Arab Bedouins, it is surprising that their long and rich tradition of hospitality is not recognised in Kant's context nor mentioned in Derrida's text though in another text, Derrida refers to Abdellatif Chaouite's notion of "prophetic hospitality" as linked to the pre-Islamic nomadic ritual (adopted by the Muslims as part of their tradition of hospitality) which offers three days of unconditional hospitality to passers by and travellers after which they have to leave (Derrida 1999a, 105). Derrida fails to address the way Kant links geography (nature) with hospitality (some places are hospitable and some are not) and thus culture with hospitality as non-European cultures are not as hospitable as the European ones.

[7] Derrida (1997d, 173-4-5-6) claims that this peace is neither political nor linked to the State (cosmopolitan), but still Levinas uses Kant's language when speaking about "une paix qui ne doit pas être la paix des morts", but only that of the living. What is needed today in comparing Kant and Levinas, and in regard to the right of refuge in a world of a millions of displaced people, Derrida argues, is the call out for "un autre droit international, une autre politique de l'humanitaire, voire un engagement humanitaire qui se tienne *effectivement* au-delà de l'intérêt des États-nations."

if separation is needed in the face-to-face relation, it is through the third party that one is joined with the Other (ibid., 80). Levinas's purpose in this is to avoid reducing ethics to politics and thus stressing the intersection between the two. Ethics is needed to correct politics though both have conflicting and contradictory demands.

In *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas* (1997d, 49), Derrida reflects on Levinas's *Totalité et Infini* (1961), which he perceives as "un immense traité de l'hospitalité" and in which Levinas insists that the face that must be welcomed, must not be reduced to 'thématisation' ('thematisation') or description, and so must hospitality. Hospitality is opposed to thematisation because it is the welcoming of the other, who cannot be calculated or known, that is, the other is infinite and 'se soustrait au thème' (ibid., 51). Welcoming or receiving in the Levinasian sense implies the act of receiving as ethical relation. Thus, the welcome to come presupposes 'le recueillement' ('recollection') or the "l'intimité de la maison ou le *chez-soi*", it also presupposes feminine alterity.[8] Hospitality for Levinas comes before or precedes property and thus its law dictates that the host who welcomes the invited or received guest is in truth a guest received in his own home. The French meaning of the word *hôte* reflects this breaking of host/guest roles as it means both host and guest. The host becomes the receiver of the hospitality he offers in his own home, which, Derrida (1997d, 79) claims, does not belong to the host: "l'hôte comme *host* est un *guest*. La demeure s'ouvre sur à elle-même, à son 'essence' sans essence, comme *'terre d'asile'*. L'accueillant est d'abord accueilli chez lui. L'invitant est invité par son invité." It is this absolute precedence of the welcome where the master of the house is already a received *hôte*, or a guest in his own home, that would be called 'l'altérité féminine.'[9]

Derrida argues that hospitality resists thematisation because it is 'l'intentionalité' ('intentionality'), it opens as 'intentionality' and thus it cannot be a theme. Intentionality is thus hospitality. The latter is not simply a name for some problem

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[8] Taking into consideration the criticism directed at Levinas' sexist language, Derrida (1997d, 83-4) defends Levinas's choice of 'l'être féminin' which is different from the fact of empirical woman: "L'accueil, origine anarchique de l'éthique, appartient à 'la dimension de féminité' et non à la presence d'un être humain de 'sexe féminin'".

of law or politics or some region in ethics but 'ethicity' itself or the principle of ethics (Derrida 1997d, 49). Through a 'phenomenology of intentionality', one would be able to understand hospitality, but a phenomenology that resists 'thematisation': a form of interruption introduced to phenomenology by the ethics of hospitality, a self interruption that Derrida compares to the interruption of the self by the self as other in hospitality: "cette interruption, la phénoménologie se l'impose à elle-même. La phénoménologie *s'interrompt elle-même.* Cette interruption de soi par soi, si quelque chose de tel est possible, peut ou doit être assumée par la pensée: c'est le discours éthique-- et c'est aussi, comme limite de la thématisation, l'hospitalité" (ibid., 95-6). The idea of interrupting oneself (by oneself as other) is crucial in the understanding of hospitality. This interruption is not imposed but it is 'decided' in the name of ethics.

The welcoming of the other indicates the subjection of one's freedom, but a subjection that instead of depriving the subject of its freedom and 'birth', gives them back; it is a subordination that gives and 'ordains' the 'subjectivity of the subject' as the subject comes to itself through the welcoming of the other, "le Tout-Autre comme Très-Haut" in Levinasian words: "l'accueil du Très-Haut dans l'accueil d'autrui, c'est la subjectivité même" (ibid., 101). Levinas defines subjectivity as hospitality, a relationship with the other but at the same time a 'radical separation', or as Derrida puts it "une séparation sans négation et donc sans exclusion, énergie aphoristique de la déliaison dans l'affirmation éthique" (ibid.).

Levinas perceives the role of ethics to be "that of disturbing my good conscience, not re-establishing it"; which gives way to an ethics based not on "autonomy", but on "heteronomy" (Bernasconi 1990a, 6). "Such an ethics would not be based in a legislative conscience which issues demands that it is in our power to meet and which thus invites the subject to aim for the satisfaction which ensues from fulfilling all its responsibilities"; it is not an ethics of the ought-to-do and does not specify actions that would fufill one's obligations (ibid., 6-7). Bernasconi suggests that Levinas's notion of 'ethical resistance' that is linked with the phrase 'you shall not kill' should be understood in terms of the ethical relation that imposes

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[9] In Klossowski's text "les lois de l'hospitalité", the host becomes the guest of his guest because of the presence of the woman. Derrida argues that the pervertibility which calls for the third (the laws) and at the same time excludes it appears in this text linked to sexual difference (Derrida 1997d, 81).

restrictions on my actions but restrictions that are 'necessities' rather than 'directives'. The idea here is not "the Other possesses a great power" but that "before the Other I lose my power". Levinas does not use the language of duty or virtue which in a way implies that one can gain something if answering the call of the Other, but he chooses to use the language of impossibility in relation to conventional ethics as he claims responsibility belongs "to a subjectivity incapable of closing itself off", "a responsibility from which one is unable to withdraw, just as it is the 'antecedent to my freedom' [..] 'without choice' and 'without prior commitment'" (ibid., 7).

Levinas's goal is not to generate or construct an ethics, but to find the sense of ethics, though he is accused of setting impossible demands and unattainable ideals. He uses 'exorbitant' terms or what Bernasconi calls as 'exclusionary phrases' that have set a whole model of ethical purity, such as "desire without satisfaction", "saying without the said", "love without eros", "gratuitously without worrying about reciprocity", etc. (Bernasconi 1990a, 10). Bernasconi reads these phrases not as Levinas's attempt to establish an ideal state, but as an attempt "to mark the moment which interrupts or disturbs the dominant order, though not by opposing it directly"; thus, "The saying is not opposed to the said; desire is not opposed to need, giving is not opposed to expectation of return...." Levinas's logic of the 'without' seems to imply that "there is no saying without a said, no desire without need, no love without eros, no gift without some thought of reciprocity because, as embodied, we live in a world dominated by the said, need, eros, economics and so on" (ibid.). Therefore, these notion of desire without need and gift without reciprocity are not free of the order which they interrupt but are not reducible to it. Bernasconi calls it an "ethics without ethics" or "ethics against ethics" as Levinas tends to link it with "this saying, this desire and this love" (ibid.).

However, this does not mean that there is not *always* an ethics that is already in place in every specific situation which poses specific demands and which takes different forms depending on the circumstances. Such an ethics that is already in place corresponds to what Levinas calls justice (not simply because the latter is free from the asymmetry characterising 'ethics'). Thus, ethics for him "interrupts the

complacency of any specific ethics. Everything which passes for justice is under suspicion of producing injustice", that is as Bernasconi (1990a, 15) puts it:

> Ethics is suspicious of every specific ethics, every conception of justice where the right thing to do in any instance is set out in advance, as if all one had to do was to follow the rules in an appropriate frame of mind. This does not mean that Levinas is opposed to such ethics. From one direction, the ethics without an ethics also leads to justice, demands it, makes it possible. From another direction, it is only by interrupting the realm of being in which justice arises that ethics makes its enigmatic appearance.

One can claim that Levinas is not a thinker about ethics as distinct from politics, but rather a thinker about the space of the intersection between the "ethics of suspicion and politics, ethics and justice". That is why, there is already a reference to the third in the-face-to-face relation because if one encounters another without reference to others, it would not be an encounter with an Other and it would be a 'dual solitude', 'the society of the couple' or 'eros'. Levinas warns against the danger of general principles which most of the time tend to be the language in which ethics is saturated. In reading Levinas's "Le Pact", one of his Talmudic commentaries, one discovers Levinas's concern about the distinction between "knowledge of the Law as a whole and knowledge of the particular laws", and how the former has been pursued at the expense of the latter (Bernasconi 1990a, 15). Levinas warns against the way general principles can be perverted in the course of their application; he "considers attention to the particular laws to be a corrective to the system of casuistry which arises from concrete application of the general principles embodied in the Law."[10] So even the most 'innocent Law' (the Talmudic Law in Levinas's case) can be subverted in the course of its application and that is where Bernasconi identifies Levinas's suspicion of ethics. Therefore, 'the ethics of suspicion' challeges self-complacency and the claims of rationality since the ethical moment is the moment of suspicion of 'self-preoccupation' that has forgotten the Other (Bernasconi 1990a, 16).

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[10] According to Bernasconi (1990a, 15), Levinas identifies the strength of Talmud's casuistry in studying "the particular case in order to identify the moment when the general principle is in danger of turning into its opposite".

(b)- Levinasian limitations: "The Alterity Content" of Otherness

Is Levinas's account of the encounter with the Other as stranger sufficiently nuanced as to be able to welcome the Other in his or her ethnic identity beyond prejudices that divide ethnic groups? (Bernasconi 1992, 22).

Derrida (1986, 74) claims a certain proximity to Levinas's philosophical ideas. However, he distances himself from some aspects of Levinasian thought.[11] In this case, I will refer only to one aspect of that difference which is Derrida's quarrel with Levinas's notion of the 'absolutely Other' as the Other is always relative or other than the ego. Derrida's point is that "the Other cannot be the Other of the Same except by being itself the same, that is, an ego." Bernasconi (2000, 73) defines the quarrel between Derrida and Levinas as mainly about the appropriate language of saying the Other since Derrida believes that the notion of the 'alter ego' expresses better Levinas' ideas of the 'absolute Other'. Derrida's complaint "Violence et Métaphysique"[12] is about Levinas's being bounded by 'formal logic' in his rejection of the 'alter ego' despite his claim to break its rules. Derrida does not reproach Levinas for failing to recognise that there can be no 'absolute Other', but for being inconsistent in talking about the 'absolute Other' while rejecting the notion of 'alter ego'. Thus, Derrida recognises "the impossibility of translating my relation to the Other into the rational coherence of language" (Bernasconi 2000, 73). In *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (1974) Levinas accepts Derrida's criticism that negativity is not enough to say 'being is Other'; he offers his notion of 'substitution' as an answer to Derrida's questions: "In substitution, my being that belongs to me and not to another is undone, and it is through this substitution that I am not 'another', but 'me'". Bernasconi claims this to be the meaning of Levinas's notion of the "contradictory trope of the-one-for-the-other". Substitution (of the-one-for-the-other) is about "a putting oneself in the place of the Other", or 'the asymmetry' of responsibility, or in Bernasconi's words: "my responsibility for everyone else, including their responsibility" (ibid., 77). 'Substitution' is clearly a response to Derrida's criticism in "Violence et Métaphysique" that there would be

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[11] Simon Critchley (1999, 273-4) provides an analysis of the difference between Derridean and Levinasian thought, especially in terms of their difference in perceiving the notion of the 'brother', the 'feminine' and the question of Israel.

[12] This article is in Derrida's *L'Écriture et la différence* (1967).

no alterity within the ego (*dans le Moi*).[13] Levinas has changed this in *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* when he claims substitution to mean, "the Other is in me and in the midst of my very identification" (ibid., 82). Thus, substitution operates not at the level of the ego (*le moi*), but at the level of the self (*le soi*), which as Bernasconi argues, has enabled Levinas to compare the self to a stranger; thus, crossing the distance that had before separated the Same and the Other. Therefore, "to revert to oneself is not to establish oneself at home, even if stripped of all one's acquisitions. It is to be like a stranger, hunted down even in one's home, contested in one's own identity and one's poverty" (Bernasconi 2000, 78).

In the relation to the other, the subject is a host. This formula, Derrida argues, was later replaced in Levinas's *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (1974) by another one, "le sujet est otage" ("the subject is hostage") (Derrida 1997d, 102). The being-hostage-- like the being-host-- is "la subjectivité du sujet en tant que 'responsabilité pour autrui'" (ibid.). The hostage is a concept marked by *sub*stitution, it actually undergoes this process: It is a subject subjected to it, a subject that submits at the very moment that it presents itself ('here I am') in its responsibility for others. The being hostage of the subject actually means being-in-question, being 'contesté', 'interpellé', 'accusé', or 'mis en cause'. Thus, "l'hôte est un otage en tant qu'il est un sujet mis en question, obsédé (donc assiégé), persécuté, dans le lieu même où il a lieu, là où, émigré, exilé, étranger, hôte de toujours, il se trouve élu à domicile avant d'élire domicile" (ibid., 104).

The plurality among individuals that Levinas puts forward in *Totalité et Infini* does not correspond to a cultural plurality in his work. Bernasconi criticises Levinas in *Totalité et Infini* for focusing on the abstract Other and shows little interest in the concrete Other though he claims the face to be a concretisation of the Infinite. This creates problematic consequences for the way Levinas can deal with the issue of racism (Bernasconi 2000, 82).

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[13] Bernasconi (2000, 82) argues that Levinas has also been criticised for his notion of the Other by Francis Jacques and Paul Ricoeur who, according to Bernhard Waldenfels, misrepresent Levinas's work by setting him as the inverse of Husserl's ideas of Otherness. Bernasconi argues that for Waldenfels "The Other is not for Levinas a negative figure of the I, but a figure of excess that breaks up our thinking."

It is true as Bernasconi (1992, 6) argues that "had Levinas identified the stranger as literally a foreigner, one whose country of origin is other than my own, he would have neglected the disruptive sense of being a stranger and reduced the term to a sociological category. And yet there are still questions to be raised about Levinas's apparent exclusion of the encounter between cultures from the dimension of alterity". Bernasconi raises an important issue here in relation to the Levinasian concept of otherness and its "alterity content" as he argues that Levinas refuses to apply the discourse of alterity to cultural or ethnic designations. This refusal is made bluntly clear in the course of an interview with Levinas in 1982 in the aftermath of the massacres of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Chatila (ibid.). Identifying the Other in this case was raised in a concrete historical and political context, but when Levinas was asked whether "'the Other' of the Israeli was not 'above all the Palestinian'", Levinas refused to adopt this suggestion.[14] When Levinas talks about "the Other is what myself am not", he did want it to be seen in cultural, religious, national or racial terms.[15]

The question here is whether the notion of the *alterity content* of the other can be avoided when one writes of the other and whether other forms of difference especially ethnic difference have an *alterity content.* [16] Bernasconi is very critical of Levinas's debt to Husserl's "Vienna Lecture", which far from being a document against European colonisation as Levinas claims, is actually loaded with notions of Enlightenment's teleological history of humanity that believes in the superiority of Western culture and civilisation (ibid., 11). Levinas (1972, 56; 1987a, 101) even went as far as adopting Husserl's concepts in answering the question of how to judge cultures as his claim that Western culture was able to 'understand' 'particular cultures' which could never understand themselves poses two serious problems: one,

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[14] Bernasconi (1992, 7) argues that it is true that on this occasion Levinas had missed the chance to intervene in the Arab-Israeli conflict by "disturbing the way the lines had been drawn between them and by introducing the idea that there might even be special ethical obligations to the Palestinian", but provisionally Levinas was trying to look beyond ethnic categories.

[15] Though Bernasconi (1992, 7-8) argues that Levinas has applied it to sexual difference and he was charged with writing from a man's point of view as he had initially made femininity as an alterity content of Otherness.

[16] This is not to suggest that "Levinas's Other is a Palestinian *because* Levinas is a Jew, any more than my Other is poor *because* I am rich. Just as it is the need of the Other, in the face-to-face relation, enables me to discover myself as rich, so it might be said that in the face of the victim I discover myself as an oppressor. [...] It may be true that in a world governed by racism one cannot evoke the encounter between White and Black or between Gentile and Jew without recalling the deep effects of persistent persecution, but that does not exhaust the meaning of ethnicity" (Bernasconi 1992, 8).

it "locates in the West a privileged culture that exemplifies a direction or sense that is allegedly prior to culture and history" and the other is that Levinas not only accepted without hesitation that there is "an identity to Western culture" but also he mentioned the "generosity of Western thought". Being a Jew who had suffered persecution at first hand in Eastern Europe and at the hands of the Nazis, this seems strange. However, this may be because Levinas does not consider Judaism as the Other of Western culture as the latter is perceived by him as both Greek and Jewish and that the West is superior in understanding other cultures (Bernasconi 1992, 12). Considering that Levinas actually shows in *Totalité et Infini*, as Bernasconi puts it, "the connection between the dominance within Western philosophy of the 'comprehension of being' and the concept of totality, on the one hand, and totalitarianism, the tyranny of imperialist domination, on the other", it seems inconsistent on Levinas's part to privilege Western culture and its power of appropriating and exploiting other cultures to its own use. In fact, "Western philosophy still tends to understand all thought in its own terms, as prefiguring it or falling short of it, but not as challenging it" (ibid.). Levinas knew the difficulty of the survival of minority cultures and their attempt to negotiate with the dominant culture without losing their own; his translation of Talmudic ideas into modern idioms was an attempt to respond to that difficulty which in a way contrasts with his claim about the generosity of Western culture. He even warns against the dominant culture's use of the language of strangerhood to 'comfort' itself, so even though there is a vibrant minority culture next to it, it remains ignorant of it and satisfies itself with few 'summary notions' that can keep, in Levinas's own words, "from asking itself questions about the secret of human beings it declared strangers in order to account for their strangeness."[17] Therefore, Western culture remains unchallenged by the 'stranger' and "it regards the stranger as a barbarian who has nothing to say precisely because he or she cannot speak 'Greek', cannot speak the language of the University" (Bernasconi 1992, 13).

Levinas's 'European complacency' is clear when he advocates pluralism in terms of the 'multiplicity of human beings' but at the same time retracts it when it comes to the question of the multiplicity of cultures, which are not just Greek and Jewish. He instead confirmed in a 1982 interview the "excellence of Europe" and its cultural

[17] Levinas as cited in Bernasconi (1992, 13).

mastery.[18] Another shocking failure of Levinas to recognise other cultures (and thus privilege only the Greek and the Judaic) was in the course of an interview in which he was asked about the concept of ethics as 'first philosophy' and whether "it is accorded a higher value over ontology", and his reply was that "I always say--but in private-- that the Greeks and the Bible are all that is serious in humanity. Everything else is dancing."[19] For Levinas (even though the Jews were considered the outcasts of Western society), Judaism is part of the West which consists of the unity of philosophy and the Bible, the conjunction of Greek and Jew and thus all other cultures are reduced to Folklore and 'local colour'. Levinas's privileging of Western culture is clearly at the expense of non-western ones.[20] Bernasconi (1992, 15) rightly raises these important questions:

> First, does not Levinas give the impression of being too comfortable with terms like "the West" and "Western philosophy" for a thinker who has set himself against totalizing? Secondly, does not any attempt to approach the Other as outside of culture, including this "humanism of the other man, not repeat the violence, long since exposed, of a humanism that reduces the other to nothing more than a man, thereby depriving the Other of his or her cultural identity"? Is abstract humanism not the contemporary form of Western ethnocentrism, sustained by its tendency to define and measure the humanity of man in terms of approximation to a European model? In this way is it not found to be complicitous with the racism it is supposed to contest?

Though Levinas dismisses 'ethnic difference' as being relevant in his definition of the-face-to-face encounter with the Other, the issue of 'ethnicity' haunts his work and it is much clearer in his definition of what it means to be a Jew (ibid., 16). Levinas's definitions of 'Jewish identity' is strongly present in his Talmudic writing where he attempts to universalise Judaism and free the term 'Jew' of any ethnic designations: "Every one is a little Jewish, and if there are men on Mars, one would find some Jews there" (cited in Bernasconi 1992, 17). When Levinas's reference to Judaism appears to make his work ethnic, he immediately gives it a universalist meaning (especially as Levinas attempts to translate the wisdom of the Bible into

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[18] Bernasconi (1992, 14) also states the case of another interview with Levinas in 1986 in which Levinas confirmed the same idea of Europe's superiority.

[19] Cited in Bernasconi (1992, 14). Levinas (1987b, 136) expressed his Eurocentricism in another instance when he claimed that "Je dis parfois: L'homme, c'est l'Europe et la Bible, et tout le reste peut s'y traduire."

[20] This privileging is more striking in Levinas's interviews rather than in his philosophical texts, but they consolidate what Levinas had already stated in *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (1972).

the Greek language or the logos, the language of the University) that is found both in his philosophical and confessional writing.[21] But isn't this form of universalisation a projection of the universalism of European humanity with all its hierarchical implications of who is defined as having the universal self? Levinas privileges Judaism over Western culture (though he thinks of Judaism as a component of Western culture) because he considers its universalism as retaining a certain particularity. His discussion of universalism is a response to the 'dangers' in Bernasconi's words of 'segregation' and 'integration': "For Levinas, they are the choice between annihilation and assimilation. Loyalty to a Jewish culture closed to dialogue condemns the Jews 'to the ghetto and to physical extermination', whereas 'admission into the city makes them disappear into the civilisation of their hosts'" (Bernasconi 1992, 18). But even though Judaism is a component of Western culture, the Jew was seen by Western Europeans "not just as a stranger, but as the archetypical alien" (ibid., 22). Levinas rarely approaches Judaism from this standpoint though he refers in the introduction of his Talmudic readings to the tendency to declare Jews "strangers in order to account for their strangeness" as a way of avoiding seeking a more intimate knowledge. Nor does Levinas

> negotiate the dialectic whereby one is a stranger to oneself because one belongs to a culture which constitutes one as other. And yet [Bernasconi argues] this alienation would seem to identify, albeit in very different ways, the fundamental experience of being Jewish among Gentiles, or being Palestinian in Israel, or being one of the colonised among colonialists, or being Black in a White's man world, or being a woman in a man's world. (Bernasconi 1992, 22-3).

Bernasconi is critical of the way Levinas had universalised the 'Jewish condition'[22] for even though it is a human condition, it is experienced differently by different ethnic groups. This suggests the limits of translation unrecognised by the Greek logos, the 'universal language' used by Levinas: as it seems that Levinas "allows himself the luxury of the promise of this universal language of the West" which has actually made him equate being human with being Western (ibid.).

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[21] It is often assumed that Levinas's philosophical texts do not leave space for politics, but Bernasconi argues that the confessional writings with their "Zionist 'aspirations'" have a different perspective (see Bernasconi 1992, 25).

[22] "Levinas identifies as the Bible's 'permanent saying' the fact that the 'uncondition' of being strangers and slaves in the land of Egypt brings man close to his neighbour" (Bernasconi 1992, 23).

Bernasconi's criticism of Levinas is not about his understanding of Judaism but about the reference to Western triumphalism in his discussions. Levinas still relies on the classic Enlightenment idea of what judges cultures, which is the idea of the West and which actually determines the perception of the identity or non-identity of the Other as 'neighbour' and 'stranger'. In other words, Levinas allows his 'humanism of the other man' to be contaminated by a more classical humanism that subordinates other cultures. Bernasconi attempts to draw Levinas's attention to the limits of his thoughts especially when he succumbs to the 'humanism of the arrogant' that he criticises. Thus, he recognises a possible move 'beyond universalism' by acknowledging the alterity-content of other cultures. It is this inferiorisation that I shall partly address in chapter Five where I argue that the Beur protagonists suffer from the stigma of their parents' non-European cultures which is represented to them as inferior and unworthy and thus a hindrance to their 'integration' into French society.

Even though Levinas excludes ethnicity at the moment of the encounter with the Other, while thinking explicitly of that encounter in relation to Judaism, his thoughts have contributed to questioning the West's hegemony.[23] Even if he tends to judge other cultures in terms of their proximity to his own, he still acknowledges the interruption by the other of one's complacency. However, it is crucial to consider as Bernasconi puts it: "what disturbs the self-evidence that supports my unquestioned attachment to my own cultural values is not just the Other as such. It is the Other in his or her specific cultural difference from that which presents a direct challenge to my own cultural adherences and calls me to respond without any certainty of the appropriate way in which to respond or the idiom in which to do so" (Bernasconi 1992, 26-7).

The arrival of the third, who "sans attendre, vient affecter l'expérience du visage dans le face-à-face", raises the issue of justice or justice as "cette présence même du tiers" (Derrida 1997d, 61). The third for Levinas, is the beginning of justice, which is "à la fois comme droit et au-delà du droit, dans le droit au-delà du droit" as it is a singular welcome of the uniqueness of the Other (ibid.). Justice in the Levinasian

[23] Bernasconi (1988, 2) argues that Derrida's critique of Levinas in "Violence and Metaphysics" is based on his insistence on Levinas's dependence on Western ontology in his attempt to escape from it or to break with it.

sense transcends the juridical and the political. The third or justice is 'necessary' to protect against "le vertige de la violence éthique même" because ethics is doubly threatened simultaneously or alternatively to undergo or exercise such violence (ibid., 66). However, the aporia or double constraint is already there as the third, in its juridico-political role as a mediating, protecting third and perverts the ethical desire. It is this aporia between the ethical and the political that I shall address in the next section.

2- The Aporia of *the* law and laws of Hospitality

Sans cesse nous guetterra ce dilemme entre, d'une part, l'hospitalité inconditionnelle qui passe le droit, le devoir au même la politique et, d'autre part, l'hospitalité circonscrite par le droit et le devoir. L'une peut toujours corrompre l'autre, et cette pervertibilité reste irréductible. Elle ***doit*** *le rester.*
Derrida (1997a, 119).

[...] The word for "hospitality" is a Latin word (Hospitalitas, a word of Latin origin, of a troubled and troubling origin, a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, "hostility", the undesirable guest [hôte] which it harbours as the self-contradiction in its own body... Derrida (2000, 3).

(a)- "We do not know what hospitality is"

Derrida argues that the experience of hospitality cannot be thematised: "We do not know what hospitality is" because it can never be determined or fixed and because 'welcoming', 'accepting' and 'inviting' someone to one's home, city or nation is usually understood as remaining the master of the house, or allowing the guest to cross a threshold that is already determined.[24] By insisting that, "We do not know what hospitality is", Derrida wants to open up hospitality to its various 'acceptations' or meanings. Acceptation is a word that lives at the heart of the discourse of hospitality since it emphasises the idea of welcoming and receiving: 'accepto' or 'recipio', (Latin words) receive and welcome always in a new way or 'anew' or 'the readiness to repeat, to renew, to continue'. But the act of receiving, giving and

[24] "A threshold that is determinable because it is self-identical and indivisible, a threshold the line of which can be traced (the door of a house, human household, family or house of god, temple or general hospital, hospice, hospital or poor-house, frontier or a city, or a country, or a language, etc.)" (Derrida 2000, 6).

welcoming into one's home is dictated by 'the internal law of the host' which imposes its own acceptations of the meanings of concepts on the guest. By using the expression "We do not know what hospitality is", Derrida shows the necessity of the "law of iterability at the heart of every law of hospitality" (Derrida 2000. 7).

The first acceptation of the expression "We do not know what hospitality is" is that the concept of hospitality cannot lend itself to 'objective knowledge'. Even though we have some pre-comprehension of what hospitality may mean, we can never fix or stabilise that pre-comprehension into a consistent and objectifiable knowledge because of the absolute 'Otherness' of the guest. Derrida (2000, 8) puts it this way:

> Hospitality, if there is such a thing, is not only an experience in the most enigmatic sense of the word, which appeals to an act and an intention beyond the thing, object, or present being, but is also an intentional experience which proceeds beyond knowledge towards as absolute stranger, as unknown, where I know that I know nothing of him.

Unconditional hospitality means welcoming the other without knowing his/her identity, potential for work, insertion and adaptation (Derrida 1999a, 130). The aporia that imposes itself here is that, on the one hand, hospitality is offered to the other as a stranger, but on the other hand, "if one determines the other as stranger, one is already introducing the circles of conditionality that are family, nation, state, and citizenship. Perhaps, there is an other who is still more foreign than the one whose foreignness is in relation to language, family, or citizenship" (Derrida 2000, 8). Hospitality can not be known or determined as a concept because the Other/guest cannot lend him/herself to 'objective knowledge' as the Other is always absolutely other (and thus "hospitality gives itself to thought beyond knowledge"). Thus, the laws of hospitality have to be invented and regulated around the uniqueness of the other (l'autre [qui] est tout autre)[25] in what Derrida calls "la parole politique": "il faut que dans chaque cas, moi même, j'invente seul devant tel terre, tel autre, tel hôte, la meilleur invitation possible" (Derrida 1999b, 102).

In reading Pierre Klossowski's *Roberte ce Soir* (1953), Derrida claims that the master of the house looks to the stranger guest as a liberator, an emancipator: thus,

the stranger is not only invited to 'come' and 'enter' but 'come within me' and 'occupy me' (Derrida 1997a, 109). It is as if the stranger/guest is the one who 'held the keys'. What Derrida is drawing on here is the idea that the guest/foreigner liberates the host from his/her 'ipseity', from his/her 'subjectivity'. This idea of the 'foreigner', the exiled being at home in the other's place deconstructs the duality of the notions of self and other and thus as Derrida tries to show that "le proche ne suppose pas l'ailleurs mais une autre figure du proche" (Dufourmantelle 1997, 52). Derrida argues that this is always the situation of the 'foreigner', that of the 'liberator' and in politics too: "celle de venir comme un législateur faire la loi et libérer le peuple ou la nation en venant du dehors, en entrant dans la nation ou dans la maison, dans le chez-soi qui le laisse entrer après avoir fait appel à lui" (ibid., 109).

The second 'acceptation' of hospitality is that it is not 'a present being' because it proclaims itself as a law, a duty, a right or an obligation; it is '*a devoir-être*' rather than '*un être* or *un étant*' (Derrida 2000, 8). Hospitality destabilises notions of the host and guest as the host can only accomplish his task as a host only when s/he becomes a guest in her/his own home (or 'of the becoming-invited, of the one inviting'). Drawing on the etymological implications of the word host in French *hôte*, which is derived from the word *otage* that means hostage, the host, the one inviting, becomes the hostage of the one invited (ibid.). However, in the France of today, it is the 'guests' who are held hostage as they are assigned a specific place and space in society, that of 'eternal foreigners': "l'hôte est un otage en tant qu'il est un sujet mis en question, obsédé (donc assiégé), persécuté, dans le lieu même où il a lieu, la où, émigré, exilé, étranger, hôte de toujours, il se trouve élu à domicile avant d'élire domicile" (Derrida 1999b, 53).

The third acceptation of hospitality (the imperative of whose law is paradoxical) is that of the threshold, which remains to be thought, or the threshold as the 'not yet', "the threshold is what has not yet been crossed". This is linked to the fourth acceptation which is to do with the 'double bind' or the meeting of hospitality with aporia in the sense that the host is supposed to offer the guest a route to cross the

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[25] Derrida (1999a, 130) claims that "dans l'hypothese de l'hospitalité pure, je veux offrir ma maison, mon chez moi, ma langue, ma nation, mais il faut que j'offre au delà de ce que je peux donner à quelqu'un qui absolument autre est sans limite."

threshold, but hospitality stands on the threshold and cannot be crossed, because once crossed, conditions are imposed and hospitality is perverted. Aporia, therefore, is the non-road, the non-passage or the barred way, but it is not negative because "without the repeated enduring of this paralysis in contradiction, the responsibility of hospitality, hospitality tout court-- when we do not yet know and will never know what it is -- would have no chance of passing, of coming, of making or letting welcome" (Derrida 2000, 10-13). The host, generally seen as male, is commonly understood in western culture as the one who offers hospitality but must be the master of the house or "must be assured of his sovereignty over the space and goods he offers or opens to the other as stranger" (ibid., 14). In other words, the act of welcoming the guest to one's home is conditioned by the guest's observance of the rules of hospitality as imposed by the being-at-home of the host. However, the law of hospitality is self-limited and self-contradictory since hospitality governs the threshold. For hospitality to exist, we need a door to cross, but once we have the door, there is no hospitality because it means that someone controls the keys to the house and thus determines the conditions to hospitality. This is the aporia of hospitality that remains on the threshold because there must be a threshold, but once the threshold is established, there is no longer any hospitality and that is what Derrida recognises as the gap between the hospitality of 'invitation' (the common understanding of 'hospitality') and hospitality of 'visitation', or the welcoming of the unexpected, uninvited guest.

(b)- *Pas d'hospitalité*: *the* law and the laws of hospitality

In "*Pas d'hospitalité*"[26] which in French means both: step of hospitality and no hospitality, Derrida (1997a, 71) plays on the meaning of 'pas' as a movement of transgression and digression, since the 'uncrossable' threshold of 'unconditional hospitality' commands that all the laws that condition hospitality should be transgressed in the name of *the* law of absolute hospitality. In other words, *the* law of unconditional hospitality that receives and welcomes the unexpected guest without juridical conditions commands the transgression of the laws of hospitality, which in their turn challenge *the* law of unconditional hospitality by limiting and

[26] A title of a section in Derrida (1997a, 71).

conditioning hospitality. Derrida (1997a, 71) puts this *hiatus* between *the* law and the laws of hospitality this way:

> Tout se passe comme si l'hospitalité était l'impossible: comme si *la* loi de l'hospitalité définissait cette impossibilité même, comme si on ne pouvait que la transgresser, comme si *la* loi de l'hospitalité abolue, *inconditionnelle*, hyperbolique, comme si l'impératif catégorique de l'hospitalité commandait de transgresser toutes *les* lois de l'hospitalité, à savoir les conditions, les normes, les droits et les devoirs qui s'imposent aux hôtes et aux hôtesses, à ceux ou à celles qui donnent comme à ceux ou à celles qui reçoivent l'accueil. Réciproquement, tout se passe comme si *les* lois de l'hospitalité consistaient, en marquant des limites, des pouvoirs, des droits et des devoirs, à défier et à transgresser *la* loi de l'hospitalité, celle qui commanderait d'offrir à *l'arrivant* un accueil sans condition.

'Une antinomie non dialectisable' marks the relationship between *the* law of unconditional hospitality and the laws of conditional hospitality and defines the juridical limits of hospitality. This is the aporia, the antinomy of hospitality, which opposes *the* law of hospitality (with its 'universal singularity') to a plurality of laws marked by a process of division and differentiation. *The* law of hospitality or ethics, however, is above the laws or politics: "*La* loi est au-dessus *des* lois"; thus, it is 'illégale', 'transgressive', and 'hors la loi'. However, *the* law of unconditional hospitality needs the laws in order for it to be effective: it is a 'constitutive' demand as *the* law "risquerait d'être abstraite, utopique, illusoire, et donc de se retourner en son contraire" (ibid., 75). Therefore, in order for *the* law to work, that is ethics, it needs the bodies of laws that actually threaten, deny, interrupt or even corrupt it, but this pervertibility is essential, irreducible and necessary. The same can be said of conditional laws, which would cease to be laws of hospitality if they were not guided by the ethics of unconditional hospitality. Therefore, *the* law and the laws are inseparable though contradictory and antinomic: "ils s'incorporent au moment de s'exclure, ils se dissocient au moment de s'envelopper l'un l'autre..." (ibid.). Derrida, therefore, stresses the two regimes of the law of hospitality: the unconditional or ethical, on the one hand, and the conditional and juridico-political. Unconditional hospitality or ethics is perverted by conditional laws and politics, but this pervertibility is necessary for the perfection of the laws that each time in a unique way respect the singularity of the other. The possibility of ethics does not mean getting rid of pervertibility but rather it means the impossibility of controlling, limiting or fixing through rules and laws a threshold which in Derrida's words should exceed any tenable knowledge or 'toute procédure réglementée' so that it

would be open or open itself "à cela même qui risque toujours de se pervertir" (such as "le Bien, l'Amour, la Foi, -- et la perfectibilité"). This "possible hospitalité au pire", Derrida (1997d, 69) argues is necessary in order for 'la bonne hospitalité' to have a chance: "la chance de laisser venir l'autre, le *oui* de l'autre non moins que le *oui* à l'autre".

The unconditional law of hospitality must be freed from the economy of debt or duty, it is 'une loi sans impératif', order or duty, it is 'une loi sans loi' (Derrida 1997a, 77). Unconditional hospitality (with its unconditional welcome of the absolute unexpected other) is crucial in opening up a politics of the laws of hospitality and keeping them alive to its ideal so that hospitality will renew itself each time it is faced with the uniqueness and singularity of the new arrival:

> La loi, au singulier absolu, contredit les lois au pluriel, mais chaque fois c'est la loi *dans* la loi, et chaque *hors la loi* dans la loi. C'est ça, la chose si singulière qu'on appelle *les* lois de l'hospitalité. Pluriel étrange, grammaire plurielle de *deux pluriels différents à la fois*. L'un de ces deux pluriels dit *les* lois de l'hospitalité, les lois conditionnelles, etc. L'autre pluriel dit l'addition antinomique, celle qui ajoute à l'unique et singulière et absolument seule grande Loi de l'hospitalité, à *la* loi de l'hospitalité, à l'impératif catégorique de l'hospitalité, *les* lois conditionnelles. Dans ce deuxième cas, le pluriel est fait de Un (ou de Une) + une multiplicité, tandis que dans le premier cas, c'était seulement la multiplicité, la distribution, la différenciation. Dans un cas, on a Un + n; dans l'autre n + n + n, etc. (Derrida 1997a, 75-7).

The host's behaviour, seen by Derrida as the condition of all ethical and juridical responsibility, should not be dedicated to anything (*par rien*) that will transform it to a set of laws applied mechanically; the 'language of hospitality' must be 'poetic', it implies inventing *my* very own law: "il faut que je parle ou que j'écoute l'autre là où, d'une certaine manière, le langage se réinvente". And yet, *I* will offer signs of a welcome in a given language: "je n' invente pas la langage. Mais encore faut il que chaque fois que je dis à l'autre: 'viens, entre, fais comme chez toi', que mon acte d'accueil soit comme le premier dans l'histoire, soit absolument singulier" (Derrida 1999b, 113). It is the aporia of addressing the un-expected guest's singularity, in a poetic language for the unprecedented event of hospitality and the inscription of this poetics in a politics, that is, conditions, laws and structures of receiving. Responsibility in this sense consists not of inventing an 'unprecedented cry' or

repeating and applying the laws, but of finding each time a 'unique compromise' between the two poles. Derrida puts it this way: "citoyen français, il me faut trouver un lien entre, d'une part, ce système de normes constitué par la langue, la constitution française, les lois et les moeurs, la culture française et, d'une part, l'accueil de l'étranger avec sa langue, sa culture, son habitus, etc." (ibid., 114).

Conclusion

Derrida emphasises the difference between unconditional hospitality or ethics that is offered to the other before they are identified as 'legal subjects', before they are named or subjected to nomination ("la question du sujet et du non comme hypothèse de la génération"), and conditional hospitality or politics with its laws and conditions that restrict unconditional hospitality.[27]

Conditional hospitality, as Benveniste describes it, requires the pact or '*xenia*' ('the contract or collective alliance of that name') as there could be no *xenos* (foreigner) outside the *xenia* or the exchange with a group or a line of descent. In Derrida's words, Benveniste inscribes the *xenos* in the *xenia* (Derrida 1997a, 31-3). The Indo-European history of hospitality is dominated by the logic of the *oikonomic* or what Derrida claims to be the law of the household, domestic lineage and family and where the master of the house is the husband, the master of the wife and family (Derrida 2000, 13).

We are moving here between the *etymological kinship* of the subject as host and the subject or *ipseity* as hostage. Levinas stresses the genealogy that links ipseity, the self or the I to the semantics of hospitality, the host or hosti-pet, that is, the guest as the master of the house where "the significations of the self, mastery, possession, and power are intertwined in a very tight web, in proximity to the hostility of the hostis..." (ibid., 57). Power (despotic sovereignty and the virile mastery of the master of the house) is nothing other than 'ipseity' itself (ibid., 15). I have raised questions that are crucial in pointing to the Levinasian gap and the way it has pointed to the-face-to-face encounter at another level from that of culture, which

[27] See Derrida (1997a, 31) and (1999b, 101-2).

seems to ignore, as Bernasconi states, the possibility that one of the ways that the Other may challenge the self is by calling into question 'my cultural identity' (Bernasconi 1992, 25). It is the idea of privileging the West that seems to keep Levinas from suggesting an encounter between cultures at the level of alterity (ibid., 25).

In answering the question of the 'foreigner'[28] (primarily through a reading of Plato's dialogues in *The Apology of Socrates*), Derrida (1997a, 17) argues that the foreigner (*xenos*) disrupts or contests the power of the master of the house or that of the *paternal logos*. The question of the foreigner, thus, is a question "[de] la guerre interne au *logos*", it is that of "l'altercation du père (*logos*) et du parricide" as the foreigner is the one who questions and sets out to question the *logos*. Thus, the question of the foreigner as a question of hospitality is linked with the question of being: "l'Étranger porte et pose la question redoutable, il se voit au prévoit, il se sait d'avance mis en question par l'autorité paternelle et raisonnable du *logos*. L'instance paternelle du *logos* s'apprête à le désarmer, à le traiter de fou..." (ibid., 17).

The pervertible or perverting nature of the law of hospitality implies that absolute hospitality should break with hospitality as a pact or a right or duty as the former means the welcoming not only of the foreigner but of the absolute, unknown other. Thus, it means "que je lui *donne lieu,* que je le laisse venir, que je le laisse arriver et avoir lieu dans le lieu que je lui offre, sans lui demander ni réciprocité (l'entrée dans un pacte) ni même son nom" (Derrida 1997a, 29). [29]

The distinction introduced in Derrida's works between, on the one hand, unconditional hospitality or 'absolute desire for hospitality' and on the other, conditional hospitality or the rights and duties that condition hospitality ('a law, a conditional ethics, a politics') is not a distinction that 'paralyses' hospitality. In fact, it aims at directing our attention to find an 'intermediate schema' between the two, a radical heterogeneity, but also indissociability in the sense of calling for the other or

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[28] Derrida puts it as "Question d'étranger: venue de l'étranger" which plays on the double meaning of "l'étranger" which means both "the foreigner" and "coming from abroad" (Dufourmantelle 1997, 11).
[29] In another text, Derrida (1999b, 103) puts it this way "Quelqu'un est chez lui, à sa maison, sa culture, sa langue; il invite quelqu'un d'autre à s'installer, mais à la condition que "chez lui" reste "chez lui", sa langue reste sienne, sa culture, sa république aussi... est-ce cela l'hospitalité? Ou n'est

prescribing the other. In other words, to find a renewed way, or a way that invents itself all the time, to offer unconditional hospitality in a "determined, limitable-- in a word, a calculable-- right or law" with all the implications of aporias and antinomies that this operation entails.

It is the question of intervening in the conditional hospitality in the name of the unconditional, an intervention that, though surrounded by contradictions and aporias, recognises the need of 'perverting' the laws for the sake of 'perfecting' them.[30] The relation between ethics and politics is necessary and must exist: "*il faut se rapport*, il doit exister, il faut déduire une politique et un droit de l'éthique" and this 'deduction' is crucial in order to determine the 'better' or the 'less bad'.[31] However, even though ethics commands politics and law, "le *contenu* politique ou juridique ainsi assigné demeure en revanche indéterminé , toujours à déterminer au-delà du savoir et de toutes présentation, de tout concept et de toutes intuition possibles, singulièrement, dans la parole et responsabilité *prises* par chacun, dans chaque situation, et depuis une analyse chaque fois unique-- unique et infinie, unique mais *a priori* exposée à la substitution, unique et pourtant générale, interminable malgré l'urgence de la décision" (Derrida 1997d, 199). In the light of this, *the decision to be taken* must remain 'heterogeneous' to the different and various calculations that condition it and that can be achieved through what Derrida calls 'political invention' that respects the irreducibility of the other (ibid.).

In the next chapter, we will reveal how the exclusion of those perceived as the Other is engraved on the Western concept of democracy. We will focus on Derrida's opening of the issue of democracy to question and how it is based on 'androcentric' axioms that exclude the 'Other'. The aim is to uncover the hegemony of such exclusion through a close reading of the canonical philosophical concepts of democracy and through opening the question of friendship and fraternity in relation

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pas plutôt l'ouverture à la "visitation", à l'arrivée de cet autre qui n'est pas invité, pas attendu et qui débarque sans que j'aie preparé aucune structure d'accueil?"

[30] Derrida (1997a, 133-7) refers to the story of Lot and his daughters as the great founding scene of Abrahamic hospitality and an example of how *the* law of hospitality is placed above a certain 'ethics' or morality. The story stresses how Lot 'offered' two of his virgin daughters to the people of Sodom in order to protect his guests from being abused. Besides stressing Lot's ultimate sacrifice of his daughters to protect hospitality, this raises gender issues and the exchange of women in hospitality or hospitality as a phallogocentric practice.

[31] Drawing on Levinas, Derrida (1997d, 198-9) claims that "jusque dans son nature *'hypocrite'*, la *'civilisation politique'* reste 'meilleure' que la barbarie".

to the 'Other'. His pledge or hypothesis, as he calls it, is to search for a possibility of 'democracy to come' that would be hospitable to the alterity of the other and that would eradicate from its roots the 'homo-fraternal' orientation.

Chapter Three

Reading of *Politiques de L'Amitié:* Towards Democracy-to-Come, Towards Hospitality-to-Come

1- French Republicanism and Exclusive Fraternity

2- Derrida Reading the Canon: The Greek "Genealogical Condition"

3*- Schmittian Political Determinism versus Nietzsche's *Perhaps

4- "France, Enfranchisement, Fraternity"

Conclusion

Chapter Three

Reading of *Politiques de L'Amitié* (1994): Towards Democracy-to-Come, Towards Hospitality-to-Come

> *Est-il possible de penser et de mettre en oeuvre la démocratie, ce qui garderait encore le vieux nom de démocratie, en y déracinant ce que toutes ces figures de l'amitié (philosophique et religieuse) y prescrivent de fraternité, à savoir de famille ou d'ethnie androcentrée? Est-il possible, en assumant une certaine mémoire fidèle de la raison démocratique et de la raison tout court, je dirai même des Lumières d'une certaine Aufklärung (laissant ainsi ouvert l'abîme qui s'ouvre encore aujourd'hui sous ces mots), non pas de fonder, là où il ne s'agit sans doute plus de fonder, mais d'ouvrir à l'avenir, ou plutôt au "viens" d'une certaine démocratie?* (Derrida 1994, 339).

Since "l'affaire Dreyfus"[1], a tradition has been established by which French intellectuals claim to be the protectors of the conscience of the Republican tradition, and thus, the belief that by the involvement of the intellectuals, the concept of the Republic will never be reduced to a mere system of government, but will rather become "a way of life together in 'la Cité'[2], that is inseparable from the moral doctrine founded on the Declaration of Human Rights and the Citizen" (Michel Winock 1992, 132). The Dreyfus affair was the first example of a tradition that was to follow in twentieth century France, that is, "the involvement of intellectuals in public life as a means of protecting (and, where possible, consolidating) the political and cultural achievements of the Republic" (Sudhir Hazareesingh 1994, 86). The Dreyfus affair revealed at that time the tension that would continue till the present moment in France between two systems of values. One defended by the 'intellectuals' and represents the defence of universal values such as justice, compassion, truth, etc.,

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[1] In 1894, Captain Dreyfus, of Jewish origin, was condemned for spying for the Germans. He was imprisoned until 1906 when he was declared innocent and thus integrated into the French Army. In this affair, many voices were raised against the government especially, those of French intellectuals, such as Emile Zola (Whose *J'accuse* was a condemnation of the tyranny of the government at that time) and Julien Benda. For a detailed analysis of how the affair contributed to the final separation between the church and state and the rise of the French intellectual movements, see Serge Berstein, and Odile Rudelle (1992).

[2] The reference here is to the 'la cité grecque' as a place of civilisation and liberty and as a democratic place where people govern themselves and are free. This implies the influence of the Greek model on the construction of the Republican one (See Henri Van Effenterre (1992, 13- 56)).

and the sacred rights of the individual in the face of the State's reasoning. The other, defended by the 'nationalists'[3] (some were 'intellectuals', but rejected the word so as to stress their position) represents particularist values such as the defence of the nation against any threat of any type stressing the absolute priority of the State's interests and rights over any those of the individual (Berstein and Rudell 1992, 134). It is in an in-between position that Derrida's work on hospitality appears which, on the one hand, tries to resist the tyranny of the State and its law-making, and on the other, open the concepts of the Revolutionary heritage of Fraternity, Liberty and Equality beyond a certain patriotic reductionism. That is what Derrida calls his 'nouvelle internationale' ('New International'), a rebellion against patriotism: "compatriotes de tous les pays, poètes-traducteurs, révoltez vous contre le patriotisme!" (Derrida 1996, 107). This chapter is a reading of the philosophical reflection of Deconstruction upon the issue of democratic politics which comes from my conviction that the political and philosophical roots of Western democratic politics and its exclusions must be revealed in order to come to an understanding of the problem of hospitality and its politics. I am particularly interested in how deconstruction provides the tools for political interventions to uncover hegemony and exclusions.

Derrida claims that his constant moving between contemporary issues of urgency and the tradition from which the West has received its concepts, that is, the Greek cultural heritage, is because of the way the 'Greek world' has shaped the western contemporary conception of concepts such as *étranger* and foreigner, and which are presumed to be 'natural' and 'untouchable' and hence Derrida's attempt to deconstruct them. Derrida insists on the necessity of lodging oneself within traditional conceptuality in order to destroy it in the sense that one has to inhabit the language of metaphysics or traditional institutions in order to subvert them (Robert Bernasconi 1988, 3). He claims that "C'est souvent la mutation techno-politico- scientifique qui nous oblige à déconstruire, qui en vérité déconstruit d'elle même ces prétendues évidences naturelles ou ces axiomes intouchables" (Derrida 1997, 45). Derrida's re-reading of the literary and philosophical texts of Greek and Latin heritage can be seen as important in questioning what Derrida calls the European history of concepts

[3] Their position here, according to Berstein (1992, 161), was to avoid the revision of the case of Dreyfus though he was not proved to be guilty, in order to maintain the 'cohesion of national collectivity' and insure the survival of its most important institutions: justice and the army.

and interpretations and to show how these inheritances or the predominant interpretations of these inheritances deconstruct themselves (ibid.).

While Paul Gilroy (2000, 62) argues that wherever "the modern idea of 'race' took hold, a characteristic perversion of the principles of democratic politics was the result", Derrida insists that the name and the concept of democracy, a Greek name, has never been free of such deadly exclusionist tendencies in its homo-fraternal preferences. Gilroy's argument is based on the way European imperial forces have managed to monopolise the concept of democracy and bind it to certain territorial units "where true and authentic culture could take root under the sentimental eye of ruthlessly eugenic governments" (ibid.). Derrida, however, goes way back to the Greek philosophical canon of democratic politics that was inherited by Europe to reveal its contradictions and aporias at the heart of its possible 'origins'. Gilroy argues that the political and ethical forces of these traditions should not be discarded, his point of departure is "the still heretical notion that modernity's new political codes must be acknowledged as having been compromised by the raciological drives that partly formed them and wove a deadly exclusionary force into their glittering universal promise" (ibid.). While Derrida keeps the old name 'democracy' with all its promises of equality and liberty, he opens this name and concept to self-deconstruction in order to keep alive its ethical promises.

In *Politiques de l'Amitié*, Derrida attempts to answer the question of what is the relationship between friendship and democracy? How can a non-traditional concept of friendship that is 'non-fraternalistic', non-androcentric, non-patriarchal, that is, a friendship that stands against its canonical perception and reception in the West, be the basis of thinking about the political that Derrida calls democracy-to-come? Is it still in the name of a democracy to come that Derrida is attempting to deconstruct a concept, the old name democracy, that is rooted in "la sécurité de la fondation autochtonique, dans la souche et dans le génie de la filiation"? And in whose legacy does one encounter "la loi de la naissance, la loi naturelle ou 'nationale', la loi de l'hymopholie ou de l'autochtonie, l'égalité civique (l'isonomie) fondée sur l'égalité de naissance (l'isogonie) comme condition du calcul de l'approbation et donc de l'aristocratie de vertu et de sagesse, etc.?" (Derrida 1994, 126-7). What are the things in the old name that resist deconstruction and that allow us to reveal what is

forgotten, repressed or un-thought of? Derrida's strategy is to keep the old name democracy while unravelling its exclusionist forces, its aporias and contradictions in an attempt to open it up to the Other.

Section One traces the strong link between Derrida's *Politiques de l'Amitié* and the French context from which the book has emerged. Republican universal fraternity is under scrutiny with its exclusionary dimensions. Section Two establishes the link between democracy and friendship. Following a reading of the Greek concept of friendship, which is marked by contradictions and aporia and its 'fictitious' and 'dreamt' condition of the 'genealogical bond', Derrida suggests another condition for the political based on a friendship that is non-androcentric, non-fraternalistic and non-phallogocentric. This will be taken further in Sections Three and Four with Nietzsche's *perhaps* and its non-foundational dimension that opens the way for the 'may be' of decision and non-deterministic politics and Blanchot's non-traditional conception of friendship. This non-fraternalistic, non-androcentric friendship can be the basis of democracy-to-come, which is not futuristic but carries the ethics of a promise that is *now*, in the present.

1- French Republicanism and Exclusive Fraternity

During the 1996 affair of the 'undocumented immigrants' of the Church of Saint Bernard in Paris, the committee of an interdisciplinary team of intellectuals, the *collège des médiateurs,* was formed to raise concerns about the ethical heritage of Republicanism. The debate that ensued has been, on the one hand, about the protection of the state's interests (by closing the boundaries for any unwanted economic refugees, deportation of any 'clandestine' immigrants and by restricting immigration laws), and on the other, the position of most French intellectuals to question the destiny of the ideas of the Revolution which had made the French nation *une terre d'asile* and which are now threatened by the anti-immigrant and xenophobic attitudes. The problem is that further restrictions of hospitality laws threaten the curtailment of the French nationals' individual rights and freedom in the sense of the state allowing itself to monitor and control their movements, a simple example is the notion of *'délit de l'hospitalité'*.

Derrida expressed his grief when he first heard the expression *délit de l'hospitalité*, which is a law in France that allows the prosecution of those who offer their hospitality to the ones deemed as 'illegal' or *sans papiers* (Derrida 1997b, 3-8).[4] What would become of a country and a culture where hospitality is seen as a crime in the eyes of the law? Just before the Second World War, a statement was issued stating heavy penalties on foreigners in an 'irregular situation' and whoever helped them was bound to be punished (ibid., 5-6). Derrida reflects on this criminalization when he claims that: "depuis cette époque, les conditions de l'hospitalité en France (immigration, asile, accueil des étrangers en général) n'ont pas cessé d'empirer et de ternir jusqu'à nous faire honte, l'image dont feint de se réclamer le discours patriotique de la France des droits de l'homme et du droit d'asile" (ibid.). But hospitality is not only denied to those seen as 'illegal' immigrants, but also most crucially to those within the French territories, those perceived as the 'Others', interlopers whose local affiliation and loyalty to the country they were born and brought up in has always been on trial. I am referring to the descendants of the post-war immigrants in focusing specifically on the North African communities in France. With their French nationality, the Beurs are still held in the same position as their parents, hostages to being 'eternal immigrants', 'outsiders' whose loyalties are always suspected to lie somewhere else outside France. The 'stranger' in French discourse can have homogeneous and classificatory meanings that tend to keep those unwanted outside the 'national hearth'. It can refer to a foreigner, to a recently arrived immigrant, a naturalised child of immigrants' origin or even to a French child born to non-European parents (Mirielle Rosello 2001, 5). This homogenisation stands against the supposed heritage of the French Revolution with its egalitarian principles towards all citizens.

Derrida insists that his book *Politiques de l'Amitié* comes from the heart of the contradictions of French universality. He claims that:

> Ce livre *s'acharne lui-même* auprès de la chose nommée France. Et auprès de l'alliance singulière qui lie l 'histoire de la fraternisation, rien de moins, à cette chose, la France-- à l'Etat, la nation, la politique, la culture, la littérature, à la langue qui en répondent et à ce nom répondent. Dès avant la Révolution française, pendant la révolution française, après la Révolution française. (Derrida 1994, 295).

[4] See also Derrida (1997c, 40).

French fraternity prescribes the 'androcentric' ethnic group though the French Republican tradition considers itself to be unique with its legacy of 'liberty, fraternity and equality' between all citizens of the Republic. The Republicans claim that principles of universality have abolished all privileges based on rank, blood or birth and thus adopted an 'inclusive' rather than 'exclusive' concept of citizenship and the rights of man (Hazareesingh 1994, 72). Fraternity and equality are supposed to offer all members of society the same rights and privileges and protection under universal principles of justice. Moreover, "the Republic's principle of equal citizenship rested on an 'open' conception of national identity" in the sense that "membership of the national community was available not only to those who had been born in France (or had lived there for several generations), but also to those who had elected to make France their homeland *(patrie)*: for example, citizens of its colonies and immigrants."[5] However, at the same time, Republicans have been developing a political culture for over a century that considers rights to be exclusive of the membership of the one nation-state (House 1997, 54). Moreover, the Republican tradition, from the Third Republic onwards, started restricting access to some rights to nationals.

From the late Nineteenth Century onwards, Republicans introduced exclusionary practices in the colonies (House 1997, 41). Even though the French concept of citizenship claims itself to be based on the idealized notion of egalitarian Republican tradition, there has actually never been any real egalitarianism in relation to some social groups, especially, the colonized subjects with their 'cultural difference' (ibid., 63). Assimilation of the colonized subjects of the Maghreb has never been taken as a real possibility because of what is seen as their 'cultural distance' that is irreconcilable with the 'French norms of national identity' (ibid.). These practices have paved the way for a Republican discourse that shows aggression towards certain cultural and ethnic 'differences' (specifically the Muslims of North Africa) and thus creates "through social practices of categorisation, new processes of differentiation which would increasingly be perceived (and experienced) in 'racial' or ethnic terms" (ibid., 42).

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[5] It must be noted here that anti-republican conceptions of nationality are usually based on race and not on citizenship. They reject the idea of cultural integration and thus normally support the idea of

In fact, the universalist model of French citizenship, which came to its present form at the height of French colonialism during the Third Republic, never fully accepted Muslims or other colonial subjects (Blatt 1997, 53). This is linked to the process of the creation of 'difference' in the colonies which stems from the assumption of French superiority and which 'legitimates' the French assimilationist ideology (House 1997, 64). However, in colonial Algeria, for example, the idea of 'cultural assimilation' was available only to the very few who could ensure the reproduction of colonial system and serve its own interests. Republican ideology links levels of civilisation with levels of secularization and thus indigenous Muslim populations were seen as inassimilable and inferior because of their 'cultural distance' (ibid., 68). Patricia Lorcin (1995) argues that French colonial ideology had used both cultural and racial discourses to keep the indigenous populations at a distance. She claims that a "clear distinction had to be maintained between the settler and the indigenous population, and if this could not be done physically it had to be done culturally" (Lorcin 1995, 253). The effect of the colonial heritage cannot be denied as France had adopted the Republican concepts of universalism but at the same time reinforced inferiority, racism and second-class citizenship of the colonial 'subjects' in the ex-colonies which neither the French nor the ex-colonials seem to be able to overcome.[6]

Republicanism stresses national unity in the name of conformity and thus rejects any form of communitarian or cultural identities. It promotes the 'French nation' as universal and homogeneous, but it is precisely these ideas that have come under scrutiny, and which are starting to reveal their contradictions and their exclusion of ethnic minorities. Republican universalism is increasingly questioned and 'demythologised'. The idealisation of Republican tradition aims at covering the complexity of the past and thus representing French identity as 'homogenous' in order to legitimise the exclusion of those seen as 'Others' today (Silverman 1995, 254).

Roland Barthes criticised what he called the French myth of a multi-racial unified French nation by referring to a picture on a Paris-Match cover. This photograph

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taking away citizenship from those groups that are suspected of not being 'loyal' to France: one of Le Pen's main arguments (Hareesingh 1994, 87-8).

[6] Robert Young (2001) raised the issue of the effects of colonial violence on both Algeria and France.

showed a young black soldier saluting the French flag, which Barthes took to signify French colonial ideology. It represented 'the greatness of the French Empire' and that "all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors" (Roland Barthes 1972, 116). Barthes's interpretation of the French myth of a unified nation is still revealing in today's French society where immigration has become the other name for 'race', and 'immigrant' is a term that refers to any 'different' Other, and thus, 'legitimates' racist classification (Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein 1988, 223).

It is important to note how the politics of French democracy have been failing some members of the French nation whose physical, cultural and religious differences are not 'accepted' by this democracy. Derrida's *Politiques de l'Amitié* is a reflection on this phenomenon. This debate is situated in Derrida's book within the heritage of the French Revolution. Sophie Wahnich (1997b) argues that the rhetoric of the French Republic was formed during the Revolution in a way that stressed the generosity and hospitality of the new nation amid all existing contradictions and ambiguities which are still prevalent today. The founding values of the Revolutionary French nation were believed to be 'universal' in the sense that the rights of Man were guaranteed to everybody regardless of origin. In other words, rights are not just limited to those born within the French national border but also to those outside it. The Rights of Man are supra national and universal which contributed immensely to the establishment of the French discourse on the bonds of 'friendship' between people that was seen as being stronger than those of nationality. The 1793 Saint-Just *Essai de constitution* claimed that:

> The French nation declares itself to be the friend of all people; it will religiously respect treaties and flags; it offers asylum in its harbours to ships from all over the world; it offers asylum to great men and virtuous unfortunates of all countries; its ships at sea will protect foreign ships against storms. Foreigners and their customs will be respected in its bosom. (Cited in Sophie Wahnich 1997b, 109).

The promise of the Revolution was formulated so as to guarantee hospitality, peace and friendship between peoples. In Wahnich's words (1997b, 109), "the purpose of the national law is not to identify the frontier but to guarantee universal law without limits." But this grand narrative of a hospitable Revolutionary France was shattered

as it was betrayed and compromised in various forms. For example in 1793, the guests of the Republic whose nation was at enmity with France would have to be expelled except for those who could prove their loyal attachment to France. They also have to wear a tricolour ribbon inscribed with the term Hospitality, that is, to demonstrate physically their status of tolerated guests in passage. This brings back the disastrous memory of the yellow star in recent history and how the Jews were forced to stand out as excluded second class citizens to be tolerated and then expelled or terminated (Wahnich 1997b, 24). Wahnich stresses this failure of Revolutionary hospitality and indicates "the enigma of a hospitality subverted by suspicion, of a friendship experienced in terms of treason, and of a fraternity that inverts the most radical forms of exclusion" (ibid., 347). It is here that I believe Derrida's work to be crucial in shedding light on this enigma. He traces these problems back to their 'genealogical' origins where the concept of democracy, friendship and fraternity were based on a certain politics of exclusion or a politics based on 'blood kinship' and the homo-fraternal, a politics that still dominates to the present moment.

2- Derrida Reading the Canon: The Greek "Genealogical Condition"

Deconstructing the Greek philosophical concept of friendship, Derrida first introduces Plato's distinction between civil war (*státis*, war between families who share ties and origins) and sheer war against foreign families (*pólemos*). The unity of the Greek 'race' or people remains intact in *pólemos* as well as in *státis*. This Greek lineage which is united by kinship and 'original community' is foreign to the *barbarians* (outsiders). Derrida argues that in every form of racism and ethnocentrism, especially in all nationalism throughout history, "un *discours sur* la naissance et sur la nature, une *phúsis* de la généalogie (plus précisément un discours et un phantasme de la *phúsis* généalogique)" structures any agreement or disagreement, friendship or enmity, war or peace. In other words, the 'natural birth' (*phúsis*) or structure of kinship and unity determines the position of the citizen towards certain issues such as nationalism, ethnocentrism, racism, etc. This *phúsis* contains everything: language, law, politics, etc. and "bien qu'elle définisse l'altérité de l'étranger ou de Barbare, elle n'a pas d'autre" (Derrida 1994, 113).

The 'barbarians' are enemies by 'nature' and so the Greek wage war on them, but when they wage war on each other, a form of pathology appears in the community: in this case, reconciliation can have no cause other than kinship: a friendship based on homophilia and homogeneity. The other has no place in this kind of reconciliation (advocated by Socrates in *Menxenus*) because s/he does not share the structure of kinship, as it is the tie of birth that ensures the strength of the social bond (ibid.).

This genealogical condition of the social bond is a 'dreamt condition' ('une condition rêvée'); "elle est toujours posée, construite, induite, elle implique toujours un effet symbolique de discours, une 'fiction légale'" (Derrida 1994, 114). All political discourses misuse what can be seen as a 'belief' in this 'genealogical fiction' and thus everything that calls for the support of birth, nature or nation consists of the 're-naturalisation' of this fiction. What Derrida calls fraternisation is "ce qui produit symboliquement, conventionnellement, par engagement assermenté, une *politique déterminée*. Celle-ci à gauche ou à droite, allègue une fraternité réelle ou règle la fraternité spirituelle, la fraternité au sens figuré, sur cette projection symbolique d'une fraternité réelle ou naturelle" (ibid.). "Natural fraternity" is used fictionally to forge the politics of nationalism.

According to Socrates, being naturally equal by birth means that no one can be the slave of another (as in tyrannies) as it ensures legal equalities, superiority can be only on the side of those who own wisdom and thus those who can rule. Derrida argues that the name democracy is less relevant in this context as is the concept that it announces, namely the right of the best to rule, starting from "l'égalité de la naissance, de l'égalité naturelle, homophylique at autochtonique" (Derrida 1994, 116). In Socrates's *Menxenus*, Derrida raises three points that seem to be the basis of Western democracy: first, the necessity of the search for equality before the law in accordance with equality of birth. By birth, Derrida means the 'genetic tie' (*eugéneia*) or "c'est le lieu de la fraternisation comme lien symbolique qui allègue la répétition d'un lien génétique" (ibid., 122). The relation between these two structurally heterogeneous ties (the bond of birth or 'blood' and equality) remains unclear and can be threatened by the mystification and perversions of rhetoric exposing itself "aux pires symptômes de nationalisme, de l'ethnocentrisme, de

populisme, voire de la xénophobie" (ibid.). Schmitt's concept[7] of the public enemy being free of private hatred is not a sufficient criterion "pour exclure l'exclusion xénophobique de cette 'logic'". At the heart of Western democracies, xenophobia is bred because of this 'troubling necessity'. Second, the concept of fraternity which is claimed to be grounded in memory (memory of noble birth, of the fathers) and which is supposed to tell people who they are ('monumental memory') is another aspect of this Greek democracy. As long as the Greek remain faithful to the memory of their dead, they are brought together by this 'testamentary tie' which for Derrida represents nothing other than their 'originary patrimony' since "la nécessité obligatoire de ce lien de mémoire forme la condition de leur liberté politique" (ibid., 122). In fact, 'truth' (of noble, natural birth), 'freedom' (legal equality), 'necessity' (of the two concepts) and 'equality' all come together in this 'politics of fraternity' (ibid.). Derrida argues that it is impossible for the notion of a *perhaps* (Nietzsche's perhaps)[8] to have a chance with such determined politics: "la chance d'une effraction ou d'une hospitalité absolues, d'une décision ou d'une arrivance imprédictibles" (ibid., 123). The third concept is related to the name democracy. In the Greek canon, the name is less important than what it announces, which means aristocracy: the power of the wisest or the best to rule with the consent of the majority. There can be no democracy without a calculation or an arithmetical dimension, i.e., a calculation in the form of a decision, but what makes this decision possible is the double equality mentioned earlier: civic equality (isonomy) founded on equality of birth (isogony). The two laws of democracy are contradictory, since there can be no democracy without respect for singularity and alterity but there can be no democracy without the calculation of majorities, without 'communauté des amis', "sans sujets identifiables, stabilisables, représentables, égaux entre eux" and irreducible to one another (Derrida 1994, 40). 'Political desire' is marked by the disjunction between these two laws: "la nécessité d'avoir à *compter* ses amis, à compter les autres, dans l'économie des siens, là où tout autre est tout autre" (ibid.,).

Aristotle defines the concept of democracy (in the *Eudemian Ethics*) as a politics of friendship founded on an "anthropocentric" (or humanist) concept and virtue and that the two concepts (friendship and democracy) are bounded by notions of law, convention and community. But this cannot be taken unproblematically as it carries

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[7] Section Three in this Chapter explains this concept, pp. 76-81.

many contradictions that Aristotle has tried to cover by establishing a *logos* of friendship. The task is to work through these contradictions to create another condition of the politcal. Aristotle's famous quotation: "O mes amis, il n'y a nul amy"[9] provides the ground of analysis for Derrida's intervention. Aristotle insists on the relation between justice, friendship and communal sharing. Derrida argues that in this case friendship cannot first be reduced to instrumentalization, and second it is related to democracy as its destiny (Derrida 1994, 199). It is a relation of proportion, '[une] loi tendancielle' ('a tendential law') since the concept of sharing or communal sharing (which indicates law, convention and contract) exists where citizens are equal. It is democracy and not tyranny that prepares the grounds for friendship and vice versa. Aristotle argues in *Politics* that everything that takes place in the *polis* (State) is the work of friendship. The State cannot merely answer to justice and ensure commerce, it has also to ensure a good life for the community; the power of such a social bond, as a political bond and its law, origins and aims, is that of *philia* (friendship). *Philia,* thus, is thoroughly political as it has the power to link the State to the *phratry* (family, generation, and fraternity in general) and to the place (ibid., 225-6). Thus, the Greek perceives *philia* as the condition for the political.

Aristotle subdivides political friendship into legal political friendship and ethical political friendship. Whereas the former is based on reciprocity, consensus and convention, the second is left to the act of faith between the parties, which may cause disagreement. But the aporia arises even with legal political friendship, for how can the measures of the just, equal and reciprocal be determined? Ethical friendship relies on good intentions and is more beautiful, but certainly legal friendship is more needed. The question according to Derrida is whether there can be any common measure that will allow us to determine the equal and just and that will be capable of regulating social change (Derrida 1994, 232). This may be the source of Aristotle's grievance when he announces "O mes amis, il n'y a nul amy" in the sense that he realises that there is no measure of equality and so no one can count on friends and vice versa. It is again the question "d'égalité, de calcul entre des calculabilités ou de calcul entre le calculable et l'incalculable" (ibid., 233). Aristotle's apostrophe is marked by a performative contradiction, since he addresses his friends to tell them

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[8] Section Three in this Chapter explains this idea, pp. 76-81.

[9] Derrida (1994) spells the French word 'ami' as 'amy' when he refers to Aristotle's quote "O mes amis, il n'y a nul amy".

that there are no friends, but this contradiction clearly highlights the keen desire for friendship no matter how impossible it may be. However, the sentence is a project: "[un projet] d'amitié ou d'inimitié, dira-t-on, ou les deux à la fois, et de communauté politique correspondante, de singularité ou de multiplicité, peu importe" (Derrida 1994, 245). It is a call for friendship or a request to come together in friendship.

3- Schmittian political determinism versus Nietzsche's *perhaps*

If the Greek philosophers consider friendship to be the basis of democracy, albeit a friendship marked by the fraternal, Carl Schmitt perceives hostility as the condition for the political to exist. Derrida traces Schmitt's[10] concept of the politcal which is based on the idea that without the enemy, the political can not exist. Derrida wants to reveal what 'l'ennemi', 'chez nous' has meant over the centuries and in what respect can politics be thought of, as Schmitt claims, without the necessary "*identification* par laquelle on l'identifie, lui, et on s'identifie, soi" (Derrida 1994, 127). Derrida's reading aims to prove "en quoi cette *double identification* engage par privilège à la fois des frères amis et des frères ennemis dans le même procesus de fraternisation" (ibid.).

In *Le Concept du politique* (1932), Schmitt claims that there can be no politics without the enemy who is not a private rival whom one hates, but "un ensemble d'individus groupés, affrontant un ensemble de même nature" and who are engaged in a virtual struggle (Derrida 1994, 105). However, his 'diagnosis' of the political (as Derrida calls it) repeats 'le lien naturel', that is, between 'la structure de credit' (fraternity as constituted) and a natural affiliation that surpasses that of credit. Such a distinction is the logic of the politics Derrida wants to deconstruct and thinks

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[10] Carl Schmitt is a contemporary German thinker known for his concept of the enemy. He was convicted and imprisoned for his political views after the war and was accused of holding Nazi views and attitudes. Derrida claims that his interest in Schmitt's ideas is due to two reasons. The first is related to the link between Schmitt's thinking about the political and political thought on the one hand, and his political commitment on the other that had led to his imprisonment; a commitment, Derrida claims, that is more repugnant than that of Heidegger especially, his Nazi declarations. Second, Schmitt's thoughts are deeply engraved in the richest juridical, theological, political, and philosophical traditions of European law and culture of which Schmitt seems to be the last defender. Derrida argues that Schmitt was attuned more than any other thinker to the fragile and deconstructable nature of structures, borders and concepts which he has tried to protect and preserve as if he was anticipating the great changes in history, politics, borders, etc. Derrida wonders how his defensive strategy which consists of the most paradoxical alliance and conservative discourse has attracted the interest of certain extreme left-wing movements in more than one country (Derrida 1994, 102).

deconstructable (Derrida 1994, 184). But Schmitt deconstructs his own views about the political subject. Using Hegelian dialect, he claims that one passes from the process of 'being-enemy' to the recognition of the enemy or to his identification, but to an identification that leads the self to its own identification with the other, or with 'l'ennemi que j'identifie' (ibid., 187). The question that Schmitt poses to himself (in his *Ex Captivitate Salus* (1945), which he wrote in prison) is who is the enemy? Schmitt claims that the enemy is the one who can call me into question, but who can call the self into question? Schmitt claims that it is only one's own self that can call one into question or one's own brother: "qui peut me mettre effectivement en question? Seulement moi-même. Ou mon frère. C'est cela. L'autre est mon frère. L'autre se révèle comme mon frère, et le frère se révèle comme mon ennemi" (Derrida 1994, 187). Thus, the question of the enemy is not only that of recognition or a 'theoretical question', or knowledge, but it is 'une remise en question de qui questionne ou s'interroge', i.e., the enemy can call into question only the one who can call himself into question: "on ne peut être mis en question qu'en se mettant *soi-même* en question" (ibid., 188). Thus the enemy is *my* self, "l'ennemi c'est soi-même, je suis à moi-même mon propre ennemi" (ibid.). This conclusion both confirms and contradicts Schmitt's concept of the politcal: it confirms that the enemy needs to be identified and contradicts the same need because the enemy is the self. This 'tautologie armée' ('armed tautology'), or synthesis (I am, myself, the other who puts me in question, puts myself in question, the other is my brother, my brother is my enemy…) leads to the conclusion the enemy is the 'most familiar', the closest and the 'most proper'. Moreover, "l'un n'exclut pas l'autre, dès lors que grâce à mon frère, à cause de lui, je suis l'autre, et que le plus proche est le plus lointain, le plus propre le plus étranger" (ibid.). Derrida rejects what he calls the modern figures of decision, especially Schmittian decisionism, which is based on deterministic politics that does not leave a chance to Nietzsche's *perhaps*. He resists Schmitt's foundational politics that limit the freedom of decision and thus exclude the dimension of the *perhaps* or the 'may be'.

Nietzsche disrupts the conceptual distinctions between the friend and enemy bringing it to the logic of the '*unheimlichkeit*' which accommodates the enemy at the heart of the friend and vice versa. It is because the word *unheimlich* is not unfamiliar "tout en disant justement l'étranger, à l'intimité de foyer et à l'hébergement familial, à

l'*oikeiótès*; mais surtout parce qu'il fait place. de façon troublante. à une forme d'accueil en soi qui rapelle la hantise autant que l'habitat- *unterkunft,* le logement. le gîte, l'habitat hospitalier" (Derrida 1994, 77). Nietzsche's philosophy has the courage to claim distancing in the very code of excluding distance, he claims that "Ce n'est pas dans la manière dont une âme se rapproche de l'autre, mais à sa façon de s'en éloigner que je reconnais son affinité et parenté avec l'autre" (cited in Derrida 1994, 74).

'Good friendship' for Nietzsche is born out of disproportion, when one respects the other more than oneself; it supposes intimacy, but "une intimité sans 'initmité proprement dite'" as it commands that one must abstain 'widely' and 'prudently' from all confusion between the singularities of 'you' and 'me' (Nietzsche calls this the community without a community and the bonding, un-bonding of friendship) (Derrida 1994, 81). Nietzsche reveals an internal contradiction in the Greek concept of *philia* by revealing that friendship does not depend on self-sufficiency and independence, but rather it assigns to us the 'law of the other' or the gift of dependency. Derrida argues that this logic calls friendship back to "la non-réciprocité, à la dissymétrie ou à la disproportion, au non-retour dans l'hospitalité offerte ou reçue, bref à l'irréductible préséance de l'autre" (ibid., 82). The concept of friendship and politics that was produced in the 'Graeco-democratic' and 'Christian Revolutionary' models seems to be jeopardised when the notion of the without sharing and without reciprocity come to mark friendship and its responsibility (Derrida 1994, 328). However, Nietzsche's politics disrupts such a logic by the *perhaps (peut-être)* (which reflects Derrida's deconstructive strategies). Derrida expresses this link when he claims "qu'un *peut-être* ouvre et précède à jamais le questionnement, qu'il suspende d'avance, non pour les neutraliser ou les inhiber mais pour les rendre possibles, tous les ordres déterminés et déterminants qui dépendent du *questionner* (la recherche, le savoir, la science et la philosophie, la logique, le droit, la politique et l'éthique, le langage même et en général), voilà une nécessité à laquelle nous tentons de faire droit de plusieurs façons" (Derrida 1994, 58). For Nietzsche, no event or decision can take place without the aporia of the *perhaps*, but at the same time nothing can be decided without the suspension of this *perhaps* while keeping its living possibility alive: "elle est l'aporie du *peut-être*, son aporie historique et politique." In Derrida's words, "Si aucune décision (éthique, juridique,

politique) n'est pas possible qui n'interrompe la détermination en s'engageant dans le *peut-être,* en revanche la même décision doit interrompre cela même qui est sa condition de possibilité, le *peut-être* même" (ibid., 86).

Derrida insists on the importance of the decision in order to introduce the aporia in which every theory of decision must be taken seriously. The paradox is that the decision makes the event but every event is followed and preceded by its own perhaps, which is not as individual or unique as the decision with which it is associated, especially in politics. This 'heteronomy', rebels against Schmitt's sovereignty and opens autonomy on to itself. Derrida perceives Nietzsche's perhaps to be "la condition de la décision, de l'interruption, de la révolution, de la responsabilité et de la vérité", but it should not be seen as belonging "au régime de l'opinion" because it is "indécidable et sans vérité dans son moment propre" (Derrida 1994, 63). Thus, the friends of the perhaps are the friends of truth but they are not necessarily in the truth, i.e., they stand for the reliability and security of a dogma or an opinion. They will possibly remain friends (Nietzsche claims) by denouncing a fundamental contradiction that no politics will be able to rationalise, which is the one inhabiting the concept of the 'common' and 'community'. The common is rare and "la commune mesure, c'est une rarité pour les rares" because of the "incalculable égalité de ces amis de la solitude, de ces sujets incommenurables, de ces sujets sans sujet et sans intersubjectivité" (ibid., 64).

Nietzsche's *perhaps* also means that the two apostrophes (Aristotle's "O, mes amis, il n'y a nul amy" and Nietzsche's response "O, mes ennemis, il n'y a nul ennemi" are the two logics of negation and denial and the logic of lying and of the unconscious. Each one haunts the other and thus the two concepts friend/enemy, self/other, host/guest intersect with each other as every concept bears the ghost of the other (Derrida 1994, 196-7). In both apostrophes, the friends and enemies are addressed in their absence, but the appeal made to them presupposes their arrival. Derrida argues that this gesture means that: "on laisse sa chance à l'avenir dont on a besoin pour la venue de l'autre-- ou pour l'événement en général" (ibid., 198). In a sense the other is the 'dangereux peut-être' ('dangerous perhaps') which is hospitality that brings chance and at the same time threat with it, so the arrival is perceived with desire as well as fear. One must let the other come, 'libre dans son mouvement' and free of one's own

will and intention: "je lui prescrirais donc de pouvoir ne pas répondre- à mon appel. à mon invitation, à mon attente, à mon désire. Et je dois lui faire une sorte d'obligation de rester libre, pour prouver ainsi sa liberté, dont j'ai besoin, justement, pour appeler, attendre, inviter" (ibid.). *I* need the other's freedom in order that *I* address the other as other in desire as well as in rejection.

The concept of friendship (like democracy and hospitality) is contradictory in its very essence because there can be no perfect friendship. But if Aristotle's apostrophe is a call for friendship, if one desires friends, it is because, "l'homme pense et pense l'autre" (Derrida 1994, 252). Friendship is 'une pensée de l'autre' that cannot take place without *philia*. To translate this into the language of the *human cogito*, Derrida puts it this way:

> Je pense, donc je pense l'autre: je pense, donc j'ai besoin de l'autre (pour penser): je pense, donc la possibilité de l'amitié se loge dans le mouvement de ma pensée en tant qu'il requiert, appelle, désire l'autre, la nécessité de l'autre, la cause de l'autre au coeur du *cogito*. (Derrida 1994, 252).

It is through friendship that we are offered the possibility of being hospitable to the other however improbable and contradictory it may be. Derrida argues that the political translation of the concept of philia has its aporias. This 'problematic scansion' ('scanscion problématique') is revealed in the form of a history of friendship with its contradictions and dissymmetry (ibid., 258).

4- "France, Enfranchisement, Fraternity"

Tous ces peuples que viennent-ils faire à Paris? Ils viennent être France. Ils savent qu'il existe un peuple de réconciliation, une maison de démocratie, une nation ouverte, qui appelle chez elle quiconque est frère ou veut l'être...Phénomène magnifique, cordial et formidable, que cette volatilisation d'un peuple qui s'évapore en fraternité. O France, adieu! Tu es trop grande pour n'être q'une patrie.
Victor Hugo (cited in Derrida 1994, 299).

Focusing on the French thinkers' understanding of friendship and fraternity, Derrida attacks Michelet's way of conceiving fraternity (another name for friendship linked to the familial in Western philosophy), because his discourse on the fraternal

homeland and nation becomes a strategy for all nationalism, patriotism and ethnocentrism (ibid., 265). Michelet's argues for a 'French national singularity' that gives an example of universal friendship and fraternity. Derrida argues that for 'French fraternity' to be universal and exemplary, it must be literal, singular and irreplaceable which is not possible as it still excludes the figure of the woman and the 'new *arrivant'* (newcomer). Michelet is unable to open its democratic fraternity to the two figures. For Derrida "la vraie fraternité, la fraternité au sens propre, ce serait la fraternité universelle, spirituelle, symbolique, infinie, la fraternité de serment, etc. et non la fraternité au sens strict, celle de frère 'naturel' (comme si cela existait jamais), du frère viril, par opposition à la soeur, du frère déterminé, dans cette famille, dans cette nation, dans cette langue-ci" (Derrida 1994, 268). Victor Hugo claims fraternity to be universal by being first French. To be a brother means to be French and so the link between "France, affranchissement, fraternité" ("France, enfranchisement, and fraternity"); the brother is crucial in Hugo's notion of "l'*Humanité* comme une *Nation*", but Derrida perceives his fraternity as not being universal as it is not hospitable either to women or to the non-fraternal in its clear-cut distinctions (ibid., 295). Despite Derrida's philosophical proximity to Levinas, he criticises Levinas's concept of 'fraternity' and his androcentric conception of friendship, fraternity and the political community. His androcentric logic of fraternity is linked to what Derrida perceives as 'the family schema', that is, as Critchley explains it, "the logic of filiality in Levinas, where the child is always the son, or thought on the analogy with the son, is linked to the logics of paternity and fraternity, as that which makes 'the strange conjuncture of the family possible'" (Simon Critchley 1999, 273).

For Derrida, Maurice Blanchot is a thinker who has rebelled against the canon. Derrida argues that Blanchot's response to friendship is that of a passivity's response to the 'unpresence of the unknown': a response in an un-shared and un-reciprocal friendship. Derrida poses three crucial questions to Blanchot's *L'Amitié* (1971), which are the question of community, the issue of fraternity and the Greek question.

Concerning the issue of community, Blanchot perceives friendship as "un *appel* à franchir la distance, *appel* à mourir en commun par la séparation", i.e., friendship is found beyond being in common, beyond "l'être-commun ou le partage", or beyond

all familial and common belonging such as the national, the familial, political and linguistic (ibid., 330). It is beyond any 'appartenance générique', and eventually any social bond. Derrida argues that Blanchot's hypothesis transcends the dichotomy of the common and uncommon, and that of appurtenance or non-appurtenance, sharing or non-sharing, proximity or distance, etc. It is not that of the order of community (not in the Nietzschean sense of 'the community without the community'), but it is a friendship, which, as Derrida describes it,

> m'engage auprès de celui-ci ou de celle-là plutôt que de *quiconque*, de tous et de toutes, auprès de ceux-ci ou de celles-là (et non de tous et de toutes, et non de quiconque), auprès d'un "qui" singulier, fût-il en nombre, en nombre toujours petit, quel qu'il soit, au regard de "tous les autres" ce désir de l'appel à franchir la distance (nécessairement infranchissable) n'est (peut-être) plus de l'ordre du commun ou de la communauté, de la part prise ou donnée, de la participation ou du partage. (Derrida 1994, 331).

Thus, if there is a politics of friendship, it will be free of the motifs of appurtenance, community or sharing whatever the nature of these communities (whether affirmed, negated or neutralised). Derrida claims that the danger is that communitarian or communal values always carry the risk of bringing the figure of the brother back and exclude the non-fraternal. This risk must be taken seriously, according to Derrida, "pour que la question du 'qui?' ne se laisse plus politiquement arraisonner, par le schème de l'être-commun ou en commun, fût-il neutralisé, dans une question d'identité (individuelle, subjective, ethnique, nationale, étatique, etc.) (ibid.). The risk must be kept alive in order to avoid any form of homo-fraternal extremism or exclusion of the other on the basis of *phratrocentricism*. For Derrida, it is irresponsible and totalitarian to exclude apriori the 'monstrous' or the 'terrible': "Sans la possibilité du mal radical, du parjure et du crime absolu, aucune responsabilité, aucune liberté, aucune décision" (Derrida 1994, 247).

Concerning the issue of the Greek question, Blanchot considers the Greek model of friendship to be an excellent one for human relations but one that must be enriched with the things it attempts to exclude, which is exactly what *Politiques de L'Amitié* attempts to achieve: 'to enrich' the Greek model of *Philia* with that which it has violently attempted to exclude. Derrida claims that Blanchot's quoting of Aristotle's sentence "O mes amis, il n'y a nul amy" takes into consideration that "le 'il n'y a pas d'ami' peut et doit se charger de la plus nouvelle et de la plus rebelle des

significations: il n'y a plus d'ami au sens où toute la tradition nous l'a enseigné" (Derrida 1994, 332).

Allusions to fraternity are rare in Blanchot's texts. since he frees himself of all determined communities, all filiation or affiliations, families or peoples. But what is meant when one says 'brother': "je n'ai cessé de me demander, je demande qu'on se demande ce qu'on veut dire quand on dit 'frère', quand on appelle quelqu'un 'frère'. Et quand on y résume ou subsume l'humanité de l'homme autant que l'alterité de l'autre. Et le prix infini de l'amitié" (Derrida 1994, 339). Derrida tries to address the question of the political impact of the use of this chosen word among the possibility of other words even if the choice is not deliberate (the allure that the notion of fraternity has for nationalism and xenophobia). Despite the contradictions his book has revealed, Derrida is not against the opening of the concept of brother or fraternity to plurality, that is, a 'fraternity' of obligation and 'oath' beyond the *phallogocentric* and the homo-fraternal schema:

> Médire et maudire, nous l'avons assez vu, cela appartient encore au-dedans de l'histoire des frères (amis ou ennemis, faux ou vrais). On ne pensera pas cette histoire, on ne se la rappellera pas en y prenant ce parti. À ma manière, comme tous le monde, je crois, j'aime sans doute, oui, à ma manière, mon frère, mon unique frère. Et mes frères, morts ou vivants, là où la lettre ne compte plus et n'a jamais compté, dans ma 'famille' et dans mes 'familles', j'en ai plus d'une, et plus d'un 'frère', de plus d'un sexe, et j'aime en avoir plus qu'un, chaque fois unique, auquel et à laquelle, en plus d'une langue, à travers bien des frontières, me lient plus d'une conjuration et tant de serments non dits. (ibid., 338-9).

Derrida suggests the idea of democracy-to-come that would free the interpretation of the concept of equality from its *phallogocentric schema of fraternity* which has dominated the Western democracies, as the concept of fraternisation has played an important role in the history of the formation of politcal discourse in Europe, especially in France (ibid.338-9). Democracy-to-come that is: "encore non-donnée, non pensée, voire réprimée ou refoulée, non seulement ne contredirait pas cette courbure dissymétrique et cette hétérogénéité infinie, mais en vérité serait exigée par elles" (Derrida 1994, 259). Such democracy "s'agirait donc de penser une altérité sans différence hiérarchique à la racine de la démocratie" (ibid.). Derrida insists that the idea of democracy-to-come is not about *future* democracy, where the future is

linked with the not-yet there or not-yet present. It is a difficult notion to define because like hospitality it has an essentially contradictory structure that resists calculability and determination. It is as Critchley (1999, 280) expresses it: "the experience of justice as the maintaining-now (*le maintenant)* of the relation to an absolute singularity [which] *is* the *à venir* of democracy. The temporality of democracy is *advent,* but it is arrival happening *now*, it happens as the now blasting through the continuum of the present." Democracy-to-come has the character of 'the incalculable', like that of unconditional hospitality, but its incalculability resists 'fraternisation', or the tribal and the national. It allows the amelioration of the existing democracy.

Therefore, for Derrida *la démocratie à venir* is important in emphasising the inevitability of antagonism with its notions of 'undecidability' and 'decision' that are important in providing the very terrain in which democratic pluralist politics can be formulated. In other words, Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction rejects the idea of establishing a 'consensus' without exclusion, warning us of the illusion that justice could ever be achieved in any society and thus it makes us alert to keeping the democratic project alive (Chantal Mouffe 1996, 9).

I do not regard deconstruction as a political programme, neither as a perfect political philosophy, as one can not deny what Morag Patrick (1997, 158) calls the "disturbing ethico-political ambiguity that inhabits it", though Derrida himself insists on ambiguity and contradiction as "the negative condition for any political responsibility and just decision" which may rather cause misunderstanding and leave deconstruction as a sterile political project. However, what is important about deconstructive thinking is the idea of the structure of the political horizon being interrupted by a non-horizon seen as the advent of the other, and a form of interruption or contamination which must be considered seriously for there to be a political responsibility and decision. The aim is to advance a different understanding of politics, for example, if we are able to accept the deconstructive claim that any form of consensus is a temporary consequence of "a provisional hegemony" which always advances some forms of exclusion, then we can understand that a democratic project is able (if using this insight) to acknowledge its frontiers and thus its forms of

exclusion instead of trying to cover them under the veil of rationality or morality (Mouffe 1996, 10).

The inhospitable and xenophobic politics that is overwhelming Europe in general and France specifically at the present historical junction, makes us think of this kind of democratic approach as being aware more than any other one of the fact that it is difference that can be the condition of the possibility of unity and at the same time its condition of impossibility. Thus this kind of deconstructive approach to democratic politics can contribute to unsettling the ever-present temptation in democratic societies to define their boundaries and to claim or essentialize their identities (ibid.). Moreover, a project of 'radical and plural democracy' informed by deconstruction will be able to "be more receptive to the multiplicity of voices that a pluralist society encompasses and to the complexity of the power structure that this network of differences implies" (ibid.).

It is important to notice that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, many political concepts such as that of a 'collective identity' are in the process of being redefined. The binary opposition between democracy and totalitarianism, which had for a long time worked as the 'political boundary' that allowed us to differentiate between the friend and the enemy, are being called into question (Mouffe 1994, 105). But in many parts of the world, with the 'multiplication of identities based on ethnic, regional and religious antagonisms', new challenges to the formation of a 'pluralist democracy' have emerged (ibid.). Another more serious problem is the collapse of the basis of western democracy, namely, the binary opposition it establishes between its system and the system of the others that reject it, a fact that implies the loss of the 'enemy' and thus the need for the creation of 'a new political frontier'. This has been well exploited by the extreme right movements who have found the immigrants as the new enemy to focus on, since they are represented as differentiating themselves on an "ethnic" or religious basis. Moreover, "these foreigners are portrayed as endangering national identity and sovereignty by various political movements which are doing their best to produce new collective identities and to re-create a political frontier by means of a nationalist and xenophobic discourse" (ibid.).

Considering our multi-racial. multicultural societies, where the danger of exclusion is always present, the rise of particularism and the appearance of an ethnic and xenophobic nationalism, Chantal Mouffe claims that "the future of democracy points towards the recognition of this dimension of the political, for to protect and consolidate democracy we have to see that policies consist of 'domesticating hostility' and of trying to defuse the potential antagonism inherent in human relations" (Mouffe 1994, 108). So what is important for the democratic project is not the question of how to reach a consensus without exclusion or how to create an identity that would be an 'us' without a ' them' but rather "how to establish an 'us' and 'them' discrimination in a way that is compatible with a pluralist democracy". This means that the other is not to be seen as an enemy to be destroyed but as "a 'counterpart' who could be in our place in the future", that is, to transform antagonism into agonism (ibid.). Certainly, democracy needs some form of consensus for it to survive but it also needs the "the constitution of collective identities around clearly differentiated positions" (ibid., 109).

For the political to be understood, Mouffe argues that we have to understand that "the condition governing the creation of any identity is the affirmation of a difference" (Mouffe 1994, 107). This will enable us to understand which kind of relationship should be established between otherness and difference to avoid the danger of exclusion. Mouffe uses the concept of 'constitutive outsider' that brings together Derrida's notion of *différance,* the *trace* and the *supplement* and that underlines the fact that the construction of every identity is based on hierarchy and thus it is relational ("the perception of something 'other' than it which will constitute its 'exterior'") (ibid.). Therefore, such a creation of a 'collective identity' will always imply the possibility of an 'us' and 'them' relationship, which for Mouffe is a relationship of antagonism and will become 'friend and enemy'. But when this other starts to be perceived as threatening one's existence, the us them relationship whether it is economic, religious or ethnic become political and thus the need here for a pluralistic democracy that will "convert the antagonism of identity into the agonism of difference" (ibid., 111). Thus, it will help to control or even to stop the potential for violence inherent in every construction of 'us and them' identities.

Conclusion

Derrida claims that the concept of democracy carries a contradiction within it as there can be no democracy without alterities and singularities, on the one hand, and on the other, without a community of friends or calculation. These are the paradoxes of a pluralist democracy that come from the articulation between democracy and liberalism which pluralist democracy has established. The two types of logic are in conflict with each other: the 'logic of democracy' based on 'identity and equivalence' and that of liberalism based on pluralism and difference and which eventually makes the former impossible as it disallows the formation of a 'complete system of identifications' (Mouffe 1994, 111). In fact, the tension between these two types of logic (the logic of difference and the logic of identity) is much attuned to the indeterminacy of modern politics and societies. The articulation between these two conflicting logics, one looking for equivalence and the other for preserving differences is a necessary one that needs to be constantly negotiated and re-created with the belief in mind that "there is no point of equilibrium where final harmony can be attained" (ibid., 122). That is exactly Derrida's idea of democracy-to-come which has "the character of an ethical demand or injunction, an incalculable *Faktum* that takes place now, but which permits the profile of a promisory task to be glimpsed" (Critchley 1999, 281).

Mouffe (1994, 112) argues that it is "this tension between the logic of equivalence and the logic of difference, between equality and liberty, and between our identity as individual and our identity as citizens which provides the best protection against every attempt to effect either a complete fusion or total separation. We should therefore avoid suppressing this tension because if we try to eliminate the political we risk destroying democracy." Mouffe uses deconstruction as an important political intervention that opens the doors for a pluralistic democracy with its emphasis on the inevitability of antagonism. Concepts such as 'undecidability' and 'decision' are important in providing the terrain for a pluralistic democracy. Derrida tries to create another condition of the political that is not based on the Schmittian notion of the enemy or the Aristotelian notion of friendship as both concepts of the enemy and the friend are rooted in the 'homo-fraternal' dimension that is based on the determination of kinship bonds. It is through friendship (contradictory though it may be) that we

are offered the possibility of a co-habitation with the other. a friendship that is not engraved in the homo-fraternal. Derrida (1994, 268) dwells extensively on the issue of fraternity and democracy highlighting the need in democratic practices for a rejection 'du frère naturel' ('natural brother'), or " du frère détérminé. dans cette famille, dans cette nation, dans cette langue-ci." He also reveals that the tradition of Western democracies is not open to the non-fraternal and hence his call for a democracy-to-come and a hospitality-to-come that transcend the boundaries of nationalism and ethnocentrism and whose essence will remain 'indéfiniment perfectible', hence always 'insuffisante et future' that belong to the time of 'la promesse': "même quand il y a la démocratie, celle-ci n'existe jamais, elle n'est jamais présente, elle reste le thème d'un concept non présentable" (ibid., 339). Derrida's concept transcends any nationalistic restrictions of democracy. It works within the territory of democratic states, but in the form of *deterritorialized democracy*[11], which Simon Critchley (1999, 281) explains in terms of "providing constant pressure on the state, a pressure of emancipatory intent aiming at its infinite amelioration, the perfectibility of politics, the endless betterment of actually existing democracy." Simon Critchley defines this democracy-to-come as Derrida's 'New International', which is a key notion in Derrida recent work on politics and which reflects a certain "reactivation or rearticulation of the emancipatory promise of modernity" (ibid., 279). Derrida (1997d, 176) himself writes that what is required is "un autre droit international, une autre politique des frontières, une autre politique de l'humanitaire, voire un engagement humanitaire qui se tienne *effectivement* au-delà de l'intérêt des État-nations." The 'enemy' in such a New International would be any form of nationalism, or in Critchley's words, "the attempted identification of justice with the destiny of the 'people' or the 'nation', a nationalism that believes that justice can be incarnated within the frontiers of the state or the words of the tribe" (Critchley 1999, 279).

Therefore, democracy-to-come is the ethical infinite demand of deconstruction as a philosophical intervention. Derrida argues for keeping the name democracy as a rhetoric or strategy because it is democracy that guarantees deconstruction and the indefinite right to question. There can be no deconstruction without democracy, and no democracy without deconstruction (Derrida 1994, 128). Derrida is extending

[11] An expression used by William Connolly (1992, 218). Quoted in Critchley (1999, 281).

democracy beyond the juridical and towards a space where the juridical and the ethical can intersect, where *the* law and laws of hospitality could uncomfortably, paradoxically cohabit:

> La démocratie est l' *autos* de l'auto-délimitation déconstructive. Délimitation non pas seulement au nom d'une idée régulatrice et d'une perfectibilité indéfinie, mais chaque fois dans l'urgence singulière d'un *ici maintenant*. Précisément à travers la pensée abstraite et potentiellement indifférente du nombre et de l'égalité. Cette pensée peut certes imposer la calculabilité homogénéisante tout en exaltant le sol et le sang, et le risque est aussi terrifiant qu'inévitable -- il est le risque aujourd'hui, plus que jamais. Mais elle garde peut-être aussi le pouvoir d'universaliser, au-delà de l'État et de la nation, la prise en compte des singularités anonymes et irréductibles, des singularités infiniment différentes et dès lors indifférentes à la différence particulière, à la rage identitaire qui corrompt les désirs les plus indestructibles de l'idiome. (Derrida 1994, 129).

Derrida's philosophical intervention is an opening to the to-come of democracy, and hospitality, which will no longer be an insult to the friendship he has been trying to open up beyond the homo-fraternal and the phallogocentric. It is also against racism-to-come as 'hostipitality' is a danger that one should keep alive. Democracy, like hospitality is marked by the same aporia between *the* law and the laws, between incalculation, unconditionality and calculability, conditionality. If Derrida's book starts with Aristotle's: "O mes amis, il n'y a nul amy" that persists throughout the book, Derrida chooses to answer Aristotle back in a very performative way: "O mes amis démocrates..." leaving the reader tempted by a conviction to add, "there is no democracy", but there is the call for democracy, the desire for it because we 'think' and 'live' democracy-to-come, hospitality-to-come against racism-to-come.

In the following chapters, I shall attempt a reading of selected Beur texts. The history of literature can not be separated from that of democracy because it is inseparable from human rights and freedom of expression, though there are many limits imposed upon it. So if democracy remains 'to come', this right to say anything in literature remains not fully or concretely realised. Certainly, I agree with Derrida that "literature is the right in principle to say anything, and it is to the great advantage of literature that it is an operation at once political, democratic and philosophical to the extent that literature allows one to pose questions that are often repressed in a philosophical context" (cited in Mouffe 1994, 80). Literary fiction can allow one to

be irresponsible by saying anything but in this irresponsibility there is a political dimension about realising who is responsible for what and before whom. For Derrida, this should be seen as 'a great chance' that can be linked to 'the historical adventure of democracy, notably European, and towards which political and philosophical reflections must not be inattentive and must not confine literature to the private sphere" (ibid.). Thus, literature is not 'an expression of private life' but rather a 'public institution' that has recently been invented. Derrida argues that in the ruins of the collapse of the concept of friendship, there is still a chance for Friendship and the Friend to emerge at the heart of literature: "cet effondrement du concept d'amitié sera peut-être une chance mais outre l'Amitié il emporte aussi l'Ami; et il n'y a rien de fortuit à ce que le sursaut de cette chance au coeur de la ruine soit encore lié, dans le plus intempestif de notre temps, à la littérature, à la 'communauté littéraire'" (Derrida 1994, 335). In other words, after the ruin of Friendship, a narrative would follow and would be prepared "à nous raconter que des monuments et des ruines d'amitié" as one can witness "la guerre de l'amitié, entre famille et littérature" as among "les tentatives désespérées pour exister outre famille: écrire; ou... aimer; qui emporte, altère, adultère" (ibid., 337). Literature provides the space for resisting determination and authority: "n'est elle [la littérature] pas aujourd'hui, dans la saturation de la mondialité géopolitique, cela même qui reste intolérable à l'intolérance de systèmes théologico-politiques pour lesquels, l'idée démocratique n'ayant aucune vertu inconditionnelle, nulle parole ne peut se soustraire à l'espace de l'autorité théologico-politique?" (ibid., 336). Since Derrida's *démocratie à venir* is a form of democratic action that "moves outside, beyond and against the State, as the *national* form of democratic government or indeed against any restrictions of democracy to territory" (Critchley 1999, 281), I shall attempt in the next chapter to demonstrate how literature can be used as a strategy to resist the bond of blood and kinship by opening itself to plurality and multiplicity and by resisting nationalistic authority.

Chapter Four

"Being at Home with not Being at Home": The Beurs' Narratives of Exclusion

1- The French Rhetoric of Belonging: Members Only in *Béni ou le paradis privé*

2- Amar as a *harki de la plume* held hostage to inhospitality in *Quand on est mort c'est pour toute la vie*

3- The Beurs as *Les Arabes Non Identifiés* in Akli Tadjer's *Les ANI de "Tassili"*

4- *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed:* the alignment of the non-aligned

5- *Le harki de Meriem* and the fate of "the French Muslims"

Conclusion

Chapter Four

"Being at Home with not Being at Home": The Beurs' Narratives of Exclusion

La France est comme l'hydre. Une tête souriante qui vous invite et l'autre avec une grande gueule qui est prête à vous dévorer. Si la douce mélopée de la déclaration des droits de l'homme vous enivre, c'est pour mieux vous conduire dans le placard où le camembert-beaujolais dicte sa loi.
Il faut alors se défendre, tous les coups sont permis au royaume du rouleau compresseur.
Nacer Kettane (1985, 170).

Vous voulez vous incruster? Mais on ne vous a pas sonné! Excusez-moi, mais j'ai trouvé la porte ouverte.
La fenêtre, vous voulez dire? Pas besoin de pression pour tomber. Seul l'insoutenable regard suffit.
Kettane (1985, 171).

In a semi-autobiographical passage, Gayatri Spivak (1992, 9) speaks about the politics of 'origin' and belonging when she claims that:

> One of the most tenacious names as well as strongest accounts of the agency or mechanics of staging is "origin". I perform my life this way because my origin stages me so: national origin, ethnic origin. And, more pernicious, you act this way because your origin stages you so. The notion of origin is as broad and robust and of affect as it is imprecise. History lurks into it somewhere [...]. To feel that one is from an origin is not a pathology. It belongs to the group of groundings, mistakes that enable us to make sense of our lives. But the only way to argue for origins is to look for institutions, inscriptions and then to surmise the mechanics by which such institutions and inscriptions can stage such a particular style of performance.

Spivak attempts to de-essentialise Otherness and to release notions of identity and belonging from the straitjacket of cultural determination. Differences of religion, 'race', gender, class, nationality are not simply facts to be 'tolerated' by liberal individuals or to be endured by those who are stereotyped on their account, but they are signifiers of certain social relations that are supported latently by institutions and power relations or structure and it is the mechanisms of those institutions and power relations that need investigation.

I have argued in Chapter Two and Three that the politics of French hospitality and democracy have been marked by the fictitious notions of the ties of kinship and blood that exclude those perceived as Other. or those falling outside the supposed national hearth. French hospitality, therefore, has been failing some members of the French nation whose physical, cultural and religious differences are not "accepted". In this chapter, I shall trace how the Beurs-- French nationals of immigrant descent-- translate in their literary texts the contradictions of French hospitality that position them at the margins of society as temporary immigrants/guests with no ties to France. Necira Souilamas Guénif (2000, 42) argues that the domestication and labelling of 'immigrants' and their descendants as 'outsiders' serve to preserve the supposed national 'harmony' since they are perceived as the Other of the nation.

Derrida (1994, 268) attacks the inherited concept of French fraternity as being that of the 'natural' or determined brother, that is, a fraternity based on notion of blood filiation. True fraternity for him is that of the fraternity of 'the oath', that is universal fraternity that transcends nationalism and ethnocentrism. The Beur narratives of exclusion from the French nation mark the texts analysed in this chapter, since Beur characters are always pushed outside the boundaries of the nation. Beur characters problematise the issue of birth as related to soil, to language, blood, nationality and the relationship between birth, language, culture, nationality and citizenship. The texts are marked by this question of discrepancy and contradiction in French notions of citizenship, fraternity and equality. Beur protagonists ironically and painfully point to their rejection and exclusion from French society despite their French nationality and their strong link with the culture of the French urban *banlieues* where they were born and brought up. French fraternity and equality are supposed to offer all members of society the same rights and privileges and protection under universal principles of justice, but the Beur are still marginalised and excluded because of their 'different' origins. Beur texts question the notions of 'blood affiliation' and cultural uniformity as necessary conditions for belonging to the 'French nation'. However, the Beur protagonists invent in their 'unhomely homeland' new forms of solidarity that make the issues of origins and purity meaningless.

In this chapter, Azouz Begag's novel *Béni ou le paradis privé* (1989) reveals the contradictions inherent in the French rhetoric of belonging to the nation. The protagonist Béni discovers that to be 'French'. you have to be 'white' whatever your level of 'integration' or success in French society. Thus, Béni confronts his exclusion from the nation on the basis of his physical appearance that denounces him as a foreigner. In Begag's novel *Quand on est mort c'est pour toute la vie* (1998), the main protagonist, Amar translates the stigma of ethnicity and physical difference. Even though he is a successful researcher in social sciences, he is seen as an unwanted 'guest' constantly reminded of his supposed return to Algeria, his parents' country of origin. Amar is also held hostage to the hostility of his own Maghrebian community which perceives him as a middle-class '*Beur-geois*' out of touch with their own misery and exclusion. Akli Tadjer's *Les ANI de "Tassili"* (1984) explores the disillusionment of the protagonist Omar with the notion of national belonging. In France he is seen as an immigrant who cannot understand French culture, and in his escape to Algeria, he is also trapped in the figure of the immigrant who does not know his parents' language or culture. In Mehdi Charef's novel *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* (1983), the two main characters of the novel, Madjid and Pat are connected by a strong friendship that transcends their different ethnic background as Madjid is from Algerian origins and Pat is a '*Français de souche*'. Class and 'race' are the two bases of discrimination in Charef's text, as both further stress young people's alienation from a sense of belonging to France. Charef's *Le harki de Meriem* (1989) suggests the harkis, or the 'French Muslims' as a stark example of the failure of French citizenship and its hypocrisy since they have been excluded from the nation and have been treated like second class citizens.

I argue in this chapter, through a close reading of Azouz Begag's, Akli Tadjer's and Mehdi Charef's texts, that though the Beur protagonists suffer from the process of being racialized and stigmatized because of their physical and cultural 'difference', they resist and subvert such stigma through the use of various strategies that suggest new alliances and solidarity that transcend skin colour and thus open hospitality beyond nationalistic and ethnic determinism.

1- The French Rhetoric of Belonging: Members Only in *Béni ou le paradis privé* (1989)[1]

Tenue correcte exigée. Club privé. Réservé aux membres adhérents. (Béni, 165).

Unlike other Beur characters, Béni in *Béni ou le paradis privé* is remarkably confident in his intelligence and achievement as a boy; he is the perfect example of the 'successful Beur'. He is working towards le BAC, which will be the pride of his family. His command of the French language is impeccable as he keeps correcting the mistakes of his French peers such as Nick.[2] He also corrects the usherette in the cinema as he is angry with her for not letting him in as she says 'qu'on me prend' and he corrects her 'qu'on me prenne' (Béni, 140). This linguistic obsession can be read as his own attempt to declare his being as 'French' as everybody else.

Though Béni is a successful example of an 'integrated' Beur with high qualifications and has everything he needs to succeed, he is still seen as a 'foreigner' in French society, for example, after impressing his French teacher on his high performance in the French language oral test, the latter asks him:

- De quelle origine vous êtes?
- Humaine, j'ai dit pour plaisanter.
- Non, allez, sérieusement, elle a demandé en égal à moi.
- Algérien.
- Pour un étranger, vous maîtrisez plutôt bien le français. Félicitations.
- Je suis né à Lyon, j'ai corrigé.
- Félicitations quand même (Béni, 60).

It is clear that Béni wants to affirm his 'insideness' to France as he was born in Lyons whereas the French teacher insists on his 'foreignness'. Béni rejects the sticky label 'immigrant' as it is linked with second class citizens and marginality. When asked by his French peers (with whom he wants to play football in the *cité banlieusard*) about his name that does not sound Arab, Béni answered: "oui et non. Je suis né à Lyon" (Béni, 62). But Béni reacts differently when a policeman is reproaching him and his friends for playing football on forbidden terrain while addressing Béni as a 'Mohamed', a process of naming that implies degradation

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[1] Abbreviated hereafter as Béni.

[2] See page 73 when Nick says "je suis rendu contre" instead of "rendre compte" and in page 78 when he also says "tu peches le vrai pour avir le faux!" and Béni corrects him "tu prêches le faux pour avoir le vrai!."

emphasising Béni's low status and his 'alien origins': "Alors Mohamed, tu sais pas lire ce qui est écrit sur la pancarte?" Béni pretends to be a newcomer in this situation and thus turns the stereotypes back on to the policeman: he adopts an accent that is meant to be recognised as foreign or as 'authentic' first generation immigrant' accent. Here is the amusing exchange:

> - Ci ba la bine, missiou!
> - Dis donc, toi y'en a pas être longtemps en France?
> - Sisse mois, missiou! (Béni, 62).

Béni exploits the stereotypes and uses them when necessary to produce ironical effects such as his pretence not to know French as a new immigrant in response to the policeman's remark of his being a 'Mohamed' who cannot read French. He does not only pretend to go along with the streotype as if it is true, but also offer a good performance of the person he is supposed to be in the eyes of the policeman. In another passage, he pretends to be an Hispanic immigrant in order to attend a pornographic film, but he is not able to impress the usherette with his "ounè blace por favor" (Béni, 139). He even pretends to be Chinese to be able to enter a 'private' nightclub because he thinks that the Chinese are seen as gentle and respectable unlike the Arab troublemakers. Another instance of this ab/use of stereotypes is when Béni 'confesses' to his friend Nick that he has two women to enjoy, one Shéherazade kept for him in his parents' country of origin and the other French for current consumption. But when he is told by Nick that it is good to be an immigrant to enjoy women from both places, he claims that he is not an immigrant as he has not migrated from anywhere and that it is only a question of "class" to enjoy both women (Béni, 78-79). Béni tries to conjure up a future in which he will stop being seen as an immigrant foreigner with his claim to be an 'insider' in France. But he is always reminded that he cannot belong. His English teacher described by Béni as "un raciste qui souffre pas le gros Arabs" has humiliated Béni in the class and treated him as 'foreigner' after he manages to answer a French grammatical question (Béni, 41). The teacher addresses the class: "Si c'est pas un comble que le seul étranger de la classe soit le seul à pouvoir se vanter de connaître notre langue!" (Béni, 42). In the same way as he replies to the French teacher, Béni emphasises that he is not a foreigner as he was born in Lyons like everybody else: "M'sieur, faut dire quand même que je suis pas totalement étranger puisque je suis né à Lyon comme tout le monde" (ibid.). 'Integration' is not as simple as succeeding in

education, mastering French (and even trying to die one's hair blond like Béni's friends). Béni is frustrated by his teacher's hypocrisy that excludes him from the 'national hearth' on account of his 'foreignness' though the teacher himself has immigrant origins:

> De côté du racisme il était pas clair le prof d'anglais dont les parents avaient quitté leur botte natale il y a plusieurs années. J'avais failli lui dire qu'il était sans doute plus étranger que moi, mais ce n'est jamais bon de déstabiliser un prof devant sa classe (Béni, 42).

Béni is not only critical of the process of exclusion imposed on him by the French rhetoric of belonging which perceives him as an eternal immigrant outsider, but also of his parents' idea of going back to Algeria, a country that he does not even know. He satirically laughs at his parents' idea of an arranged marriage for his brother Nourdine who will settle down in Algeria and prepare the way for them (Béni, 107-8-9). His father is outraged at Nourdine's refusal and accuses them all of wanting to marry 'des Françaises', an act of betrayal in itself that will cost them dearly as they will be treated as *de 'bicou'* (Béni, 109). Béni's father, an Algerian Muslim from the village of Setif, is now an exhausted labourer who has lost his children to France, his host country that has turned them against him.

Béni has fallen in love with a girl in his school named France. Her name can be seen as metaphor for both his love for the girl and the country itself: France (Béni, 44). Béni is not worried about his parents' anger as much as about his being rejected by France: "Ben Abdallah et France! Tout de suite, ça sent l'agression, l'incompatible." (Béni, 44). When France asks him about the origins of his (nick) name, he convincingly tells her that his father is African and his mother is English though later he discovers that his 'France' is not at all concerned about his origins (Béni, 45). He takes the symbolic chain with the Quranic verse off his neck, unable to keep it (it was a gift from his parents), as he has decided that between France and his parents, he has chosen France:

> *Entre France et mon père, j'ai choisi la blonde.* J'en ai eu marre de ces discussions de pauvres, des projets de retour de bled, du camion Berliet, des sous, du mariage avec une Arabe blanche ou noire: je ne voulais plus écouter ...Au fond de moi-même j'étais très content d'être un garcon, capable de prendre des décisions, de dire: Moi je reste là, et vous allez dans votre pays si vous voulez" (Béni, 110)

It is clear that Béni does not consider Algeria as his home as he has decided to stay in France (metaphorically the blonde France and the country) which he favours over his parents and he claims to be ready to abandon his parents and all the Arabs of the world for his 'France' (Béni, 151). The gender preference is clear as boys have more freedom to make their decisions about their lives than girls. Beni's sister lies to her parents about obtaining her degree and she is scared of the issue of getting married (Béni, 113-4). His mother sadly notices that France has taken him (Béni, 118), but for him "C'était décidé: j'allais tout dire à mon père. Finis l'hypocrisie, les monsonges, les fausses illusions, l'Algérie des colons, vive la France des amours" (Béni, 153). He respects his parents but he thinks that they are 'doublés par le temps', as they live in a time and space that is not 'here' and 'now', but somewhere in Algeria. Béni highly respects his father who is represented as being very generous with him and as sometimes fragile and scared to lose his children to France (Béni, 148-9, 157). Béni believes France's parents are not racist towards Algerians. Therefore, his father should lay the history of the Algerian war to rest: "je serai obligé de lui dire, à mon père, que la guerre d'Algérie est finie, qu'il faut sortir des tranchées, l'armistice est signé" (Béni, 121). His parents must face the fact that things have changed and that their children care less about Algeria than about their future in France. The war in Algeria is over for them and their life is in France, *'ici'* and not *'là bas'* in North Africa, though the colonial memory is respected. He clearly does not want to be linked with his parents' migrant life and their post and anti-colonial generation or to subordinate his future to their expectations.

However, Béni seems to have invested too much in his fragile illusions with his love for France. In his trip to the night-club *paradis de nuit* for which he has prepared so much, to the extent of straightening his frizzy hair, to look 'normal' and to impress his girl France, Béni discovered that to be 'French', you have to be 'white'. His friends in the cité of North African origin like himself are better prepared for the trip than Béni, thus for example Miloud dyes his hair blonde to be more 'classy' and dresses up in highstreet designer clothes to fool the entrance guards with his 'Frenchness'. His promise to his father to take the bus is broken as he decides to join his friends in their car, but it is too late to feel guilty as he has decided to go for France: "J'ai pensé à mon passé déjà si lointain .... à la guerre

d'Algérie, et plein d'autres choses aussi. Elles se mélangeaient toutes dans ma tête comme si c'étaient plusieurs personnes qui parlaient, m'avertissaient, me conseillaient. Tant pis, j'avais décidé d'aller vers France" (Béni, 161).

But his decision to go for France does not mean his total renunciation of his parents' culture as he is determined to follow the Islamic rituals of circumcision of his sons (Béni 164). Ironically while approaching the "paradis de nuit", Béni notices the note on the wall of the club*: "tenue correcte exigé. Club privé. Réservé aux membres adhérents."* (Béni, 165). In other words, France is *"un paradis privé"* and accepts only those who are members (ibid.). This membership is determined biologically as only the 'whites' or French *'de souche'* are accepted. For Béni, the privatisation of the club is 'a divine punishment' as he has given up everything for France (even his own parents) but it still does not accept him as a 'member'. Béni witnesses the vain endeavour of two boys looking like him being rejected by the guards of the 'private club' and one of them told Béni with despair that "Y'a rien à faire, y'nous enculeront toujours!" (Béni, 166). Béni realises that "Je n'ai pas la tenue correcte exigée. J'en suis sûr. Les yeux des hommes le disent. Je n'ai même pas la carte de membre adhérent du club privé. Je n'ai rien de ce qu'il faut pour être normal" (Béni, 167). But the young boys who are rejected at the doors are dressed up very well, in other words, they have filled all the requirements of being members but they are still rejected on the basis of their ethnic difference as they have to be whites to be members of the 'private club' as those with 'l'air normale' meaning French *'de souche'* were accepted without any questions about membership (Béni, 170). Béni understands then why Miloud changes his appearance and dyes his hair blonde; he is accepted in the club without questions. One of the guards tells Béni that he is Italian (that is of Italian extraction) emphasising the idea of old immigrants imposing the rhetoric of belonging on the 'new' ones (Béni, 170). Béni feels that France has let him down and that "tout d'un coup je deviens peureux de la vie comme mon père" losing his confidence in the capacity of France to respect his integration as it imposes the status of temporary immigrant on him as it did on his father (Béni, 171). He feels that he is a "n'importe qui" to be rejected (Béni, 171). As he has straightened his curly hair to change his image, he puts a ball of snow on his hair to restore the curls of "his real skin" (Béni, 172). He dreams that France the girl comes to him asking him to 'resist'; they disappear together into the 'paradise of

light' leaving behind those two guards who appear smaller and smaller: a dream of a possible future-to-come of France that will be more inclusive (Béni, 173). Exclusion on the basis of ethnicity is suggested in the title of the novel as Béni confronts his exclusion from 'the private paradise' (literally in the novel in the form of a night-club) because of his physical appearance that confirms his ethnicity: the membership of the 'private paradise' is limited to 'les Français de souche' and excludes even those who are 'integrated'. It is only members who have the right 'tenue' that are accepted.

That Béni is deprived of the joys of the 'private paradise' of French society because of his ethnic origins is clear from the first passage of the novel, but this time, Béni blames the narrow-mindedness of his parents who do not allow their family to celebrate Christmas: " Nöel et son père barbu ne sont jamais rentrés chez nous, et pourtant Dieu sait si nous sommes hospitaliers! Jamais de sapin-roi-des-forêts devant la cheminée, de lumières multicolores et d'étoiles scintillantes.... Et tout ça parceque notre chef à nous c'est Mohamed!" (Béni, 7). Béni believes that it is because of religion and ethnicity that they cannot enjoy Christmas celebrations and thus be like the 'others': "C'est toujours la même chose dans cette baraque, on fait jamais comme les autres! C'est pas parcequ'on fait le Noël chez nous qu'on devient des traîtres. On est pas obligé de mettre une crèche avec un petit Jésus dedans, bon Dieu!" (Béni, 20). It is clear that Béni is trying to enjoy both cultures and reconcile them without having to denounce the one or the other, but he is harshly beaten by his father for what he thinks is imitating Catholic customs (Béni, 22). Béni describes the Christmas party organised by his father's employers in the factory as the only time of the year where they feel very close to the French working-class families and their 'good side', or 'bons côtés' (Béni, 8). He is the only one in his family to insist on having the Christmas celebrations at home like the 'others': "J'allais dire chez moi qu'on pouvait très bien profiter de la fête des chrétiens même quand on est des Arabes" and that they can pretend or 'faire semblant' to be French to enjoy the celebrations, but he is confronted by his father's total lack of understanding.

Béni's desire to belong to both communities, to break down the boundaries of religion, culture and ethnicity summarises the experience of most people who are

aware of the processes of creolization, those who live on the border of cultures: "ceux qui viennent à brouiller ces frontières, à les passer et donc à faire apparaître leur artifice historique, leur violence aussi, c'est-à-dire les rapports de force qui s'y concentrent et en vérité s'y capitalisent à perte de vue. Ceux qui sont sensibles à tous les enjeux de la 'créolisation' ... le mesurent mieux que d'autres" (Derrida 1996, 24). Like most Beurs, Béni refuses the rhetoric of the outsideness-insideness opposition by thinking of the outside and the inside, of the outside with the inside as being deferred into each other. It is clear that Begag's text translates the contradictions experienced by the young Beur who, while insisting on refusing to be held hostage to the process of migration that excludes him from the French national hearth, offers a new model of affiliation that transcends religion, ethnicity and nation. Affiliation for Béni is not limited by the ties of being part of a specific 'ethnic' group, religion or culture since he wants to break the barriers that keep French communities and Maghrebian ones apart and thus enjoy both cultures. But the Beurs' strong desire to be accepted in the non-Maghrebian communities is accompanied by what Jacques Derrida describes (in his own attempt at integration into the non-Jewish community in colonial Algeria as an Algerian Jew) as a painful and distrustful desire to discern signs of racism and their manifestations (Bernasconi and Wood 1991, 107). This racism is found in the French assertions of 'you are not integrated yet', 'you are not yet here', 'you have to come close to us' or 'you are among us but not of us'. At the same time, there is sometimes a feeling of 'distance' from the Maghrebian communities and the parents' generation when they close in upon themselves. The result of this is a process of exclusion from both French society and Maghrebian communities.

2- Amar as a *harki de la plume* held hostage to inhospitality in *Quand on est mort c'est pour toute la vie* (1998)[3]

> *Dans le métro (...) avec sa tête de vacancier bronzé, il risquait en permanence un contôle. Sans papiers, on l'embarquerait en poste. Au moins, avec de vrais faux papiers, il pourrait passer au travers de filet, et poursuivre sa route comme un poisson dans son océan de béton.*
> Mehdi Lallaoui (1986, 169).

[3] Abbreviated hereafter as Mort.

Azouz Begag's text is clearly a semi-autobiographical reflection on his life, since the protagonist Amar is, like Begag, a novelist and an academic researcher in the human sciences, married to a French woman. Amar strongly distinguishes himself from the miserable and deprived life of his father (who accuses his son of being 'taken by France' mainly because he married a French woman). He is a young middle-class professional: "émir du golfe de Lyon" and "un de ceux que la France a 'pris' dans son piège d'intégration" (Mort, 107). His being trapped within the discourse of integration is due to the fact that in French society, he is still held hostage to inhospitality or to being an 'intruder', an unwanted 'guest' constantly reminded of his supposed return to a certain Algeria, his parents' country of origin with which he had severed his links long before. Amar is also held hostage to the hostility of his own Maghrebian community which perceives him as a *Beur-geois* out of touch with their own misery and exclusion. Issues of the law, the institution of 'justice', power relations and the exclusion of the ethnic Other deeply mark this text. Amar's grief for the murder of his brother deeply troubles his sense of a supposed 'belonging' to France; a country with which he is strongly affiliated by birth.

Begag's text raises an important issue of the supposed authenticity of North African communities as he stresses the way they experience unprecedented forms of internal divisions based on wealth and class, gender, sexuality, etc. One cannot homogenise the descendants of North African immigrants into one social category, since class divisions separate them (for example, Amar as a middle-class professional is rejected by his fellow Beur, still at the bottom of the social scale). If Mehdi Charef's text *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed* (1983) calls on class exclusion as an element that unites the various youths of the *Banlieue*, Begag's text addresses the problem of class as an element that separates him from his fellow Beur as he is accused of 'selling himself to the French' to climb the social ladder. But it also emphasises the divergence in the Beur experience and thus the absence of a supposed 'ethnic essence' specific to the North African communities.

Amar's visit as a Beur novelist to a youth community centre in Lyons. his home town, where he is supposed to talk about his work is marked by this social division. A young drug addict tells Amar that "La France, tu l'as bien enculeé. toi! Et t'as raison! ...Mais viens pas nous raconter des conneries. à NOUS!" This is a clear accusation that Amar cannot understand their own marginalisation as a deprived group, since he is perceived as 'un ecrivain integré' (as he calls himself) (Mort, 57). Amar's career as a 'public writer' is not easy; on one occasion he is confronted by some of his distant relatives at a party as being a user of the immigrants' misery. Amar has been brought up with his two cousins who are now very rich butchers in 'douar-Lyon', but when he jokingly refers to their job as butchers, he is harshly accused of being a 'hypocrite': " Pour qui tu te prends? Écrivain! Tu racontes des conneries sur les pauvres et tu gagnes de l'argent avec ça! La misère des gens te fait vivre et tu nous dis 'quoi la viande'... Tu'as pas honte?" (Mort, 90). Amar takes it as part of the 'joys' of his job as a writer (to be attacked by the people he is writing about); he feels the need "to harden his heart" and not be demoralised by those attacks as other people approach him and express their admiration for his work (Mort, 91). He may be seen as a "HARQUIS DE LA PLUME"[4] licking "le cul des Français with his words", but he is committed to speak from where he is situated (Mort, 105). If he is rejected by some members of his own community for being a 'Beur-gois', he is equally rejected by some French people especially the agents of 'order and law'. His perceived 'foreignness' makes him susceptible to being gazed at with suspicious eyes and to being accused of being outside the law (Mort, 55).

Amar is trying to come to terms with the loss of his brother murdered by a French taxi driver for not paying his taxi fare. The French law does not convict the murderer and considers the murder as if it has not taken place ("non-lieu") or as a case dismissed for lack of evidence. His brother's blood is made worthless by the authorities, as it has no 'lieu' within French society. This 'non-lieu' has deeply influenced Amar's trust of the French Declaration of Human Rights and of their justice system marked by institutional racism.

Being still under the influence of this stark miscarriage of justice, Amar approaches the upholders of the law with suspicion and even fear. For example, a park-keeper

[4] Begag's own capitals in the text.

who claims to be "La loi, c'est la loi et moi c'est la loi" tells Amar off for cycling in the park. When Amar tries to argue with him, the keeper tells him that: "JE VOUS PERMETS PAS DE ME TUTOYER... ON N'A PAS ÉLEVÉ LES COCHONS ENSEMBLE EN ARABIE!" (Mort 19). Amar is seen by the keeper as an outsider to French society or rather still an immigrant. Though Amar clearly speaks 'native' French, the 'guardian of the law' suspects him of not understanding his 'French', the French of the law: "Nul n'est censé ignorer la loi. Je parle le français, non?" (Mort, 19). The keeper warns Amar not to challenge the law and that if he is not happy in 'French gardens' under 'French law', he can go back to his 'desert': "ce 'desert'", Amar thinks, "restera collé à ma peau toute ma vie, même si je ne l'ai jamais connu" (Mort 20). Whatever the degree of his integration in French society (successful *homme de lettres* and researcher, married to a French woman with two daughters and adoring Lyons as his home town),[5] he is still seen as an outsider. Amar is haunted by the phrase "go back to your country" and he imagines everybody telling him that (Mort, 24-5).

Amar translates the stigma of ethnicity and skin colour that in France are linked to criminality, as he suspects every policeman of accusing him of being a thief: "Le flic qui fume une cigarette devant l'entrée du poste police va-t-il me demander de décliner mon identité? Il va me soupçonner de voler mon vélo. Ça j'en suis sûr." (Mort, 28). France has not yet recovered from the violence of colonial racism which has been carried to the metropolis and practised on those perceived as 'colonial subjects' (for example, Amar thinks of the policeman suspecting him of stealing the bicycle as having a trace of the Algerian war in his eyes (ibid.)). He sees the faces of Mitterrand and Chirac as threatening him with a very serious expression of the legitimate guardians of the 'Declaration of the Human Rights', and ironically torment his conscience when he drives through a yellow light turning into red (Mort, 32). Heavily damaged by the verdict of the *non-lieu* of his brother's murder, Amar confronts the police, posing the 'moral dilemma' of the *lieu* and *the non-lieu* of his offence: "J'ai grillé un feu rouge. Y a pas de NON-LIEU qui compte!" (Mort, 32-34). The policemen look at Amar as if he is a 'murderer' and ask him aggressively about the car suspected of being stolen (Mort, 33). Begag's text is clearly directed at the criticism of the French police's institutional racism and its

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[5] See page 18.

exclusion of the ethnic Other always suspected of 'necessarily' being a criminal. For Amar, the law and the police force must be "formès aux sciences sociales et humaines" (Mort, 35).

Being pushed to 'leave' for the other side of the Mediterranean, Amar decides to visit his parents' country of origin in an attempt to 'reconcile' himself with the land of his ancestors. His short trip "home" or with "les miens"[6], is marked by his feelings of alienation from his parents' native country where he is also seen as an "émigré de retour dans sa terre non-natale" or a temporary "guest" (Mort, 94). Colonial violence has also come back to haunt Algeria, but this time in the form of a bloody civil war between the army and the Muslim fundamentalists. The ideal of the Revolution has disappeared into the chaos of a very corrupt military regime. Amar witnesses people's sufferings with the eye of a "foreigner": "je vois tout cela avec les yeux d'étranger" (Mort, 44). If Amar leaves France with disheartening disappointment about the French justice system and security force that stigmatise the Beurs and still see them as outsiders or threats, Amar leaves Algeria and comes back to Lyons with many doubts and suspicions about everything in his parents' country of origins as economic social and politcal life is marked by the total abuse of those in power: "Je suis au milieu de ces hallucinations. Quittant chez moi pour retourner chez moi" (Mort, 53). But ironically he is seen as an 'intruder' in both spaces.

3- The Beurs as *Les Arabes Non Identifiés* in Akli Tadjer's *Les ANI de "Tassili"* (1984)[7]

> *Ils [les Beurs ou les ANI] ont la redoutable faculté de s'adapter partout où ils se trouvent. Ils investissent tous les droits que les chants des mosquées condamnent. Ils ont, en l'espace d'une génération, crée leur propre espace culturel, leur propre code, leur propre dialecte. Ils sont beaux. Ils sont forts. Ils savent d'un seul coup d'oeil faire la différence entre un vrai et un faux ANI. Ils aiment la vie et débordent d'énergie. Des brigades spéciales de police ont dû être formées à leur intention pour freiner leur ardeur. Ce sont les rois de la navigation, les rois de la navigation en eau trouble. (ANI, 27).*

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[6] Amar's own brackets, see page 40.

Omar, the narrator and protagonist of Akli Tadjer's *Les A.N.I. de "Tassili"* identifies the descendants of the Maghrebi immigrants in France as a 'new' species in the name of ANI ('Arabes non Identifiés'). Tadjer comically and ironically uses the pseudo-scientific expression OVNI (Objet Volant Non Identifiés) to set the appearance of this new species between 1950-1980, 'peuple de bâtards' who rebel against both their parents' and French culture, creating their own space amid all the aggression and exclusion.

The novel is structured around the sea trip on board the ship "Tassili" from Algiers to Marseilles. It is a 'shipboard journal'[8] situated in the borderlines between Algeria and France, which significantly projects Omar's situation between borders, cultures and histories. It also strongly emphasizes how his border line narrative deconstructs all determinations associated with borders, whether they are national, cultural or ethnic as Omar refuses fixed identity claims imposed on him by others.

The narrator/protagonist Omar, who identifies himself as an Arab-non-Identifié, describes his encounter with the different passengers of the Tassili reflecting at the same time on their various identities and subjectivities and recovering some of their histories. While Omar tries to divide the characters according to their supposed identities--for example, immigrants workers, an Algerian 'intellectual', a pied-noir couple, French tourist girls, and his fellow ANI, the narrative takes him to the Franco-Algerian interdependent and intertwined histories as the itinerary of the ship is linked to other historical movements between Algeria and France. In post-Independence Algeria, Omar is careful to criticise sarcastically how the Algerian Revolution against French colonisation has been corrupted by the military elite and their excessive privileges and lack of respect for the Algerian people. The difference between national liberation and independence is clear as the sacrifices of the Algerian Revolution are being overshadowed by the corruption of the military elite and their impoverishment of the Algerian people. Immigrants like Chérif, a crane driver in France and one of the freedom-fighters during the War of Independence, expresses his sadness and disappointment at the status of Algeria (ANI, 36-7).

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[7] Abbreviated in the references as ANI.

[8] Derrida (1979) uses this term in reference to Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*, which was written on the borderline between land and sea.

Omar himself cannot recognise the revolutionary Algeria and its rebel people that had put an end to French colonisation, all that he can see now is "des spectres déambuler dans les villages tristes comme la mort" (ANI. 61).

An Algerian 'intellectual' on board the Tassili represents the official discourse of the Algerian government that hijacked the Revolution for its own use and excluded those it wants to exclude; in this case the intellectual addresses the immigrants accusing them of betraying their country by leaving it for France and their descendants who sooner or later 'must' choose between France and Algeria as they cannot remain all their lives "d'éternals adolescents irresponsables, inconscients et immatures..." (ANI, 120). This appropriation of the Algerian War by the elite has deeply angered Chérif whose body still testifies to the inscribed memories and scars of the war (ANI, 121). Chérif reminds him of the demonstration on the 17th of October 1961 at which Chérif had been present and how he was arrested and tortured by the French police (ibid.). Chérif rejects any attempt to deny his "history" and memory because he is an "immigrant": "Maintenant, quand on rentre au pays, on nous appelle les fils de France, comme si on n'était pas des Algeriens à part entière." But he also divides history into winners and losers, the former are those who had chosen to fight for Algeria until the end and the latter are the *harkis*, those who fought with the French (ANI, 123-4). The losers also include the nostalgic 'pied-noir' couple on board the Tassili, nostalgic for their past life in colonial Algeria. These two 'disinherited' people, as Omar calls them, remind him of his pied-noir concierge and her husband in La Garenne-Colombe, as they ask him to check whether their house in Algeria which they fled after the independence still exists and whether their neighbours still remember them (ANI, 38). Omar decides to lie so that he will not hurt their feelings and thus pretends that the house is still there.

Omar himself has been on a 'stage d'adaptation volontaire' to adapt himself to 'Algerian' life and become a 'true' Algerian, but he discovers his total disillusionment about a supposed 'Algerian' identity that he can know and master and thus the illusion of having to belong to Algeria, his parents's land of origin: "Algerié, je t'en veux de n'avoir pas su me retenir. J'étais venu te voir avec la secrète ambition de réussir ce stage d'adaptation volontaire. Pour cela, je dus

prendre des cours d'information accélérée entre Barbés et Belleville." Omar has 'prepared' for his trip to Algeria like any well-meaning 'tourist' and cultural 'outsider' would have done. He has frequented all the Maghrebian cafés of certain neighbourhoods where Maghrebian culture is supposed to be "transmitted". He has even read Ibn Khaldun to familiarise himself with the history of the Maghreb, and listened to traditional Folkloric Berber and Arabic music (ANI, 41-2). But "Toute cette somme de travail, de recherches et d'efforts pour en conclure que l'Algérie, c'est autre chose qu'un plat de couscous, deux disques, un livre de géographie et de littérature. Je ne suis pas sûr d'avoir la volonté de me représenter de si tôt à un nouveaux stage..." (ANI, 42). But Omar is not sure why he should master Algerian 'culture'. Is it because he calls himself and other Beurs Arabs but not-identified or not accepted as 'authentic' by both Algerians and French, or is it because he thinks that he can overcome having 'le cul entre deux chaises' (ANI, 173) (between France and Algeria) if he acquires his supposed 'Algerian identity'? Or is just a form of escape from a commonplace daily racism in France that makes one search for another 'space' where one can belong? Still, he insists on his strong affiliation with the Parisian suburbs where he was born and brought up.

Being born in *La Garenne-Colombes,* a Parisian *banlieue*, Omar thinks it possible to claim French origins while filling in papers for his entry to Algeria. He is trying to play the innocent with his Algerian passport, but the officer in charge representing the official discourse of Algeria clearly links his nationality with his origins: "T'as un passport algérien, tes origines sont algériennes. Que te sois né à Paris, New York ou Moscou, ça ne change rien!" (ANI, 12). For the officer, if one is Voltaic and is born in Sweden, one would never have Swedish origins (ibid.). Thus, Omar concludes that it is possible to be born in *les Hauts-de-Seines* and have Algerian origins, but if nationality is linked to passport, why are there two questions about nationality and origin? (ANI, 12). French discourse on the other hand does not consider nationality and origin as the same even though Republican discourse does not make that difference. Therefore, descendants of Maghrebi immigrants with their French ID are still perceived as outsider immigrants.

Being caught between these two discourses, Omar claims to be happy to leave his 'chez-moi' (Algeria) for his 'chez-moi' (France) (ANI, 20). His trip was a total

failure as he could not bear staying in Algeria for more than 18 days: "Au bout de dix-huit jours, j'ai craqué. J'en pouvais plus...Vidé... Plus rien dans les tripes... J'ai capitulé..." (ANI, 67). In Algiers, he is easily accused of being 'un immigré' who does not know his roots and his language: "Tous tarés les gosses de Madame la France" (ANI, 15). He is expected by Algerians as well as by the French to know 'Algeria'. Nelly and Francine ask him to clarify certain misconceptions about 'his' country, Omar responds that he knows 'la banlieue Parisienne' more as his home as he is familiar with this discourse that tries to set for him a certain role:

> - Mais l'Algérie, c'est ton pays...
> - Je ne l'écoute pas. Je connais leur baratain... Ton pays...Tes racines...Ton drapeau... Ton père...Ta mère... Tes frères... Tes pois chiches...La nostalgie... J'en passe, et des meilleurs. (ANI, 73).

Omar strongly resists being trapped in the role of a 'native informant' who can provide Francine with the key to the understanding of the Algerian patriarchal society not simply because his personal knowledge of Algeria is very limited, as he has been there only three times, but also because Francine's questions still consider Omar as an outsider to French society who can explain his 'native' Algerian culture, which he himself cannot understand. He is still perceived even by those two 'open-minded' French social workers as an Algerian immigrant (ANI, 77. He is aware of the stereotypes constructed by the 'tiers-mondistes', those interested in knowing the 'Third World' like Nelly and Francine, and of their desire to impose 'lessons of civilisation' (ANI, 78). Nelly tells Omar that her friends have warned her to be careful of 'savage' Algerians as the wounds of the Algerian War have not yet healed, but she has discovered that: "... les Arabes sont des gens formidables...Ah! oui, de braves gens! Ils nous ont accueillies chez eux à bras ouverts. L'hospitalité, chez vous, ce n'est pas une légende" (ANI, 78). Nelly still addresses Omar as if he belongs to Algeria, as if he is still an immigrant in a temporary passage though Omar states clearly that he is an ANI of France (ANI, 77). He has some nostalgia for the Algeria of his parents and even some ironic 'nationalism' when a disappointed tourist from Belgium attacked the Algerian 'Revolutions' (ANI, 117), but Omar is a foreigner to Algeria like Nelly and Francine. Omar plays and then

dismisses the roles assigned to him (because of his Algerian origins and French up-bringing) in order to survive the various expectations forced on him.[9]

As Chérif refuses immigration as a betrayal to Algeria, Fifier, like Omar and an ANI of France (a Beur) refuses to be an outsider immigrant in French society. He writes a song for his friend Larbi, "qui vit ce que vivent chaque jour des milliers d'ANI" in Parisian *banlieues*:

> Il a pas bronzé
> Sous le ciel d'Alger
> C'est pas un étranger
> Bien que sur ses papiers
> Y ait écrit "émigré"
> Comme tous les autres paumés
> Un jour qu'ont traversé
> La Méditerranée

Fifier rejects immigration and foreignness as the point of reference in the history of the Beur who have not migrated from anywhere. France is the country they know:

> Depuis qu'il est môme
> Il habite la zone
> Du côté de Nanterre
> Dans une cité d'enfer
> Mais il dit qu'il aime bien
> Y a tous ses copains
> Et pis la p'tite Sylvie
> Une fille qu'il aime aussi.

Fifier seems to think that the rough life in the banlieue, the failing schooling system, delinquency, unemployment, the refusal to 'be' slave labourers like their parents[10] are all factors that link the story of the Beurs in general. Fifier's song reflects the story of Omar's young brother who has been locked in prison and who refused to do the same job as his father: "l'usine c'est la prison, le chantier c'est pour les

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[9] For example to be a good Muslim, see p. 63, to be an Algerian nationalist, p. 117, etc.

[10] "Son vieux bosse à en crever
Sur un chantier, danger
Alors si tu veux l'faire marrer
Dis-lui d'aller trimer
Il est pas preneur
Y a trop de risques à l'usine
Et pas assez de frangines" (ANI, 138-9).

immigrés..." (ANI, 81). Omar feels his brother's absence which makes him lonely, lost and confused. (ANI, 82).

The Parisian *banlieue* haunts the life of both Omar and Fifier with its ordinary 'mal de vivre' such as the lack of social activities, poverty, unemployment and 'ordinary racism'[11], but it remains the source of their inspiration and artistic creation, Omar and his fiction writing and Fifier with his musical talents. Their life is 'said' and 'invented' as Omar, caught up in this web of histories, writes to invent "...des pays, des histoires, des cauchemars, des rêves, la vie et moi même" but not in a totally dispirited way; it is coloured with humour and hope (ANI, 175). Omar resists opening up to his fellow passengers about his life and the painful memories of his childhood and adolescent life. He masks those experiences with humour and irony, which can be seen in the text as two strategies of survival. The only time we can hear his thoughts is when he agrees to be 'interrogated' by Nelly, the French social worker, who wants to know as part of a game whether he has encountered racism and whether he feels culturally affiliated to France or Algeria (ANI, 173). Nelly's questions are exactly what Omar is trying not to think about as they are haunting him and they remain partly unanswered because he cannot find clear cut definitions. Thus, writing provides the tool for bringing all those tensions and contradictions to life in a way that will allow Omar to invent himself beyond binary oppositions and categorisation as he is heir to various histories and cultures. Omar uses humour and self-mockery in answering Nelly's questions, but underneath this humour is a set of issues and feelings that Omar prefers to address to himself as he thinks Nelly would not be able to understand them.

Omar insists that there can be no single definition of racism as it is a plural phenomenon that takes different shapes: "Facile d'opposer le Blanc ou Noir, facile d'opposer l'Oriental à l'Occidental. Facile d'opposer le Nord au Sud... C'est même ce que j'appellerais le racisme des pauvres gens honêtes!" (ANI, 170). But still, he cannot forget the stereotypes he faced when he was a child such as "les Arabes, ça vole...", or "Retourne dans ton bled, sale raton" though he has never been in his 'bled' before and though he thinks of himself as *'garennois'* as he was born in la Garenne Colombe in Paris (ANI, 170-1). He also remembers when his relationship

with a French girl was cut short by her parents because he happened to be an Arab (ibid.). The stigma of his cultural origins has marked his life: "Il suffit de croiser les regards du bon petit peuple de la rue pour déjà les entendre m'accuser de tous les maux" which has led to the commonplace murder of young people of Maghrebi origins (ANI, 172).

As for the question of cultural affinity with France or Algeria, Omar thinks that:

> Avoir le cul entre la France et l'Algérie, c'est avoir le cul mouillé, et je ne supporte pas d'avoir les fesses mouillées. Il y a longtemps que j'ai pigé que pour être bien dans sa peau et à l'aise dans ses babouches, fallait surtout pas choisir entre la France et l'Algérie...D'ailleurs pourquoi choisir, puisque j'ai les deux... Je ne veux être hémiplégique. (ANI, 174).

But he is still obsessed with questions of 'existentialisme' and still searching contradictorily for his 'arabité': "j'aimerais ne pas courir après mon arabité comme certains courent après leur bifteck...Il y a pourtant des jours où je la sens toute proche de moi. Elle me provoque, m'excite, m'effleure et me caresse. Alors, je tends une main docile et avenante. J'ai envie de l'enrober entre mes bras, la blottir très fort contre ma poitrine et lui baiser le front. Je veux l'apprivoiser [tame]. Il m'arrive même de lui murmurer qu'elle n'a rien à craindre, que je veux être son enfant, son ami, son amant, que je lui appartiens, qu'Ibn Khaldun ne me fait pas peur, je l'ai étudié...Wallou!!!...Elle ne veut rien savoir: 'ANI tu es, ANI tu resteras'..."(ANI, 187).

Islam is not seen as a component of 'Arabité' for Omar as he shows his total disinterest in it and no attachment to it (ANI, 63). Omar even stresses that his generation of Beurs frequents all the spaces (nightclubs and discos) that what he calls 'les chants de mosquées' (meaning ironically the Quran) condemn (ANI, 27). He declares the difference between first generation immigrants and what he calls the ANI, their descendants in French society (ANI, 175). He considers his birth and up-bringing in the Parisian *banlieue* as a focal point in the formation of his identity, but he is still confused about his search for his Arab origins. It is as if his identity is not complete without this 'seizing' of his 'Arabité'. In trying to avoid others' judgmental

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[11] Omar puts it as the next door neighbour who "refait la guerre d'Algerie tous les soirs en sortant ses poubelles" (ANI, 139).

discourses on his identity. Omar sometimes falls into the trap of these limited discourses, which leave him unsure and confused. When he is in Algeria, he is seen as an immigrant who does not know his parents' language and culture and thus has sold his soul to France ('Fils de France'), but when he is in France. he is seen as an immigrant who could never 'integrate' into French society.

4- *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* (1983):[12] the alignment of the non-aligned

C'est quoi la frontière? Ah! C'est ce morceau de papier, vous me rassurez! Mais si je pose le pied dessus, on ne le voit pas. Ah! que c'est bon un monde sans papier! Je suis là, vous êtes là, dans le présent. Vous pourriez être moi, je pourrais être vous. Demain d'autres seront là à notre place. Nacer Kettane (1985, 171).

Mehdi Charef's *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed* is one of the most acclaimed early Beur novels. It is a narrative of marginalisation that transcends the rigid notion of ethnicity as the basis of alliance and extends to other clusters of identifications such as that of class and the dynamics of exclusion. The two main characters of the novel, Madjid and Pat are connected by a strong friendship that transcends their different ethnic background as Madjid is from Algerian origins and Pat is a '*Français de souche*'. Their common working class background and their shared life in the *HLM cité* provide their strong bond of affiliation as they both (with the other young people of the *cité*) 'failed' their education and are unemployed. Madjid's group consists of youth from various 'ethnicities', Bengston of Antillais' origin, James of Algerian extraction, Jean-Marc of French ancestry, Bibiche of Algerian descent and Anita of an Algerian father and French mother (Thé, 26). Charef's text translates Derrida's (1994) theory that non-androcentric and non-fraternalistic, that is non-patriotic or non-nationalist friendship is the basis of an ethical hospitality that denounces the figure of the 'determined' brother or the brother of the blood and thus accepts the irreducible transcendence of the Other. Madjid, Pat and their friends are not bounded by the 'fictitious' and 'dreamt' condition of the 'genealogical bond' as their affiliation transcends the privileges of birth or blood and thus offers hospitality to difference and Otherness.

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[12] Abbreviated in the references as Thé.

More than any other Beur author, Charef's narrative focuses not only on the life of the immigrant parents and their descendants, but also on the life of their French working class neighbours with whom the space of the *cité* is shared and whose life is entangled in a web of difficult and sometimes dramatic social relations. For example, Madjid and his mother are usually called to rescue their next door family from the drunkard father, Mr. Levesque, who terrorises his wife and children almost every night. Malika, Madjid's mother interferes to help the beaten wife amid the commonplace racist insults of Mr. Levesque (*bougnoule, sale bicot*...). Madjid is called to help when the drunkard cannot be controlled or when he is using knives and sharp objects to attack his wife (Thé, 18-9). Mr. Levesque's racist views about the Arabs are clear according to Madjid: "Pour lui, c'est les Arabes qui pissent dans l'ascenseur et dégradent le batiment", which puts Madjid on the defensive confirming that "Les Arabes ne sont pas des chiens..." (Thé, 12). Similar to Mr. Levesque is Mr. Pelletier with his German dog with which he scares all the residents of the *cité*. For Madjid, it seems easier for Mr. Pelletier to scare the others "en restant cloîtré chez soi avec un berger allemand à ses pieds que de sortir au-devant des gens pour se comprendre et les comprendre." (Thé, 23). Fear and insecurity are compensated for by fierce dogs or guns to fight the youths of the *cité* seen as delinquents and out of control (Thé, 24). Charef represents the issue as a generational problem between the young and their parents: "comme dit Pat, un jour ce sera la guerre entre les parents et les jeunes de la cité, une guerre à mort. Le cauchemar." If racism is widespread among the older generation in their hatred not only of the young Franco-Maghrebians, but also of the 'white' youth of the *cité*, the young generation, Madjid's group of friends, is united by a strong friendship that transcends their 'racial', ethnic or religious affiliations (Thé, 26). The war eventually takes place at the end after a series of confrontations. Madjid and his friends are heavily drunk when a gas bomb explodes in the cellar of the building where they are squatting. A group of 'white' middle-aged male residents full of hatred, savagely attack the youths causing them immense physical damage, but the youths do not give in as they burn all their cars in the *cité* car park the same night. The cellar of the building is the only place where they can find some peace and warmth, where they can find relief under the effects of drugs and escape from unemployment, despair, and *le béton*: "Silence et repos, et un peu de chaleur humaine, comme

quand on s'endort fatiguée d'une journée trop remplie" (Thé. 144). In many other Beur texts, especially those of Tassidit Immache, the youths use the cellar of the *béton* as a place where they can escape *le mal de vivre* and create their own space.

In *Le Thé*, France's policies of inclusion/exclusion are exposed with all their contradictions and discrepancies. Discrimination at work because of skin colour or ethnicity is clearly the case with all those not perceived as 'Français de souche' though they are French nationals. If the French from North African origins are already stigmatised because their Arabic names 'betray' their origins, *Les Antillais* (West Indian origins), with French names are asked to send a photograph when applying for jobs to make sure that they are 'white' before granting them the job (Thé, 93). "Les Antillais, c'est des Français pourtant. Mais à part entière seulement pour voter", Bengston, Madjid's friend of West Indian descent, understands this issue and thus he only frequents 'des fils d'Arabes' as he aligns himself with their exclusion; he criticises politicians of West Indian extraction who sell themselves: "Même si certains politiciens antillais sont des vendus, les Antilles ne sont pas à vendre" (Thé, 94). Class and 'race' are the two bases of discrimination in Charef's text, as both further stress young people's alienation from a sense of belonging to France, their 'unhomely homeland'.

The *cité de banlieue* and its residents are located at the periphery of French society. Josette, a young single mother struggles to survive after she has been made redundant in a factory and is unable to find a job anywhere (Thé, 47). Malika, Madjid's mother, supports her as a good friend and makes her feel a member of the family, but Josette is too desperate to cope with not being able to support herself and her son (Thé, 66-7-8). It is Malika who passionately saves her life on New Year's eve when Josette decides to throw herself from the balcony of her flat (Thé. 163-4-5-6). Madjid's mother, Malika overworks so as to be able to support her children after her husband is mentally disabled in a work accident. Her friendship with Josette is also an example of their compassionate bond based on their common struggle to survive. Solange, an alcoholic young mother, is another example of human misery in the *cité*. She gives herself over to prostitution as her husband has been locked up in prison for a long time (Thé. 71-2). Madjid and Pat take her to the bidonville of Gennevilliers where single immigrant men of Portuguese, Spanish and

North African origin live: "ils vivent là comme des bêtes, à l'écart de la ville, entre les travaux de l'autoroute, la voie du chemin de fer et le port de Gennevilliers, dans ce champ de travail entouré d'un haut grillage" (Thé, 77). Madjid and Pat use Solage to exploit the sexual frustration and misery of immigrant workers (Thé, 79). Charef manages to draw a comic scene from this miserable situation (Solange moving between the cabins of workers selling her body and Madjid and Pat negotiating the price) with his ironical style that laughs at human misery (Thé, 78-9-80).

Madjid and his best friend Pat both failed their schooling, Pat is even illiterate. It is in the "collège d'enseignement technique", "l'université du fils-du-pauvre-qui-n'a-pas-eu-de-chance" that Madjid and Pat become friends (Thé, 51). The class (*classe de rattrapage*) that is set to help him and other children at the Fleurs school is more of a humiliation for those who are the outcasts of society: "fils d'alcoolos, de malades, de putes, de Gitans, d'immigrés...", future residents of the prison of 'Fleury-Mérogis' (Thé, 100). Each time a child has a problem in following his/her class, the director of the school sends him or her to Mr. Raffin, an alcoholic teacher, who abuses the children both mentally and physically (Thé, 101). After his father's fatal work accident, Madjid joins the 'catching up' class where he and his friends witness the slow death not only of their alcoholic teacher who cannot punish them anymore, but also of their own chances to break out of the vicious cycle of failure in which they are trapped (Thé, 102).

Mehdi Charef directs his criticism towards the idea that schools provide the tools for integration for children from deprived ethnic backgrounds. The exclusion in schools of certain groups (especially the children of North African immigrants) is directly linked to their socio-economic deprivation (the idea here is that discriminatory practices based on ethnic origins deeply affect forms of social mobility). In fact, rather than looking at the school system as if it were in crisis, one has to look at it from the point of view of the school's changing function in producing different forms of inequalities that did not exist before. If the school system is seen as a way of reinforcing the belief in the 'neutrality' and uniformity of values in the public sphere, this means that the notion of 'difference' has no place within it and even if a certain 'openness' to cultural difference is allowed, it should

not threaten the 'national identity of the French culture' (House 1995, 89). The crucial question is how this limited cultural 'openness' can allow for integration without raising the issue of French 'identity'. Mehdi Charef makes this idea problematic in the title of the novel itself "le thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed", an expression that Balou, a student of Tunisian parentage in the *classe de rattrapage* has formulated as a translation of the theory of Archimedes in mathematics. The expression is double edged, on the one hand, Balou, bored and exasperated, ironically changes the theory of the Greek mathematician Archimedes to having tea in the harem of a certain Archi[13] Ahmed, a clear cultural reference to North Africa. But on the other hand, Balou refers to the harem, one of the most stereotyped aspects of North African culture in French imaginary as it has been usually linked with the sexy bodies of beautiful women kept for the sexual enjoyment of men. Balou's emphasis on the most controversial aspects of the North African culture can be seen either as his own way of articulating this silenced culture in school, or an emphasis on cultural differences as exoticised by the host society, in the sense that Balou, like most Beurs, is on the receiving end of the French orientalist discourse on the women of North Africa, a discourse that he unconsciously perpetuates. But such a stark and humorous reference to the North African harem in the title of the novel can also be Charef's strategy to attract more French readers who may be attracted to the exotic title of the novel.

The friendship that ties Madjid and Pat transcends all the boundaries of origin and belonging as both adolescents challenge the prejudice of race and class in way that keeps them united: "Ils rient en se tapant dans la main. La tape de l'amitié. Unis pour le meilleur et pour le pire" (Thé, 60). The two adolescents manage to laugh about all the miseries taking place in the cité, such as Pat's father's escape with a young girl leaving them on their own, suicides in the cité, violence and police's raids. Their escapades in 'Paris' consist of enjoying their life as posh Parisians able to consume and spend; they use stolen money to get into smart clubs and to sleep with expensive prostitutes. It is their own way of avenging the 'Paris' that they do not belong to and its consumerist society. Finally, Madjid loses his appetite for the city as he discoveres with great shock that Pat's pretty sister, who is completely terrified when she sees him, is a prostitute. Madjid cannot tell Pat about it as he is

[13] A title of a governor or a man of authority and power.

totally disheartened to the extent of giving in to despair. He humorously used to tease Pat's sister that she could use her beautiful body to be rich; he did not know it would turn out to be true. Poverty has pushed Pat's sister to prostitution; she tries to help her single mother to cope with the family expenses. The influence of this incident on Madjid's psychology is immense. The same night, all his friends, including Pat, escape from the police, who chase them because of the stolen car they are riding in, but Madjid does not want to escape; he is emotionally and physically too tired and too disgusted (Thé, 184). Pat does not give up on his friend as he is aware of his strange state but cannot understand it, he waits for the police to tell them that he is with Madjid and both friends are taken to the police station where they will start their prison sentence (Thé, 184-5).

Identification and recognition through the possession of 'papers' is part of the French police system of classifying those 'with' or 'without' papers, a policy mostly directed to those who are 'basanés' (tanned). Mehdi Charef ironically plays on this system of surveillance and exclusion in his text where adolescents find themselves confronted with the monstrous 'carte d'identité' as the one that determines their status and place within society: "dis moi qui tu es = tes papiers" (Laronde 1993, 113). In one of the frequent police raids of the *cité les Fleurs*, the policemen are conducting 'ID checks' on the young people of the *banlieue* when Pat refuses to show his papers telling the policeman that: "-Je suis français, moi. Je suis dans mon pays. Tu me prends pour un Arabe, ou quoi?" (Thé, 140). Pat ironically links ID checks with being 'foreign', that is, being an Arab.

If Pat exploits the police's racism for his own use, Madjid, like Béni in *Béni où le Paradis Privé*, plays with racist stereotypes and throws them back into the face of their claimants in an incident that involved pick-pocketing in the metro (*se faire un métro* is their own way of making money: "...quand on est chômeur et pas aidé, on ne regarde pas aux moyens de se payer un sandwich et un paquet de cigarettes.") (Thé, 104). Madjid and Pat target a middle-aged "white" couple in the train. Madjid manages to steal the man's wallet and pass it discretely to Pat who quickly disappears from the sight of the couple whereas Madjid remains seated in front of them (Thé, 105). When the man discovers the loss of his wallet he immediately looks at Madjid sitting in front of him: "il le dévisage de haut en bas et sans se

gêner: un Arabe!" (Thé, 106). The man takes Madjid by the neck and asks him for his wallet, the latter pretends to be completely innocent and accuses the man of being mad: "De quel droit, hein? Je m'en fous, moi, de ton larfeuille. Mais ça y est: ils voient un Arabe, c'est un voleur!" (Thé, 107). After searching Madjid meticulously, the man finds himself in an embarrassing situation which gives Madjid ample chance to turn the situation around and accuse the man of holding racist views against the Arabs (Thé, 107). Madjid and Pat know well that Pat can get away with the wallet, as no body will suspect him of theft and that the usual suspect will be Madjid because he looks physically like an 'Arab'. Madjid uses his body to trap those willing to think and act according to the stereotypical idea of the 'ethnic other' as delinquent. As a result, we are faced with an ironical situation where Madjid is guilty of an act of theft, but at the same time the victim of a stereotype that accuses him and all members of his community of being thieves. Madjid reappropriates this stereotype (that links being 'Arab' with 'thief') and complains in the name of all Arabs though one clearly notices that his supposed identity as an 'Arab' has nothing to do with the theft (Rosello 1998a, 58). In other words, Madjid steals both the wallet and the stereotype. Moreover, in this iteration of stereotypes in Charef's text, the character of Madjid and Pat are not portrayed so as to be judged on the basis of the criteria that would 'normally' be used to distinguish between "delinquent and honest social actors, between supposedly non-ethnic, non-immigrant 'Français de souche' and second-generation immigrants" (ibid., 49), since the boundaries between the two are deconstructed. Pat's invisible presence in the scene of the crime in which he participates makes him a spectator to both acts: the act of theft and that of the racist behaviour of a fellow 'white' passenger. Mireille Rosello suggests that Pat's presence offers the reader "the space of a nonessentialist identification process, and his name crystallises the possibility of escaping the binary opposition between whiteness and ethnicity" (ibid., 59). Therefore, Charef implicitly rejects the idea of linking cultural or 'ethnic' identity as an explanation to delinquency, rather he problematises the issue and opens it up to other dimensions of class, poverty and marginalisation of the young people of the *banlieue*. However, despite the fact that Madjid and Pat clearly function in a stereotypical environment that protects Pat and victimises Madjid, the latter never seems to suffer from 'internalised racial prejudice', since he is not interested in convincing the French man that Arabs are not thieves and since it seems that the

language of the stereotypes is completely familiar to him (ibid.). But this depiction of the young people of the *banlieue* as delinquents is important, as Rosello argues, to show *how* stereotypes are repeated in Beur texts, and "what tactic they choose to repeat them while undermining their ideological implications about who is in and who is out, who is rich and who is poor, who owns and who steals" (ibid., 47). Madjid uses stereotypical images while stealing their power. His character suggests that it is not merely the 'ethnic Other' who must protect him/herself against stereotypes. But it is the case, as Rosello maintains, of becoming aware "of the perverse dynamic that puts each potential victim of ethnic stereotypes in a complex position. Both can suffer from the internalising of stereotypes and use them as if they were a perfectly mastered foreign language. The principle is to have the last laugh, to remain one step ahead in the game of hide-and-seek where identity can no longer be guaranteed to rhyme and power" (ibid., 61).

However, Madjid's 'Arabité' surfaces in situations where he is reminded of his outsideness. He does not see himself as an Arab or French, but as someone in-between histories and cultures. This impels him to create and invent his own history, his own origins and alliances as he feels the lack of belonging to a specific fixed nationality:

> Elle [sa mère] quitte la chambre et Madjid se rallonge sur son lit, convaincu qu'il n'est arabe ni francais depuis bien longtemps. Il est fils d'immigrés, paumé entre deux cultures, deux histoires, deux langues, deux couleurs de peau, ni blanc ni noir, à s'inventer ses propres racines, ses attaches, se les fabriquer. (Thé, 17).

His mother keeps reminding him of the threat of loss of origins (which for her comes from Algeria and not France) if he does not do his military service in Algeria as he will have no papers, no roots, no land: "Tu veux pas aller au service militaire comme tes copains, ils te feront jamais tes papiers. Tu seras perdu, et moi aussi. Tu n'auras plus le droit d'aller en Algérie, sinon ils te foutront en prison. C'est ce que va t'arriver! T'auras plus de pays, t'auras plus de racines. Perdu, tu seras perdu" (Thé, 17). However, Madjid's attachment to France is stronger than that to Algeria, a country he barely knows. He tells his mother that if they had not migrated, he would not have been 'lost'. Madjid feels the pain of his mother who works hard to support his family after his father's accident, but she does not understand his frustration at not being able to find a job to help her: his constant attempt to get a

job always fails as he is faced with the fact that he has no qualifications and no experience (Thé, 150). He pretends not to understand his mother's broken French, a tactic used to provoke her anger as he cannot understand her when she speaks Arabic. She threatens to alert the Algerian consulate so that they will take Madjid to do his military service in Algeria as that is the only way she believes her son can learn about 'his' country and language (Thé, 17). Even though Madjid's life in France is miserable, he refuses like most Beurs to paint a miserable picture for himself as he still holds some hope for his future: "Pour l'instant il attend...il attend. Il ne veut plus pas y penser, il ne supporte pas l'angoisse" (Thé, 17). Madjid refuses to align himself with his mother's Algeria whose language he does not even know or with the France of ID checks, his alignment with his group of friends from the *cité* interrupts the idea of genealogy and geography as the basis for belonging to France as they all come from different origins but are linked by a strong friendship that does not align itself with nationality or 'race'.

The exclusion of the young French from Maghrebi origins in French society takes various forms (immigration laws have already situated their parents as outsiders). For the younger generation, exclusion is institutionalised by the legal system that sets the difference between the French and the Maghrebis, so young people of Maghrebi descent have to choose their nationality at the age of 18. Article 23 of 1973 registers this difference even among younger generation themselves, as those born in France before 1963 have the choice between the two nationalities before the age of 18, but they will be automatically Maghrebians if they do not choose, whereas the others born after 1963 become French. Thus, in the same family, some could be Maghrebians and some French with different access to national rights (Laronde 1993, 111-2). However, the exercise of political rights has not, however, proved a guarantee against social exclusion, as the history of the *banlieues* (poor suburbs) has demonstrated. The analysis of the issue of integration in France has to go beyond that of nationality criteria, as most of the children born in France from foreign parents are granted French nationality (that is, possessing nationality does not mean being "integrated").

The young Franco-Maghrebians are still named "young people of immigrant origin", a denomination that stresses in a passive voice the link with a faceless

immigration process of and ignores filial continuity. denying these young people any identification with any possible ancestors (though the idea of successive generations is there). Moreover, it defines the descendants of a disrupted genealogy by transplantation, as if they are deprived of parents of flesh and blood. only stemming from a process (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 43). The residency card given to "foreigners" proves this non-lieu or non-space or extra-territoriality as it must indicate at the back the date of entry to the country; thus, the children born in France of foreign parents discover that their date of entry to the national territory is the date of their birth and thus their mother had given them birth in national space from which she was excluded (ibid.). This indicates the disrupting of genealogy and familial intimacy and thus the risk of having no past apart from that of the "terre d'accueil" (France). These young people are pushed to integration (to be "un être français") confronting the possibility of abandoning, transforming or assimilating their own family life. The descendants are left with an empty memory and confronted with the monstrous immigration process as their origin, which features their extraterritoriality and thus "to be in France without really being" or like their parents, to be the Other of France but to remain without a face so as to be controlled.

The French system ignores the recognition of communities because it stands against its model of assimilation. However, even if communities are recognised in France, and even if their children are French nationals, they still suffer from discrimination in housing and schooling, employment, involvement in political and public life and thus exclusion and the most outstanding example is that of the French Muslims or the harkis.

5- *Le harki de Meriem* (1989)[14] and the fate of "the French Muslims"

The fate of the harkis or the so called 'French Muslims' is not different from that of the North African immigrants. Even though they were granted French nationality when they were all exiled to France in 1962, they were extremely marginalised as second-class citizens at the periphery of French society. Mehdi Charef's second novel *le harki de Meriem* brilliantly describes the fate of this forgotten community in France through the history of Azzedine, a harki whose life has been strongly affected by the letter **H** or *harki* since the Algerian delegation printed it on the door of his house when he refused to donate money to them, a letter that marks him as a traitor in Algeria. Even though he has defied this rejection of the Algerian community and worked hard to improve his lot in France as a 'French Muslim' amid all the difficulties and daily commonplace racism, his children are still perceived as outsiders by the French, no different from the descendants of other immigrants in France.

Charef's text clearly demonstrates the limitations of the exclusiveness of French concepts of equality and citizenship, since the harkis have been deprived of their basic *de facto* rights as French citizens and since they have been treated like any other economic immigrants. Derrida's (1994, 338-9) concept of democracy-to-come suggests another condition of the political that would free the interpretation of the concept of equality from its *phallogocentric* schema of fraternity which has dominated the Western democracies. The concept of fraternisation has played an important role in the history of the formation of politcal discourse in France, but it is marked --as Derrida demonstrates in *Politiques de l'Amitié* (1994)-- by the prescription of the 'androcentric' ethnic. The hospitality offered to the harki community in France reveals that the tradition of French democracy is not open to the non-fraternal, since they have suffered from racism, exclusion and the monstrosity of eternal exile and displacement as 'French Muslims' or Muslim soldiers of the French Empire.

Le harki de Meriem starts with the murder in 1989 of Azzedine's son, Selim, by a group of extreme right wing thugs in the town of Rheims. Unlike Charef's

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[14] Abbreviated hereafter as harki.

protagonist in *Le thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed*, Madjid who represents a generation of Beurs lost in the violence and delinquency of the banlieue. Selim in *Le harki de Meriem* is an example of a successful 22 year-old university student of law whose future seems to be very promising. Selim strongly feels his bonds with France, the only place where he 'belongs': "Il n'était pas d'ailleurs et se sentait pas d'ailleurs. Sélim n'imaginait pas d'issue de secours, ville ou pays de retour. Il était de Reims, de France, depuis la clinique Saint Charles où il était né" (harki, 26). Selim thinks of France and the town of Rhims as his 'homeland' where he has excelled in his studies and where he has become a champion boxer. However, he understands his parents' link with Algeria while thinking of a sentence in Idriss Chraïbi's *Les Boucs*: "Ils ont laissé leur âme de l'autre côté de la Méditerranée" (harki, 29).

Selim is brutally murdered on the night of his 22nd birthday because, according to his racist murderers, he has not the 'modesty' to remain "crouille[15] et fils de crouille" as his papers prove him to be a French national: "T'as vu la tête que t'as? Réfléchis bien!....Tu ne peux pas être français avec la gueule que t'as!" (harki, 30-31-32). For the racist murderers, to be French, one must biologically or "racially" belong to France: "Si par malheur tu as une carte d'identité francaise on te fait la peau, on veut pas de basanés dans les mêmes registres que nous, Bicot tu es, Bicot tu resteras" (harki, 3). Selim's rejection is based on his physical difference (and eventually cultural one) as his non-'white' face ('basané') says the opposite of his papers: he will always be seen as a foreigner on French soil.

A double rejection of Selim's corpse comes this time from the Algerian authorities who strongly refuse to accept his body to be buried on Algerian soil, as he is the son of a harki, the abominable traitor of the Algerian Revolution. It is Saliha, Selim's sister, who takes charge of accompanying the body to Algeria. At Tlemcen airport, Saliha undergoes all forms of mental and physical harassment at the hands of custom officers and police guards. Called by the chief custom officer[16] as "La fille de pute d'enculée de sa mère" and "Fille de chien pourri, tu le poses là ton cul niqué

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[15] Crouille or crouillat is pejorative racist term referring to North Africans in France.

[16] He himself claims to be from a certain Ben-Essedik family, which must take revenge on Azzedine, Saliha's father as he carried out the order to arrest Antar Ben-Essedik, an influential member of the resistance. This suggests the effects of the unfinished business of the harkis' involvement in the war (harki, 42, 106-7-8-9).

par un roumi...", 'Bent harki'[17]. Saliha is made to feel ashamed of herself and some people at the airport look at her 'comme une lépreuse' (harki, 36-7-8). The chief custom officer tells people how Saliha's brother is killed by racist French thugs and how "son harki d' enfoirée de père veut l'enterrer ici" as if Algeria has no memory to remember those who have betrayed it: "Tu baises l'Algerié et quand tu en as besoin tu reviens, tu t'en sers comme si de rien n'était? Ni vu ni connu, hein?" (harki, 38-9). He confirms to Saliha that Algeria will not forget and that "tous ceux qui ont essayé de la baiser sont marqués d'une encre de sang dans notre histoire", so the harkis will pay by their eternal exile and if they have chosen France over Algeria, France is paying them back by sending their children dead corpses (harki, 41).

Azzedine, like the other harkis, is quick to believe his superior's speech when he is first recruited that "... la France ne vous laissera pas tomber, l'armée française est désormais votre mère, elle vous couvrira." (harki, 162). But afterwards, even Masson (their captain) is sorry to have led them to an ideal that cannot be theirs (ibid.). Though they were given French nationality, the harkis have been treated with contempt like other North African immigrants[18]; they have the same problems of housing, education and employment. They also have to cope with the historical burden of being seen as traitors by the Algerian community and the total indifference of the French (for whom "on a l'impression qu'il ne s'est rien passé" as one harki puts it) (harki, 167).

In a masterful ironical style, Charef describes the fate of these "nouveaux Français", whose history of exclusion in French society is silenced as it is a cause of embarrassment and shame. The loss and suffering of the harki community in France has included a sense of loss of belonging to Algeria, a loss of faith in France and daily confrontation with the monstrosity of exile. They are lodged in the poorest areas; they have to accept jobs that even the immigrants would refuse and many of them, especially those who cannot bring their families with them, "se laissaient périr" in alcohol, despair and suicide:

> On recontrait pas mal dans la centre d'Aix, traînant la savate et la main tendue. Le plus connu était Ould-el-Hady. Celui là, quand un passant lui

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[17] Bent harki in Arabic means the daughter of a harki.

[18] One harki puts it this way: "Tout ca pour rien....Toutes ses années perdues pour que l'on nous considère comme des immigrés! Pourtant même eux, les francais, disent que nous sommes francais!" (harki, 168).

> refusait la thune, il lui chantait *la Marseillaise,* au garde-à-vous. D'autres, cartes d'identité Francaise épinglée au revers de la veste, se retrouvaient à la soupe populaire. (harki, 170-1-2).

The majority of these 'nouveaux Français', "ne savaient pas où se donner la tête" as they felt disoriented as 'French Muslims'. Some insist on clinging to their religious identity in order not to perish like the harki leader Si Hamza, and some are worried about the idea that their cultural differences will create further rejection in French society like harki Boufledja who wants to end all ties with Algeria, even religious ones (harki, 172). They suffer from discrimination at work and housing like any other 'foreigners'. Harki Djelloul, an experienced ambulance driver, is refused the job because of his 'face' which is not 'white' like his French identity card; he attacks the racist French officer and takes refuge in his room where, surrounded by the police and the leader of the harki community Si Hamza[19], he expresses the feelings of many harkis: "Moi j'ai fait la guerre pour lui et pour les autres et il m'a ignoré comme si j'étais rien!", "...nous avons cru à la victoire beaucoup plus qu'eux!", or "on s'est donné à eux et ils veulent rien nous donner..." (harki, 176). Djelloul ends up shooting himself in the heart and not the head as he is not ashamed of his face: "...Pas au visage. J'en ai pas honte, de ma tête" (harki, 177). Unlike the immigrants, the harkis have no choice in returning to Algeria, as France constitutes their only possible 'home' and their relationship with their families back home are severed (because of fear of reprisals); so the children remain the only hope for a better future in their new host country (harki, 197).

Azzedine decides with his wife Meriem to leave his life outside the ghetto of the *banlieue d'Aix* set for the harkis. He manages after a long and difficult journey to secure a good job for himself and a good life for his two children Selim and Saliha, both very successful in their schooling (harki, 200). Azzedine and Meriem are very proud of their son Selim who has won the first prize of 'le concours général de français' and so is the whole harki community in France; the representative of the minister celebrates this 'new generation': "Dorénavant, nous devons compter avec

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[19] Si Hamza is represented in Charef's text as the heart of the harki community, the one who wants the harkis to prove that they are not a 'lost generation'. He has given up his life to run around social services offices in order to improve the life of his community and he also insists on establishing a small Quranic school for the harkis' children to teach them "les moeurs et rites qui donnent la dignité" (harki, 195). His last duty before he died is to chase out a group of extreme right wing

cette nouvelle et ambitieuse génération qui apportera un élan de fraîcheur et de vitalité à nos vieilles habitudes" (harki, 201). However, Selim is murdered in a racist attack simply because his murderers reject his 'Frenchness' with his 'visage basané' (harki, 30-1). Azzedine's and Meriem's hopes after more than twenty years of exile are shattered and France has betrayed them a second time. Postcolonial France is still haunted by colonial violence and still marked by the exclusion of the colonial system whose traces have never disappeared from the metropolis. However, Azzedine still believes in his grandchildren's laughter; his hope for the future "...est plus puissant que n'importe quel fusé braqué derrière une fenêtre, plus fort que n'importe qu'il couteau brandi dans la nuit" (harki, 211).

The French government's silent attitude towards the harkis has slightly changed recently when for the first time in French history the French Republic revised its total exploitation of the 200,000 Algerian Muslim men (harkis) by 'recognising' their 'sacrifices' towards France. On the 25th of September 2001, President Chirac, Prime Minister Jospin and Defence Minister Alain Richard conducted a ceremony in the courtyard of *Les Invalides* in honour of those to whom "France has not given the place they were due" and whose "wounds remain sore" in President Chirac's words, as the harki community in France is today one of the most deprived, stigmatised, and excluded communities.[20] Even though the recognition came very late, it was seen as a step forward by the harkis and their descendants whose French citizenship has not guaranteed their inclusion in French society.

The citizen in the French model is more an abstract presence rather than a real one. This comes as a result of the established binary opposition between the universal and the particular, the individual and the community, the public and the private, the secular and the religious, civilisation and barbarity, etc. The construction of the space of citizenship was purified of all forms of social divisions to achieve a 'pure, abstract, free-floating and a historical domain' which can be seen as the ultimate aim of humanity (Silverman 1995, 256). However, in reality, the space of citizenship set up an opposition between the centre (France) and the periphery (colonised lands) in the sense of projecting 'particularist' differences onto others,

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supporters who come to settle in the city to mobilise anger and despair for their own purposes (harki, 196).

[20] For more details about the ceremony, see *The Guardian*, 26th September 2001, 14.

who were labelled 'subjects' instead of 'citizens' or sometimes 'natives' (usually described in terms of their 'different' physical features) instead of French nationals (Silverman 1995, 256-7). It is this colonialist perception of citizenship that still dominates the French context today, and its claim to be based on political and legal criteria rather than an ethnocultural one seems to have failed in certain communities. Young Beurs are confronted with the difficulties of having a full *de facto* right as French citizens as they are faced with complete rejection because of their ethnic origins or the colour of their skin. Therefore, when they interiorise the fact that sometimes even successful schooling can not guarantee their success in society and that "pour être embauché, c'est la tête qui compte et la consonance de nom!" it becomes impossible to trust the discourse of 'integration' (Begag and Chaouite 1991, 108).

The history of France and Algeria and its impact on the life of the two countries at the present moment is crucial as Derrida (1997a, 125) puts it: "l'Algérie et la France, sont encore vives et en vérité encore à venir" in the sense that the two countries must confront the ghosts of the past. In colonial Algeria, the history of the foreigner, citizenship, and the way borders were set to separate first and second class citizens dating back to 1830 until today provided the grounds for understanding the complexities of the present moment. Derrida considers this history as being marked "d'une complexité, d'une mobilité, d'un enchevêtrement dont il n'y a pas [...], à ma connaissance, d'autre exemple au monde et ou cours de l'histoire de l'humanité" (ibid.). At the beginning of colonisation[21] and till the Second World War, Algerian Muslims were called 'French nationals' and not 'French citizens' which meant that they could be citizens without being seen as total foreigners. In 1865 (while the inhabitants of 'the French possessions in North Africa' as the countries were officially called, remained subject to religious law), the natives gained legally the status of French person without the citizenship, which meant that they could apply for civil servants' jobs as a French person without French citizenship and then could apply for citizenship if under certain conditions and with the agreement of a judge they abandoned their 'particular position' (Derrida 1997a, 125). Indigenous Jews had faster access to French citizenship because of the Crémieux decree of October 1870, but this was abolished by the Vichy regime

[21] For more details, see Louis-Augustin Barrière (1995, 29-30).

without any demand on the part of the Germans who occupied only a part of France. After World War I and after the death of many Algerians in the war at the front, a law was issued (February 1919) to grant French citizenship to Algerian Muslims without the intervention of the judiciary of the state, but it was a total failure because Muslims resisted a citizenship that meant renouncing their personal status or their own culture. However, after World War II, some changes took place because of the participation of Algerians in defending France and thus on March 1944, a ruling offered both citizenship and equality to all French citizens of Algeria with no distinction of origin, race, language and religion, with the rights and obligations allowed for by the preamble and Article 81 of the constitution (ibid., 127). However, distinctions were still made between two colleges of electors (which was one of the causes of the Algerian Revolution): the first were non-Muslims and certain Muslims (such as diplomats, or those who had served in the army) and the rest of the population took the second position. This hierarchy remained until the Algerian War. In France, however, and since Algerian Independence, "these 'complications' continued right up to the moment of the so called Pasqua laws and the 'standardisation' that now subjects Algerians to the same conditions as other foreigners coming to France."[22]

Conclusion

Begag's, Charef's and Tadjer's texts, like many other Beur texts, question the way cultural conformity and 'blood affiliation' are set as a necessary condition for granting citizenship rights or belonging to the 'French nation'. This process of 'nationalisation' of the French state clearly links obtaining full citizenship rights with 'acculturation', which means that communities should be changed or transformed to belong to France.

Gérard Noiriel (1991) identifies this process of exclusion of certain French nationals from equal rights as a form of the 'tyrannie de national', which is due to the fact that these 'ethnic' groups such as the Franco-Maghrebians are essentialized as inherently 'different'. Etienne Balibar (1992, 11) recognises how these processes of

[22] Before then the Evian agreements granted some special arrangement for Algerians to come to

racialization and nationalisation of the State are saturated within the hierarchical structures of the State's institutions:

> Tout racisme n'est pas un racisme d'État, officialisé, mais tout racisme est ancré (y compris comme "pathologie") dans la structure des institutions et dans le rapport conscient ou inconscient des individus et des masses à ces institutions. Ce qui devient alors déterminant est la contradiction entre la forme égalitaire et les mécanismes inégalitaires des institutions et avant tout de l'Etat donc entre *la citoyenneté et la sujétion.* Il faut en faire l'histoire singulière dans chaque nation et à chaque époque.

Therefore, Balibar argues for a certain *égaliberté*, a concept that perceives *égalité* and *liberté* as strongly linked (ibid., 135). However, the French model is based on the belief that any form of recognition of 'difference' can lead to the division of society into distinct groups and thus can lead to tension and struggle. Thus, it is theoretically that of integration of individuals and not that of recognition of communities and, therefore, political universalism replaces any form of ethnocultural particularism and difference.[23] Nevertheless, though the state adopts (theoretically) the universalist discourse of integration and refuses to recognise institutionally cultural differences, ethnocultural classifications and notions of a 'national identity' are still used to exclude and discriminate against the 'ethnic Other'.[24] Moreover, Le Pen's extreme right wing party has been conducting a campaign to 'racialise' French society by emphasising irreconcilable cultural differences, immigration and the preservation of a national identity. Certainly there is a clear danger in the institutionalisation of categories of 'community' and 'minorities' as it may lead to 'ghettoisation', but an effective social integration could be improved by a recognition of a 'cultural identity' that is not degraded or seen as deviant (Touraine 1993, 5-11). Moreover, 'a certain right to difference' is

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France, but were abolished by the Pasqua laws (Derrida 1997a, 129).

[23] France's 'grand narrative' of the abstract ideal and universal project of the Republican concept of the nation and citizenship that had tended to regulate social systems in a homogeneous way does not seem to fit the rather fragmented post-modern age (Silverman 1995, 253). Whereas it aimed at reinforcing equality between citizens in a communal society through the construction of an ideal, neutral and universal public space, the new post-modern, post-industrial concept is more preoccupied with the individual. Thus, it places liberty over equality and no longer recognises universal culturalism as it allows cultural particularism and its tensions to come to the surface (Nair 1992, 44-5). It seems that it is high time the dualistic model of both the particularist and universalist have to be revised as the concept of citizenship in a post modern age has to be looked at without the binary classification of equality and difference.

[24] But even the UK model based on the acceptance of 'ethnic differences' is fraught with the danger of falling into essential and racial definitions of people and thus the possibility of establishing binary opposition between 'black' and 'white' race which delimit the possibility of opening the path to the acquisition of *de facto* equal rights (see Silverman 1995, 259-261).

important with integration as long as this concept of ethnicity does not contradict the 'universal values of reason and law' and thus the crucial need to reinvent social-democracy in the widest possible sense of the term (Wieviorka 1992b). A revision of the history of past models for the formulation of rights may be a good starting point towards a reformulation of the concept of citizenship; and also the perception of difference in a non-essential way but as a process that implies constant transformations. The aim is for citizenship that will not be exclusionist and will be free from the straitjacket of national belonging and thus open to flexibility and change, and responsive to the negotiation of common and particular interests (Silverman 1995, 261).

These contradictions dominate Begag's, Charef's and other Beur texts, which offer alternative modes of thinking about the notion of 'natural nations' and 'rooted belonging' seen as composed of uniform families that reproduce 'distinctive cultures' (Gilroy 2000, 123). The Beurs refuse the past of their parents' exclusion to determine their own outlook of their future in France. Their texts problematise their relationship with their unhomely homeland which keeps pushing them outside the national space towards their parents' country of origin with whom they scarcely identify. Their narratives stress their refusal to be labelled 'immigrants' though they do not abandon their parents' history of immigration which is not only part of French history for them but also an important component of their own alterity. Their narratives translate a sense of anti-belonging or the inability to settle on a certain belonging, but at the same time, unlike their parents seen as 'la génération de silence', they possess a determination to live at a time that is *now* and a space that is *here* as 'la génération de parole':[25]

> Maintenant et là sont les deux exigences constitutives de cette nouvelle rhétorique revendicative. Nous ne sommes pas immigrés, disent-ils, ni français ni arabes, nous sommes ce que nous sommes et nous le restons, conscients de leur flottement entre deux eaux. Leur écriture auto-référentielle met en scène l'urgence de cette nécessité d'être, d'où s'échappent les effluves de l'acte d'insoumission et du geste rebelle (Benarab 1994, 206).

Their position in the post-colonial diaspora allows them to problematise notions of blood, 'race' and 'bounded national cultures' as the basis of belonging as they fall

[25] See T. Ben Jelloun (1984, 57) and H. Bouraoui (1988, 220).

within the in-between position that enriches the idea of culture as a mutable and travelling phenomenon (Gilroy 2000, 86). In this chapter I have demonstrated through a close reading the Beurs' texts their strong refusal of roles assigned to them because of their 'origins' rendering their belonging less deterministic. In other words, they refuse the mechanisms of power that contain them in specific origins, roles and identities that mainly exclude them as the others/outsiders. The Beur texts have the subversive power of breaking down the supposed myth of French national purity as they allow for "a complex conception of sameness and for versions of solidarity that do not need to repress the differences between one 'essential' community and others" (ibid., 252) as we have seen in Charef's texts. The Beurs insist on their position as insiders/outsiders (a post-colonial diaspora position) that brings to the surface the tensions between origin and essence, between identity and ethnic absolutism, and thus offers a basis for solidarity that transcends notions of 'race' and national belonging.

Chapter Five

"The Hyphenated Peoples of the Diaspora": Beurs or the Franco-Maghrebians

1- ***Georgette!* and *Le Gone de Châaba*: The inscription of identity *"à l'envers" ou "à l'endroit"?***

***2-* The Beurs' strategies of masquerading**

(a)- The Failed Quest for Invisibility

(b)- Béni and the Language of Comedy in *Béni ou le parade privé*

***3-* Leila Houari's *Zeida de Nulle Part* and *Quand tu verras la mer*: narratives of the homelessness and fragilities of 'exile'**

(a)- Zaida and the 'interrupted genealogy'

(b)- Encounters

***4-* Ferrudja Kessas's *Beur Story*, Sakinna Boukhedenna's *Journal Nationalité Immigrée*: the Beur(ettes)' strategies of survival and "Le dechirure physique et psychologique"**

(a)- Ferrudja Kessas and 'the triple alterity'

(b)- "Ni putes ni soumises!" in Sakinna Boukhedenna: *Journal "Nationalité: immigré(e)"*

Conclusion

Chapter Five

"The Hyphenated Peoples of the Diaspora":[1] Beurs or the Franco-Maghrebians

Qu'est-ce qui est franco-maghrébin? ...Le silence de se trait d'union ne pacifie ou n'apaise rien, aucun tourment, aucune torture. Il ne fera jamais taire leur mémoire. Il pourrait même aggraver la terreur, les lésions et les blessures. Un trait d'union ne suffit jamais à couvrir les protestations, les cris de colère ou de souffrance, le bruit des armes, des avions et des bombes. Derrida (1996, 27).

Nous les beurs, on fait peur. Ni l'un ni l' autre des gouvernements ne peuvent nous canaliser. Pour eux, on ferait mieux de disparaître. Mais j'espère qu'on leur montrera un jour ce qu' on est. Nous sommes les révélateurs de leur contradictions, de leur mensonges et même de leur trahision vis-à-vis de la mémoire du peuple. Un clou dans le talon d'Achille de la conscience collective. Kettane (1985, 167-8).

In *Le sourire de Brahim,* Nacer Kettane (1985, 50) expresses how his *appartenance* to Algerian culture is marked by deferral and *contre-appartenance* as his mind is always 'infiltrated' by 'd'autres images' and 'd'autres références.' Brahim expresses this 'fluidity' as such:

> Fier d'appartenir à un peuple enfin debout, il aimait aussi marquer sa différence. Mais malgré tout cela, il sentait au fond de lui-même qu'il lui manquait quelque chose et il le cherchait. Il sentait son appartenance à un groupe, mais sans en préciser exactement les contours. Un flou persistait et il se demandait si, un jour, la lumière viendrait en fin.

This lack of precision, stabilisation and fixation is the logic of the hyphen, a logic that defers and resists 'encampment' as belonging. But not in the sense of suggesting outsideness, rather in the sense of resisting nationalistic reductionism and opening the space for other forms of solidarity and affiliations that transcend specific national belonging or a supposed myth of 'racial' and ethnic belonging. However, as Derrida points out in the above passage, the hyphen in the case of the Franco-Maghrebians is charged with the histories of colonial violence. Kettane

[1] This expression has been used by Trinh Minh-Ha (1991, 15).

(1985, 114) reflects on this after a visit to Algeria, his parents' home country, where he confronts his own illusions of a possible 'chez soi':

> Ses pensées, telle une balle de ping-pong, allaient d'un pays à l'autre. Alors qu'en France les adeptes du "Si tu n'es pas content retourne chez toi" faisaient rage, ici [Algérie] on le renvoyait dans un "chez lui" chimérique. Mais alors, c'était où "chez lui"? Pour Brahim il n' y avait pas d' équivoque. il était chez lui partout avec la Méditerranée comme drapeau. Mais il avait l'impression d'être un otage. Comme si la France et l 'Algérie étaient deux amants séparés de longue date qui n'en finissaient plus de se disputer et de se renvoyer la responsabilité d'une paternité insupportable.

In this chapter I address how the Beurs' construction of their identities is marked by the disorder of the hyphen, or by being held hostage, as Kettane puts it, to two worlds and cultural spaces (France and the Maghreb). The oscillation between the two cultural and social spaces, that of their parents and the French, which are represented to them as incompatible and irreconcilable requires the urgency and necessity of the process of 'translation'. Being hyphenated, in between two worlds implies that one becomes translated as the movement of the hyphen is a movement of translation between cultures. But translation itself signifies hospitality in the Derridean sense, a process of deferral and a moving across but also resistance to this translation, untranslatablity.

Situated in-between spaces or the space of the hyphen of being Franco-Maghrebians, the Beurs try to bridge the gap of the double bind of their identities. I maintain in this chapter that it is the diasporic populations such as the Beurs who open hospitality beyond cultural determinism. The Beurs can move across boundaries and cultures. The translated person does not possess exclusively and naturally the two worlds s/he inhabits. Such 'natural' or 'national' claims to property or identity are deconstructed by hospitality itself or translation. This is due to the fact that the 'master/host' or the translator cannot own 'his/her' language as the ex-appropriation of language is an essential 'coloniality of culture', and a coloniality of hospitality when it conditions and auto-limits itself into a law (Derrida 1996, 47). The language of hospitality and translation that the Beur characters offer cannot be assimilated and appropriated because it always belong to the Other who is uncalculated and untranslatable. Therefore, being Franco-Maghrebians, the Beurs resist appropriation (whether national, cultural or linguistic) through the translation

of their various affinities and identifications that their 'hospitable' in-between position allows them to construct. They also emphasize the idea of culture as a travelling and mutable phenomenon. But being hyphenated means also being 'uprooted', displaced and always confronted with the untranslatablity of one's identity, with tensions, aporias and losses. But if something is lost in the process of translation, something is also gained, that is, if the condition of being Franco-Maghrebian is fissured with limitations and frustrations, it is also a condition that has its freedoms, and its resistance to authority and stabilisation.

Derrida calls himself a Franco-Maghrebian. Unlike the Beurs, he was born in colonial Algeria and migrated to France when he was seventeen, but like the Beurs he defines his being Maghrebian on the basis of a certain cultural and historical affiliation and not citizenship. His French citizenship like the Beur "ne définit pas une participation culturelle, linguistique ou historique en général. Elle ne recouvre pas toutes ces appartenances" (Derrida 1996, 33). As we have analysed the precariousness of the Beurs' French citizenship in the previous chapter, Derrida suffered from the same precariousness in colonial Algeria. The Arab Jews of colonial Algeria lost the French citizenship that the coloniser had granted them (a citizenship acquired under the 1870 Crémieux decree) and which was lost less than a century later with the Vichy regime around 1940, it was returned to them in 1943. Derrida's young mind could not understand that loss of citizenship but he could understand the exclusion from schools reserved for young French citizens and that exclusion could be linked to 'le trouble d'identité' ('the disorder of identity') he has carried with him. In the case of the Beurs who are French citizens, the disorder of their identity comes from their inheritance of the figure of the immigrant, a figure that is frozen in an ethnic and religious difference shaped by the history of colonisation which forces them into the marginalised state of second class citizens and makes their identity claims illegitimate. In reading Beur texts, one senses the constant resistance to a certain French 'monoculturalism', especially in schools, the institutions of 'integration'. It is carried through a separation between a French superior culture and thus language and a 'Maghrebian' immigrant inferior culture that stigmatizes its bearers as carrying a 'deviant' culture. This monoculturalism whose essence is always colonial (Derrida 1996, 69) tends to reduce the Beurs' alterity to pure difference and thus to "un être défini par une différence culturelle

dont il aurait l'exclusivité" with the ramifications this exclusivity has in preserving the 'purity' of French 'national culture' (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 82).

These policies had been practised in colonial Algeria and later have been carried to the centre with the movement of ex-colonial subjects to the centre or the metropole. Because of French 'public education' in colonial Algeria, Arabic was proposed as a foreign language and Berber was never included. Most students submitted to this interdict, including Derrida himself. It was a total marginalisation of Arabic and Berber by a colonial policy "qui affectait de traiter l'Algérie comme l'ensemble de trois départements français" (Derrida 1996, 66-68). This linguistic hegemony worked hand in hand with the cultural one, as the separation was strongly present between a French culture or 'literariness', of French language and culture, from the non-literary culture or the community. It was an essential and brutal separation that fostered another severe separation between French literature, its works, names and authors and the culture proper to 'les Français d'Algérie' (ibid., 77). Derrida's education was not at all about Algeria but about France, 'l'histoire de France', "une discipline incroyable, une fable et une bible mais une doctrine d'endoctrinement quasiment ineffaçable pour des enfants de ma génération" (ibid., 76). When reading Beur texts in this chapter, such as Begag's, Belghoul's, Houari's, Boukhedenna's and Kessas's, one senses the constant struggle that the protagonists undergo in the school where they are taught a world that has no continuity with the one they live in: *HLM cité banlieusarde*. They also suffer from the complete omission of their parents' colonial and anti-colonial history as they are all taught that their ancestors are *les Gaulois*, which further accentuates their state of confusion between the world of school and home causing a state of emotional and psychological chaos. This 'homo-hégémonie' is everywhere at work in culture, whereas culture like language always belongs to the Other as one can not own it, that is, there can be no monoculturalism as there can be no monolingualism because culture like language can not be appropriated (Derrida 1996, 69).

For Derrida (1996, 32), to be a Franco-Maghrebian does not mean a richness of identity but is to betray 'un trouble de l'identité' in all its psychopathological or sociopathological connotations. But out of this disorder one can certainly argue for richness. Derrida (1996, 133) claims that his Judeo-Franco-Maghrebian genealogy

does not explain everything but it is the heart of his intellectual project: "toutes *les* langues de 'la' dite métaphysique occidentale, car il y en a plus d'une, et jusqu'à ces lexiques proliférants de la déconstruction, toutes et tous appartiennent, par presque tout le tatouage de leur corps, à cette donne avec laquelle il faut ainsi s'expliquer." This explaining of oneself is at the heart of the Beurs' literary, artistic and intellectual projects as they translate the aporia of the double bind of being Franco-Maghrebians. Derrida's deconstruction of phallogocentricism and the 'the' Western metaphysics, could not have been possible without his reference to an 'elsewhere': "il fallait compter avec cette 'culture' [gréco-latino-christiano-gallique] pour y traduire, attirer, séduire cela même, l'ailleurs, vers lequel j'étais moi-même d'avance ex-porté, à savoir l'ailleurs de ce tout autre avec lequel j'ai dû garder, pour me garder mais aussi pour m'en garder" (ibid., 133). This reference to 'elsewhere' is the logic of the hyphen or the hyphenated people, who while inhabiting the in-between space of the hyphen, move across in translation that not only cross the boundaries but also question the myth of 'origins', the notion of rootedness and of 'pure' cultures.

Hélène Cixous (1998a, 169) shares the same historical background as that of Derrida, which she describes as her *Algériance*: a legacy of colonial violence and hostility, but also a legacy that has taught her to depart, but never to arrive from Algeria, a 'passance' or a refusal of a 'terrestrial localised country' to belong to. Cixous speaks about the 'Algeria sickness' which Algeria has given her or the "sensation of being possessed by a sensation of dispossession". Her Franco-Algerian double bind means a resistance to any form of inhospitable classification since she would always *stay passing*:

> To depart (so as) to arrive from Algeria is also, incalculably, a way of not having broken with Algeria. I have always rejoiced at having been spared all 'arrival'. I want *arrivance*, movement, unfinishing in my life. It is also out of departing that I write. I like the phrase: *j'arrive* (I am coming, I manage, I arrive...), its interminable and subtle and triumphant messianicity. The word *messiance* comes to me from Algeria (ibid., 170).

Cixous' preference for the use of the progressive form of the suffix *-ance* stresses hospitality in movement or a *movance* towards inclusion and not exclusion.

The Beur novels analysed in this chapter are marked by two important issues: first the 'disorder of the hyphen' of being Franco-Maghrebian as the process of the inscription of one's identity in French society is marked by aporia and 'double bind'; second, the translation or the movement of reconciliation between the various cultural spheres, a *movance* that is marked by hospitality and not hostility. Farida Belghoul's *Georgette!* and Azouz Begag's *Le Gone de Chaâba* and *Béni ou le paradis privé* are classical Beur texts that criticise the contradictions in the French discourse of integration. They question French politics of cultural inferiorisation with its power "de nommer, d'imposer et de légitimer les appellations."[2] Beur characters question the binary opposition set between a French culture considered to be liberal and a North African immigrant culture seen as backward. They problematise the discourse of acculturation and assimilation, which instead of incorporating them into French society, has transformed them into a separate, alienated and ambivalent group. The main protagonists in Belghoul's and Begag's texts use various strategies to masquerade the stigma of their 'cultural difference' in order to be 'accepted' in French society, but the visibility of their physical difference stands as a reminder of their 'irreducible difference'.

Leila Houari's two texts *Zeida de nulle part* and *Quand to verras la mer* problematise the issues of up-rootedness, loneliness and exile. Even though The main characters in the two texts are tormented by the experience of geographical and cultural displacement, they make use of the richness of their contradictions and thus invent their own roots "sans modèle et sans destinataire assuré."[3] Being hyphenated, one searches not for identity but for identification even though one is deprived of easily accessible models of identification (Derrida 1996, 87). Derrida complains about being a 'stranger' not only to the 'roots' of French culture or the Arabic one, but also to Jewish culture, which has resulted in "un aliénation de l'âme, étrangement sans fond" from which Derrida has never emerged (ibid.. 88). It is this alienation from French culture and the Maghrebian that haunts most of the Beur texts, especially Ferrudja Kessa's *Beur Story* and Sakinna Boukhedenna's *Journal "Nationalité: immigré(e)"*. As a post-colonial diaspora, the Beurs are faced with contending versions of identities and cultures which are claimed to have initiated the possibilities of either adopting one at the expense of the other or finding some

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[2] See Derrida (1996, 68).

sort of hybrid form which in turn leaves them in a state of 'betrayal' or compromise and also leaves the power structures behind each culture unchanged. In Kessas's and Boukhedenna's texts, the mechanisms of gender oppression are strongly added to the other dimensions of identifications such as that of class and ethnicity. The Beur(ettes) protagonists refuse to be fixed in a certain duality of choice between French culture represented as emancipatory and their parents' culture seen as oppressive. They question the roles assigned to them while at the same time examine the institutions and mechanisms through which their identities are stated by each culture.

1- *Georgette!* (1986) and *Le Gone de Châaba* (1986): The inscription of identity *"à l'envers" ou "à l'endroit"?*

Farida Belghoul's *Georgette!*[4] is one of the most sophisticated and classical Beur texts in terms of its narrative techniques and the complexity of its themes. The text evolves around a one-school-day narrative traced through the troubled psychology of an anonymous seven-year-old girl of Algerian descent. Central to its concerns is the process of 'l'apprentissage': the learning of writing and reading French language and culture. The protagonist/narrator is first presented in linguistic confusion as to whether 'la sonne cloche' or 'la cloche sonne'"(G., 7): an indication of the problem of cultural disorder or inversion that most Beurs have to undergo when moving from the family circle to the wider circle of French society. It is a form of textual disorder; the girl is not sure which of the phrases is correct according to the dominant linguistic norms.

The girl is confronted with the monstrosity of being 'à l'envers' (on the reverse) of French society. Her father insists on teaching her the Arabic language, which unlike the French, is written from right to left. When *la maîtresse* looks for the homework, she reproaches the girl for not doing her exercises though the latter has written them on the right side of the copybook (G., 29). For a moment, the girl thinks her *maîtresse* to be looking "à l'envers" of her copybook, but she realises later that it is her father who had misled her: "Mon père n'est pas un âne mais il invente une

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[3] Derrida's expression in (1996, 96).
[4] Abbreviated in the references as G.

maîtresse qu'il n'a jamais vue... Il croit que c'est n'importe qui! C'est tout l'inverse de la tranquillité, le bonhomme: *il voit juste ce qu'il croit. Il est tout à l'envers*, c'est l'exaggération de sa nature!" (G., 30). It is her father who is "à l'envers" according to her *maîtresse*.

Her father, however, does not want to know about French culture, which he thinks will corrupt his own daughter. For him, "Y'a pas de bien qui peut venir d'eux, y'en a pas" (G., 45). When the old French woman is speaking to her about her abandonment by her children, she remembers her father telling her that: "Si y'en a un qui m' parle, c'est qu'il est abandonné par ses cousins!" (G., 147). Her father reflects on colonial history and the way he was treated as a slave labourer in a French settler farm in colonial Algeria (G., 110). He came to France as an economic migrant at the time of the Algerian Revolution, that is, a time when the Algerians were very much hated in France. He was turned down for all jobs: "C'est ça, la révolution et puis la charge de famille sur le dos" (G., 110), and the only alternative was the job he has been doing since: cleaning the public streets. Colonial memory and the humiliation the father has suffered both in colonial Algeria and post-colonial France as a marginalised labourer has shaped his mistrust of France. He warns his daughter not to listen to the teacher: "Écoute- la mais faut jamais la croire. Sinon, tu t'fais enterrer vivante" (G., 129). He imposes a certain narrative of betrayal on his daughter if she will ignore this history, a narrative that torments and tortures the girl's psychology. His fear is summoned in the belief that his daughter will have no 'land' to belong to if she forgets about her parents' history and culture as he believes France will never accept her as it has never accepted Algerian people as citizens of the French Republic: "Si tu n'a pas de terre, t'en a pas un pays" (G., 129). *La maîtresse* also stresses the girl's 'temporary status' in France and her 'usefulness' for Algeria if she becomes a doctor (G., 121). Being burdened with this mutual mistrust, the girl calls herself a 'fugitive' without land or name: "Je ne connaîtrai jamais la terre. Je porterai jamais de nom" (G., 130). She claims her teacher to be "a foolish cannibal" who has eaten her up and thus she is cut off from her parents' culture but at the same time is not fully accepted in France (G., 133).

When she hears her father reading the holy book, the Quran, she is fascinated by the sound of his voice and she prefers it to the beautiful hands of the teacher as she

writes: "C'est préférable une belle voix que des belles mains. C'est rare et cher, on explique tout avec" (G., 35). Moving from the circle of the family where the parents' culture is expressed orally to the circle of school where writing in French is represented as the only legitimate form of expression, a tension has been created in the mind of the girl. She is confronted with the fear of replacing her father's oral culture with the French written one which would mean annihilating her father's voice and experience. Whereas both the father and the teacher portray themselves to the girl as totally 'rooted' within their own respective cultures, the girl confesses that she has neither her father's nice voice as she insists that her memory is weak, nor the teacher's beautiful hands, though she wants to have both. She is cut off from both cultures and cannot fit in the call for 'loyalty' on her father's part and total submission on her teacher's side. But she still wants to reconcile both cultures to each other as she wants her father to have beautiful hands and her teacher a nice voice: "Je voudrais bien une voix de seigneur et des belles mains de princesse" (G., 35).

The process of inscribing oneself in the French language is painful, tense and even tormenting. Writing in French means 'writing off' the parents' culture, as reconciling both cultures is doomed to failure. The implications of the father trying to impose his own writing on her from right to left suggests another possibility of writing one's self that *la maîtresse* does not even want to know about as she insists that there is only one way of inscribing one's identity and that is the 'French' way, writing from left to right. The girl is torn between these two poles that both require her 'loyalty', with the power *la maîtresse* has in imposing her authority on the mind of the little girl whose love for her unhappy and humiliated father is immense. Her identity, however, is not only inscribed in writing but also in orality. Both dimensions of identifications are strongly present in *Georgette!* as culture is clearly embedded in language and thus the latter is not simply used for the sole purpose of communication but also as a marker of cultural identity.[5]

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[5] J.K.L. Scott (1997, 19-20) claims that language, control and communication play an important role in two Beur texts: Charef's *Le Harki de Meriem* and Belghoul's *Georgette!* as the language that one speaks or writes is not simply a means of communication but a marker of cultural identity, but unfortunately her analysis does not extend beyond the narrative plot of Charef's novel mostly represented through the eyes of Azzedine: a *harki* who has been burdened with the unfinished

The girl is confronted with the "à l'envers ou à l'endroit" (G., 57) writing of her identity; a spatial metaphor that translates the girl's confusion in her quest for an identity. On seeing her father first writing in her copybook, she was proud of him, but "... c'était pas vrai; il était le deuxième. J'étais fière comme une andouille" (G., 57). In fact, it is *la maîtresse* who is "le premier écrivain qui donne le sens à mon cahier, c'est pas le deuxième!" (ibid.). Therefore, it is the teacher who determines the dominating cultural norms and not the father whose culture comes second after the French one: "Sourtout, mon écriture c'est l'affaire de la maîtraisse. Et pas d'un autre, ailleurs completement fous. *Il m'a casse la voix et les mains*" (G., 58). It is clear that she is unable to master any of the cultural codes: that of the father and that of the teacher who are both responsible for her total confusion. However, her father is the one to confuse her further as he insists on his own model without possessing the keys to the French dominant cultural codes: "C'est lui qui me trompe! Il fait un modèle à l'envers. Et en plus, il se permet, il crâne" (G., 58). She decides to destroy her father's writing and thus his culture as both are not acknowledged in school "l'écriture à l'envers n'existe pas" (ibid.). The title of the novel 'Georgette' is very expressive of the struggle the girl has been undergoing between pleasing her father and her teacher. After running from school, the girl meets an old French woman who, feeling terribly lonely and humiliated as her sons have deserted her, asks the girl to write her imaginary letters signed with her sons' name so that she can show them to her neighbours (G., 140). Immediately, the girl thinks of her father's reaction if he knows that she writes letters to a strange woman calling her "chère maman" and signing them Paul or Pierre. She imagines him telling her that he has sent her to school to sign her name and she signs something else: Georgette, a foreign name to her father's ears, implying the power of school to 'corrupt' her:

> Surtout, il gueule: "J' t' envoye à l' école pour signer ton nom. A la finale, tu m' sors d'autres noms catastrophiques. J' croyais pas ca d' ma fille. J' croyais elle intelligente comme son père. J' croyais elle est fiere. Et r'garde moi ca: elle s'appelle Georgette! (G., 147-8).

The exclamation mark in the title *Georgette!* translates the girl's anxiety about her father's reception of her newly acquired identification with the French language and culture. The whole of the novel is built on this constant anxiety of writing herself into the language and culture of 'difference' from her father who fears his daughter's

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business of those Algerians who joined the French army against their Algerians patriots during the Algerian War of Independence.

loss of the culture and language of her ancestors. a loss that would mean falling into neo-colonisation.

The girl's escape from school at the end of the school day is a result of her incapacity to confront the constant struggle between what the teacher offers her and what the father wants her to receive. She imagines her father telling her how he has suffered "la misère affreuse, la faim, l'travail esclave, l'insulte et l'coup d'pied. T'es bon, t'es mauvais: tu payes. Tu payes c'que tu l'mèrites pas." But he has always 'come home'; he accuses her of being "la race de l'fugitif c'est le plus pire, personne le *veut ou qui le ramasse.*" He would rather she die than dishonour him by escaping, though he thinks he has given her everything 'to find her way':

> Et tu racontes qu'ton père c'est un âne-alpha-bête... Des générations et des générations, on est resté propre. Toi, même pas huit années, tu m'ramènes une saloperie dans l'monde entier elle existe pas! Ma fille elle est perdue. C'est fini: t'es plus ma fille... Le Dieu, il est temoin: c'est pas ma faute. J'ai pas jeté ma langue dans les ordures..." (G.,151).

Despite being an 'âne-alpha-bête', her father manages to keep his cultural identity after generations of French cultural imperialism in Algeria, but she has failed to do so and has thrown her parents' language in the dustbin. This refers to an incident when *la maîtresse* empties her school bag and starts throwing what she thinks is irrelevant in the dustbin including a talisman of Quranic verses given to her by her parents for protection. The girl is tormented that her father may find the Quranic words when collecting the rubbish (as he is a cleaner) and thus disown her (G., 117). Even though she decides: "J'abandonne mon père et sa folie bête sinon je termine ma journée à l'infirmerie" (G., 63), guilt and uncertainty troubles her as her conversation with an imaginary doll reveals (G., 163). Just before she is hit by a car, the girl is challenged by a story narrated to her by the doll about a French army general of Arab descent described as having 'his father's name', Bendaoud and who has a problem with a soldier described as having "the name of his country", Lafrançois, that is, France. The general commits suicide, frustrated at the injustice of the military tribunal, which has given preference to the soldier. The doll warns her that "voilà ma p'tite biquette si tu compte sur leur parole. Voilà ce qui t'arrive si tu cherches après eux qu'y t'regardent" (G., 163) implying that she will be doomed to exclusion because of her Arab origins whatever the degree of her "integration".

La maîtresse is indifferent to the girl's feelings and when she finally notices the girl's constant gazing at her and her unusual behaviour, she speaks to her about *la langue, parler, communiquer, dialoguer* to try and establish a connection with the girl: "La langue n'a jamais empêché de communiquer. Ça veut dire se parler" (G., 117). But their 'communication' is over-determined by *la maîtresse's* preconception of the girl's culture as oppressive and as being the reason for her misery. She asks her whether her father has been abusing her because she 'knows' well that men from 'là bas' beat their wives and children savagely (G., 117). How can they communicate if the language used is already biased? The girl ends her narrative by associating the process of integration with suffocation: "j'étouffe au fond de mon encrier" (G., 163). The parents' culture is constructed as deviant and incompatible with the French one and the teacher's total ignorance and disdain of that culture has pushed the girl to suicide.

Besides being a novelist, Farida Belghoul was very involved in politics in the 1980s. She helped organise the famous *Convergence 84 pour l'Egalité*, which was born out of the first March of the Beurs for liberty and equality that was held in 1983. In her speech during the march, Belghoul (1985a, 53-8) expresses her disillusionment at the way the socialist government of the time was handling the 'immigrants' issue' and how it forced the immigrants and their descendants into a form of integration that would destroy their integrity. Belghoul (1985b, 19) has always been anxious about the effects of this horrendous imbalance of cultural politics on the young Beur. She expresses this in a cinematic context claiming that:

> L'audience, en soi, est une victoire mais j'ai le sentiment que la définition à l'égard du milieu d'adoption l'emporte et que dans ce rapport à l'extérieur, les choses se perdent. Pas forcément dans l'audience elle-même. Mon problème est de maintenir les relations avec ce milieu d'adoption, tout en lui opposant un milieu de contre-référence. Ce milieu d'adoption est conscient comme nous de 'choix': cédér ou pas. Ça sonne guerrier, puisque le milieu d'adoption exprime le désir de nous digérer et la résistance à cette voracité prend parfois les allures de la guerre.

Belghoul refers to her audience, the French public as her own 'milieu d'adoption' or the French dominant culture that positions itself against what Belghoul calls her 'milieu de contre-référence' or the parents' 'immigrant' culture in which she is partly

grounded. Taking into consideration the imbalance of power between the two, Belghoul's attempt is to bring the two cultures together without subordinating, or devouring the parents' culture.

In another classical Beur text: *Le Gone de Châaba,*[6] the protagonist Azouz, the semi-autobiographical self of the writer Azouz Begag (Hargreaves 1991, 43), is (like that of *Georgette!*) undergoing a time of 'integration' into the French educational system. It is clear that both in *Georgette!* and *Le Gone*, mastering the French language is seen as the key to social advancement. The parents' mother-tongue is linked with the parents' illiteracy and thus their low socio-economic status as most of them are not literate in the rich tradition of the Arabic language and literature. Thus, the Arabic and Berber languages are not given any prestige and are linked with poverty and cultural deprivation, as they do not provide the tools to infiltrate into French society. This comes from the belief that social success can only be reached by compromising with 'white' French norms, which while implying a supposed betrayal of the parents' communities, results in a further destabilisation of the conjunction of being a Franco-Maghrebi or a French Muslim.[7]

The process of integration into French society has shown the Beurs that no matter how 'integrated' they are, they are still perceived as outsiders whose 'difference' is irreconcilable. To strike back, most Beur novelist adopt a strategy of writing that shows their deep linguistic roots within French society by using very specific types of regional slang that only those who are grounded in such a milieu can master. For example, Begag's strategy is clear in his adoption of the term *gone* in the title of *Le Gone de Chaâba*, which belongs to a Lyonnais slang language. This suggests Azouz's multiple clusters of identity deeply rooted within Lyons, his city of birth and Chaâba, an Arabic name given by the Algerian immigrants to the *bidonville* in the suburbs of Lyons which means tribe or group hinting of the "tribally" secluded ghetto of the North African immigrants. The title suggests Azouz's deep roots in both spaces, but the movement between the two is a constant process of linguistic and cultural translation and adaptation. He sometimes uses Arabic words especially those used in his parents' native village in Algeria: Setif such as the words *chorba*

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[6] Abbreviated hereafter as Gone.

[7] Ali Rattansi (2000, 124) expresses the same idea in the British context and the conjunction of being British and Black.

(soup), and *Chkoun* (who is that) while providing what he calls "le petit dictionnaire des mots Bouzidiens". Azouz also uses Arabised French words or as pronounced by his parents and what Begag calls "phraséologie Bouzidienne" such as *La boulicia* (la police), *la tilifiziou* (la télévision) and *le saboune d'Marseille* (le savon de Marseille). The various uses of different linguistic styles contribute to reinforcing the plurality of the Beurs' identities and the polyphonic nature of their texts (Marc Sourdot 1996, 112). However, the parents' use or pronunciation of the French language in an Arabised way is not only related to the process of what Marc Sourdot calls linguistic decentralisation, but it is also a phenomenon related to French colonisation of North Africa and the serious attempts to "Frenchise" the language and culture of the area. This policy has to a great extent been successful, as the French language has been widely adopted within the daily spoken Arabic language of the North Africans. Azouz recognises this phenomenon when he was constantly asked by his pied-noir teacher about the Arabic language, but Azouz only knows a certain "Arabised French" that his parents speak: "À la maison, l'arabe que nous parlons ferait certainement rougir de colère un habitant de La Mecque. Savez-vous comment on dit les allumettes chez nous, par exemple? Li zalimite. C'est simple et tout le monde comprend. Et une automobile? La taumobile. Et un chiffon? Le chiffoun. Vous voyez, c'est un dialecte particulier qu'on peut assimiler aisément lorsque l'oreille est suffisamment entraînée. Le Maroc? Mes parents ont toujours dit el-Marroc, en accentuant le o" (Gone, 213).

When Azouz moves with his family from the bidonville of the Chaâba to a *HLM cité*, he encounters a new usage of the French language by his peers in the cité marked by the *verlan* or the use of slang French (such as *branler*, *jacter* ou *crécher* in a dialogue between Azouz and his friends in the *cité*) (Gone, 285). Parisian verlan language is heavily used in Akli Tadjer's *Les ANI de Tassili* and Mehdi Charef's *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* and many other Beur texts. However, this use of the language of the *banlieues* that aims at transforming the French language and appropriating it is lightly spiced with the use of some colloquial Arabic words learnt from the parents. Begag for example provides a glossary of Arabic terms at the end of *Le Gone* and some other Beur writers provide footnotes translating the words such as Charef and Belghoul, but their understanding of Arabic remains only at a superficially simple level. The use of the various languages in the Beur texts

such as standard French, regional banlieusard slang French, and Arabic and Berber expressions translate the various clusters of identifications that the Beurs stress in their writing. It is to do with the forces that determine the relationship of the authors with the languages in question in terms of the way they appropriate the French language (the language of the majority in France) to deterritorialize it and reverse it to a form of a minority language. This process of decentralising the French language by invoking the parents' native languages and the language of the banlieues within the French language is for the purpose of deterritorializing it in order to reterritorialize it (Bensmaia 1995, 215). In Deleuze's and Guattari's words, this allows "the possibility of setting up a minor practice of major language from within" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 18). The Beurs' translation of the various minor languages in the French context such *verlan*, Arabic and Berber into the French language and vice versa is a way of opening the French language to new images and styles and inventing new idioms to suit their own 'translated self'.

Azouz is very much aware that some of his words and expressions do not fit in with the school language: "je me suis rendu compte aussi qu'il y a des mots que je ne savais dire qu'en arabe" (Gone, 60). Once Azouz leaves the accommodating world of the Chaâba for the outside world, a process of linguistic translation has to take place; for example, Azouz did not know that *tababrisi* and *binoirs* are only variations of his father's way of pronouncing *tabac à priser* and *pied noir* (Gone, 61, 179). The issue of language in *Le Gone* is strongly entwined with the process of integration undergone by the young Azouz and which pushes him to abandon the linguistic heritage of the family as well as leaving the Chaâba. In both cases Azouz feels marginalised in relation to the French language and in relation to the city. The poverty and isolation of the world of the Chaâba make him feel inferior towards his French peers in school. He wants to be "comme eux" (i.e. the French) (Gone, 60). His feeling of inferiority is transformed into a strong determination to "integrate" into the French educational system whatever the cost:

> "Mes idées sont claires à présent, depuis la leçon de ce matin. À partir d'aujourd'hui, terminé l'Arabe de la classe. Il faut que je traite d'égal à égal avec les français. [...] Le maître a toujours raison. S'il dit que nous sommes tous les descendants des Gaulois, c'est qu'il a raison, et tant pis si chez moi nous n'avons pas les mêmes moustaches" (Gone, 62).

Azouz is determined to succeed even though his parents' culture and history are completely ignored or even negated in the process of his 'integration' (unlike the girl in *Georgette!* who worries about her father's reaction). For Azouz, the school is the only means that guarantees his social promotion and his total conformity is the condition for him to move socially upward. If the little girl in *Georgette!* suffers from the school's incomprehension and ignorance of her needs as a child coming from a different background and thus delays her supposed entry into the French society, Azouz is determined to overcome those difficulties and adapt himself to those conditions of total assimilation. He forms another identity for himself in the school away from that of the *Chaâba*; for example, when *le maître* asks them to write an essay about a picnic in the countryside, Azouz draws an image of himself as a happy middle-class French child spending a perfect day in the countryside with his family though his parents could never have afforded that kind of picnic as they live in the most wretched conditions in the Chaâba[8] (Gone, 67). Azouz's success at school comes at the expense of his alienation from his 'compatriots', or 'ceux de fond de la classe' as he is accused by his cousins of being a 'false brother' who no longer wants to be linked with their failure at school (Gone, 77). But he is also alienated from his French peers who perceive his culture as 'savage'. Even though Azouz tries to suppress his cultural difference, it always comes back to haunt him and to take over his inscription within French culture. For example, when Mr. Louban, his favourite *maître pied-noir*, asks them about inheritance, all the French pupils agree that it is shared according to the will of the deceased, but Azouz has a different view: "M'sieur, un héritage, ça ne se partage pas. Dans la famille, c'est le frère aîné qui est responsable de tout" (Gone, 219). When faced by laughter and accusation of his culture to be savage, Azouz can only say: "Vous pouvez rire. Chez moi, c'est comme ça" (ibid.). Azouz always finds himself in a position of having to defend his 'chez moi' and its difference amidst the aggressive comments of his classmates. However, this time the reaction of Mr. Louban surprises him and his classmates as he fixes the one who accuses Azouz of being "savage" and asks him to apologise. Azouz, however, feels exposed:

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[8] Alec Hargreaves (1993, 115) claims that research among some children from North African origins has shown that most of them use this strategy of fictitious writing in school to camouflage their poverty. See also Hélène Milet (1986, 53-61).

> Pendant le dictée, je n'ai osé regarder personne. Que doivent-ils penser de moi, maintenant? Que je suis un fayot. A l'école Léo-Lagrange, les Arabes de la classe me traitaient de faux frère parceque je n'étais pas dernier avec eux. Et ici, les Français ne vont pas tarder à jaser sur mon compte, parce que Loubon et moi nous avons l'Algerié en commun. Mais je ne les crains pas. J'ai un peu honte, c'est tout. (Gone, 219-220).

It is in school that Azouz is fully aware of the difference of which he is made to be ashamed and it is also the place where Azouz learns how to negotiate and thus reconcile those differences between the world of the shanty town, the *Chaâba* and that of the school. In *Georgette!*, the girl's acquiring a new identity at school is a torment as it imposes on her a certain narrative of betrayal of the father's colonial history: "Elle [la maîtresse] est toujours là entre lui et moi pour mettre la zizanie [ill-feelings] dans la famille!"(G., 133). But Belghoul's text remains an attack on the French educational system that does not consider catering for the needs of ethnic minority children despite the widespread belief that the Republican school provides fair grounds for anyone to integrate 'safely' into French society. Belghoul's text draws attention to the fact that the space of the school is ideologically prejudiced against anyone who is not 'French' and does not share the values of mainstream society. The process of the construction of one's identity, therefore, becomes a matter of conflicting loyalties and uncomfortable choices. But whatever these choices, the Beurs' claims to identify are neither systematic nor homogenous, they follow a process of subjectification and they consist of diverse fragmented experiences in schools and familial relations.

2- The Beurs' strategies of masquerading

The Beurs' experiences of the issues of integration and acculturation have strong affinities with other ethnic minorities. The long and rich experience of the Jewish diaspora in their quest for 'invisibility' and assimilation within European societies sheds light on that of the Beurs. Ben Jelloun (1984, 14) claims that Maghrebian immigrants and their descendants have inherited the same racism that the Jewish communities had experienced in the past in France: "Hier, on ne supportait pas la présence des juifs en France. Aujourd'hui, ce sont les immigrés, arabes notamment, qu'on charge de beaucoup de maux avec la même mauvaise foi, le même

aveuglement." This has the same characteristics of anti-Semitism since it is "souvent justifié par les stéréotypes classiques qui ont trait à l'apparence. au physique. C'est le même procédé que l'antisémitisme: défauts du corps. attitude sournoise, perturbation de l'ordre culturel et religieux" (ibid., 85). The Jews. considered for a long time as the Other of Europe because of their supposed 'cultural', 'religious' and 'physical' difference. found themselves throughout Europe in the forefront of assimilatory ideologies. Jewish diasporas had to battle with the issue of assimilation, cultural conformity, visibility and invisibility in public spaces for a long time. Their experience in European societies sheds light on the complexity of the Beur situation, since as Zygmunt Bauman (1991a, 145) argues, the Jews were seen as "an admittedly unwieldy, scattered group spilling over any national border, they served everywhere as a symbol and a reminder of the assimilation's inner weaknesses, and, worse still, of the elusiveness of the dreamed-of-order".

Assimilation of the Jews implied the idea of being invisible in public spaces in the sense of "be like thine neighbour; do not stand off; in the crowd of like people, be inconspicuous" or "be a Jew at home, man in the street" or just "be invisible in public spaces" (Bauman 1991a, 152). Jewish communities were asked to make their 'Jewishness' indistinguishable and thus to accept "the hosts' right to define the code, studying that code earnestly and diligently, gaining flawless mastery in its application" (ibid.). In other words, Jewish diasporic populations were asked to master the art of mimicry. This mimicry, in Homi Bhabha's words (1994, 86), is "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.*" In the relationship between the colonized and the colonizers or the dominated and the dominant, the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence since for mimicry to be effective, it has to produce its difference or 'slippage'. Thus, mimicry appears as "the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" and thus mimicry becomes at once 'resemblance' and 'menace' (ibid.).

In *Peau noirs, masques blancs* (1995), Fanon stresses the idea of how the Negro required and justified white acceptance, an acceptance that is reflected in the Beur case in their earnest desire to have their cultural identity approved. Belghoul's text *Georgette!* and Begag's *Béni ou le paradis privé* express the desire of the young

Beur to masquerade their cultural difference in order to be accepted in French society as 'normal', but their quest for invisibility through the mimicry of 'white norms', as we will discuss in this section, is always overturned for them by their apparent physical difference that already pre-determines their position in society. Fanon (1995, 80) argues that "le désir d'être blanc" is due to the fact that one lives in a society that "rend possible son complexe d'inferiorité". Thus, the coloured person lives in a society where it is either the case of *"se blanchir ou disparaître"* (ibid.). Fanon's analysis comes from the heart of colonialism and the relationship between the white coloniser and the colonized natives; however. his analysis bears an uncanny resemblance to the process of assimilation and difference that most ethnic stigmatized communities undergo. Fanon (1995, 94-5) claims that whereas the black wants to suppress his/her identity as a Negro and 'behave' as an assimilated European by wearing a white mask so that his/her skin colour vanishes, the white stubbornly clings to his/her stereotypes images of the 'uncivilised' Negro. Bauman (1991a, 113) argues that, "Both the call to assimilation and the utter improbability of answering it properly (i.e., in a manner which the jury was likely to find satisfactory) stemmed from the same source: the power structure of cultural and social domination."

Jean-Paul Sartre (1954) argues that the Jew was held captive to a certain dominant interpretation of his/her Jewishness and thus let him/herself be contaminated by the hostile stereotypes that others had of him/her. Thus, through the serious attempt to avoid behaving in accordance with those stereotypes, the Jew robbed him/herself of his/her own 'authenticity'. Sartre (1954, 164-5) expresses it this way:

> "tel est donc cet homme traqué, condamné à se choisir sur la base de faux problème et dans une situation fausse, privé au sens métaphysique par l'hostilité menaçante de la société qui l'entoure, acculé à un rationalisme de désespoir. Sa vie n'est qu'une longue fuite devant les autres et devant lui-même. On lui a aliéné jusqu'à son propre corps, on a coupé en deux sa vie affective, on l'a réduit à poursuivre dans un monde qui le rejette. le rêve impossible d'une fraternité universelle. A qui la faute? Ce sont nos yeux qui lui renvoient l'image inacceptable qu'il veut se dissimuler. Ce sont no paroles et nos gestes-- *toutes* nos paroles et *tous* nos gestes. nore antisémitisme. mais tout aussi bien notre libéralisme condescendant-- qui l'ont empoisonné jusqu'aux moelles: c'est nous qui le contraignons à *se choisir juif*, soit qu'il se fuie. soit qu'il se revendique. c'est nous qui l'avons acculé au dilemme de l'inauthenticité ou de l'authenticité juive."

Thus the Jew's conduct was 'overdetermined' from the inside, that is, once his 'Jewishness' is known and made public. Related to this issue, Fanon (1995, 95) notes that whereas the Jew suffers from this 'inside overdetermination' as s he tries to conform to the image set for him in society, the black-- with more apparent physical difference-- suffers from both inside and outside 'overdetermination'. In other words, if the Jew can often be invisible to the white Gentiles, the black is damned by skin colour; his victimization is both predetermined and 'overdetermined' from the outside. Moreover, if the Jew is the 'Other' to the prejudiced Gentile, the black is not only the "Other" to the white man, he is also slave to the master: "Le juif n'est pas aimé à partir de moment où il est dépisté. Mais avec moi tout prend un visage *nouveau*. Aucune chance ne m'est permise. Je suis sur-déterminé de l'extérieur. Je ne suis pas l'esclave de "l'idée" que les autres ont de moi, mais de mon apparaître" (ibid.). Even though some Beur are highly 'integrated' in French society, their physical difference remains an obstacle for them to be fully accepted. Fanon claims that the coloured person renounces his/her dreams of integration when s/he learns that, on the one hand, by integration the white man means 'be like me'; but on the other hand, that the white man is convinced that the black man can never be like him, can never be as good as he is. Silverman (1992, 32-3) expresses this idea when he claims that "assimilation maintains that there is both an initial difference which must eradicated ('you must be like us') and an initial difference which can never be obliterated ('you can never be like us')". This is clearly reflected in the case of most Beur protagonists in their attempt to understand the mechanisms of French integration as they are exposed to the logic of an impossible choice, as Fanon puts it, "entre [l]a famille et la société-- la Blanche, la civilisée-- tend à rejeter la famille-- la Noire, la sauvage-- sur le plan de l'imaginaire..." (Fanon 1995, 121).

The pressure placed on minority Jewish communities towards 'cultural conformity', seen as the condition of social and political emancipation, caused a negative re-evaluation of their own cultural tradition, "typical of a minority smarting under severe assimilatory pressure" (Bauman 1991a, 128). Therefore, the assimilatory pressure and the inferiority problem both resulted in the case of European Jews in what Bauman calls "the *internalization of ambivalence*" (ibid.). The Beur characters that I study in this chapter in Belghoul's, Begag's, Kessas's, Boukhedenna's and

Houari's texts express this ambivalence. They suffer from what Bauman (1991a, 135) calls 'the psychological syndrome' of assimilation: "once the assimilatory pressure of native nationalism had been accepted as authoritative and legitimate those who accepted it as such internalized their ambivalent status and thus condemned themselves to a vigilance they would never be allowed to lapse or relax. [...] And they would eager to displace, project and exteriorize again the harrowing experience of ambivalence."

If the figure of the Jew stood against the idea of supposed collective identity, the figure of the Beur disrupts the cultural conformity of the French nation. In France, for example, "new conditions of acceptance were to be unashamedly self-canceling: a Jew could *become* a Frenchman only if he *was* a Frenchman; that is, if he was not a Jew. The states of being a Jew and being a Frenchman were declared mutually exclusive-- neither stages of a life-process, nor two faces of the same identity" (Bauman 1991a, 152-3). Therefore, this vicious circle of assimilation and difference reveals that the nation is not the product of learning and self-improvement but in fact it is a "commonality of fate and blood-- or not a nation at all" (Bauman 1991a, 154). But even though assimilationist pressures have caused torn souls and broken lives in the case of the Jewish diaspora, living in ambivalence has a unique creative potential, which is the contribution of the 'hybrid' Jews to the flourishing of modern culture (ibid., 154). The Beur express the same potential of cultural creativity born out of their suffering of being torn between two cultural spaces that are irreducible to one another.

a- The Failed Quest for Invisibility

The discourse around the issue of the visibility and invisibility of the immigrants' families and its relation to the way identity is constructed is crucial in *Georgette!* The protagonist's ambivalent attempt at masquerading her physical and cultural difference but at the same time wanting it to be recognised is mainly due to her constant fear that if her difference is 'seen', she will be immediately denounced: "moi, je suis une étoile invisible dans le noir" (G., 149) or "je deviens transparente, *la maîtresse* peut plus me voir" (G., 55). Her way of walking around lonely like an old woman in the school's *recreation* ground asking for 'respect' ("c'est une raison

de me respecter" (G., 9)) was read by one of her classmate as entailing her being an Arab: "Ça ce voit que t'es l'arabe comme tu marche" (G.. 10). Though the girl has tried to hide her 'origins' and thus become 'invisibly French' in the sense of not being noticed as 'different', her quest for invisibility has failed to convince the others who already pre-determine her 'belonging' for her on the basis of her physical difference.

The girl's serious and constant attempt to attract the gaze of the teacher so that the latter will notice the girl's different eye colour, and her being 'proper'[9] is cut short by a classmate who asks *la maîtresse* for the toilet (G., 53). The girl desperately longs for the teacher recognition of her different identity, the one she has acquired from the father. This identity that she schizophrenically loves and hates at the same time because of the one she has newly acquired depended on the accepting gaze of *la maîtresse*. Depending on the recognition of the teacher to accept her difference is as crucial as depending on her father's approval of her 'inscription' in French society. Her identity keeps oscillating between the two in search of tranquillity.[10] Her fear of the teacher and her imagining that the teacher is watching her all the time imposed a certain kind of auto-surveillance on her though la maîtresse is never demonised: "elle me surveille encore et cette fois-ci, elle sourit plus" while in fact she has not stopped gazing at her teacher who asks her "Pourquoi me regardes tu sans cesse?" (G., 28).

There is no place for her parents' culture outside the space of the family and thus if it is visible inside the home, it is invisible outside. This is clear when her mother painted her hands with *henna*: "Un jour ma mère a dessiné dans ma main un croissant de lune et une ètoile. Le dessin de ma mère était joli et magnifique. Je suis sortie dehors acheter du pain. *Là, je l'aimais plus de tout*. Je cachais dans ma poche ma main dégueulasse par la terre rouge" (G., 20). However, most Beur realise later the importance of the parents' language and culture as an important component of their identity which prompts them to search, ambivalently, for other cultural origins

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[9] Being clean and tidy is significant for the girl, as the immigrants are associated with being "improper" or dirty (G., 13-14).

[10] Buffard-O'Shea (1997, 53) thinks of this as metaphoric identity, or un *traversée, une mouvance*, that of the Beur in the 80s.

that are not longer perceived as marginal. In Akli Tadjer's *Les A.N.I. de Tassili,* the protagonist Omar is in constant search of his "Arabité" which keeps slipping between his fingers. This coming back to the parents' language and culture is a form of affirmation of one's alterity seen before as degraded and deviant from the French cultural norms.

When she attends with her family the Christmas party organised by her father's employers, she starts clapping when le 'bon-Dieu' (Father Christmas) appears on stage; her father is angry at the idea of her believing in father Christmas and accuses her of being like 'others' (G., 67). The girl tells him that "Je tape comme tout le monde, c'est fait exprès… Comme ça je me fais pas remarquer" (G., 67). Her action aims at hiding her cultural difference and thus be like others and remain invisible. In *Béni ou le Paradis Privé,* Béni tries to 'behave' like the French children in a Christmas party organised by his father's employers, but is silenced by the father who orders him to keep quiet (Béni, 9). His brother Nourdine complains that his father never wants to act like 'others' and be 'similar' (ibid.). This failed quest for invisibility translates the Beurs' desire to be socially empowered as they link the invisibility of their difference with being accepted.

In *Georgette!* all the girl's family members do not hesitate to show their support for the Indians in their battle against the cowboys in a classical cowboys and Indians film (G., 72). The connection between the Indians and the girl's family is established earlier in the classroom when the teacher introduces the game of *le pot rouge* which indicates the right of the students to speak when the *le pot rouge* reach their table. When it is the girl's turn to have *la parole*, Mirielle, her classmate, passes to her *le pot rouge,* calling her an Indian which causes her classmates to laugh: "C'est rigolo, z'donne le pot rouge à une pot rouge." (G., 69). The girl's right to speak, institutionalised by the teacher and the school is destroyed by the stigma of her 'peau rouge', but she totally refuses this stigma and considers the whole game as an insult to her 'difference': "C'est plus in pot rouge celui là. Je ne l'appelerai plus comme ça. C'est un pot de yaourt déguisé en insulte grave" (G., 69). She feels trapped within her visibly different skin colour, which makes her vulnerable to her classmates' remarks (G., 71). Her immediate reaction is to deny any link with the Indians, but this denial becomes an acceptance later on as she claims that "Surtout,

je me traine comme un peau rouge. Je marche comme une indienne!" (G., 71). Her family's identification with the Indians can be seen as an identification with the long injustice and oppression that the Indians have undergone at the hands of the 'white' Americans and the loss of their land, culture and identity as a result. The Indians also represent a possible alterity that the girl sympathises with as she claims herself to be "la fille d'un Grand chef Peau-Rouge, mon frère est son fils et ma mère est une reine" (G., 87).

She is fascinated with the Indians' strategy of disguising themselves, but "elle [Mirielle] envie de sauter en me voyant à la télé. Mais elle a aucune chance! je suis pas une indienne! Je me déguise tout les matins, d'accord. Mais je le montrerai pas à télé. Si les indiens acceptent c'est leur affaire" (G., 81). The Indians represent for her a possible model of alterity especially in the way they camouflage their difference, but she does not agree with their strategy of exposing themselves or making themselves visible to be massacred afterwards: "Ils descendent des montagnes pour le massacre. Du coup, ils sont repérés. A partir de là, tout le monde se méfie d'eux. Tout le monde est prévenu de leur sauvagerie" (G., 81), but she is more subtle in retaining her "savagery", "je suis un petit chat sauvage qui se voit pas" as she is called before by her teacher 'chat sauvage'; "Je respire comme un petit chat civilisé. La sauvagerie, je le retiens dans mon ventre" (G., 41-2). Visibility means to her annihilation; that is why, she prefers to be invisible. Her relationship with the Indians is not fixed but revised constantly ranging from acceptance, refusal, and contempt to admiration and respect as she recognises her resemblance to them but also affirms her difference. For example, her disdain for the Indians' visibility, that is, their exposure of themselves, is transformed into an admiration for their strategy of hiding their identity, or rather of their ability to remain visibly invisible: "Le grave problème c'est de les reconnaître. Ils se ressemblent tous. Plus, il se déguisent et pas n'importe comment. Ils se déguisent en terre rouge et le cow-boy est perdu: il peut jamais les reconnaitre nulle part. C'est des malins!" (G., 72). Therefore, the girl admires and sometimes identifies with the Indians because of their ability to invent strategies to camouflage their identity and make it inaccessible, changeable and elusive which is exactly her own strategy of refusing to be classified or framed within a certain fixed identity that either the father and the teacher want her to adopt: "la carte d'identité des indiens est un secret de guerre. Il

est gardé éternellement même si le cow-boy les torture. Personne ne connait la vraie figure des indiens. Encore heureux. Si non, le cowboy les massacre tous. un par un" (G., 72). The Indians help her to find her survival strategies of how to cope with the different worlds of home and school; thus, she also "...[se] plangue derrière un masque sur la figure", or as she puts it: "Je me colle une peau rouge sur le visage. Je marche vers l'école, mon visage rouge est magnifique", but her masque falls off when fear takes hold of her: "Il [le masque] tombe à la renverse de peur" (G., 76-7).

Mireille Rosello (1993, 79) argues that the characters of Belghoul's text appropriate television programmes for two reasons. First, Belghoul presents implicitly the problem of the sex of the viewer and second the family of Georgette are not watching a film about the representation of Arabs which renders their identification with the characters represented on television more complicated. But Rosello's argument does not explain how the girl is positioned differently when watching the cowboys and Indians film with the rest of the family members. I would argue that when reading the passage in which the family is watching the film, that gender is not particularly relevant in that scene as a signifier of identification. 'Ethnicity' or minority status seems to be more important since the whole family has no problem with identifying with the Indians in their bloody struggle with the cowboys. The family identifies with the Indians as they are the ones who are dominated and who are victims of history. The girl even claims to identify herself with her father by not watching the end of the film, as the defeat of the Indians was predictable and inevitable:[11]

> Moi, je suis comme mon père: je regarde jamais la fin des films de cow boys. Je m'en vais ou bien si je suis toute seule, j'éteins. Je regarde en silence la meilleure part de film. De toute façon c'est inutile de regarder la fin. elle est toujours pareille. (G., 73-4).

The girl and her family collectively support the Indians who are not idealised but are admired for their vigorous resistance to the cowboys though they are always defeated at the end which may be seen as a reflection of their status of being a minority largely marginalised by the mainstream society. However, Rosello claims that the seven year-old girl, a consumer of television images, breaks with the long

tradition of '*la femme orientale*' who is always imagined as being devoured by the gaze of the white artist, as on this occasion she is the one who gazes at the television. However, she also claims that she is equally tempted to worry now that the girl has moved from the position of the viewed one to that of the viewer and thus to the state of 'passive' spectator in a position to be influenced by the powerful discourse of the media:

> Peut-être est-il ironiquement complexe qu'au moment où une petite fille se retrouve en position d'observatrice et non d'Odalisque esthétisée, je sois tentée de m'inquiéter de son statut de téléspectatrice 'passive' susceptible de se laisser influencer par le discours tout-puissant des media. (Rosello 1993, 39).

Either way, Rosello already seems to predetermine the position of the girl as an 'oriental' woman either to be gazed at as an 'aesthetic' object or to be influenced passively by the discourse of the media if she is the viewer, which deprives the girl of her own agency. She claims that "la petite fille, spectatrice d'une 'bagarre à mort entre les indiens et les cow-boys' me rapelle étrangement d'autres femmes, dont je ne sais plus si je dois dire qu'elles ont 'participé' ou été 'spectatrices' de la guerre de libération nationale" (ibid.). Rosello compares the seven year old girl with the heroines of Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, La Fantasia* (1985) who were active participants in the war of liberation. She also compares the girl with the protagonist of Leila Sebbar's *Les carnets de Shérazade* (1985) where a young Beurette undertakes a journey through France following the steps of her fellow Beurs in the famous 1983 'Marche des Beurs' in which they called for equality and freedom. Rosello links the three novels on the basis of their tackling in their own ways "le problème de la spécificité" du rôle de la femme lorsque les événements historiques font d'elle un sujet que l'on considère comme 'bi-culturale'" (ibid.). I would argue here that the history of colonial women who had experienced the historical events of the Algerian war is of a different order than that of young Beurettes protagonists of these novels. These protagonists emerge as young Beurettes who trace their links with the anti-colonial history of their ancestresses in order to understand in their own way their exclusion from French society.

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[11] In Kettane's *le Sourire de Brahim* (1985, 52) the protagonist 'instinctively' supports the Indians in their bloody war against the cowboys because they were the victims of colonisation. He also hates watching the end of the films with the predictable slaughter of the resisting Indians.

The girl also links her father with an Indian chef when she catches sight of him cleaning in the middle of a public road with a red bandage over his cap: "Là, dans la rue noire, c'est un chef indien"(G., 82). The link is based on her father's low self-esteem and humiliation at being a *nettoyeur* suffering from the banal daily racism of a displaced *travailleur immigré*. He confesses to his daughter that the red bandage on his cap which is claimed to be for security reasons is actually intended to make all the immigrants visible: "y veulent qu'on s'fasse repérer, oui!" as there are only three or four of them in the neighbourhood but with the red bandages, people will see them everywhere and think they are thousands (G., 81). The father clearly states that it is a strategic move to make the immigrants visible so that they will be seen as a threat within French society and thus deported. The issue of immigration becoming visible in the public eye has been significant in increasing public debate about the threat of the immigrants and thus the increase of hatred and xenophobia especially at the beginning of the eighties, the time of the writing of Belghoul's text when many young Beurs were murdered by 'ordinary' French people in the streets for no reasons but fear and hatred.

In *Le Gone de Chaâba,* Azouz follows the same strategies of masquerading his 'origins sarrasines' (Gone, 210). He pretends to be French of Algerian Jewish extraction when confronted by his classmates, the Jewish brothers Taboul, at a time when the six-day war in 1967 between the Arabs and the Israelis is the focus of the media. He does not want to be recognised as having Arab origins not only because of the huge Arab defeat in the war, but also because of the colonial prejudice against the Arabs in France (Gone, 188-9). He refuses to recognise his mother who comes to collect him from school giving her signs to disappear as he is not proud of her colourful dress and the tattoo on her face which will expose his Arab origins to Taboul's brothers (Gone, 193). Azouz thinks of the Taboul Jewish brothers as highly 'accepted' in French society and hence his desire to be a Jew.

Azouz defensively insists on being born in Lyons when he is asked: "T'es d'où, toi?" as if to mark his French 'insideness' (Gone, 205). Just when Azouz thinks he is successful in 'masking' his origins, his *pied-noir* teacher, Mr. Louban, reveals his Arab origins and asks him about the way his name is pronounced in Arabic. This time, Azouz feels that the man knows all about his 'history':

> Je me sens vidé d'un coup. Heureusement que les Taboul ne sont pas dans la classe, sinon qu'aurais-je répondu? Que je n'étais pas arabe? Peut-être y a-t-il d'autres Taboul autour de moi? Le prof attend une response. Comment lui dire que je n'ai pas envie de dévoiler ma nature à tous ces élèves qui sont maintenant en train de m'observer comme une bête de cirque? J'ai envie de lui dire: je ne suis pas celui que vous croyez, mon bon monsieur, mais c'est impossible. (Gone, 209).

Being born and brought up in colonial Algeria, Mr. Louban speaks to Azouz in a nostalgic way about an Algeria Azouz has never known; he recognises how Mr. Louban is proud to be an Algerian: "le prof a pris l'habitude de me faire parler en classe, de moi, de ma famille, de cette Algérie que je ne connais pas mais que je découvre de jour en jour avec lui" (Gone, 213). Azouz feels more rooted in France as though his links with Algeria are almost 'fictional'. But it is Mr. Louban who makes Azouz interested in knowing his parents' country and culture with his "nostalgérie" (nostalgeria):[12] "modeste, le prof. Il est en train de m'expliquer mes origines, de me prover ma nullité sur la culture arabe et il ose dire qu'il parle arabe presque bien que moi!" (ibid.). Azouz is surprised to find out that his father's view about *les pied-noirs* and their racism against the Algerian immigrants proves wrong at least in the case of his teacher.[13] Mr. Louban establishes a kind of complicity of common origins with Azouz; he introduces Azouz to Jules Roy and his *Les Chevaux de soleil* to read describing him as "un Algérien comme nous, un très grand écrivain de l'Algérie" (Gone, 215). Mr. Louban clearly stresses his double identity as a *pied noir*: he is French in citizenship but he has strong cultural and linguistic affiliations with Algeria, the country where he was born and brought up. This *pied-noir* cultural affinity with Algeria has caused serious problems to the notion of the 'French nation' after they left Algeria for France as --like the Beurs-- they deconstruct the notion of cultural uniformity with their 'algeriance' or 'nostalgeria'.

Azouz remembers his father's horror when the immigrants of the poor shantytown are exposed to the public eye through television and newspapers as criminals who

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[12] A term used by Derrida (1996, 86) to refer to his relationship with Algeria.

[13] "...Tout ce que je sais, c'est que mon père dit que les "binoirs" [pied-noir] n'aiment pas les Arabes, et surtout ceux qui travaillent avec lui, à l'usine. Il paraît qu'ils disent toujours aux Algérians du chantier: "vous avez voulu votre indépendance et maintenant vous venez travailler ici!" Ils ne comprennent pas. Et moi non plus. On aurait dû rentrer chez nous depuis longtemps" (Gone, 211).

arecarrying out the illegal *halal*[14] slaughter of sheep in the *bidonville*. France is always absent from the Chaâba and appears only with the police force to establish 'order'. Confronted by the commonplace racism of the police force, Azouz-- still under the spell of the 'morale' classes that are taught by his teacher-- shows the place his uncle used to the policemen (Gone, 123-4-5-6). This act further deepens his act of betrayal of his 'Arabhood' in the eyes of his Arab cousins (Gone, 127-8). His father is horrified at being visible for the first time to the eyes of the French public institutions when he is recalled to the police station (Gone, 134). Bouzid associates his visibility with surveillance and then expulsion as he knows well how the system functions from his past experience in working with the *colons* in colonial Algeria (Gone, 134). The article written in the local newspapers about the incident confirms the fears of Bouzid and his fellowmen. They are described as those 'Arab immigrant' who are 'hors les lois' and traffickers of meat, and how the police 'work' hard to arrest the offenders and 'restore' the law[15] (Gone, 135). Bouchaoui (Bouzid's cousin) complains about the incessant 'control of papers' and about public abuse as a result of their 'visibility', he claims that "ils ont ri de moi, m'ont traité de bikon. Tous les jours, ça va être comme ça, maintenant " (Gone, 136). The Chaâba has survived many things before but 'le scandale de la boucherie clandestine' is fatal to all the Algerian immigrant communities who, under the burden of stigmatisation, start to leave the Chaâba (Gone, 136). Azouz's family is the last to move because of Bouzid's attachment to the place and his belief that the Chaâba is the only place where they can remain invisible and thus live peacefully without harassment (Gone, 149).

Azouz Begag's *Le Gone du Chaâba* had itself raised hot public debate when it became exposed to the scrutiny of the media in 1988 after a row over a schoolteacher's decision to use the book in her class curriculum. Under the influence of some National Front supporters, some parents accused the teacher of using a pornographic text that would totally corrupt the young adolescents readers. This accusation was based on a brief passage in the novel where the protagonist Azouz, a young child, was trying to understand and mimic the sexual act that far

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[14] Slaughtering of animals following the Islamic rituals.

[15] In *Béni ou Le Paradi Privé*, Béni's father expressed his mistrust of the French media when "...le présentateur parlait des Arabes, de pétrole, de l'Islam, de l'Algerie, il nous disait à tous de nous taire...." And then asks his children to translate for him what had been said while affirming that "les Français ne disaient que des mensonges sur nous" (Béni, 31).

from being pornographic was a comic perception of sexual innocence (Hargreaves 1993, 35).[16] The row over the book, however, has brought Begag's text and other Beur novels into literary visibility and thus encouraged more creativity on the part of the growing young writers.

The parents of the Franco-Maghrebines had no voice at all and kept their existence surrounded by silence and despair. Their descendants, however, have refused to be silent as they have translated their *mal de vivre* and exclusion from mainstream French society into various voices whether artistic, political, cultural or athletic. In *Georgette!*, *Le Gone de Chaâba*, *Béni ou le Paradis Privé* and other texts, the Beurs' psychological fracture is due to their awareness of their alienation in relation to two cultural spheres irreducible one to another (Benarab 1994, 206). The texts are a way of translating their experiences of being a minority and clearly show traces of their distancing themselves from their parents' and the French identities.

a- Béni and the Language of Comedy in *Béni ou le paradis privé*

Azouz Begag's second novel *Béni ou le paradis privé* focuses on the character of Béni, a young adolescent of high achievement in school and with a promising future (Béni, 35). His nickname Béni is carefully chosen by him to disguise his real name Ben Abdellah, (meaning the son of the slave of God in Arabic) a name for him that has no future in a non-Islamic country. But his nickname can accommodate and reconcile various meanings and cultures: "mon fils" dans la langue de Prophète, Béni dans celle de Christ, anagramme de bien dans celle de petit Robert" (ibid.). Béni prefers to be called by this name instead of his real name "Ben Abdallah" because it hides his Arab origins: "Mais j'aime surtout quand m'appelle Béni, parce que là, on voit pas que je suis arabe" (Béni, 40).

Béni is stigmatised by his skin colour and physical difference, which always pushes him to the verge of being a foreigner. For example just as he thinks he has managed to gain Nick as a friend, his mother tells Béni that her son is forbidden to accompany 'n'importe qui', clearly implying Arabs; her racism is aroused by her son's death in a car accident involving "les trims" of the cité (Béni, 73). Nick's

[16] For more details of the issue, see Daniel Licht (1988).

mother associates "les trims" with the youth of the banlieue who are predominantly of North African origin. Béni, however, does not want Nick's mother to think of him as 'n'importe qui' (Béni, 75) because he thinks of himself as a high achiever, unlike his newly acquired friends in the cité such as Milou (Franco-Algerian), Riton, etc. (Béni, 137).

Béni's physical and ethnic difference makes him unable to choose what he wants to be as he is already classified. Confronted with the banality of this latent racism that involves other groups[17] as well, Béni decides to become a comedian to be free from stigmatisation, free from national or ethnic certainty and fixation:

> Je voulais lui dire qu'un comédien avait le magique avantage d'être plusieurs gens à la fois, avec le choix de se cacher dans la peau de l'un d'eux, une marionnette imaginaire qui n'existe et n'apparaît que sur un claquement des doigts, comédien pour faire croire qu'on n'est pas celui qu'on est en réalité, et vice versa, personne ne me comprendrait plus et ce serait tant mieux comme ça car on ne serait plus assuré de rien, bien fait! Un monde fait de comédiens dans lequel on ne saurait pas si monsieur Untel s'écrit avec un U majuscule ou un I, et de toute façon tous les gens s'en fouteraient parceque y'aurait plus de I et plus de U, plus de gros, plus de maigres, plus de Blancs, plus de couleur, plus de Béni-t'es-d'où-toi? d'ici ou de là-bas? et je pourrais tranquillement regarder ma France sans qu'elle le sache, je sais c'est malhonnête, mais au moins je saurais exactement ce qu'elle ressent pour moi derrière mon masque. (Béni, 75).

Béni 's idea of living in a world of actors and masques so that he camouflages himself in different characters without having to be categorised and classified, is due to his desire to escape his constant stigmatisation. Béni wants to break down the barriers of the fixed ethnic camps that stabilise people's identities and belongings. His world of actors means that he will not be afraid of anything especially the police force. His big day of comedy will be when the brutal misuse of power by the police against those categorised as outsiders/criminals like himself will be revealed. He imagines himself to be a victim of an abusive

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[17] Beni heard the discussion in a café of a group of old white French men about an article in the Progrès, a Lyonnais newspaper stating how a Gitan is said to rape a French woman whereas he denies it; Here is their dialogue:
"- Si c'était moi que je dirigeas ce putain de pays, je les renverrais tous dans leur pays, les Gitans, à coups de botte dans le cul!
- C'est sûr, dit un autre. Tu les accueilles, tu leur donnes du boulot, ils violent tes femmes: France pays d'accueil! Voilà le résultat!" (Beni, 125).

police ID check with the power to immediately and brutally change to a police chief delegated by French society to punish those who abuse their power (ibid.). He will ask them: "Quelles sont les raisons qui ont contribué au choix de mon personnage pour votre contrôle?" (Beni, 75). Even when merely watching the police chasing a young boy, he is singled out for questioning and accused of helping the fugitive to escape (Béni, 87). The policeman insults him and he is humiliated when he tries to protest (ibid.). Beni believes that "partout il en faudrait des comédians, partout des masques, des incertitudes" (Béni, 76).

As young Beurs still in the process of inscribing themselves in French society, the three Beur protagonists in *Georgette!, Le Gone de Chaâba* and *Béni ou le Paradis Privé* "develop an attitude of double choice imposed by this perception of the host society: conformity or revolt. But this painful choice is born also out of the miserable experience of their parents, on which they avoid to reflect" (Benarab 1994, 144). Therefore, the adopted posture expresses their willingness to liberate themselves from the reductive expectations made for them of taking their parents' place as an exploited labour force that reproduces itself. It is as a result of this socio-cultural exile that the Beur literature emerges expressing individual experiences and at the same time the collective social exclusion of the banlieues. Most of the characters in the Beur texts suffer from conflict and ambivalence in relation to the family space on the one hand and French society on the other. The elements inherited by the Beurs from the family as a mark of cultural identity become a source of humiliation and disdain within the wider space of French society. This can be attributed to the negative stereotypes inherited from colonial history and the low socio-economic status accorded to their parents as *travailleurs immigrés* that have also made them feel inferior.

The question of double culture is conceived not as a tangible reality but as a social and ideological construction, which makes use of the 'foreignness' of cultures and their irreducibility to one another so as to legitimatise the domination of some over others (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 84). In other words, Arabo-Islamic culture is defined as being deviant and irreducible to a superior unitary and egalitarian French culture. This constructed fiction denies recognition and thus equal access for the Maghrebian families to public space. The descendants of immigrant families find

themselves, when trying to affirm their singularity and their mode of belonging to French society, at risk of being disavowed not only by the agents of 'legitimate culture' but also by their own parents who expect them to conform to certain cultural norms. These young people are denied a space where they can express their individual aspirations as the idea of assimilation dominates any cultural legitimacy.[18] They are seen as 'incomplete individuals' not because they are torn between two cultures but because they are 'uncertain individuals' as they question and weaken the dominant cultural model and its imagined integrity. Instead of recognising the individuality and singularity of any translation of the different cultures inherited by the Beurs, the diversity of their cultural practices are homogenised under a unified label 'Maghrebian' culture which is seen as threatening to the French 'national integrity' and thus denounced: "l'étiquetage accrédite dès lors l'idée d'une double culture illégitime car déviante" (ibid., 49).

Facing various triangles of domination, the girls of North African descendants try to adopt a form of independence or liberty that is rooted both in their family values and French society: "sous l'effet cumulé d'une double impossibilité, celle de la culture familiale et celle de la socialisation institutionelle, les filles comme leurs frères sont renvoyées à leur seule capacité" (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 68). Thus, the diversity of their trajectories and their confrontation with individualistic culture from a dominated position cannot be generalised. The texts of Leila Houari, Ferrudja Kessas and Sakinna Boukhedenna clearly demonstrate the diversity of experience in negotiating the various facets of being Franco-Maghrebian women.

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[18]This is the case not only of the young descendants of North African immigrants but also young people from working-class backgrounds who are socially discriminated against in terms of being considered unable, as dominated groups, to affirm the singularity of their existence, unlike for example more socially favoured classes (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 84).

3- Leila Houari's *Zeida de Nulle Part* (1985)[19] and *Quand tu verras la mer* (1988):[20] narratives of the homelessness and fragilities of 'exile'

(a)- Zaida and the 'interrupted genealogy'

Elle était folle, folle! Pourtant son histoire était simple. (Z., 75).

Sa grand-mère avait raison, elle ne devait pas fuir, jusqu'à présent elle n'avait fait que courir après des ombres, la réponse n'était pas ici [le Maroc], l'exil était et serait toujours son ami, il lui appris à chercher ses racines. (Z., 83).

A l'aube on se réveille, on voudrait pouvoir...
Le constat nous bouleverse et,
L'on se retrouve comme un oiseau blessé
A la veille de sa migration. (Q., 11).

Leila Houari's *Zaida de nulle part* focuses on the life of a young adolescent of Moroccan origin, who moved with her parents to Brussels at the age of five. She expresses through the novel her belonging to "nulle part" (nowhere) as she feels lost and uprooted in France and a foreigner in Belgium. The protagonist's name Zaida, which in Arabic has two meanings: the newly born one, or the one that is extra or excessive, reflects the mode of the novel where Zaida is "de nulle part" (from nowhere), the one who is born out of nowhere while oscillating between two spaces, the *ici* (Brussels) and *là bas* (Fez). Her identity is one of 'lack' as she is from nowhere (*nulle part*) or doubly excessive as she is linked to both Morocco and Brussels. (Z., 19).

Zaida still cannot come to accept her enforced displacement from Fez, a city whose charm, perplexity, warmth and hospitality still haunt her early childhood memories (Z., 19-20-21). Though Brussels is her adopted home where she was brought up, she is still confronted with people's mistrustful looks and coldness (Z., 30). A graffiti on a wall reminds her that she is not in her "country", but rather in exile, incertitude and loneliness: "Non, elle ne prendrait pas goût à la solitude, à l'incertitude, jamais, parce qu'elle savait qu'il y a des grisailles qui vous imprègnent et rendent aveugle à tout autre ciel!" (Z., 40).

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[19] Abbreviated hereafter as Z.
[20] Abbreviated hereafter as Q.

Zaida rebels against the restrictions imposed on her by the patriarchal mentality of her parents' culture. Torn between her mother's resignation and her father's inability to talk about the harshness of exile, Zaida feels unable to communicate with her parents, especially her father, whom she perceives as a 'wanderer' who can never find his lost 'home' again (Z., 39). When he catches her watching the street from a window, he suspects her of waiting for a lover and accuses her of being "une petite révoltée qui déshonore sa race" (Z., 39). He insults her with words that hurt her as they show his mistrust of her; words that translate the harshness of his experience in exile: "tes mots qui sont durs, ont la dureté de ton expérience. Si tu m'avais batue, cela m'aurait fait moins mal" (ibid.). Her mother warns her not to rebel against the father's will as that will bring on her "la malédiction". However, exile is her "malédiction", "tout ce qu'elle vivait était maudit, trop de contradictions se mêlaient pour qu'elle y voit clair" (Z., 32). It is her "hidden imprint" as she is doomed to live in contradiction between "ces deux mondes qui l'habitaient" (Z., 79). Because of these two worlds, she has no identity, she is 'nothing' (rien) though people already classify her as an Arab because of her physical 'difference': "Non, je ne suis pas arabe, je ne suis rien, je suis moi. Ah! Mes yeux bruns, excusez-moi, j'avais oublié..." (Z., 15).

Listening to her mother's own history *là bas* in her own village in Morocco, Zaida feels a strong link has been renewed between the two, a genealogical and historical link of continuity but also of disruption: "Tu parlais, je t'écoutais, j'aurais tellement voulu être comme toi, accepter les choses telles qu'elles sont, tu n'as pas été très heureuse et un rien te fait sourir. J'ai honte de moi, à force de me révolter j'en arrive à ne plus avoir ce que je veux" (Z., 36-38). She can never be like her mother, submissive to the idea of a 'pure' woman who keeps the 'honour' of the family intact. But her rebellion against the taboos set for by her father throws her into more confusion: "et moi, je veux justement déchirer ce voile d'interdits, je veux connaître l'amour et une ombre me poursuit, me harcèle, me rit au visage et me laisse perdue" (Z., 39). Mehdi Charef (1983, 37) reflects on this confusion as a problem of generations, since the parents want to enforce their vision of life on their children which deepens the latter's psychological turmoil:

> Ce qui me dérange avec la génération des premiers immigrés, c'est que la majorité d'entre eux voudrait que leurs enfants soient ce qu'ils sont ou ce

> qu'ils ont été. A la maison, c'est tous le temps: 'Attentions. ne fait pas ci. parce que tu es Arabe... Ne fait pas ca... N'oublie pas que tu es musulman! Dans la rue, le gosse se retrouve carrément dans un autre monde que les parents ignorent. Il est déchiré et c'est ce déchirement qui me dérange. C'est ce déchirement qui fait souffrir les jeunes.

Zaida expresses this 'déchirement' in terms of the rupture in the supposed genealogy of cultural continuity as her parents' expectations of her do not fit in with her other acquired affiliations within the Belgian society and thus cause her serious conflicts of loyalty with her parents. Zaida has been confronted with all the limitations of what she is allowed to do/be and not to do/be; she abandons everything including school and even "l'espoir de s'en sortir un jour" (Z., 54). Though she is inhabited by the 'exile' and forced displacement that she blames for 'interrupting' her 'filial genealogy' with Morocco, her up-bringing in Belgian society has created a strong affiliation with the culture of her adopted society. Contradictions, disruption and confusion mark the movement between the filial and the affilial, as she feels no longer able to identify with her mother's submissive views on life and thus her father's patriarchal views which limit her freedom of movement.

Zaida's decision to make the journey back to the land of her early childhood is an attempt (like most Beur protagonists)[21] to escape the various contradictions that inhabit her, but the journey has further accentuated them as she discovers that "home coming is out of the question" (Edward Said 1984, 165) and that "exile" will be her companion. She makes a determined effort to adapt to the life of the peasants in the village whose warmth, hospitality and attachment to their land is something that she cannot have (Z., 49-56). But she is perceived as a guest of passage; a guest treated with great respect but never an insider. Seen as 'une fille d'Europe', she is allowed the company of two young boys simply because she does not 'belong' to the village (Z., 69). In Brussels she is seen as a 'foreigner' in the category of poor labourers without any esteem (Z., 50). But even her aunt still thinks of her as a 'foreigner', an outsider in transit as she warns her of the dogs who dislike foreigners (Z., 43-52). Like her mother *là bas* (Brussels), women of the village *ici* strike her with their resignation to the patriarchal mentality perceived as their 'destiny' (Z., 53).

Her love for her cousin's friend Watani is important as his name in Arabic means 'my country'. She indulges in the same fantasy about him as the one she has of her 'pays': "ce grand garcon aux yeux verts elle le désirait envers et contre tous. elle ne se rendait pas compte des illusions qu'elle se fabriquait..." (Z., 59). Watani cannot be her answer as he is doubtful about life in Morocco where she wants to have security (ibid.). She discovers that "elle n'est pas faite pour vivre ici" as she is seen as 'fille d'Europe' (Z., 68). Watani cannot even understand her serious efforts to settle in the village; he asks her to leave for Brussels as "le rêve n'est pas permis ici" (Z., 73). Zaida feels handicapped by being unable to express herself in what she sees as her 'very own language: Arabic', a language she does not know, which further accentuates her status as an 'intruder' (Z., 75).

The call comes from her grandmother telling her to stop escaping her "destiny", her double affinities and the illusions she has made about a possible homeland, as her journey to her parents' village simply creates more doubts and illusions in her mind: "...les jours sont longs ici, ils vont semer encore plus de doutes en toi, n'essaye pas d'échapper à ton destin, les nuits vont t'envelopper de rêves et bientôt tu seras comme la vielle Rahma qui est devenue folle parce qu'elle attendait que le sel fleurisse. Ne te berce pas de l'odeur de menthe, ya Zeida! Sache que la déception ici, est plus dure que partout ailleurs..." (Z., 44). "Home-coming is out of the question" as Zaida cannot establish a new umbilical cord with the land of her birth: "Elle voulait trop, elle demandait la compréhension générale et c'était elle qui s'était imposée à tous, à Watani, à sa tante, même à la mule bornée" (Z.,78).

But even in the village, where nobody believes that she wants to efface her past in Europe and start anew, she feels "étrangère... tout bonnement étrangère", as it is not enough to wear *une blouza* and live the life of the peasants to become one of them (Z., 74). Her escape from Brussels has only aggravated the contradictions that already possess her as she discovers that she cannot efface her half-self or the other hyphen of her identity: her Belgian identity: "le choix de s'être retirée totalement de tout ce qui pouvait lui rappeler l'Europe n'avait fait qu'accentuer les contradictions

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[1] Many Beur protagonists are disillusioned in their trip back to their parents' country of origin; see, for example, Omar in *Les A.N.I de Tassili* (1984), Brahim in *Le Sourire de Brahim* (1985), Sakinna in Sakinna Boukhedenna, Sakinna: *Journal "Nationalité "Immigré(e)"* (1987).

qui l'habitaient" (Z., 74). Her trip to Morocco has further deepened her sense of loss:

> Le Maroc dégeagait une beauté si attachante, la misère qu'elle vivait en Europe était différente, lui avait permis d'aimer son pays malgré les années qui l'en avaient séparée, de se chercher dans ces deux mondes qui l'habitaient. Pourtant elle n'avait pas de réponse pour son rêve, un voile lui collait intérieurement et pour longtemps! (Z., 79).

Her life is on the borders of these new spaces that inhabit her. If her love for a Belgian boy, an act of loosening inter-ethnic boundaries is totally impossible for both families to accept, this rejection reappears with her experience with Watani in Morocco, as her love for him is also impossible as they live in "different universes" (Z., 80). "L'avenir était à refaire" in Brussels, but "Elle était paralysée... sa tante, sa grand-mère, la mule, Watani, les pancartes qui cachent la ville pauvre, l'odeur de jasmin, le petit vendeur de raibi, la beauté de son pays puis... le garçon aux cheveux clairs, la grisaille...l'Europe" (Z., 83). She can never resolve her contradictions, but she can work through them. Her "cavalier noir" "se pétrifait dans le désespoir de sa mémoire désormais orpheline!" (Z., 83). She decides to search and make use of the richness of her contradictions and that "rien n'était à justifier, ni ici, ni là-bas, c'était comme cela, un point c'est tout! Chercher et encore chercher et trouver la richesse dans ses contradictions, la réponse devait être dans le doute et pas ailleurs" (Z., 83). She has stopped dreaming about the certainty of her 'belonging' and accepted doubt as an answer; her 'chez-soi' can be anywhere, it can be "où je mange de pain" according to her mother (Z., 83-4). But she still feels close to the immigrants: to their nostalgia and 'weariness' at crossing borders (Z. 84).

(b)- Encounters

Une jeune femme sans enfance erre dans l'histoire
Sans nostalgie de passé
Indifférente à l'avenir
Soucieuse du miroir auquel elle sourit
Consciente de l'instance seulement. (Q., 97).

Un homme marche droit devant lui.
De temps en temps, il s'arrête pour une rencontre.
Puis continue sa route et préfère dire j'ai rêvé. (Q., 103).

Houari's second novel *Quand tu verras la mer* is composed of various short stories that centre on the sea as a liberator, a powerful signifier that can heal ethnic divisions as it unites the various characters and liberates them from their mutual prejudices. The main narrator of the stories is the anonymous protagonist of one of the short stories entitled "Encounter". One can easily link her to Zaida in *Zaida de nulle part* as she was also forced into exile with her parents when she was five. Fez, the city of her early childhood, is described with the same intensity as in *Zaida* (Q., 90). Brussels is her 'exile': the place that envelops her in her contradictions (Q., 8-10). Houari emphasises in this text the futility of ethnic camps and barriers as her stories subtly evolve around how friendship and love between people from different ethnic groups can help appease their pain and loneliness. The stories evolve around issues of fragility, madness, suicide, *le vide* or lack of *le fond*, and childhood memories.

The young woman suggests a strong link between her forced exile as a child and her being sensitive in a world where sensitivity is seen as a mark of weakness; her "Arab" origins do not help her situation: "Bien sûr, j'ai une excuse: je suis arabe. Alors la sensibilité, mon frère, elle me tue" (Q., 16). To overcome her sensitivity as a "Fatima", a name that is used to degrade her as an immigrant labourer (*le Fatima de ménage*) in a country "des trucs branchés" is to use "a mask" to deceive the others: "IL VOUS FAUT UNE CARAPACE POUR TROMPER LES AUTRES"[22] (Q., 16). Her strategies of camouflaging resembles other Beur characters such as Béni in *Béni* and the anonymous girl in *Georgette!* However, her mask falls apart since she cannot take the pressure of being somebody else and not herself: "Alors, j'ai levé les bras au ciel et j'ai poussé un cri horrible, continu, douloureux; je tenais mon ventre en me roulant par terre. Je hurlais du plus profond de mon être" (Q., 17).

The anonymous young woman lives on her own in Brussels in a neighbourhood mostly populated by "les travailleurs venus d'ailleurs" (Q., 22). She describes them as lost and lonely (Q., 23). The narrator problematises the adoption of a form of 'Islam' as a reactionary form of 'identity assertion' which for her represents another form of self-closure as it encourages patriarchy and ethnic encampment. She

[22] Houari's own use of capital letters in the text.

satirically attributes this to emptiness, unemployment, loss of memory and exclusion: "do not touch white women, do not drink coloured drinks, cover up your wife: her teeth are too white, your wife should not cut her hair as that will decrease your virility and keep an eye on your children as they can run away" (Q., 22). However, they still remain 'absent' under the weight of the 'banality' of daily racism practised by Belgium people (Q., 24).[23]

The first encounter that the story traces is between the young woman and a Belgian man, a writer who is attracted to her bizarre charm (Q., 76). Here is their first exchange of words,

> -Vous êtes arabe…
> -Pourquoi, ça se voit?
> -Je ne voulais pas vous blaisser.
> -Vous ne me blaissez pas, seulement cela fait vingt ans que l'on me pose la question. (Q., 74).

She wonders whether it is her 'exotic' looks, her being 'an oriental woman' which make her the Other, "*une étrangère*" that attracts his gaze and curiosity, but for him it is her aloofness, her inaccessibility that have fascinated him: "Lui qui avait l'habitude de jongler avec les personages, il était là, impuissant devant cette jeune femme insaisissable" (Q., 95). She traces their encounter back to one a thousand years earlier in a big ship, a reference to the encounter between Europe and North Africa and their long shared and entwined history (Q., 85).

She confuses him with her lack of certainty about her possible 'identity' and the way she crosses boundaries: "Je suis nomade, simplement nomade de la vie" (Q., 95). She insists that she has no "tribe" when he asks her whether she will be 'unfaithful' to her 'tribe', that is, whether she will have a relationship with a man outside her designated community. She asks to see the sea (Q., 90); he, bewildered, asks her:

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[23] The local shopkeeper and his clientele exemplified this as one of the customers asked Monsieur Van Bazar about coffee as there seemed to be 'une razzia' in supermarkets; he assured her that all his 'faithful' customers, by which he means those who do not shop with the 'Turk' (a word used to describe any 'foreigner' especially Muslims) next door, would be able to get the coffee from him (Q., 24). Madam Duchemin was refused coffee because she shopped with the 'Turk' though Madame Germaine was shocked to discover that the former, "dont les carreaux sont si propres" shopped with a Turk (Q., 24). Madame Germaine's reference to Madame Duchemin's clean windows is related to an earlier ironical remark made by the protagonist when she claimed that "c'est un pays où l'on vous juge d'après la propreté de vos vitres" (Q., 22) which hints at the discourse of 'propre' versus 'impropre' (the 'natives' versus immigrants).

-D'où viens-tu?
-Je n'ai pas encore trouvé.
-Où vas-tu?
Elle le regarda avec son sourire d'enfant:
-A la mer, avec vous. Vous avez oublié? (Q., 91).

She confronts him with her own *histoire* disguised in the form of an old folkloric tale narrated to her by her grandmother. In this story exile or *l'ogresse* forces her parents towards "l'autre côté de l'horizon" where the break with the native land is involuntary but irreversible (Q., 82). The little girl is promised by a genie (in the midst of her psychological trauma at the moment of a violent geographical and cultural displacement that haunts her still) that he will keep her heart in the mountain (while her body moves away): "Tu laisses ton coeur pour tout ce que tu aimes ici, et là-bas tu serais indifférente à tout ce qui s'y passera, aux gens, aux choses, puisque tu ne voulais pas ressembler aux cadavres vivants qui en reviennent sans le sourire..." (Q., 83). But her happiness will be restored each time she sees the sea (Q., 83). Later when he sees her throwing herself into the sea to die, the Belgian man understands that she is the story and its end.

The encounter has changed his life; she has shaken all his certainties as he confesses to her when she asks him about his 'origins' that he does not know anymore and that he is "un clandestin des temps modernes" (Q., 95). When he asks her to live with him forever, she tells him that it is not her 'destiny' and that "les agneaux ne sont pas éternels": a reflection upon her status as a 'descendant' of her parents' geographical and cultural displacement and the way she is sacrificed like the lamb (Q., 93). This is related to the Muslim annual sacrifice of lamb for religious purposes, which, she found repulsive when she was a young child. She witnesses the lamb facing its terrible destiny "effrayé au début" but with a smile afterwards "la lame de couteau...lui passait avec une douceur effroyable sur sa gorge tendue" (Q., 94). This reminds her of her status: her displacement when she was a child is like the inevitable sacrifice of the sheep: moving towards one's death: " peut être de voir cette bête de regard presque humain aller vers une mort inévitable, quelque chose de profond, de vieux comme le monde réagissait en moi..." (Q., 95). When they finally reach the sea, and when he sees her running on the beach 'happy to die' like *les agneaux de sacrifice*, he understands her trauma and her desire to be freed even

through suicide: "C'est quand il la vit courir, heureuse à en mourir, qu'il regarda à nouveau les gens, le ciel, les chiens, les coquillages, le sable puis le ciel encore, qu'il sentit un froid le glacer jusqu'à la moelle. Il comprit" (Q., 101).

Another form of encounter ("La vieille et l'enfant") that crosses ethnic barriers is between Méméd, a young boy of Moroccan origin and Mocika, an old and lonely Belgian woman. Both characters live at the margins of society, Méméd as the child of a deprived immigrant family whose only memories of happiness are when his father uses his skills of storytelling to make his wife and children laugh and forget about their hard life (Q., 41). Mocika's old age alienates her from society. She refuses to allow anybody to approach or talk to her; she reveales her private life to the outside world by not shutting the curtains of the huge glass window of her ground flat thinking that by exposing herself to the public, she will be left undisturbed (Q., 30). The total loneliness and sadness of the woman is juxtaposed with that of the 'immigrant' boy and their encounter is described as "deux solitudes venaient de se croiser et c'était bien" (Q., 35). Like other characters in the text, Mocika's link with the sea is very strong as it also symbolises for her youth and happiness and memories with a lover forty years earlier. Therefore, her trip to the seaside with Méméd changes their life; it fills Mocika with a feeling of happiness and love for the boy, feelings she thinks are buried forever (ibid.). Méméd is 'fou de joie' as it is his first glimpse of the sea; his excitement has swept Mocika with a pleasant feeling of being loved (Q., 49). That night "c'est une autre Mocika qui entre dans son rez-de-chaussée, et pour la première fois depuis des années, elle ferme ses tentures pour dormir" (Q., 51). As for Méméd, he feels deeply attached to his new friend whose death the next morning is an extreme shock to him (Q., 51-2). Both establish a new relationship on the basis of their being excluded and "unwanted" by mainstream society. But like the young woman, once liberated, Mocika gives in to death.

The aporia of exile and homelessness is the focus of "la mer dans tes yeux" which dramatises a young immigrant's life divided between his host country Belgium and his home country. His lover Christine, a young Belgian woman cannot help him cut his "umbilical cord" with his native land, nor can she be his mother or his country. But she knows how her displaced and exiled lover wants to efface his memory when

he narrates stories: "Tu te sentais bien, tu mélangeais les langues et ta vie est devenue un mélange obscur de plus en plus trouble" (Q., 65). Storytelling helps him (*l'homme viril*) to hide the little child inside him who is rejected by the intimate world of his mother and her friends in their bathing rituals. A rejection based on the expectation that he will become a 'Man' 'commanding' women, a patriarchal role he can never be at ease with (Q., 65). The moments of intimacy with his mother as a young boy in the Turkish bath with other women was never found again. Though he is loved by many women, he can never be close to them (Q., 58). He addresses his mother whose "ghost" haunts him all the time and makes him unable to "belong" to other women, or other homelands:

> Aucune femme ne veut vivre avec moi, et toi tu souris avec tes yeux noirs qui me troublent. C'est la nuit quand je te regarde. Je ne comprends rien. Dans le noir de tes yeux, j'ai erré des nuits entières pour trouver....J'ai rencontré des putains, des hommes de toutes les couleurs, des femmes brunes, des femmes blondes aux yeux bleus, surtout elles, je croyais que je pourrais trouver dans le bleu de leurs yeux... sur la blancheur de leur peau... Oh, mère, tu ne peux pas savoir. Je ne rentrais jamais seul à la maison, des femmes, encore des femmes. Je buvais de plus en plus. Je voulais toucher le fond, pour trouver.... Quoi? (Q., 58).

Exile in Edward Said's words "is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (Said 1984, 159). Thus, the search for the *'bout'* or the bottom of things, a condition of exile as the young woman/narrator at the beginning of the novel is told by her doctor that she has reached the *'bout'* but she claims that "donc après le bout, c'est le vide. Et le vide, a-t-il un fond?" because "s'il y a avait vraiment un fond, je ne serais pas fâchée de tomber. Une fois seulement. Ça ne doit pas faire de tort, hein?" (Q., 20). He also suffers from emptiness, lack of a bottom or a 'fond', homelessness and fragility. Madness is the result of this rift (" je deviens fou") as he realises that he cannot be here (exile) and *là-bas* (home country) at the same time: "De la fenêtre, il voit une ombre, il dit: "Mais, c'est moi là-bas. Je ne peux pas être partout à la fois". L'ombre s'éloigne sans bruit..." (Q. 59). Being *partout à la fois* but being *nulle part* at the same time is his condition, a condition of not being able to go back 'home'. But he cannot either recognise his *chez-moi* in Belgium where his house is equipped with things he has brought from 'home' on his last holiday (Q., 59). His end is marked by violence as he puts an end to his life

when he sleeps in a hot bath, a chosen death that reconciles him with his childhood in the Turkish bath with his mother and also like other characters (the young woman and Mocika) liberates him from his suffering (he dies with a smile). For the young exile, Christine "a emporté la mer dans ses yeux", the seaside of his own country as he always tells her after making love: "Chris, tu as la mer de mon pays dans tes yeux" (Q., 56). But Christiane is also like him, fighting solitude, wandering and searching (Q., 66). Christiane realises after his suicide that "ce n'était pas moi que tu aimais, à travers moi tu cherchais autre chose..."(Q., 63). When he introduces her to his home country and his mother, she cannot recognise him, as he becomes a child again; she is jealous of the love he has for his mother and for their complicity and her intrusion (Q., 64). Christine sends his body to be finally "reconciled" with his "home" country.

Even though most characters in the text suffer from alienation, the last story "Mimouna" tells of the experience of establishing new affiliations and forging links with the host culture. A young woman finds love in exile after she migrates from her village in Morocco to Paris where she meets the man of her life described as "très souriant avec une barbe et des yeux bleus, bleus, bleus..." (Q., 119). Once again the colour of the sea is a symbol of hope and happiness. Exile in her case liberates her from the constraint of a rural patriarchal society and gives her a choice to determine the course of her life. In the case of the other protagonists, exile deprives them (especially the young woman) of having control over their lives as they are torn between two worlds. Like the symbol of the sea, storytelling is very significant in all the parallel short stories as it brings hope for a better future. Reflecting on the elements of the autobiographical self of Houari, the narrator/protagonist is a writer who likes narrating stories "qui soient belles, même si elles sont un peu tristes. Oui, voilà, des histoires belles, tristes, avec une pointe d'espoir. Ça, c'est une bonne recette" (Q., 25). Storytelling is a way of translating experiences of exile, hospitality, loneliness and the aporias of alterity that, though painful, offer the hope of bringing people together.

If Houari's texts translate the experience of the double bind of exile, the texts of Kessas and Boukhedenna focus more on the issue of ethnicity and gender in fostering the women's double exclusion. Daughters of the North African immigrants

in France are the targets of a paradoxical injunction coming from the parents and the actors of integration that both want to normalise the girls' positions. The girls who search for alternative options to make themselves heard, are disqualified from both injunctions. If boys suffer from exclusion and marginalisation on the basis of their ethnicity or on that of being Franco-Maghrebians, the girls add another dimension to that hyphen which is that of gender oppression. This double oppression of gender and of ethnicity is strongly present in most Beurettes' texts:

> Les jeunes filles sont descendantes d'immigrés nord-africains. A ce titre, elles sont une figure de l'altérité, figure de l'étranger et plus particulièrement elle, résiduelle, de l'immigré. Dans l'imaginaire collectif, cette figure est figée dans une différence ethnique et religieuse façonnée par l'histoire de la colonisation. Elles sont femmes et à ce titre incarnent une autre figure fondamentale de l'alterité, celle d'une différenciation culturellle qui traverse toutes les sociétés et assigne les individus à des rôles et statuts différents à partir du sexe biologique. Dans le parcours personnel de ces filles, ces deux figures de l'Autre se combinent et se renforcent. (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 84).

Girls are represented as being more accepting of integration as they are claimed to look for "emancipation". In most research, the question of gender is ignored and the girls' experience is overshadowed by that of the boys. At the same time, images of successful Beurettes (though they show the inclination to succeed like any other French women) tend to cover up problems related to the question of equality between the sexes as if it is resolved, women winning over men. The experience of the girls (like that of the boys) in negotiating these various components of their identities cannot be generalised as it varies from one individual to another, but one has to point out their common resistance to the pressure of the community and the agents of 'integration" by translating their multiple affinities as 'hyphenated' people that can move across boundaries.

3- Ferrudja Kessas's *Beur Story*[24] (1990), Sakinna Boukhedenna's *Journal Nationalité: Immigrée* (1987): the Beur(ettes)' strategies of survival and "Le dechirure physique et psychologique"[25]

(a)- Ferrudja Kessas and 'the triple alterity'

Je me faisais une joie d'avance de me séparer de notre quartier. Me fondre à une foule nouvelle, ne plus être marginalisée. (B., 114).

Kessas's *Beur Story* centres around the characters of three Beur(ettes) and their subjective experiences of being Franco-Maghrebians torn between the different expectations imposed on them by the agents of 'integration' in French society and their own parents. If the boys of North African descent have to confront their working-class backgrounds and their 'ethnicity' as the two dimensions of their domination in French society, the girls have a third additional dimension of gender oppression. Therefore, their 'triple alterity' consists of being women of immigrant origin, from working-class backgrounds and confronting a unified culture. Girls of North African origin are translating the three facets of their alterity in diverse ways and in various forms of resistance to authority and domination. Kessas's text stresses the diversity and plurality of the girls' experience. Malika (the main protagonist and narrator) and her friend Farida are disheartened at their constant exclusion from the activities of their French classmates who consider them '*inintéressantes*' as they cannot enjoy the same freedom of movement as their French peers (B., 100). They have suffered from such an exclusion for seven years in school and now in college. Though their classmates denounce American racism against the Blacks and racial segregation in South Africa, they are still racist against the Franco-Maghrebians (B., 12). Farida and Malika are under the illusion that by helping their classmates with their notes and their exercises, they will facilitate their entry into their 'universe' (B., 14).[26]

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[24] Abbreviated hereafter as B.

[25] This rhetorical expression is used by Malika in *Beur's Story* (1990, 221) to reveal the different tensions confronted by young Beurettes and the various strategies adopted to work through them.

[26] In most Beur texts such as Charef's, Begag's, and Belghoul's, school is important in forging new alliances, but it remains a source of emotional disorder and alienation from the parents' culture. In Kessas's text, Malika is tormented by the world of school that reminds her and her fellow Beurs of

The three Beurettes Malika, her sister Fatima and her friend Farida adopt various strategies in the face of the cultural, social and psychological rift. Fatima for example refuses to accept on the one hand the double standard of the parents' culture that grants mobility and freedom of movement to the boys while restricting that of the girls, and on the other hand, their marginalisation by their French peers in school. Fatima refuses to be cornered in a certain identity: "elle s'imaginait être une lady obligée de se camoufler derrière l'identité médiocre d'une certaine Fatima" (B., 203). She is no longer ashamed of criticising both cultures to find her own space. She has chosen visibility and activism instead of silence. She has decided with her other friends at school that the only way to liberate themselves is through their artistic creation or the re-invention of their culture: "Enfin, bref, on parlera de nous car tu vois, j'ai bien réfléchi, vu qu'on n'a aucun droit, aucun liberté, à moins de sauter par la fenêtre comme la fille d'hier, moi j'ai decidé de me libérer, grâce à ce que nous avons de plus précieux: notre culture!" (B., 217). The new generation of girls do not want to be invisible anymore and ashamed of their origins and they do not accept integration at the expense of completely denying the parents' culture.

Farida's strategy is very different. She believes that for the parents' mentality to change, that of the daughters has to change too: "Comment veux-tu que les parents évoluent si les filles pareilles n'évoluent pas elles-mêmes!" (B., 13). Farida has a rebellious spirit against the patriarchal culture of her community that limits her freedom of movement, but also a rebellious attitude towards the French idea of integration that is still impregnated with the colonial discourse of 'emancipating' 'native' women from their oppressive culture. Farida has gone through the phase of looking at herself through the eyes of others or through the norms of the dominant culture, which looks at her community contemptuously as inferior: "elle s'était

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their own economic and social deprivation (B., 12.). Besides the school and teachers' failure to understand their pupils social problems, Malika also confirms the school curriculum's inability to respond to their needs as children coming from a "different" background as it is mainly made for French children: "[elle] n'arrivait pas à retenir le texte de Diderot, aucune des explications qui lui venait à l'esprit ne lui paraissait convaincante. Elle soutenait sa tête de sa main droite et commencer à en avoir assez de tout ces textes qui ne signifaient plus rien pour elle, qu'un amas de mots incompréhensibles et inconfortables" (ibid., 216). Referring to a recent study by Goux et Maurin (1997), Guénif Souilamas (2000, 58) argues that that the institution of school has been unable to erase social inequalities, instead it has contributed to widen the gap by putting forward the idea of unequal cultures that separates those who have the keys to cultural codes and those who have not.

méprisée en se contemplant avec horreur dans la glace, se donnant de terrible gifles, pour essayer de détruire cette face un peu très basanée qui lui rappelait qu'elle s'appelait Farida et non Francine" (B., 14). She develops contempt for her parents' culture and rejects it (even her friendship with Malika is rejected because she and other girls of her origin remind her like 'spectres' of her 'condition'). However, her rejection of her parents' culture does not guarantee her entry into French society as she is still seen as different with her "yeux de 'cochon'", "[ses] cheveux hennifiés et [son] teint!" (B., 155). The process of pushing the girls to integrate at the expense of family divisions seems to imply a form of a 'disintegrated integration' (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 47). Farida cannot efface her parents' culture from her hyphenated identity divided between the two poles, however, this experience allows her to liberate herself from "la toile d'araignée dans laquelle [elle] [s]'était empêtrée" and teaches her to accept herself better and to affirm her own culture and origins (B., 116). At the same time, she challenges the parents' mentality by going to a café with a group of French friends (B., 76). As she stops going to school, the teacher announces in the class that Farida will not be coming any more to school because she has to work to help her parents (B., 99). Malika thinks that this announcement only worsens the gap between them (Beurettes) and their French classmates as it represents them as having no agency: "plutôt que les rapprocher, ces révélations avaient creusé un gouffre infranchissable. Elles etaient considerées comme des marginales" (B., 100). However, Farida stops coming to school not because of her father's prohibition, but because it is her own second act of rebellion[27] against the institution of her integration that has failed her and further deepened her confused identity cards: "J'en ai assez de l'école et de tout le fatras qui l'accompagne!" (B., 114).[28] Farida explains and defends her rebellious spirit and her defiance of the 'rules', in terms of her status of being 'emigré', torn between cultures and spaces: "Ce n'est pas de ma faute, je n'ai pas demandé à être une émigrée! Mon père n'avait qu'a me laisser là-bas, au pays!" (B., 77). Farida marks her life with a violent end as

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[27] Even critics like Alec Hargreaves (1993, 31) claims that when Farida dared to enter a café, she was immediately forbidden to go to school again by her parents. This aims at emphasising the oppressive culture of the parents, though Hargreaves never mentions that Farida's father was a highly educated man and a scholar who was pushing his daughter to go to university. Farida herself was the one who had withdrawn from school as she confessed to Farida (B., 111-2-3-4).

[28] Farida also claims that "Pourtant le lycée représentait tellement pour moi: c'était une étape! Un autre monde à découvrir et à aimer! Je me faisais une joie d'avance de me séparer de notre quartier. Me fondre à une foule nouvelle, ne plus être marginalisée! .... Ne plus être marginalisé! Quelle déception! Côtoyer tous ces jeunes riches libres et beaux de surcroît, et être obligée de jouer la

she cannot cope with the tension in her life that has driven her to "un profond épuisement morale" (B., 120, 213). Her act is read by Malika's mother's patriarchal voice as a form of self-punishment as she may have tarnished the family's reputation (losing her virginity, a 'déchirure physique'), but Fatima insists that the girl's act is an expression of 'déchirure psychologique': " tu sais Yemin (mother), y'a des milliers de raisons pour qu'une fille veuille se suicider. Pas seulement parce qu'elle a été déchirée, sans votre permission; mais aussi pare qu'elle est déchirée dans sa tête" (B., 214). Being 'borne across' has its various limitations and frustrations and can lead to self loss as in the case of Farida, but it can also have its own benefits: Malika resists authority and stabilisation and as a 'translated person' invents her own spaces. Facing estrangement from the kind of integration offered by the dominant society that she has side-stepped and estrangement in the face of her parents' 'genealogy' that (like other Beurettes) she attempts to recompose or deconstruct, Malika wants to go beyond the dichotomy of cultural belonging towards a more pluralistic cultural space. She feels sorry for her parents' deracination and the way they try to keep the balance of the 'boat' they have installed in France against the threatening winds especially those of inter-ethnic marriage (B., 64). Her brother Abdel falls in love with a French girl, which gives him more hope for the future as he starts an electro-mechanical degree; this also changes his view of his sisters as he tries to understand them more and become closer to them (B., 59). Malika witnesses her mother's deep grief at Abdel's act, totally rejected by the community as an act of 'betrayal' (B., 136). Malika's mother's discourse-- like the French one-- places an overwhelmingly catastrophic value on the intercultural and inter-ethnic mixture seen as causing the proliferation of intra-communal divisions. But for Malika, it represents a new phase of crossing ethnic barriers and camps.

Even though boys have more liberty of movement (as Fatima puts it), they offer no sympathy for the girls' position as they exercise the same patriarchal roles of the parents' generation. Fatima wonders if it is possible to construct a discourse based on solidarity instead of confrontation: "Nous sommes aussi de la deuxième génération, un jour ou l'autre on sera peut-être confrontés à pire que ça...Et au lieu de nous donner la main, ils nous tournent le dos!" (B., 202). For decades, research on the young descendants of North African immigrants has constructed the image of

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comédie, dissimuler nos origines, cacher l'endroit où nous habitons, tu t'en rends compte, quelle

the young boy as failing the system of integration in the segregated, violent and delinquent banlieues whereas the girls represent the stark opposite image of their failing brothers (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 87). This creates a dichotomy between the histories of the young men and women of North African descent and thus creates opposition, conflict, and most importantly ignores the common solidarity of experiences that though different in gender, converge in terms of their commonality of social and cultural exclusion. Though the experiences of both young men and women are complex and may differ within the family as men can play the role of controllers leading to the women's resentment, boys are also losing the support of what can be a strong ally to them in their studious attempt to overcome the paradoxes that confront them in their every day life and thus create, instead of antagonism, common solidarity through the use of various strategies on both sides (ibid., 88).

In French society today, Franco-Maghrebian women are seen either as 'convincing', excellent examples of the success of social and cultural integration into French society by first and foremost taking the step of abandoning their parents' culture and at the same time denying the implications and real alienation that this assimilation can cause. That is, integration is seen as conformity to a pre-defined norm. The construction of the girl's image of failing the French educational system and accepting the supposed traditional roles assigned to her by her parents' culture (enforced marriage) is a way of 'confirming' that her origin (a confusion of cultural and social origins) is the one that prevents her from integrating (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 60). In this case, the girl's wretched consciousness can lead her to believe the stigma is justified or to try and think of the idea of a double culture that is not reduced to a conflict between two irreducible cultures but as a subjective reconstitution of multiple cultural belongings, that is, to translate and move across borders. Therefore, Franco-Maghrebian women faced with this dilemma of cultural belonging can negotiate with these diverse voices, exceed the terms of a cultural dichotomy so as to develop their own subjective version. The three dimensions of the girls's domination: being women of immigrant origin, from working-class backgrounds and confronting a unified culture are being translated into various forms to resist authority and domination.

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honte d'habiter les Marais Noirs quand tu ne vois pas plus loin que Sainte-Claire!" (B., 114-5).

b- "Ni putes ni soumises!"[29] in Sakinna Boukhedenna: *Journal "Nationalité: immigré(e)"*[30]

Boukhedenna starts her text with a significant dedication in which she claims that:

> J'ai écrit ce journal à la mémoire de tout jeune immigré(e) qui rentre dans sa terre arabe et qui découvre soudain le sens amer de l'exil. Toutes ces jeunes femmes immigrées, tous ces jeunes hommes immigrés qui grâce au mensonge et à l'illusion du retour, et aussi, grâce à l'esprit colonialiste qui règne à l'Ecole française, sont devenus les
>
> **NATIONALITÉ: IMMIGRÉ(E)**
>
> Le passé de nos parents, c'est notre présent, et notre présent de deuxième génération sans nationalité a-t-il un futur?
> C'est en France que j'ai appris à être Arabe.
> C'est en Algérie que j'ai appris à être l'Immigrée.
>
> Sakinna, novembre 1985.

Sakinna Boukhedenna's *Journal "Nationalité: immigré(e)"* is a blunt text that speaks loudly and bitterly of racism in France and Algeria. Her text is marked by contradictory attitudes and feelings towards her filiation and affiliation with the two countries. Sakinna's search for a 'home' where her ideals of equality between people and between men and women can be lived is driven by her experience of being a woman descended from the much deprived and excluded immigrant background. She discovers, however, that she has no 'home' and that her condition of 'immigrée' is her 'nationalité' as both the countries of her parents-- Algeria-- and that of her place of birth-- France-- reject her:

> Pas de terre pour les femmes immigrées....
> Nous n'avons pas de terre,
> Nulle part
> Déja soumises de la naissance jusqu'à la mort ... (Journal. 123)

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[29] A recent slogan used by young Franco-Maghrebian women in their "marche des femmes": "une marche des femmes contre les ghettos et pour l'égalité", which started on the 1st of February 2003 and lasted till 8th of March. The March was organised by young girls of the *banlieues* gathering in la Fédération des maisons des potes (linked with SOS-racisme) and walking through 23 French cities to denounce all the forms of violence and discrimination they have been undergoing in the *cité*. (Le Monde 01-02-2003).

[30] Abbreviated hereafter as Journal.

By claiming her nationality to be migrant, Sakinna stresses the idea of 'moving across' that deconstructs the issue of rootedness represented in her text as a myth that is used to manipulate and dominate others such as herself, located between borders and spaces. This 'mythical rooting' is clear in the French and Algerian cultural attitudes towards the immigrants and their children, treated as 'bastards', who interrupt the genealogy of national conformity as they fall outside 'rooted belonging' with their multiple affinities: "Je me sentais rejetée par les Français et par les Arabes autochtones. Eux qui ne sont pas immigrés. Ceux qui me regardaient comme une étrangère" (Journal, 74.).

In France, she and her sisters revolt against any rules set by her Algerian father to the extent of escaping the house (Journal, 12-3). Sakinna frequents places associated with 'western culture' such as bars and cafés and that is why she is seen as 'westernised' and a 'whore' by her own community members. With her strong feminist views, she has the courage to confront *le tribunal communautaire* which wants to preserve *la communauté mythique* (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 87) with the traditional roles of women as *soumises*, which Sakinna denounced as a form of *oppression masculine.* She rebels against being seen as either *soumise* (to the patriarchy of the community) or *pute* ('adopting' French culture). Sakinna demonstrates against the French common belief that the *Beurettes* are not submissive by nature or default, but because of the power structures of their own culture. Like the protagonists of *Beur's story,* Sakinna searches for a possible solidarity with her Franco-Maghrebian fellow men who, although they share the same experiences of exclusion and racism, do not act in solidarity with women. Instead they perpetuate their roles as patriarchal figures and take the women's misery for granted (Journal, 55). Sakinna raises the issue of the disorganisation of the North African immigrants and the exclusion of women from the struggle against injustice and inequality.

Even though assimilated to French culture, Sakinna's life is still marked by daily routine racism. The ghettoisation of the immigrants and their descendants at the periphery of French society first in *bidonvilles* and then in *HLM* haunts Sakinna with all the ramifications of being poor and deprived, witnessing problems between parents, violence against women by drunken fathers and daily police raids. (Journal,

35). This spatial segregation gives way to revolt and disbelief in the institutions of 'integration' such as schools: "Comment être élève sage quand le germe de la révolte a grandi dans le quartier des bidonvilles où l'on a mis tes parents quand ils ont débarqué en France. Comment être élève sage quand pour eux, tu es vaurien, fille de Mohamed couscous? La plupart des élèves indisciplinées étaient Arabes et pauvres. Presque toutes. Est-ce qu'ils cherchent à nous comprendre, ont-ils fait un tour, ces profs, après l'école, pour voir ce qu'on appelle nos 'quartiers'?" (Journal, 35). The immigrants and their descendants are rejected in France where they are 'les boucs émissaires' responsible for unemployment and also accused of being "les salisseurs et les salisseuses de la France" (Journal, 71). She attacks right-wing politicians and intellectuals with their racist attitudes towards the immigrants and their descendants, but she focuses more on the leftist intellectuals with their 'humanitarian compassion' marked by hypocrisy and double standards (Journal, 60). She is always reminded of her status as an 'immigrant' outsider pushed to the other side of the Mediterranean, to a country she has never seen before: Algeria (Journal, 31).

If in France "On [l]'avait déjá classée", (Journal, 15) she takes a trip to Algeria in order to end what she calls her 'cultural handicap', but it turns out to be a total shattering of her dreams and illusions about 'her' Algeria (Journal, 75). Being grounded within French society makes her see Algerian society with 'French eyes'; that is, seeing Algerian culture as modelled on the French one, so she is surprised to see women wearing the veil, which she associates with oppression. She also has French values in mind when she cannot find women living on their own as it is part of the Algerian culture for young men and women to live with the extended family (Journal, 77). She finds Algeria as being the reverse of what she believes, as she has in mind French culture as the 'norm' (Journal, 80). She feels an outsider to Algerian society and a foreigner, *une fille d'Europe*, a westernised feminist and even a 'whore' as she challenges the patriarchal mentality of some men. Her language is 'unremitting' in the face of the oppression she faces as an 'immigrant' both in France and Algeria (Journal, 83). Kateb Yacine, the famous anti- and post colonial Algerian writer, is the only one with whom she totally identifies as his writings epitomise for her the exiled militant in a search for his own Algeria (Journal, 96). Her experience in Algeria is a total failure as she discovers the corruption of the socialist government and its oppression of the population; she also understands how

she is not welcomed in the strongly patriarchal society that considers her to be a whore (Journal, 100). She is convinced now that "la France et l'Algérie sont égales sur une chose à jouer au ping-pong avec nous, les 'nationalité: immigré(e)'" (ibid.). She has to go back to France, the land of inhospitality for her: "la France m'avait dégoûtée car nous subissions trop d'injustices dans cette France de colons. Pays de racisme, de l'inhospitalité, pays de la honte et de l'humiliation quotidienne des conditions de travail auxquelles mes frères, soeurs et moi. étions assujettis..." (ibid.).

Therefore, she decides to construct her own *arabité* and her own Frenchness: "Si la culture arabe, c'est de réduire la femme à l'état où elle est, je ne veux pas de cette arabité. Si Arabe en France signifie bougnoule, il faut être naturalisé pour dire je suis française, ça jamais" (Journal, 100). Sakinna sees herself as a 'femme immigrée' living in a "cage HLM. Grésilles-Chenôve..." (Journal. 62-3), a woman who has challenged all the taboos related to her parents' North African culture by enforcing her presence in public places associated with 'westernisation'. However, her freedom to smoke, to drink alcohol and to move has not provided the basis of 'liberation' for her in her own community as she is perceived as a 'whore' and an outsider to the community. In contradictory terms, however. her being rejected by France despite her total assimilation to its culture enforces her to see herself out of place and culturally 'colonised' by France. This pushes her to search for her 'real roots', her 'real Arab culture' that are free of the patriarchal domination (Journal, 67). From this shuttle between the two spaces in which she cannot fit in comes her sense of 'non-belonging', of being comfortable at borders or at the hyphen:

> Ni Français, ni Arabes, nous sommes l'exil, nous avons une identité non-reconnue, luttons pour le réobtenir, ne nous laissons plus faire par les arabes et par les Français. "Nationalité immigrée", je rentrais en France avec ce nouveau passport tamponné par l'Algérie et par la France. J'étais fière d'être restée femme et non-soeur, mère ou putain... Femme arabe, on m'a condamnée à perpétuité, car j'ai franchi le chemin de la liberté, on m'a répudiée, maintenant me voilà immigrée sur le chemin de l'exil, identité de femme non reconnue je cours le monde pour savoir d'où je viens (Journal, 126).

Sakinna realises that she has various selves and identities depending on the context she finds herself in, while lacking an 'original' identity that she can refer to as the

'centre'. As a translated person, her identities have no original text as her translations have multiple belongings. The identities she constructs for herself as a free woman always in '*movance*' in search for new spaces are at odds with the ones constructed for her by her community (to be either *soumise* or *pute*) and by the host society in which she is held hostage to being a certain immigrant outsider. Thus, she breaks free from any certain cultural grounding.

Besides the hyphenated identity of being Franco-Maghrebians, the girls add another dimension to this hyphen, that of feminine alterity. Being women, being young and being descendents of North African immigrants are the points of identity cluster for the girls. Girls descendent from an Arabo-Islamic origin have to deconstruct a place already over-determined for them by the dominant discourse and its legacy of imperial orientalist perceptions of Muslim women as obedient, exotic sexed objects, and easily dominated. At the same time girls are asked to 'integrate' unconditionally into the emancipator French culture. This obviously will be at the expense of rejecting the parents' culture seen as oppressive (an Eurocentric view of culture, subordinating other cultures to the superior French one). The young generation of women of North African origin search for their own singular voice that go beyond the discourse of emancipation and their parents' culture. In French society, the Arabo-Islamic culture is assigned a subordinate, dominated position as it is 'naturalised' or seen as having an unchanging nature (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 57). Any form of support for this culture is seen as backward and anti-integrationist, forcing the young Franco-Maghrebians, especially the girls, into an impossible choice.

But even 'experts' on 'the immigrant North African culture' like Hargreaves (1993, 23) declare that, "Few communities have a more marked tradition of male domination than the population of Maghrebian origin in France". Hargreaves seems to ignore the diversity of the North African communities in France. Though most of them come from rural backgrounds and are illiterate, their culture has undergone lots of changes as a result of their encounter with French society and so it cannot be stabilised or naturalised. When referring to Houari's and Kessas's texts, Hargreaves states that the protagonists find themselves blocked by "the Islamic values of their parents" when searching for independence (ibid., 31). In making this assumption,

Hargreaves overlooks the complexity of gender issues in Islam embedded in various social systems and mores and mainly represents a typical imperialist point of view that emphasises the inferiority of certain cultures whose only way to 'salvation' is the adoption of 'European' values.[31] Leila Ahmed argues that research on Arab Muslim women still occurs within a field already marked with the biased discourses of colonialism. Therefore, "awareness of such a legacy and of the political ends silently being served by the assumptions, the narratives, and the versions of history and culture with which the Western discourse on Arab women is already inscribed needs to be the starting point of any investigation" (ibid., 245). This is crucial in order to avoid the re-inscription of the old discourse of domination/subordination. The binary opposition between tradition (immigrant culture) and modernity (French culture) allows space for the re-appearance of colonial categorisation that underlies the construction of the figure of the 'immigrant'. In this sense, the Beurettes undergo a certain 'naturalisation' because of their Islamic origins. Being a Beurette herself, Necira Souilamas Guénif (2000, 52) argues that "Pour les filles d'origine nord-africaine, cette domination [culturelle et sociale] redouble d'intensité du fait d'une perception naturalisée des femmes 'arabes', 'musulmanes'". Even though the girls suffer less from a pre-determined ethnic stigmatisation than the boys as they appear more open to 'integration' and thus do not 'trouble' public order, they are as much used by the wider society (who expect them to renounce their parents' culture in order to be able to integrate) as by their own community (who expect them to conform to the parents' culture to 'preserve' the community). Thus "les images contrastées des jeunes filles d'origine nord-africaine oscillent ainsi entre incarnation de la modernité universelle et résurgence fantasmatique de la communauté mythique" (ibid., 87). The affair of the 'Islamic scarf' has revealed the simplicity of the argument that sees them as simply refusing the 'ailing' culture of their parents or 'the masculine Arab culture' that they have to free themselves from in order to succeed. Arab culture is represented as the only one that alienates the girls with its oppressive cultural practices against which the French western culture can fight to

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[31] Leila Ahmed 's brilliant book *Women and Gender in Islam* (1992, 244) analyses the complexities of this issue in a way that reveals to those who dismiss Islam as sexist and bigoted their historical ignorance and prejudice. She argues that: "whether the attack on Muslim customs and societies, and especially on their practices regarding women, was made by imperialist men who were supporters of male dominance, by missionaries, or by feminists and whether it was made in the name of 'civilising' the natives, or Christianising them, or of rescuing women from the religion and culture in which they had the misfortune to find themselves, invoking the issue of women served to license, and to impart

'save' them. However "les lunettes de l'alterité montrent que le sentiment d'appartenance à une culture familiale singulière contribue à renforcer l'enracinement social des filles. Ces trois termes construisent l'idéal type d'une identité ciselée dans une alterité jeune, féminine et immigrée" (ibid., 88). Using these three signifiers, girls of North African descent bring closer to society what is seen foreign and at the same time question what constitutes the 'proper' or the national. They refuse linearity (that is part of the western notion of the universal) as their experience varied according to the resolution they adopt facing their status of being women, young and of Maghrebian descent.

Their refusal of the parents' imposition of conformist attitudes on their culture comes from their rejection of the tone of this conformism which, (while stressing conformist attitudes towards cultural norms in the name of 'natural difference') emphasises the dominant stereotypes of irreducible differences between the two cultures. It also denies the lively and vibrant part of the familial culture that is not only present in practice but also claimed by the descendants. Moreover, it ignores the girls' own willingness to take their own decisions in life. As for their discarding of the tones of integration, it is because of the latter pushing the girls to reject the 'oppressive' culture of their parents for an 'emancipator' French culture. This still carries a colonial connotation as the coloniser tends to advocate for the 'native' women's freedom from the oppression of their fellow men and thus it fosters a binary opposition between the two cultures (and hence between generations: parents/children). Therefore, any invitation to emancipation is inscribed within the implicit rejection of the parents' culture from which the girls cannot disassociate themselves. The integration project is socially alienating and fosters cultural domination. Thus, the girls refuse to be 'docilement héroiques' (docilely heroic) to the parents' desire and 'héroiqument dociles' (heroically docile) to the agents of integration, looking for alternatives to express themselves (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 27; Begag and Chaouite 1990, 116-7).

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an aura of moral legitimacy to, denouncing and attacking the customs of the dominated society and

Conclusion

The colonial past with its inegalitarian perception of native culture casts its influence with the arrival from citizens of the ex-colonies who were assigned a 'subaltern' economic and cultural position as first 'les travailleurs immigrés' and then as 'Mahgrébins' (temporary to permanent residency not acknowledged or recognised) and thus emphasises the perception of 'legitimate' and 'deviant' cultures to cover for any social and economic domination (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 50). Through a close reading of the Beurs texts in this chapter, one comes to the conclusion that the young Franco-Maghrebians denounce what is represented to them by the dominant discourse as their parents' 'archaic mentality' while inventing new voices that go beyond the reductionism of their parents' history to something more hospitable to their different histories. The common discourse about immigration produces a reductive alterity by reducing the multiple figures of the history of migration to one single image, that is both negative and totalitarian. Alterity is not only about difference but also about resemblance as it is not only around the figure of the 'foreigner' but also about singularity in relation to others and thus it reveals social and individual identities in the making (ibid., 81-2).

The protagonists' efforts in *Georgette!*, *Le Gone de Chaâba* and *Béni ou le Paradis Privé* to 'integrate' within French society remain inconclusive and in the end unrewarded since the more they try to make their 'difference' invisible, the more it seems evident and irreconcilable. The pressure of assimilation and cultural conformity results in negative evaluation of one's culture and also in a form of estrangement and alienation. If the girl in *Georgette!* commits suicide in the end as she is unable to cope with the 'disorder of her identity', the two protagonists in *Le Gone de Chaâba* and *Béni ou le paradis privé* liberate themselves from any reductive expectations made on them by the agents of integration and their parents and thus open their identities to plurality. Leila Houari's *Zeida de nulle part* and *Quand on verras la mer* focus on the fragility of exile, the madness and loss linked with geographical and cultural displacement. Houari suggests storytelling as a way of translating experiences of exile and loneliness, but she stresses friendship and hospitality as the only means left to bring people from various 'ethnic' and social

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insisting that it change its ways and adopt the superior ways of the Europeans".

backgrounds together. The texts of Kessas and Boukhedenna focus more on the issue of ethnicity and gender as important components in forming the Beurettes' identities. Though they are the targets of a paradoxical injunction coming from the parents and the actors of integration, the Beurettes search for alternative options to make themselves heard. They exceed the terms of a cultural dichotomy so as to be hospitable to their hyphenated identities.

Therefore, the descendants of North African immigrants refuse one form of alterity among others as each one of them translates the different facets of their identity (social, cultural and sexual) in a way that solves the 'disorder' of their identities. This means that if we begin to understand difference as interarticulation and the "unremarkable interdependence suggested by the idea of symbiosis", we may understand that "what is best named a 'transcultural' mixture, and the assumptions about alterity that it promotes, is a phenomenon without any necessary or fixed value" (Gilroy 2000, 217). Antiracist democracy and civic reciprocity can thrive if there is no obligation to possess specific forms of otherness predetermined by ethnic, cultural or 'racial' 'origins'.

Chapter 6

The Beurs as Heirs of Colonial and Anti-Colonial Memory

Confronting French Colonial History

1- Reviewing "the willed effacement of the history of anti-colonial resistance" in France: the Beurs' perspectives

(a)- "Arabicides" and the Return of the Repressed

(b)- The Inscription of the French Silenced History *dans l'enceinte* of the Monumental Architecture of Paris in Leila Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*

2- Mehdi Charef's *Le harki de Meriem*: Healing the Wounds of History, the Harkis in Perspective

5- The Interplay Between History/Memory/Space in Tassadit Immache: *Presque un Frère* and *Le Dromadaire de Bonaparte*

6- Tassadit Immache: *Une Fille sans Histoire*, 'une Fille de l'histoire'

(a)- Photographs and Imprints of the past: "C'était à mourir d'amour et de haine"

Conclusion

Chapter 6

The Beurs as Heirs of Colonial and Anti-Colonial Memory

Brahim pensait à tous ces maghrébines morts pour la France, des campagnes de Napoléon III à la guerre contre le nazisme en passant par Verdun. Non seulement la France n'avait pas la reconnaissance de ventre mais en plus elle amputait sa mémoire. La guerre de Crimée, la bataille de la Marne, Bir Hakeim, Monte Cassino et tant d'autres batailles où les troupes, maghrébines en première ligne servaient de chair à canon. Son oncle par miracle en avait réchappé, mais ses frères étaient tombés au champ d' horreur pour sombrer dans les décomptes des soldats inconnus morts pour la France. Nacer Kettane (1985, 145).

Fini le viol de l'histoire, il ne voulait pas continuer comme ses parents à être victime de politcards véreux. L'Algérie était son pays et la France aussi.
Kettane (1985, 156).

As a postcolonial diaspora, the Beurs strongly identify with their ancestors' colonial and anti-colonial memory. Some Beur texts are solely devoted to commemorate colonial memory such as Mehdi Charef's *Le Harki de Meriem,* Nacer Kettane's *Le sourire de Brahim,* and Leila Sebbar's *Le Seine était rouge.* Most Beur authors refer to colonial history and colonial violence in relation to their effects on their life in contemporary France and in relation to their parents' migration to France during and in the aftermath of colonialism. Their parents suffered silently from colonial racism, humiliation and de-humanisation when they arrived in France. Therefore, one can argue that the Beurs' tracing of such a memory has certain political claims that link past exclusion and racism with the contemporary one in an attempt to mirror and project the continuity of certain past attitudes into the present. This chapter will map out the significance of historical and colonial genealogy as traced in Beur texts in order to understand the backward and forward movement between the colonial past and the postcolonial present and the way the violent legacy of the past has marked the life of the Beurs and their parents. The Beur identities are strongly marked with history and memory.

The Beurs re-read the violent colonial history of France in North African (especially Algeria) as a stain on the conscience of France, the country of the Declaration of Human Rights and of *liberté, égalité, fraternité.* Insisting on the hypocrisy of this

discourse, their texts expose France's colonial crimes because the silence about them means that according to the law of the return of the repressed, colonial racism would come back to haunt post-colonial France. Thus, one can clearly see the urgency in their texts of recovering and commemorating their parents' forgotten and silenced history. I argue that the importance of recovering this colonial and anti-colonial memory would help the Beurs to lay the past to rest and work towards a future where their post-colonial immigrant parents would be seen as historic figures bound to the French colonial past and not as intruders with no relation to their host country and where their descendants would stop being seen as immigrants. In other words, their presence in France does not come from nowhere-- or as it is officially represented in French official discourse, they were a mere labour force that was needed for a short time to help build the economy and then be disposed of later-- but it is strongly related to the imperial history of their host countries and thus is linked to its contemporary history. The Beurs' deconstruction of French official monolithic colonial history gives voice to individual narratives in the sense of writing history from the point of view of those who have been written out of this history, the displaced and the excluded, a minority history or counter narratives to official histories. Rewriting the memory of immigration is also a clear refusal to lock the parents within the sole logic of economic production which subjugates them to being a dominated group. Moreover, these texts question the way the teaching of French history glorifies only those seen as 'great people' while denying those like their parents who had built railways, worked in farms and industries, contributing immensely to the wealth of the country and in the making of its history.

Confronting French Colonial History

French colonial history and its subjection of a great number of nations as its slaves has significantly marked the political history of France and has also played an important part in questioning the principles of the Republic in the same way, for example, the Dreyfus affair at the end of the nineteenth century questioned the discrimination against the Jews after the principles of the Revolution had banned any differences between French citizens. Etienne Balibar (1997, 391) raises the issue of how the idea of the 'Empire' with its hierarchical 'racial' differences that subordinate those seen as 'inferior' still exercises influence in French society. Thus it

plays the role of an interior frontier between the French and those who are carrying the image of the colonial subjects, the North African immigrants and their descendants:

> ...C'est que la frontière intérieure est en jeu: L'"Empire" n'existe plus, mais son idée est toujours lá, comme le fantôme de ses "sujets" avec leur "superstitions" ou leur "fanatismes". Chacun des voiles qui franchit la porte d'une école surmontée de la devise "Liberté Égalité Fraternité" est la preuve non seulement que nous avons dû renoncer à l'Empire, ce qui est au fond secondaire, mais surtout nous en retirer sans avoir accompli la mission que nous croyions y remplir: libérer tous les peuples de leur ignorance et de leur intolérance, enseigner à tous la religion laïque à la française.

Balibar ironically points out that the image of young women-- descendants of the ex-colonial North African Muslims in France-- entering French schools with their Islamic headscarf[1] reminds the French that they have not just given up the Empire, but also of the failure of the supposed *mission civilisatrice* with its supposed aims to civilise and liberate colonial subjects from their 'beliefs' deemed as ignorant and primitive. In other words, Balibar questions the idea of French Empire which was energised by 'prestige' and France's '*vocation superieure*' (Said 1994a, 204) that believed in its ability to 'civilise' the colonial natives as factors that justified territorial acquisition. This is different from the British 'departmental view' as it is based on the French great assimilationist enterprise (ibid.). However, French colonial assimilation that was supposed to start under the Revolution collapsed after theories of 'race' and 'racial inferiority' dominated French imperial strategies. Therefore, "natives and their lands were not to be treated as entities that could be made French, but as possessions, the immutable characteristics of which required separation and subservience, even though this did not rule out the *mission civilisatrice"* (ibid., 206).

France (like other great European Empires) has managed to exclude in the representation of its official history the subjects of their colonies who had fought

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[1] Balibar (1997, 391-2) refers to the republican model of school and the concept of secularity which became politically charged during the 1989 headscarf affair which marked the beginning of an intellectual debate about the principles of the Republic. Wieviorka (1992a, 36) argues that it is not the principle of secularity that has caused the crisis as teachers were used to see immigrants children wearing scarves and it was not perceived as a problem before then. But it became problematic at the end of the eighties because the immigrants themselves became a 'problem' threatening the cultural uniformity of the nation. For a thorough analysis of the influence of the headscarf issue of the French political and cultural life, see Gaspard, Francoise, and Farhad Khosrokhavar (1995).

along with the European soldiers in the First and Second World Wars with the same determination as their European fellows. Walking in the streets of Paris, one easily realises the extent to which this exclusion is clear in public monuments where the heroism and glory of the French soldiers is mentioned with such extravagance in defending the French Republic and where not a single reference is made to remember the loss of lives of millions of France's ex-colonial subjects who were called to fight and defend the freedom of France. Certain memories that consolidate the vision of the grandiosity of the Republic are cultivated but others are negated. In a similar way, Paul Gilroy (2000, 5) argues that at a time when the memory of anti-Nazi war is being commemorated and recovered, one must ask the way in which such commemoration takes place in terms of excluding the non-white narratives: "is the presence of non-whites--West Indians, African Americans, and other colonial combatants-- being written out of the heroic narratives that are being produced in this, the age of apologies and overdue reparations?" This raises the question of "What role might their stories [non-white combatants] have if we could write a different history of this period, one in which they were allowed to dwell in the same frame as official anti-Nazi heroism" (ibid.). The history of the anti-Nazi struggle and the active role of the colonised subjects as a crucial part of it can be used to forge "the minimal ethical principles on which a meaningful multiculturalism might be based" (ibid., 6).

If, as Edward Said (2000, 176) claims, "memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority," one must address the way France has been representing and teaching its official history (especially in its relation to North Africa) in order to understand the mechanisms of past and present exclusions and amnesia towards its colonial subjects and now their representatives in France: North African immigrants. It is necessary to address the way France has excluded the role of its North African colonial subjects specifically in defending the Republic during the Nazi occupation and how that has been linked to the way the North African immigrants have been excluded from the history of building the economy and prosperity of the French nation. In order for a "multicultural France" to exist, a re-reading of French history that will "look history at the face" in president Jacques Chirac's words (*Economist* May 2001, 55), is important in forging new alliances and allowing France to

recognise its injustices towards its ex-colonial subjects and its present exclusion of the North African immigrants and their descendants from national history. The Beurs' reconstruction of French colonial history is an attempt in Said's (1994a, 23) words, at "representing the suffering of your own people, testifying to its travails, reasserting its enduring presence, reinforcing its memory..."

The texts that are analysed in this chapter are diverse and rich in their pluralistic approach to the reading of history. Though most of them (Kettane's, Sebbar's and Immache's texts) trace the memory of the 17th October 1961 event, their reading of the event is marked by their own subjective translations and invention of it. Nacer Kettane and Ahmed Kalouaz's texts trace the return of colonial violence to haunt post-colonial France. Sebbar's text re-inscribes the itinerary of the 17th October 1961 demonstration at the heart of the monumental architecture of Paris, whereas Immache's (more autobiographical texts) re-inscribe this event at the heart of the Parisian *banlieues* where she had grown up as a child of an Algerian immigrant father and French mother at the time of the Algerian war. Her text translates the inhospitality, hatred and rancour of the time of the war, an inhospitality that is still perpetuated in the treatment of the youth of the banlieues who have inherited the same colonial stereotypes inflicted on their parents. Charef translates the historical burden of the harkis by focusing on their own narrative perspective on the war of Algeria.

1- Reviewing "the willed effacement of the history of anti-colonial resistance"[2] in France: the Beurs' Perspectives

Hommes noyés, fusillés, torturés, à jamais témoins de la barbarie, vous êtes comme un souffle de vie suspendu qui rafraîchira la mémoire des générations en pèlerinage d'identité. En se promenant, les amoureux des bords de Seine pourraient voir votre sourire, au fond de l'eau, bénir leurs baisers. Kettane (1985, 22).

Nacer Kettane's *Le Sourire de Brahim*[3] is based on the aftermath of the historical incident of the 17th of October 1961 when the French authorities savagely

[2] Robert Young's sentence (2001, 427).
[3] Abbreviated hereafter as Brahim.

suppressed a peaceful Algerian demonstration against the War in Algeria.[4] The Algerians in France were brutally massacred by the Parisian police whose *préfet* was Maurice Papon, the man who had sent the Jews to concentration camps. The protesters consisted of whole Algerian families calling for an end to the bloodshed in Algeria and an end to the curfew imposed on Algerian immigrants in France, but the event was marked with further bloodshed of Algerian lives within France as many were killed and thrown into the river Seine and others were massively arrested and tortured. Brahim loses his young brother Kader who is hit in the head by a bullet; both children are accompanying their parents for the demonstration. Brahim loses his smile from then on, a symbol of his hope in his future in France, but the novel, partly an autobiographical work of Kettane's, makes of that smile a memorial for the dead of the 1961 so that their anti-colonial, anti-racist historical memory will not be forgotten and will guide their descendants in their search for their own future in France. Though the massacre has been consigned to amnesia in the French memory, it is remembered in the Algerian mind in France as the beginning of their battle for visibility in French public life and outside their confinement in the *bidonvilles*. Jean-Luc Einaudi (1991) argues that the massacre of around 250 Algerians during the peaceful demonstration failed to constitute a case for investigation into the massacre at the time. The State clearly distorted interpretations of the event in order first, to cover up for its own involvement in the massacre, and second to prevent an accurate judicial inquiry. The amnesties from any future judicial prosecution, that were granted to those who were involved, was certainly part of the State's hegemonic position to exclude the massacre and its implications from French official memory. Einaudi (1991, 224-5) suggests that there were more reactions to the event by some sectors of French society than has been claimed recently, especially on the part of intellectuals (university teachers, writers and students) in Paris. However, their transmission of such a memory was largely restricted for ideological reasons, because mainstream political parties rejected their views.[5] Leila Sebbar's recently published novel *Le Seine était rouge* (1996) recognises a more complicated representation of the event especially the

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[4] New fictional books have recently appeared to mark the memory of this event such as Bertina, Arno: *Le dehors ou la migration des truites* (2001) Lallaoui, Mehdi: *Une nuit d'octobre* (2001) and Streiff, G. *Les caves de la Goutte d'or* (2001).

[5] See Jim House's unpublished Ph.D. thesis (1997, 299). In relation to this, Brigitte Gaïti (1994, 27) argues that "(l)e silence de la plupart des hommes politiques ou des journalistes témoigne de leur

participation of French activists or *les porteurs de valise* in supporting Algerian Independence, not only by being part of the 17th October demonstration but through other political channels.[6]

The 17th of October 1961 can be seen as the beginning of another history in France, which is that of the presence of Algerians and North Africans on French soil. Fausto Giudice (1992, 340) claims that "Si les 'Beurs' sont ce qu'ils sont et, avant tout, s'ils existent, c'est bien, en premier lieu, parce que leurs parents ont refusé le couvre-feu, imposé leur presence au risque de leur vie, en payant le prix fort du sang". Giudice stresses how the North African immigrants' anti-colonial struggle within France has paved the way for their descendants to voice their political struggle for a better life in France.[7]

Brahim is also very critical of the Algerian official narratives of independence as he clearly makes a distinction --in his visit to his parents' country of origin to do voluntary service as a young doctor-- between national liberation and independence. He re-visits *Kabyle* where his aunt has showed him sites of resistance against the French and where his grandfather died fighting. But in contradiction to this rebellious spirit of national liberation, Brahim recognizes a postcolonial Algeria that is failing and impoverishing its own people with the monopoly of power of the ruling elite (Brahim, 109-113). The corruption of the military regime makes the prospect of independence in Algeria dark and gloomy for Brahim.

The return of colonial violence to haunt post-colonial France --where the murder of the Beurs is not seen as a crime and where 'des circonstances atténuantes' such as 'le bruit, la sécurité, les nerfs ou quelque maladie psychiatrique' are the 'explanations'-- does not discourage Brahim and his fellow Beurs (who are on the receiving end of

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acceptation de cette définition de la situation: les manifestations comme les attentats sont des troubles à l'ordre public et la police comme le gouvernement ont fait leur devoir."

[6] It is significant to notice here that the journalistic works of Michel Levine (1985), Jean-Luc Einaudi (1991) and the academic work of Brigitte Gaïti (1994) are all important in establishing the chronology of the events of the 17th October 1961 and the number of those killed and also the State's denial of what had happened.

[7] For the first time in 1989, the Beurs made their entrance on the French political scene, as some young Beurs were elected in the local elections of March 1989 and two other young women were elected to the European Parliament in June (Begag and Chaouite 1990, 15). The first Beur minister was appointed in the Chirac government after the May 2002 elections when a Franco-Maghrebian women was given the post of the Minister of Agriculture for the first time in French politics. (See the *Guardian* 28-05-2002, 4).

this violence) to fight their battle in France, not as colonial subjects but as citizens of the Republic. Brahim has no doubt that France is their 'home' where they will continue the fight against racism: "C'est ici chez nous, tout autant que chez vous, sinon plus!" (Brahim, 133). *Les meurtres racistes* are part of Brahim's and his friends' daily lives as some French people are still charged with colonial rancour and revenge:

> Celui qui tirait était souvent un ancien policier ou militaire à la retraite. Le genre de petites personnes qui ont toujours une arme chez eux pour faire des démonstrations aux copains. Et la nostalgie de la gâchette aident, ils s'offraient un carton de temps en temps, de préférence sur un cible basanée avec des cheveux frisés... Beaufs dérisoires, obsédés du canon scié, nostalgiques des ratonnades, ils se prenaient pour des héros (Brahim, 132).

Kettane commemorates the memory of the 17th October not only to show the brutality of the event, but most importantly to stress the collective self-affirmation expressed at the time by so many Algerians in defiance of the invisibility that was imposed on them by the State. Brahim's trajectory from the event of October 1961 extended to the Beur marches of 1983-5 and their continuous struggle against racism and racial murders. The colonial legacy of the Fifth Republic, which has been constructed on the mass murder of the Algerian masses throughout the Algerian war of independence, has made those crimes banal. Those who committed those massacres during the war have benefited from total protection and amnesty as stated by the 1968 law (Giudice 1992, 335-6). It is a law that encourages in postcolonial France the perpetuation of crimes against French citizens of Arab descent without any serious punitive measures.[8]

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[8] Giudice (1992, 337) argues that "A l'origine de la clémence judiciaire dont ont pu bénéficié les arabicides en temps de paix, il y a l'impunité totale dont ont bénéficié les policiers, les militaires, les fonctionnaires, ou les "simples particuliers", pour les arabicides commis en temps de guerre. Cette impunité, sanctifiée par les amnisties couvrant les crimes et délits commis avant le 19 mars 1962, a été tacitement acceptée par le pouvoir politique et judiciaire de l'Algérie indépendante, qui n'a engagé aucune poursuite".

a- "Arabicides"[9] and the Return of the Repressed

L'arabe parfait, identifiable à la première invective. Aux yeux baissés. Les morts sans mémoire, et craintives. Ceux qu'il fallait taire, par peur du sensationnel. Le crime ne paie plus... Ahmed Kalouaz (1986, 64).

Qu'importe! De paroles fulgurantes, je décrirai l'étendue de la désolation. Avec une pensée restreinte pour la résignation de nos pères, l'habitude des gestes machinaux. Nos pères, terrés sous la logique de l'occident. Jusqu'à y perdre la vie, la dignité, le souffle de la révolte. Debout, peinant, suant, dans des cadavres d'hommes. Kalouaz (1986, 78).

Ahmed Kalouaz's novel *Point Kilométrique 190* (1986)[10] narrates the true story of the murder of a young Algerian man, Habib Grimzi, on the 14th of November 1983 by a group of five French men on their way to join the Foreign Legion (Point, 7). The victim is first tortured and then stabbed to death and thrown out of a train travelling at 140 kilometres an hour. The train is travelling from Bordeaux to the Italian border town of Vintimille. Onlooking passengers who are too fearful to do anything (Point, 107) disappear afterwards refusing to bear witness (Point, 115). Kalouaz reconstructs the story in memory of the murdered youth. The story is narrated by the journalist who is asked to report "Un fait divers, comme d'autres" as the murder is seen as an insignificant piece of news in the French media (Point, 9). Though the victim is a complete stranger to the journalist, his death attracted her when she sees his completely mutilated body and she decides to give voice to the horrors of this racially motivated crime. Being obsessed with the murder of the Algerian man to which she becomes *une témoine*, Sabine takes the same train one year after Grimzi's murder to reconstruct the whole incident and imagine his state of mind during the process of being tortured and murdered. The novel is written in the form of a poem, a humanitarian cry for the murder of an innocent man.

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[9] In many of the Beur novels, there is a constant anxiety about the murders of their friends, close members of the family or remote members of the Franco-Maghrebian communities. Those murders are committed either by fascists and neo-Nazi groups, or by ordinary people who do not necessarily belong to any racist group or by 'drunken' policemen. Most of the time the reasons for the murders are trivial. Fausto Giudice (1992) provides a brilliant chronicle of the events of those continuous murders of French citizens of Arab origin in the 1970 till 1991. He stresses in his book *Arabicides: Une chronique francaise 1970-1991* (1992) that those murders were treated most of the time by the French justice system as 'work accidents'. In other words, Arabicide or the killing of young Beurs of North African origin has become a 'simple crime' (*simple délit*) or has become a commonplace event. Giudice cites more than 200 murders in 21 years.

[10] Abbreviated hereafter as Point.

Kalouaz performs textually a post-mortem reading of the body in an attempt to trace the memory of a mutilated corpse. Grimzi's body becomes a text on which a certain memory is inscribed as the journalist Sabine imagines its voice saying: "Nul besoin de commettre un délit, nous sommes marqués par la vérité de la peau. Par l'héritage de deux siècles d'histoire, et les mots du vocabulaire. Cantonnement, Razzia, Insurrection, Terrorisme. Les mots, les mots..." (Point, 42-3). The mutilated body of the young man translates two centuries of violent colonial history from which the French have not yet recovered. Colonial encampment with its 'racial' prejudice and hatred is what clearly motivated the murder. His skin colour provoked the murder: "la couleur de la peau fait basculer "les autres" vers la violence, vers le crime" (Point, 110). Azouz Begag (1990, 115) calls this 'difference' *"le délit de faciès"* because if the victim had "le teint européen", he would not have been killed. In other words, "Il s'agit bien d'un double meurtre: d'une personne et de l'image d'une partie de l'humanité. Ce meurtre est le rejet simultané de la différence et de la similitude."

Sabine reflects on the reaction of the French media, which gives little space to the analysis of the murder and perceives it as the result of alcohol (Point, 36-7). The narrative of some media is still saturated with a certain colonial mentality that does not recognise the seriousness of the offence and does not acknowledge the humanity of the victim.[11] Sabine accuses the media of inciting the murders with its campaign of hatred of the North Africans with "des mots qui donnent la passion aveugle" (Point, 45). This perpetuation of colonial hatred made the murderers 'believe' that "Quelque part, ils ont cru comprendre qu'un arabe ça peut se mutiler, se flétrir, s'assassiner avec sang-froid" (Point, 45). The language of hatred has become commonplace and overt and alcohol serves as the excuse for killing innocent people because they are Arabs (Point, 97) and the media encourages these attitudes (Point, 101). As a journalist, Sabine feels frustrated at the way truth had been covered up:

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[11] The representation of the Maghrebian communities on French television and media has not moved away from negative stereotypes. Carrie Tarr (1997, 79) argues that in the last decades French films have showed an incapacity to confront the colonial past and postcolonial present. Though a move has taken place in which the ethnic other is no longer portrayed in a comic way, ethnic and cultural differences are still negatively portrayed. Despite the fact that there are some attempts by Beur filmmakers and a recent generation of white French filmmakers to address the issue of the diversity of French identity and its implications, there is still a need for greater diversity of representations of ethnic minority identities.

> Tant la gêne, l'obstination que les journaux ont mis pour dépeindre ce drame, sous les relents racistes. Car cela permit à tout le monde de se sentir à l'aise. Parce que d'abord, il s'agit d'un "autre". d'un inconnu, d'un citoyen éloigné. D'un anonyme au prénom étranger. les gens se disent que cela ne les concerne pas. Qu'ils ne risquent pas de devenir un jour une victime. Puisqu'il s'agit d'un crime raciste... (Point, 108).

The media attempts a 'racialized' explanation of the murder in the sense that the Algerian man is murdered because he happens to be an anonymous foreigner without a face. This conceals a racial mentality that subordinates the humanity of other people and thus encourages xenophobia and hatred towards those perceived as the 'racialized' others. Sabine recognises the murderers in the courtroom "déterminés dans leur haine...ils n'avaient aucun regret, aucun remords. Les dernières bribes de l'alcool s'étaient envolées, mais le long voyage continuait, pour eux" (Point, 35).

The sequence of racial murders against the descendants of North African immigrants that were perpetrated in France especially during the 1980s has raised serious questions about the failing role of the institutions of justice, the institutional racism of the police force and also most significantly the rising star of the Front National with its racist and xenophobic politics. The famous "Marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme" in 1983 came as a response to the increasing number of racist massacres. Hundreds of thousands of Beurs marched in the big cities of France and ended their journey in Paris. However, the promises they received from the socialist government were just illusions as racist crimes have continued to haunt the young Beur with the failing role of the police force (Giudice 1992, 183). If the government slogan at that time was 'living together with our differences', the slogan of the Maghrebi youth was 'living together equal in what we have in common whatever may be our differences' (Wihtol de Wenden 1995, 246). The expectation that "la guerre des beurs" would take place as a violent reaction to the aggression against them has not taken place, instead the Beur have depended mainly on non-violent ways to call for their rights such as demonstrations, artistic creations in terms of inventions of ways of speaking about themselves through paintings, writings, and music (Giudice 1992, 332). This reveals their level of awareness of the importance of civil movements in helping them to raise their voice and speak about themselves despite the continuous hostility towards them.

(b)- The inscription of the French silenced History *dans l'enceinte* of the monumental architecture of Paris in Leila Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge* (1999)

Peuple français, tu as tout vu
Oui, tout vu de tes propres yeux,
Et maintenant vas-tu parler
Et maintenant vas-tu te taire
Kateb Yacine (1986, 38).

In this section I argue how sites of memory in Sebbar's text are also sites of amnesia, an amnesia that she tries to commemorate. The historical monuments of Paris carry strong contradictory significance of what is remembered colliding with what can not be remembered including anti-colonial memory. Edward Said (2000, 175-6) expresses this idea when he claims that specific historical dates and places can mean different things to different people.[12] Sebbar suggests that the legacy of colonialism is not only a problem for France but also a problem for Algeria as the violence has come back to haunt it with the on-going civil war that has claimed the lives of thousands of Algerians. Sebbar also interrupts the official history of Algerian Independence as she revisits the narrative of the internal strife within the FLN. What is unique about Sebbar's text is that it does not confine the memory of the 17th October to any specific group such as Algerian activists but to a large number of people such as French activists, members of the French police, ordinary French people who witnessed the event, etc. Sebbar suggests the memory of the 17 October as an event of inter-generational links between North African parents and their descendants.

Leila Sebbar's narrative *La Seine était rouge*[13] is a revisiting of the events of the 17th of October 1961. Sebbar's intelligent way of marking this forgotten event in French history relies on the testimony of various people who had lived it and were deeply involved in it. The novel is structured (in a Sebbarian style that resembles that of the trilogy of Shérazade) around three main characters: Amel, a sixteen year-old girl

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[12] For example in Mehdi Lallaoui's *Les Beurs de Seine* (1986: 158), Kaci explains to Katia and Farida the fact that the Algerian Consulate is located in Paris in a street called 8 May 1945 which for the French means the end the Second World War but for the Algerians, it is the beginning of the War of Liberation which became official nine years after. The 8th of May also commemorates the anniversary of the French massacre in Algeria where thousands of Algerians disappeared (ibid.).
[13] Abbreviated hereafter as Seine.

born in Nanterre of Algerian origin, Omer, a twenty-seven year old Algerian journalist living in Paris as a political refugee and Louis, a twenty-five year old man born in France of Jewish parents. Amel and Omer revisit the locations of the demonstration and thus the space of the violence and death, following the steps of Louis' documentary film on the event and the narrative of Amel's mother. Amel's, Omar's, and Louis's re-reading of the event insist on opening the graves, freeing the ghosts so that the dead bodies of the massacre of the 17th of October 1961 can be buried and the Beurs' post-colonial generations can lay the burden of memory to rest. Sebbar re-reading of the silenced history is marked geographically as Paris, the space where the demonstration took place, is re-invented and the city is re-opened to the multiple voices of its past. Amel attempts to piece together genealogies with the space she inhabits; she confronts the colonial legacy with its discursive and ideological influence so as to build a present in which she will not be excluded.

The architecture of the *cité banlieusarde* stands in sharp contrast with that of Paris. The *cité* is marked by an impression of closure and seclusion; from inside the cité, one can notice closure with bars that block the view (David Lepoutre 1997, 44). This may be seen in contrast with the monumental architecture of Paris the city that for a long time has served to commemorate events and people and keep away "death, absence and uncertainty". If Paris monuments are seen as "the mark of the resistance to absence" and the site on which resistance focuses (Paul Hegarty 2000, 49), I argue that Sebbar's text is an attempt to reveal the ways the monuments can be the trace of absence and exclusion. In other words, a certain history is absent in the monuments, especially the history of the violence of French colonialism. The glamorous monuments of the First and Second World War, such as the names of the heroes of liberation inscribed in the Arc de Triumph, exclude names of soldiers from the colonies who died in the wars in great numbers. Sebbar's text deconstructs the architecture of Paris in order to allow the silent voices that inhabit it to talk and register their fingerprints of forgotten memory.

Sebbar stresses the interdependency of all those events, from the history of the French Revolution to the conquest of Egypt by Bonaparte in 1798 (Louis's strong interest in digging up the history of the scholars sent to 'discover' and 'civilise'

Egypt), the Two World Wars (North African soldiers were heavily recruited in both wars to defend France), the colonial war of independence. such as the Indo-China wars (Amel's grandfather fought in the this war, (Seine, 34)) and the Algerian war. as well as references to the massacres of the Jews in concentration camps. Her attempt is to inscribe those intertwined histories in the memory and geography of France/centre/Paris in order to demonstrate the complexities of the Franco-Maghrebian historical, social and cultural relations that go beyond the simple binary opposition between a civilised France/centre and uncivilised periphery: the ex-colonies. Through this novel Sebbar attempts to resurrect the voice of the silenced dead of the October 1961 massacre that the French are too ashamed to remember.

Louis lives in a flat that overlooks the famous prison of *La Santé*, which reminds him of his French mother's incarceration in other prisons during the Algerian War with other Algerian women including Omer's mother (Seine, 25). But Omer's encounter with *La Santé* represents for him a silenced history of what had happened within its walls or what he calls its 'verité historique' (Seine, 29). Louis refuses Omer's 'lessons' as he believes that "à chacun son histoire, son regard", but he also passionately refuses Omer's 'Verité historique' that considers all the French to be oppressors as his film aims exactly at showing how French people like his parents believed strongly and thus fought for Algerian Independence: "Il l'a dit, il a dit: 'vous, vous les Français…' Tous les Français pour lui….Les parents, on les a traités des traîtres, et c'est tout ce qu'il à dire… C'est sa vérité historique…" (Seine, 30). However, Louis films Omer's own inscription on the wall of the *La Santé* prison: his own commemorative plaque sprayed in big red letters:

> 1954-1962
> DANS CETTE PRISON
> FURENT GUILLOTINÉS
> DES RÉSISTANTS ALGÉRIENS
> QUI SE DRESSÈRENT
> CONTRE L' OCCUPANT FRANÇAIS. (Seine. 30)

The famous prison is the site of a commemoration of the Nazi occupation but not of the French occupation of Algeria as the two histories seem to be colluding with each other (France being occupied while shamefully occupying other territories and nations). The site also suggests how colonialism has moved from outside the

boundaries of Europe to the heart of Europe. Omer's inscription of this silenced anti- colonial memory is set next to an official memorial plaque of the prison that commemorates the French prisoners who were incarcerated during the Nazi occupation; it says besides the famous: "LIBERTÉ ÉGALITÉ FRATERNITÉ":

> EN CETTE PRISON
> LE 11 NOVEMBRE 1940
> FURENT INCARCÉRÉS
> DES LYCÉENS ET DES ÉTUDIANTS
> QUI À L'APPEL DU GÉNÉRAL DE GAULLE
> SE DRESSÈRENT LES PREMIERS
> CONTRE L'OCCUPANT. (Seine, 29)

Louis's mother, Flora and her husband had actively worked with the Algerians during the War of Independence. Flora was imprisoned in Algeria with other Algerian women where she met Mina, Omer's mother who is now Flora's guest in Paris after fleeing Algeria as a political refugee. Flora and her husband were part of a group called 'porteurs de valise' which was a French group formed in France to support the Algerian militants in the War of Independence. Louis wants to immortalise his parents' passion for justice in a film, he tells his mother: "je le ferai parceque c'est pas mon histoire. 1954-1962. Le 17 octobre 1961, à Paris et vous dans cette guerre coloniale … Vous avez trahi la France, non? Vous êtes battus avec les Algériens contre votre pays….Je dis ça, je sais que vous n'avez pas été des traîtres…" (Seine, 26). In the making of his film, Louis wants to present the various voices that had participated and campaigned for the event of the 17th of October 1961 including those of his own French parents accused at the time of betraying France. The voice of the French police is also present as a French policeman in Louis's film talks about how "le seine était rouge" that day and how: "Le 17 octobre 1961, c'est un jour noir pour la police française. On peut dire: octobre noir… Parce que la Brigade fluviale, elle en a repêché des cadavres d'Algériens, et pas seulement à Paris. Combien? On le saura un jour" (Seine, 133).

Place De la Defense with the huge Statue de Marianne was another important historical location for the 1961 demonstration as it was the centre where Algerians had met. But underneath the Statue de Marianne, there is only a memorial to remember "the courage of the Parisians during the terrible siege of 1870-1871" during the Franco-Prussian war. Amel wonders about the fate of those Algerians

who were brutally suppressed under the Statue de Marianne on the 17th of October 1961: "Qui les a défendus quand les flics ont chargé au pont de Neuilly? Tu les a entendus les récits, la panique, les corps piétinés, les blessés, les morts....Les familles en habits du dimanche, les voitures d'enfants renversées, des souliers perdus, de grands, des petits..." (Seine, 56). Amel and Omer mark also in their journey, following Amel's mother's narrative and Louis's pictures, the Place de Concorde where many Algerians were shot and others detained; at the front of the hotel, Amel and Omer write in big red letters: "ICI DES ALGÉRIENS ONT ÉTÉ MATRAQUÉS SAUVAGEMENT PAR LA POLICE DU PRÉFET PAPON LE 17 OCTOBER 1961" (Seine, 88).

The famous fountain of Saint Michel is the place that links for Amel's mother the Algerian demonstrators of 1961 and the students of 1968 which she followed as a young girl on television screens. The students had cut the plane trees that had protected the Algerian demonstrators (before them in 1961) from police bullets (Seine 114). Amel and Omer read on the marble plaque near the fountain: À LA MÉMOIRE DES SOLDATS DES FORCES FRANÇAISES DE L'INTERIEUR ET DES HABITANTS DES V ET ARRONDISSEMENTS QUI SU SUR CES LIEUX LA MORT EN COMBATTANT" (Seine, 111). Total denial of those who found death at the foot of the fountain in 1961 has made Omer and Amel inscribe beside the commemorative plaque: "ICI DES ALGÉRIENS SONT TOMBÉS POUR L'INDÉPENDENCE DE L'ALGÉRIE LE 17 OCTOBER 1961" (Seine, 118). Amel and Omer follow Louis's itinerary in the film to discover the geography of the event, but every time they pass through those historical locations and inscribe the silenced history in their own way, Louis films the places a second time to capture the new historical inscriptions.

Sebbar's novel reflects on the France of 1996 but at the same time stresses the way the intertwined past of France and Algeria is brought up to date with an intensity that shows the strongly inter-linked histories of Franco-Algerian relations. The present violence in Algeria is revealed in a new light that aims to go beyond official versions and representations. Sebbar links the three main characters in a web that reflects on the history of France: Amel, the third generation of Franco-Maghrebians in France could not know what had happened that day in 1961 if she has not met

Louis and Omer. Her mother and grandmother who both lived the event do not want to tell her the 'truth' of what happened that day, but when she watches Louis's documentary with her mother as the main witness narrating the itinerary of the day, she decides to escape home and revisit the sites of the protest in Paris accompanied by Omer.

Amel and Omer are different in their perception of things, Omer does not see the relevance of Louis's film because for him that history interests neither the French, nor the Algerians nor the immigrants and does not change much about contemporary racism in France and the civil war in Algeria (Seine, 117). After thirty years of Independence, bloodshed in Algeria is disastrous: "la belle revanche" is probably what the French think, according to Omer (Seine, 117). As a Beurette, the memory of the event is crucial to Amel as it provides a certain historical genealogy with her mother and her grandmother who had participated in the event. Omer suffers from despair with history rather than apathy, as anti-colonial memory has not saved Algeria from the present bloodshed; Amel puts it to him: "Tu sais rien et tu veux pas savoir. C'est pas important, parce que aujourd'hui des Algériens tuent des Algériens? On sait pas qui, ni pourquoi... parce que ta tragédie est plus excitante que celle de ma mère? C'est ça?" (Seine, 55). Omer has fled the violence in Algeria where as a journalist he was threatened with death three times, for him: "l'histoire de la guerre de la libération, l'histoire officielle algérienne, je la connais par coeur, et elle m'écoeure, tu comprends?" (Seine, 55). The violence and civil war in Algeria, the continuous assassinations of intellectuals and journalists who speak against authority, corruption and tyranny are the real tragedy for him, since he cannot live freely in a country that had once rebelled against the yoke of colonial servitude. Anti-colonial memory for Omer is not the answer to the violence that has come back to haunt Algeria and France. When Amel insists that Louis's film is not 'official history' but unrevealed archives and testimonies, Omer tells her that he will show her some texts and photographs he has published in the Algerian press that are unheard of before in France or Algeria, such as the story of the sixteen year old *maquisard* (who is Omer's mother, Mina) and her mother who was a teacher in Tlemcen (Seine, 55).

If Amel is trying to inscribe the history of the 17th of October 1961 within the geography and memory of Paris, Omer also reflects on the unspoken history of the War of Independence of Algeria. His reading of non-official narratives of the war and his encountering testimonies of those years have made him discover that *'les moudjahiddins'* had not only killed the enemy, the French soldiers but also Algerian brothers whom they called "traitors". The latter were those who had different views about independence and the running of the State, that is those who were murdered because they dared to oppose authority and corruption: "des frères dans la Révolution [qui] ont été exécutés, par balles ou au couteau comme le font aujourd'hui les justiciers de Dieu contre leur propre peuple" (Seine, 67). Omer links the violence within the ranks of the Algerian revolutionaries, where some members were assassinated (because of internal strife) to present day violence in Algeria where the army and militant Islamic groups have declared civil war on each other which has resulted in the massacre of thousands of innocent civilians. There were also assassinations carried out between the FLN (Front de libération nationale algérien) and the MNA (Mouvement national algérien) which were competing to gain the representation of Algerian people in Algeria and France (i.e. among the immigrant community). Their confrontation between 1955-1962 had resulted in hundreds of deaths in France and Algeria (Seine, 142). For Mourad, an Algerian cook who experienced the event of the 17th of October, this reflects today's Algeria as the two opposition parties FFS (Front de forces socialistes) and RCD (Rassemblement pour la culture et la démocratie) are fighting each other instead of uniting, which contributes to over-empowering the army and its corruption in Algeria (Seine, 101).

Omer's reflection goes far deeper as he reminds Amel of the Quranic story of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Ismael to please God who then sent Abraham instead of a lamb to sacrifice. Muslims celebrate *Aid Al Adha* every year to commemorate this event, but for Omer this sacrifice is reflected in today's Algeria where those who slaughter (he means Islamic fundamentalists and the army) "... ne mettent pas un mouton ou une biche à la place, ils pensent que leur geste est sacré parce qu'il produit, à la lettre, le geste de soumission à Dieu, c'est une preuve de leur amour absolu de Dieu, ils vont jusqu'au bout de la purification, homme, femme, enfant.... Comme le mouton du sacrifice, les corps doivent se vider de leur sang, l'âme est

dans le sang, ils le croient, ils suppriment les âmes mauvaises, indignes de Dieu" (Seine, 67). For Omer this ancient act of sacrifice becomes 'natural' once it is accompanied by a 'purifying ideal' and thus Algerians have to live with this 'geste de mort', or 'geste de couteau' to be able to reflect on it and change it one day (Seine, 67-8). In other words, Omer believes that Algerians 'sacrifice' each other in the belief that it would 'purify' the nation of corruption. Amel refuses to accept Omer's logic, that of linking the revolutionary past of Algeria and the present violence through the act of death or "purification" of the brother/enemy for the general good of the nation: "On n'est pas tous des égorgeurs, je comprends pas. Les révolutionnaires et les musulmans sont pas tous des égorgeurs...." (Seine, 67). Amel does not understand the killing in Algeria though she is aware of what she calls 'la géographie terroriste', that is, names of towns and villages where the massacres are taking place (Seine, 39).

Sebbar's own act of commemoration of the event does not include only a voicing of the narratives of the Algerians who attended the event, but also those unheard voices of French people such as students, policeman, and the general public who either participated in the event or were witnesses to what happened. The voices of the Algerians who were recruited by the French army to fight the Algerians is also present, "*Les harkis de Papon*" ("*les calots bleus*"). One *harki de Papon* speaks of how the shantytowns of the immigrants (especially Nanterre) were all encircled on 17th October 1961 and how Algerians were murdered and thrown into the river Seine (Seine, 47). French narratives of the event also mark the Place Concorde, Station Solférino, pont de Neuilly, and Nanterre (where Algerians were killed) with their own perception of injustice and horror at what they had witnessed (Seine, 106). Sebbar includes references to French militants who raised their voices against French atrocities in Algeria, including writers such Henri Alleg who wrote *La Question* (Éditions de Minuit was the champion of books such as *Le Déserteur*, by Jean-Louis Hurst: a story of a French soldier who refused to fight the Algerians. (Seine, 106-7)).[14]

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[14] The memories of 17-18-19 and 20th of October 1961 have been kept in the dark in the French memory except for the books of Michel Lévine: *Les ratonnades d'octobre. Un meurtre collectif à Paris en 1961*, (1985) and Jean-Luc Einaudi: *La Battaille de Paris, 17 octobre 1961* (1991). Many people were imprisoned, some disappeared, and others were killed. Giudice summarises it as "A partir du mardi 17 octobre, et pendant plusieurs jours, les Algériens de la capitale française ne furent pas seulemt parqués au palais des sports de la porte de Versailles. Ils Furent battus, torturés,

Amel's mother, Noria, a Beurette herself born in Nanterre, narrates in Louis's film how her father was captured with other Algerians in the demonstration and how they were taken to the 'palais de Sports' where they were all "entassés, parqués, des centaines, battus, blessés, matraqués...."; they stayed there until they were deported to Algeria through Orly as they were unwanted on French soil (Seine, 127-8). Nobody knew their destination and their families were not notified. Ironically enough, Amel's mother remarks how *le palais de sport* was 'disinfected' the next day for the concert of Charles Ray, which took place on the 20th October (Seine, 128).[15] Noria also reveals another silenced demonstration, this time by Algerian women, which took place on the 20th of October 1961 at the call of '*la Fédération de France*' (Seine, 128). She participated with her mother and Flora, Louis's mother. The demonstrators called for "Libération de nos époux et de nos enfants", "À bas le couvre-feu raciste", "Indépendance totale de l'Algérie" (Seine, 128). Hundreds of women walked up to Sainte-Anne hospital where the police dispersed them (Seine, 128-9).

The last stop of Amel and Omer in the itinerary of the demonstration is Orly, the place from which the Algerian prisoners were deported to Algeria. Amel and Omer choose to fly to Alexandria instead where they meet Louis. Omer tells Louis that he is writing a piece for Amel: the story of a young girl, who digs the grave of her twin brothers executed and buried on a hill. The army displayed the bodies in the centre of the village. Whether this story is a reflection of Amel's escape from home (like

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assassinés par balles, pendus, noyés dans la Seine, ou simplement blessés, estropiés, détenus, déportés, par des policiers français, dans les rues de Paris et de sa banlieue, dans les commissariats, dans les stations de métro, sur les quais de la Seine, dans le bois de Vincennes, dans la cour de la préfecture de police, et dans des dizaines de lieux qui restent à répertorier" (Giudice 1992, 336). The government announced the death of two people (though the death rate varies from 50 to 200 and the number of those who had disappeared are more and an estimate of 1200 people were deported). The public reaction to those massacres at the time was limited and those responsible for them benefited from the state's clemency and thus there was never any judicial enquiry against them. The French media reported the death of two or three people ignoring the massacre of hundreds and the torture, imprisonment and deportation of others.

[15] The concert took place in the *Palais des sports de Paris*. Giudice (1992, 335) ironically points out that Ray Charles was blind, but the large French audience attending his concert appeared to be blind too to the horrors that took place in the stadium. Hours before the concert, the stadium was evacuated of hundreds of Algerians who were packed there in conditions similar to those of the Jews in concentration camps twenty years before. But it is true that "En France, tout finit par des concerts", which rather reminds us of Kettane's *Le sourire de Brahim* when the racist murder of Belaid was mourned by the young people of the *cité* by organising a rock concert.

Sebbar's protagonist in *Shérazade* (1982)) to dig up the corpses of the Algerians massacred on the 17th of October 1961 and thus exhibit their silenced dead bodies thrown in the Seine to inscribe them in history, remains a possibility. Louis is in Egypt to follow, in his new film, the steps of the scholars who came with Bonaparte during the invasion of Egypt in 1789 (Seine, 137). Louis remembers his father's Egyptian friends (Louis's father is a researcher in Egypt) talking about the expedition with passion if not anger describing it as "expédition coloniale", "savants manipulés", "Bonaparte, héritier des lumières", "chef d'État exceptionel", "Alexandre moderne".... (Seine, 77). Louis has spent hours in Collège de France reading the *Description de l'Égypte,* which was written by the scholars of the expedition in 1798 (Seine, 78). His attraction to the project of the film about the expedition especially the itinerary of the imperial scholars is not clear to him though he clearly marks this colonial expedition as the watershed in the history of France as it opens the doors to other colonial conquest and marks the crucial encounter between the near east and France (Seine, 81). He reads Bonaparte's Letter to his soldiers which still covers the real purpose of the mission: "Soldats: vous allez entreprendre une conquête dont les effets sur la civilisation et le commerce du monde sont incalculables... la première que vous allez rencontrer a été fondée par Alexandre." (Seine, 82). Louis writes to Amel who will be the heroine of his film about this orient of 1798 that Europe dreamt about and wanted to conquer it in order to "civilise" it and dominate its trade routes. It is in Louis's words "Le cruel mythe colonial" that he invites Amel in his film to subvert and unravel its hidden agendas (Seine, 94).

The interplay between memory, place and invention in Sebbar's text is used for the purpose of questioning historical exclusion. Sebbar's protagonists inscribe and commemorate in their own way the silenced passage of the 1961 demonstrators through the monumental architecture of Paris. This form of recognition encourages liberation and coexistence between various communities whose "adjacency requires a tolerable form of sustained reconciliation" (Said 2000, 191).

2- Mehdi Charef's *Le harki de Meriem*: Healing the Wounds of History, the Harkis in Perspective

Lui avait été un soldat et il avait perdu. Perdu sa guerre. Guerre à laquelle il ne croyait pas quant il s'était engagé. Il avait vingt-quatre ans. Tous les pièges et guet-apens tendus à l'armée coloniale n'étaient l'oeuvre dans son esprit que d'un groupe d'idéalistes facilement muselables. (harki, 74).

Mehdi Charef *Le Harki de Meriem* is unique in representing the memory of the Algeria war through the perception of the harkis, embarrassing figures that must be kept silenced: reminders of defeat and loss of glory for the French and interrupters of the official history of Algeria. Charef's narrative discourse stresses the politcal ignorance of the Algerian recruits exploited by their poverty, lack of understanding of the events surrounding them, or their obsession with power and money as means to revenge their total social exclusion. Azzedine, *le Harki de Meriem* recalls for the first time the monstrosity of the war in colonial Algeria after the loss of his son in a brutal racist murder in France. As I argued in chapter four (section five), the harkis and their descendants have suffered from the same marginalisation and exclusion as that of the North African immigrants and their descendants. But as Charef stresses in his text, they further carry the historical burden of being condemned to treachery against the Algerian nation, a burden that their descendants have been paying the price for.

The difference between the unfolding of French colonial history and its representations gives way to complicated and conflicting memories of the colonial natives and the French. It is a "... dialectic of memory over territory [which] animates the relationship of French and Algerian accounts of 130 years of French rule in North Africa" (Said 2000, 181). In Charef's text, the figures of the harkis further problematise the representation of history as they fall outside the logic of the 'dialectic' of the natives and the colonisers. Charef's text traces the narrative voices of various harki characters with their different attitudes towards the war in Algeria. Though Azzedine's narrative pervades the text, the harkis' historical point of view is not monolithic.

Azzedine's daughter Saliha is made ashamed by the Algerian authorities for daring to bring her brother's dead body to be buried in Algeria. She understands the hatred

felt for her as a daughter of a harki. Her father's family does not turn up to meet her in the airport as they are also ashamed of them (harki. 43). It is only her grandmother who comes to see her after she has escaped from her sons and daughters and after she has walked for a day and night to get to the airport. The encounter with her grandmother convinces her of the great love of this woman: "cet amour, elle ne pouvait y croire" (harki, 52). For the first time after her brother's murder, the grandmother's presence makes Saliha feel secure (harki, 66). Azzedine's mother is the only family member who does not disown her *harki* son as she explains to her granddaughter in the airport how he has sacrificed his life to feed his brothers and sisters. Addressing the tormented and rejected soul of her granddaughter, Azzedine's mother moves beyond the clear-cut distinctions of the Algerian official representations of the harkis as traitors. She links their history, the history of her *harki* son, with that of her husband who was recruited by the French army to fight the Germans in the Second World War (harki, 59-61). The use of the Algerian Muslim men to defend France in the First and Second World Wars (and the French Indo-china war) is not even recognised in French history. Saliha's grandmother reveals how her husband is taken against his will (and without even knowing where he is being taken) to fight the Germans. He comes back after five years of fighting; his brother and his next door neighbour are killed like many others from the surrounding tribes (harki, 60). He tells his wife how the French has placed the North African soldiers in the front ranks because they are strong and do not complain (ibid.). He is ashamed to return to his village in his terrible state as his whole body is very weak and full of wounds: "Quand ils n'ont pas besoin de lui ils l'ont laissé partir sans soins. Son ventre était tailladé par les coups de baïonnette et les pansements secs avaient épousé les plaies. De gros trous dans le ventre et des cicatrices jusqu'au cou" (harki, 61). Even though his wife tries to nurse him, he dies of his wounds confiding in his wife the state of his tormented spirit for killing people in a war that is not his own: "J'ai tué des hommes. Puis, avant de tourner la tête: Ils avaient aussi peur que moi" (harki, 61). The brief encounter between Saliha and her grandmother has renewed a lost affiliation with an Algeria that Saliha thinks has rejected her forever.

Azzedine is haunted with the still vivid memories of the brutal ambushes of the *moudjahiddins* in the mountains. The prisoners end up dead in the torture room

after undergoing all forms of most brutal torture: "De la chambre de torture montaient les cris secs et rident que les coups arrachaient à Antar. Entre-temps, c'était par saccades lentes et rauques qu'il suppliait qu'on l'achève" (harki, 109). The moudjahid dies from torture: "Et il ne pouvait même plus dire "Istiqlal". Il ne faisait plus que murmurer. Antar est mort de toutes les couleurs. Il y avait du vert, du gris, du rouge, du jaune et du bleu sur son cadavre nu, étendu au sol...." (harki, 123). He is just one example of the many sub-stories in the text of the French atrocities against the Algerians, this time narrated from a harki's point of view. We are reminded of specific events such as the massacre of Guelma in May 1945 when the French Army wiped out whole tribes, twenty thousand Algerians; a massacre that involved raping and killing women and children, armed and unarmed men (harki, 89-90).[16] There are also significant sub-stories of the war in the text, such as the rape of a beautiful young Arab girl by lieutenant Forbach and the two soldiers Lanson and harki Chaouch which provoke more hatred and repulsion for the harkis in the region.

Overhearing the painful cries of the prisoner coming from the 'confessionnal' (torture chamber) where other harkis take charge of brutally torturing the moudjahid who is pleading for them to end his life, Azzedine realises that night that he is trapped in a point of non-return and that even if Algeria remains French, he will always be seen as an oppressor (harki, 112). Azzedine realises that his life has changed forever and that whatever happened, even if France win, he will never be in peace: "'Istiqlal'[17] devint sa hantise. Le drapeau vert et blanc à croissant et étoile rouges n'arrêtait plus de flotter dans son esprit. Et c'est la mort qui flottait au vent

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[16] Many Beur texts revisit and invent the events of the violent conquest of Algeria. In Azouz Begag's *L'Ilets aux Vents* (1992, 81), the young boy in the novel received an important text from his runaway teacher who could not stand life in the small French colony in Africa. The story written by the teacher himself: "Soufian où la Révolte de l'Oasis" is "une histoire de racines, une vraie bataille" that will help the boy Siloo to finds his "points d'ancrage rapidement". This reinforces the fact that the strong identification Siloo feels for his wandering teacher is based on their common uprooting because of colonial and post-colonial histories. "Soufian où la Révolte de l'oasis" narrrates the story of an oasis in Blenda in the province of Constantine around 1830, the time of the French conquest of Algeria. The oasis resisted strongly the French occupation which provoked General Grand (who was leading the conquest) to give orders to destroy all the palm trees of the oasis one by one knowing that people there lived only on the collection of dates: "Pour ne pas perdre sa dignité, la France avait commis une atrocité" and devastates the whole village, but even though "le général Grand avait coupé court à la vraie bataille" (ibid., 106). Siloo reflects upon this event in French colonial history and how General Grand is "... le plus grand criminel de l'histoire de *notrepayslaFrance*", but French official history completely omits this and many other violent episodes: "l'encyclopédia Saber ne lui consacre aucune ligne" (ibid., 113).

[17] An Arabic word meaning 'independence'.

avec ses trois couleurs" (harki, 113). Becoming a harki for Azzedine is being without a choice in the skin of an other: "un autre qui n'avait plus qu'à exécuter les pires ordres et abattre les plus sales besognes pour se préserver. pour ne pas mourir"; he knows he will become repulsive like harki Chaouch (harki. 113). In one instance Azzedine has to use force to separate a *moudjahid* from his pleading wife. All the peasants move towards him in a gesture of protest, but the French *lieutenant* told them that "- Celui-là, il [Azzedine] est avec nous...Et il a raison. L'Histoire le confirmera." (harki, 107). L'Histoire, however, confirms something else, as his son is murdered in a racist attack in a country where he has given everything to 'belong'.

In March 1962, the harkis and their families had to leave Algeria for French exile beneath the contemptuous looks and insults of their fellow peasants (harki 152). The war was over but not between the harkis and "les fels" (maquis): "Il y a avait eu les fiers: les fels et les harkis. Maintenant, c'était l'heure des rapaces" (harki, 156). Many harkis were murdered by the New Algerian Guards: "les flics or les engagés de dernière heure", they were usually caught when they came to collect their families (harki, 156). Entire harki families were murdered, those who served as civil servants in colonial Algeria were also seen as 'harkis' and thus murdered: such as firemen, postmen, or even cleaners: "On retrouva des cadavres partout, dans l'oued, sous les ponts, là oú il y a avait une cachette" (harki, 156). That is another silenced history of Algeria, the violence that ensued after national liberation. Mehdi Charef paints a very realistic picture of the events of March 1962 when many if not all French settlers in Algeria (or pieds-noirs) and harkis fled the country towards France: "L'indépendance chassait les Francais de cette Algérie, où la plupart étaient nés. Ça grouillait de partout. Noirs les quais, les visages, les habits. Endeuillés. Pas un ne pouvait parler sans des larmes dans les voix" (harki, 160). *Les pieds-noirs* of Algeria confronted the same uncertain future in France as the harkis if not the same racism: "C'est tous des juifs! Espérons seulement qu'ils ne s'attardent pas ici..."; anti-Semitism was directed against the *pied noirs* Jews who were accused by the French of enjoying privileges at the expense of the indigenous population (harki. 166). Azzedine had escaped Algeria for his eternal exile in France. He suffered from stigmatisation and racism like all other harkis. but managed to secure a precarious life for his family in France. Even though the murder of his son in a racist attack has left him perplexed, confused and angry towards France, he does not

give up hope for a more inclusive France for his daughter Saliha and her two twins amid the hostilities not only of the French but also of some members of the North African communities.

In *Le sourire de Brahim*, Kettane points to the still persistent historical burden of being "traitors" carried by the descendants of the harkis in France though they suffer from the same racism and exclusion like other descendants of North Africans. In one instance, the protagonist Brahim manages to convince the son of a harki to join their protest group, but he is harshly scorned afterwards as a son of a traitor by one member of the group whom Brahim describes as "cet idiot a hérité de toutes les débilités des vieux et il n'a rien compris au film" (Brahim, 170). Brahim believes that the inherited stereotypes about the harkis must be changed: "ce qui des mentalités, il y a beaucoup de blocage et de chantage," and that the doors of solidarity should be open for the descendants of the harkis: "La guerre d'Algérie c'est fini, pour tout le monde, et les enfants d'anciens harkis, et bien, ils sont exactement comme nous [les Beurs]" (Brahim, 170). Kettane clearly refuses the stigmatisation of the descendants of the harkis and calls for more solidarity between them and other descendants of North African immigrants in their joint fight against racism and exclusion.

3- The interplay between history/memory/space in Tassadit Immache: *Presque un Frère*[18] and *Le Dromadaire de Bonaparte*[19]

Liberté, égalité, fraternité, amour, honneur, patrie, que sais-je? Cela ne nous empêchait pas de tenir en même temps des discours racistes, sale nègre, sale juif, sale raton. De bons esprits, libéreaux et tendres-- des néo-colonialistes, en somme-- se prétendaient choqués par cette inconséquence; erreur ou mauvaise foi: rien de plus conséquent, chez nous, qu'un humanisme raciste puisque l'Européen n'a pu se faire homme qu'en fabriquant des esclaves et des monstres.[20]

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[18] Abbreviated hereafter as Pres.
[19] Abbreviated hereafter as Drom.
[20] Jean-Paul Sartre in the preface of Fanon: *les damnés de la terre* (1961, 56).

Tassadit Immache's texts *Une Fille sans histoire* (1989), *Le Dromadaire de Bonaparte* (1995), *Je veux rentrer* (1998), and *Presque un frère* (2000) problematise the relationship between history and auto-biography, between memory and identity and between memory and space. All her novels carry autobiographical elements, marked by her experience as the daughter of an Algerian immigrant father and a French mother born at the height of the Algerian war. This passage in *Presque un frère* summarises the dilemma of Immache's relationship with colonial and anti-colonial history in France as it is retrieved from her mother's testimony of the night of 17 October, 1961:

> *Je l'ai supplié de ne pas sortir. Ton enfant, ai-je pleurniché. Est-ce je suis un homme? m'a-t-il demandé. Tu es un père de famille, ai-je répondu. Et de la lucarne, regarde, on voit très bien aussi. Tu n'as pas besoin de sortir. "Je vois les miens", hurla-t-il. Analphabète, votre grand-père n'était pas dénué d'une voix forte et authentique.*
> *On a regardé ensemble le spectacle religieux de la lucarne d'un grenier. On leur brisait le crâne, on les ramassait et on les soulevait la tête sanguinolente, personne ne comprenant leur langue, eux criant imma. Imma [mother in Arabic]. Tout le monde n'est pas au courant à propos de imma. Beaucoup ignore que le phenomène M est commun à notre et la leur. Le troupeau sourd, en uniforme, d'un même visage, hurlait et frappait contre ces boucliers avec ses matraques, la vue de premier sang ne les rendait pas aveugles, l'odeur au contraire leur venait narines et décuplait leur acuité visuelle. Après avoir jeté les corps, l'un derrière l'autre par-dessus le parapet. Ils ont couru sur la rive, enfoncer les têtes dans l'eau noire et puante. Ecraser quelques doigts qui se retenaient. Briser les dents de ceux dont les bouches imploraient. Tirer dans les orbites pleines de ceux qui les regardaient encore. J'ai supplié votre père de ne pas sortir. Est-ce que je suis un homme ou non? Sanglotait-il. Ou alors tu n'as pas d'enfant. Il a réveillé mon bébé: Qu'il regarde lui aussi! [...] Ordure! a-t-il hurlé, pousse-toi de devant cette porte. Est ce que je ne suis pas un être humain? Tu veux que je regarde les têtes des miens éclater sous les coups des tiens comme des pastèques, et, traînés par les pieds comme du gibier, s'enfoncer et mourir, privés à jamais de sépulture! Laisse-moi montrer, d'une lucarne, à mon fils ce que ta race fait à la mienne. Qu'il voie les frères de son père chercher l'air, le nez et les oreilles pleins de sang et d'eau. Ses yeux seront leur tombeaux.* (Pres., 138-9, text's italics).

The French mother, Hélène is trying to dissuade her Algerian husband from leaving their attic flat that overlooks the street to join his Algerian compatriots who were savagely beaten, tortured and murdered at the hands of the French during the infamous night of the 17th of October 1961. If the father wants his child to know this violent history of his ancestors to preserve their memory, the mother wants to protect all her children from getting to know this violence so that they would be

spared the daily humiliation and racism that she and her husband had suffered. The marriage of a French -Algerian couple at the height of the war with all the enmities and hatred between Algeria and France has deeply shaped the psychology of Immache and is strongly reflected in that of the protagonists of her texts. Reflecting now on that moment of history, the Algerian war, the massacre of the 17th of October 1961 and all the hatred, racism and humiliation undergone by the immigrants and their families in France at the time of the war, Hélène questions the way she has imposed amnesia on her children growing up at the time of the war to protect them and how that has confused them further.

For Hélène, memory is the reconstruction of the past, her own individual experience of the war of Algeria as it happened within the French territories, especially the memory of the 17 October 1961. However, her construction of that event is strongly linked with the present revolt of the youth of the banlieue, which is under siege from the forces of order, such as the police force and those in authority. She clearly sees their revolt as a revolt against despair, exclusion and racism in a way that reveals the commonality of these oppressions among the anti-colonial generation of their parents though with changing historical circumstances. Besieged in her flat by the representatives of the 'Office',[21] some soldiers from the city and the university lecturer who is appointed to 'study' the people of *les Terrains*,[22] who are all surrounding the *cité* in an attempt to control the youths in revolt, Hélène suggests that the occultation of a certain history that France does not want to recognise does not help heal the wounds of colonial crimes. She refers to her own personal experience of 'protecting' her children from knowing History, which has turned her children against her. She tells them about how she has ventured once to tell *l'histoire*-- a French word that carries the meaning of both a story and a history-- of the 17th October to her children. She stands in front the television screen so that they will remember the story the next day (Pres., 136). But when her children hear the beginning of the story "Une nuit, sur un pont, des hommes que l'on jette dans l'eau", they ask her to tell them another story that has "l'air fausse et pas l'air vieux" (Pres., 136). So she uses Greek mythology to reflect on the tragedy by referring to

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[21] The Office refers to those in authority as Héléne claims: "S'il s'était trouvé une personne pour prendre le temps de réféchir. Là-haut, dans les bureaux de l'Office" (Pres., 125).
[22] A significant word used by Immache to refer to the *banlieues* with their socio-economic deprivation.

the story of 'Astyanax'[23] and the River Styx in Greek mythology and how a mother tries to save her son from death but ends up causing his death (If she has immersed him completely in the water, he would not have had the vulnerable heel) (ibid.). Hélène thinks that she will empower her children if they are not exposed to the atrocities committed by the French against the Algerians during the war and the humiliation she has underwent as the wife of the enemy. But she discovers that instead of protecting them she has made them vulnerable and confused about their relationship with their silent father.

She is asked by the 'Office' to reflect on the violence of the *banlieue* where she lives or as they put it to her "où a commencé l'histoire" (Pres., 125). She clearly links the history of *les Terrains* with that of the colonial history that the French have consigned to amnesia. The representatives of the *Office*, however, ask her to start her "récit au commencement de l'histoire, et non aux origines", a discourse that severs the genealogical link with *les origines colonialiste* and thus explains the violence and the conflicts in the *banlieues* by using migrancy as an explanation in itself for all the misfortunes that have befallen the immigrants and their descendants (Pres., 137). This French 'official' discourse shows a strategic blindness and refusal to recognise the influence of the violent legacy of the colonial past in contemporary French society. If Hélène suggests colonial racism to be the focal point in the exclusion and violence of the youth of the *banlieue,* she subverts the official discourse that explains them by migrancy and thus blames the immigrants and their descendants to be the cause of their own misfortunes. In other words, when migrancy is seen as the only decisive element in explaining the exclusion of the ethnic *banlieues*, it allows opportunities for explanations that 'legitimatise' the violence and hostility directed against the immigrants and their children by their reluctant 'hosts' because they are seen as representing the reaction of 'ordinary people' to 'differences'. Xenophobia, hatred and violent murders in French society are strongly linked to French imperial history with its long established legacy of colonial racism. The effects of colonialism as Fanon suggests in *les damnés de la*

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[23] In Greek mythology, it is the story of Achilles, a hero of the Trojan War, son of Peleus and Thetis. When a child, his mother plunged him in the river Styx and so all his body was strong except for the heel by which she held him. She was unable to plunge him completely in the river thinking that he would die if she did so, but her act of protection turned out to be fatal as his heel was the only vulnerable part of his body. Thus, in the Trojan War, he was killed by an arrow in his vulnerable heel (hence the expression: Achilles' heel).

terre (1961) are to humiliate and dehumanise the natives. and it is this dehumanisation that is still at work with the North African immigrants and their descendants.

Hélène's sons and daughters of the Algerian immigrant are lost in *les terrains:* Tintin is looking for *un contrat d'apprentissage* but is always rejected by employers, Didi who is about to leave prison, Amer passing time with his black friends, Zouzou working in the supermarket, Louisa whose news she does not know as they fell out over her abortion and finally Lydia who though very successful is always sad, depressed and haunted with her violent childhood memories (Pres., 52-3). What has made Hélène change her mind about the importance of memory is the way her children are all haunted by this period of time she thought they were protected from. Therefore, she wants to keep the memory of the night of 17th October that she had witnessed from her own window alive to her grandchildren (Pres., 138). But she problematises the reception of this silenced history by future generations as she imagines how her grandchildren would not like her own narration of the witnessing of the massacre. One of them invents it in a new way, narrating it on a VHS in mode of science-fiction form as the people thrown in the water (Algerians) called V would be seen as coming from another planet and those that throw them into the water (The French police) who would be called X (Pres., 139-140). The end of this *histoire,* as seen by the grandchildren, depicts the ongoing events in *les Terrains,* where violence between the police and 'ethnic youth' of the banlieue is worse than ever:

> En tout cas, à la fin, les descendants des V reviennent de dessous de la flotte, non? Les morts-vivants, tu vois, ils disent alors aux descendants des X, merde, c'est vous les poissons. Et ils les écaillent vivants, au couteau, tu vois? [....] A la fin, tu vois, on tombe tous sur les genoux. Sauf que nos genoux sont cassés, tu vois? Ils nous les ont démolis à la batte de base-ball. Les os passent au travers de la peau. Sauf qu'on se marre, tu vois? On est des frères. On ne sent rien. On est le plus fort. Et tout ca finit dans le noir. Heu? (Pres., 140).

If colonial violence is not confronted, it will always come back to haunt future generations. *Le Troupeau,* a word Immache uses to refer to the young people of the

banlieue with their self-defensive mechanism of looking invisibly similar,[24] of being seen by others as anonymous, suffers from constant racist murders sometimes at the hands of the police officers. Immache links the colonial legacy with the deprivation, violence and exclusion of the residents of *les Terrains* who revolt against any authority or the 'Office'. She clearly compares colonial depictions of the killing of Algerians during the war with that of the representations of the killing of the young Beur in the *banlieues*. One can remember the stereotype of the Algerian with the knife that has been perpetuated since colonial times in Algeria, a stereotype that looks at the 'native Algerian' with suspicious eyes as he can always strike at the back and thus makes the murder of the 'Algerian' a legitimate act of self-defence.[25] This stereotype of the Algerian with the knife is still perpetuated with the youth of the *banlieue* and if in colonial Algeria, a *pied-noir* killing a native Arab would not even be considered as a murderer, in France today, the murder of the teenage who is physically 'different' is often legitimated as self-defence as "*they* carry knives--everyone knows that."[26] The same pattern of colonial violence still exists as 'the native with the knife', is replaced with 'the boys with the *canive'* in the *banlieues* which make their racist murders unnoticed at the hands not only of policemen, but also householders, bar-owners and other French citizens who would put the blame on the teenagers. Neil MacMaster (1995) traces the 'criminalization' of the Maghrebian immigrants back to the inter-war period in France as the North African single male immigrants were portrayed as thiefs and criminals. But this practice had already been established in the colonies through colonial French ideology with its racist depictions of the natives. Fanon clearly links, in his *Les damnés de la terre,* the French "scientific" inferiorization of the natives in colonial discourse with their criminalization. Mireille Rosello (1998a, 43) captures the continuity of this streotyping when she refers to the list of stereotypes that follows the word 'Arab' which is used interchangeably with that of 'Beurs' or 'Maghrebians' and which aims at classifying and stigmatising the Beurs in the same racist way as their parents.

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[24] Hélène, *une femme de terrains,* talks of how she lost her son to *le troupeau*: "J'ai peur, lorsque je cherche son visage dehors, je ne le vois plus. Ils se ressemblent tous. Il est dans le troupeau maintenant" (Pres., 10).

[25] David Macey (1998, 160) refers to the link between the 'Algerian' and the 'knife' in Albert Camus's *L'Etranger* when the anonymous Arab pulls a knife on Meursault, who immediately fires four shot from the gun he has been concealing. Nothing bothered Meursault afterwards except destroying the silence of the beautiful day; the murder of the Algerian passed unnoticed like many other murders of the natives by *les pieds noirs*.

[26] Most of the time, the figure of the 'Algerian' represents all North Africans in France, and thus Algerians are North African and Algerians carry knives (Macey 1998, 160-1).

She claims that "say the word 'Arab', and you will have pressed a discursive and cultural button, unleashing a Pavlovian herd of images: 'Arabs' or 'Beurs' or 'Maghrebians' equal Islam and fundamentalism and mosques and crowds and suburbs and fanaticism and fundamentalism and racism and antiracism and fear and insecurity and immigrants and illegal aliens and Pasqua's laws and S.O.S. Racisme and the Algerian war." Rosello identifies this reflex as lying beyond a certain opposition between left-wing or right-wing politics. This homogenisation implies that the figure of the young ethnic delinquent is 'unavoidable', since "youth equals delinquency equals immigration, equals children of immigrants, equals Maghrebi" (ibid., 48).[27]

One can relate this form of post-colonial stereotyping to the one that appeared in the aftermath of the Algerian war during which and since "(u)n climat de psychose anti-algérienne est suscité où l'on faire croire que tous les criminels sont Algériens et que tous les Algériens sont criminels."[28] Frantz Fanon (1961, 350) stresses in his *Les damnés de la terre* the link between racist colonial discourse and its practices and the 'criminalization' of the Maghrebians. He reflects on the way the constructed myth of the moral debasement of the North Africans causes them to be seen as "...menteurs nés, voleurs nés, criminels nés" (ibid., 353). Such 'racial' constructions are still pursued in the way the Beurs are perceived in France.

Hélène tells her daughter that she was sent a messenger before the events took place in the *Terrains* (when *le troupeau* was hunted by the police force and a young boy was killed) who told her that all studies agreed on the danger of *la meute*: "...ceux que vous appelez le Troupeau...Nous sommes au courant. Regardez-les se contorsionner comme des aliénés, écoutez-les pousser des cris!" (Pres.,11). She identifies the messenger as belonging to the same family as the guardian of the *Terrains,* those who refuse to see the despair and void of *le troupeau* leading to their revolt, "des gens qui refusent de voir que le gris sera mangé. Ils ignorent que dans le troupeau, ils ont tous un canif, dans la poche, ou sous la peau" (Pres.,11). In

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[27] I have argued in Section One (pages 94- 95) and Section Four (pages 117- 119) in Chapter Four how Azouz Begag and Mehdi Charef use the stereotypes inherited by the Beurs especially that of being thieves to 'strike back' at the dominant society and thus weaken in an ironical way the link between the ethnic youth and criminality.

[28] MRAP or Mouvement contre le racism, l'antisémitisme, et pour la Paix (1965, 48). Cited in Jim House's unpublished Ph.D. thesis (1997).

Presque un frère, the youth of the banlieue or *le troupeau* are seen as a threat to society by the representatives of authority and order in the sense that their revolt against exclusion threatens society.

If colonial missionaries were sent to study the natives (in order to facilitate the process of colonisation though the claim was to carry out *la mission civilisatrice).* 'experts' are sent to study the 'banlieue syndrome' in order to control the rebellious youth. Hélène reflects on the "Office's" strategy of 'inventing' things to 'deal' with the residents of *les Terrains* to the extent of sending 'experts' to study them as Hélène confides to Lydia, her daughter: "Allume la télé se soir. En ce moment, il passe au journal sur toutes les chaines. C'est un spécialiste, envoyé spécialement aux terrains, a dit la télé. Il parait qu'il donne un cours rien que sur nous à l'université." (Pres., 55). In other words, Immache's criticism is directed at the idea that the violence of the banlieues is something inherent in the ethnicity of the youth as if their physical and cultural differences make them essentially violent and criminal.

In *Le Dromadaire de Bonaparte*, Jasmine, the main protagonist of Immache's text, encounters in her research in the French official archives in Paris' town hall 'la fiche mécanographiée: *populations étrangères.*' It was a research project of the year before about *les premiers arrivants* of North African immigrants. Jasmine expects to find all the clichés in the files;[29] in one document, she finds out that the researcher has mixed "flagrants délits de police et des minutes de procès" while he wrote down that "ces gens-là ont une baisse inflationniste de moral" (Drom., 80). Ironically, Jasmine comments on this link between ethnicity and 'lack of morals', a legacy inherited from imperial thinking that claimed to civilise the 'natives' with their low morals, with the expression "tous ne pourront être sauvés" (Drom., 79). This echoing of French colonial doctrine on North Africans 'morality' has been perpetuated in other contexts as even writers such as Frederick Engels wrote on September 17, 1857 that the Moors of Algeria were a 'timid race' because they were oppressed but "reserving nevertheless their cruelty and vindictiveness while in moral character they stand very low"(cited in Said 1994a, 203).[30] The first arrivants have a serious fall in their 'morals' though cases of police injustices against them are

[29] "Elle repousse le tas de papiers et scrute avidement les clichés." (Drom., 79).

there in the records (Drom., 80). Another document focuses on their medical records which refer to the serious health problems of lung failure, kidney and heart problems, and sexually transmitted diseases, but the document does not refer to the fact that their damaged health is the result of overworking in chemical industries, mining and other dangerous jobs without any health or security measures. The young descendants of the first immigrants are categorised in the research archives also as foreign populations and the clichés about them are similar to that of their parents as the young men (in contrast with young women) are 'documented' as not being into education and particularly like fire, a reference to the burning of cars and violence in the banlieue, seen in this case as 'inherent' in their nature. The girls, like their mothers, are seen as submissive and do not cause much trouble (Drom., 79-80). These widely accepted stereotypes stored in an archive room as work of 'research' still perpetuate the same colonial representations of North Africans or those of North African descent as barbaric with strange habits and customs, which are seen as characteristics inherent in their 'nature'.[31] In other words, powerful colonial racism that was based on the superior 'racial' morality of the colonisers has been perpetuated in the metropolis, not only in relation to the first immigrants who are seen as colonial subjects subjected to this hierarchy, but also to their descendants who have not migrated from anywhere and who are immersed in French values.

Immache's texts do not explicitly challenge these depictions of the young people of the *banlieues* that conduct or rather regulate public official discourse about them, but more significantly and ironically reveal their contradictory essentialism through the characters of the novels who come from a French mother and an Algerian father, an embodiment of the entwined histories of both countries that resists any form of totalisation. The revolt of young people in *Presque un frère* is a refusal of the authority and tyranny of the state or the nation as they challenge the principle of confinement so specific to every governing body. The 'Office' searches for renewed modes of governing them and keeping them under control. Hélène asks her daughter to explain to her all this 'cirque' of sending an expert to 'study' them: "s'ils croient là-haut, dans les bureaux, que c'est en envoyant un type frapper à nos portes

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[30] Originally in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1972, 156).
[31] For a detailed analysis of colonial stereotypes in North Africa, see Patricia M. E. Lorcon: *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in colonial Algeria* (1995).

pour noircir gratuitement des cases sous notre nez, que nous, les z'anonymes, nous aurons un jour l'envie de repayer des impots!" (Pres., 55).

Besides ethnicising the 'violent nature' of the Beurs, the space of the banlieue is also ethnicised as it is kept at a distance. Immache's *Presque un frère* and other texts links history and memory with the ethnicised space of the *banlieues*. Patricia Lorcin (1995, 253) analyses the *mise à distance* that was widely implemented in colonial Algeria in terms of how the natives and the colonisers were separated not only culturally and 'racially' but also spatially. She argues that a "clear distinction had to be maintained between the settler and the indigenous population", a distinction that has been at work in the *banlieues* with their supposed 'ethnic difference'. Fanon (1961, 27) expresses the same view when he claims that: "la zone habitée par les colonisés n'est pas complémentaire de la zone habitée par les colons. Ces deux zones s'opposent (...) elles obéissent au principe d'exclusion réciproque: il n'y a pas de conciliation possible, l'un des termes est de trop." The differentiation of social space that had already been at work in colonial North Africa where the natives and the colonisers inhabit different social spaces has been practised in France where spatial barriers have been implemented in big cities. The space occupied by the North African immigrants and their descendants is at the periphery of the social map, which reproduces the past hierarchical colonial relations between France and its colonial subjects.[32] "The appropriation of history, the historicization of society", in Said's words, "...include the accumulation and differentiation of social space, space to be used for social purposes" (Said 2000, 93). The social privatisation of a territory is not about territorial boundaries more than it is about ethnic and social ones. The *panoptical* dimension of the structure of the *banlieues*[33] (situated outside the centre of the cities especially in Paris) is an important dimension of the power relations between the centre and the periphery. Michel Foucault uses the concept of panoptic spaces to describe the relation of power between the centre and the

[32]Neil MacMaster (1997, 87- 89) analyses how North African immigrants were given the poorest and most deprived areas of accommodations when they arrived in France. Heavy industrial factories and their primitive barracks were kept for the super-exploited racialised North Africans who were classified as the least competent among other immigrants such as the Poles, Belgians and Italians. The condition of living in those places was very poor as the companies did not care to provide good accommodation and the immigrants were driven by their desperate need to save money. 'The urban enclave' witnessed the concentration of immigrants to the extent of forming the 'Arab ghetto' (in the suburbs of Paris, North and North west of Paris such as Goutte d'Or, Aubervilliers, Colombes, Argenteuil...) near industrial zones and factories.

periphery especially in hospitals, prison and schools. Panoptic architecture implies a central tower open to peripheral buildings around it with windows directed towards the tower which allows the latter to exercise a controlling gaze over them but itself being protected from such a look (it allows the surveyor to see without being seen). Laronde argues that the panoptic model of architecture is mainly found in Paris where it is situated as the centre and around it is situated a great number of suburbs predominantly inhabited by the immigrants. This has produced an architectural structure where geographic exclusion is internal to it in terms of spreading the banlieues around the outskirts of Paris (they are not in communication with each other) and thus emphasising its panoptic nature and its dimension of surveillance that aims at keeping the immigrants in control (Laronde 1993, 96).

The ethnicisation of the neighbourhood or the cité, which is translated to spatial segregation or territorialisation, is the work of society, which converts social inequalities into cultural features. In other words, neighbourhoods are being ethnicised and spatially segregated as they are claimed not to accept the "civilisation" of the dominant culture because of their "cultural difference" whereas underneath this argument lies the fact that this ethnicisation of territory allows the covering up of social inequalities and exclusion. The young people coming from the (ethnicised) *cités* are inhabited by "les figures de la territoire plus qu'ils ne l'habitent" and from this comes the non-mastering of public spaces as the already existing classification affects their circulation (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 79).

The Beurs innovate in their description of the space of the banlieue, if Immache calls it *les terrains,* Charef gives it the name of *le béton*, a place dominated by *rien* (Thé, 11). Both writers focus on the way the space of the *banlieue* inhabits its residents in a way that continues to haunt them throughout their life. Immache's *Je veux rentrer* reveals how the space of the *cité Bleuets* where Sara, the main protagonist, grew up has been haunting her. Though she has been living in "un immeuble en pierre de taille entre les murs de la capitale", she has never ceased to be "la fille de la cité des Bleue" where her memory and history have been inscribed. At the end of the text, Sara is confronted by a police car during regular night check

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[33] The *banlieue* is a set of small neighbourhoods united only because of their geographical proximity to each other and their distance from the centre (Laronde 1993, 97).

and the first thing that she thinks to tell them is that she has left the cité for eleven years as if living in the cité and criminality are inter-linked.

In *Presque un frère,* Hélène's daughter Lydia (whom she describes as the most complicated and intelligent and who is successful in her career) tells her that she will never come back to *les Terrains* again (Pres., 108): "Maman, chaque fois que je me couche… je suis de retour chez nous. Au Terrains. Quoi qu'il arrive dans le rêve. C'est ici que ça se passe. Je pourrais bien habiter à l'autre bout de la terre ou dans une maison à un étage, être heureuse toute ma vie. Dès que je ferme les yeux, je ne me repose plus…" (Pres., 111). Charef stresses this idea of being inhabited by the banlieue when Madjid in *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed,* reflects on how the children internalise the coldness and dryness of *le béton*, which make them not only cold but apparently indestructible, but their fissures, like that of the buildings can easily be seen in times of crisis: "Qu'est ce qu'il y a comme fissures dans le béton: sur le coeur, sur le front, déjà tout petit. Ça s'élargit avec le temps, ça pénètre davantage et ca s'étend comme un lac, une déchirure, cicatrice indélébile, jusqu'aux tripes" (Thé, 62). *Le béton* always inhabits those who lived in it: "On ne se remet pas de béton. Il est partout présent, pesant, dans les gestes, dans la voix, dans le langage, jusqu'au bout des ongles…." (Thé, 63). Immache's use of the term *Troupeau* describes the youth of the cité in their collective despair:

> Tout ça, c'est la faute de temps. Ailleurs, le temps mange la couleur. Ici, le gris c'est la couleur du temps. Rien ne l'entame. Juste à espérer qu'un coup de canif écaille à force. Et quelquefois un accident. A faire jaillir le rouge de sang. Comment voulez-vous empêcher un garçon de plus de sept ans de prendre un canif? (Pres., 10).

Charef stresses how 'les mômes de béton' are seen as threatening in their collectivity: "On s'écarte de leur territoire. Quand on veut s'occuper d'eux, c'est pour mieux les détruire, proprement. Pour les séparer. En horde ils attaquent. Ils dérangent" (Thé, 64). It is the young people living in the *banlieue* who find themselves carrying the stigmatisation of this space and thus they are seen as representing the image of the place (delinquency, drugs, violence, etc.). Lydia confesses to her mother that though she tries to lead a 'normal' life after leaving *les terrains* with her successful career, she falls into her "neurasthenia" every time the people outside *les Terrains* "represent" them:

> Maman, si tu sortais des Terrains, tu entendrais ce que disent les gens dehors, tous ses gens autour de moi qui pensent très fort. Ne me demande pas à quoi ils pensent! Ce que ils imaginent me cloue au sol et me détruit. Aujourd'hui, j'ai trente ans et je ne me souviens de presque rien. Il y a cette peur qui monte, sauf que je ne sais pas si c'est la mienne ou la leur. (Pres., 55-6).

Pierre Bourdieu (1993, 42) argues how stigmatised territories (*banlieues)* degrade those who live in them and they in return degrade them symbolically. But whatever the attitude of the young people towards the debasement of the *banlieue*, it remains in the Beurs texts a territorial space or a space where their rebellious social and cultural roots are taken shape, where childhood memories and adolescence fantasies have been constructed (Lepoutre 1997, 42). In most of the Beur texts such as *Le thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed, Les Beurs de Seine,* and *Les ANI de Tassili,* Beur characters invest in specific spaces on the thresholds of the *banlieue,* such as staircases, building entrances, caves, and terraces, in order to appropriate them and mark them with their own presence. Hélène remarks in *Presque un frère* upon her visit to *les caves* of the *cité* that the young people have totally marked the space with their own presence: "Ils sont prêts à tout pour avoir un endroit avec leur propre odeur et non mélangée avec la nôtre" (Pres., 100).

Therefore, if territory as a 'normative' social construction is imposed by the dominant discourse (the ethnicisation and segregation of territory), the complex and contradictory efforts of the (poor and young) inhabitants of the cités to recompose and re-appropriate this territory in order to give it a meaning different from the external world is a strategy of resistance to the confinement they subdue. In other words, young people refuse to accept the space of the banlieue as a space of confinement but a space of possible cultural innovation: "il [le territoire] traduit la rupture tangible entre les usages dominants et la multiplicité des procédés qu'inventent les "territorialisés" pour cesser d'etre enchaînés à leur territoire" (Souilamas Guénif 2000, 80). In Leila Sebbar's *Shérazade,* the *banlieue* is portrayed as the centre of urban fashion, rap music, squatting, and as labyrinth of exploration. A film is designated by Julian for Shérazade to be its heroine, it is called "le banlieue c'est beau". The idea of the beautifying (*faire beau)* of the space of the banlieue is important in most Beur texts as the ground for resisting the

stereotypical images that degrade their space. For example, in Mehdi Lallaoui's *Les Beurs de Seine*, the banlieue is a place of childhood memories of which Kaci is very proud. He takes his French friend Katia around the market of Barbès in Goutte d'Or and then around Argentueil; he describes the North African dominated market with its smells, food, and people as an integral part of his life. The space of the banlieue constitutes a major support for the identity of the youth since they are rooted in it and thus strongly attached to it. It is a culturally constructed territory to be appropriated and mentally invested in by the adolescents especially in its relation to the history of the parents' migration to France. A history of immigration (as expressed in Immache's text *Presque un frère*) that provides the inter-generational link, that though stressing the difference between the parents and their descendants, creates a certain foundation for the continuity of exclusion and marginality. The Beurs reject the memory of their parents' emigration as being linked solely to the mere economic logic that situates them in a relative position in relation to the role they played in helping France to reproduce itself, this time not in the colonies but within the metropolis. In other words, the Beurs disavow the representation of their parents' history in France as 'guest labourers' chained to servitude and domination, but they are historically linked it to French colonial history and the decolonisation process in their own countries. The parents' anti-colonial memory in France at the time of the national liberation in North Africa, especially the events of the Algerian war, provides grounds for the Beurs to consolidate internal bonds with their parents' struggle against racism.

In Immache's *Le Dromadaire de Bonaparte*, Jasmine, the main character of the text embarks upon the excavation of a certain colonial memory related to *le dromadaire* used by Bonaparte to move around during his invasion of Egypt in 1798. I argue that Immache links the history of the displaced camel that was forced to migrate to France with that of the enforced displacement of *les premiers arrivants* from North Africa. Jasmine receives a letter from her sister Rosa about *l'histoire* of the historical camel in which she writes:

> *Il faut que te raconte, écrivait Rosa. Pour une fois, j'avais pu prendre ma journée. J'étais partie dans une petite île voisine. Et alors, imagine-toi, Jasmine, que je tombe sur un musée africain...Non, ce n'est pas un canular! Le drapeau national flottait au dessus de la porte d'une des maisons du village. A l'intérieur, quelle mise en scène! Dès l'entrée, la gueule jaunie et*

> *sous-titrée d'un aristocrate en casque colonial: le fondateur du musée lui même. Dans le vitres, des animaux sauvages empaillés sur des fonds décolorés de désert, de savane, de jungle. [...] Enfin, je découvre, comme plantée au melieu d'un rêve, à deux mètres de moi, une pauvre bête, harassée, à l'oeil vitreux, au poil pelé. Un dromadaire d'Arabie. Sache que c'est celui que monta le général Bonaparte pendant la campagne d'Egypte! Rameneé vivant en France, il est mort au jardin zoologique de Paris, où il a été naturaliseé et conservé. Une plaque gravée le certifie. Le Muséum d'histoire naturelle en a fait don au grand voyageur. Vois-tu, sans comprendre pourquoi, tout ça m'a beaucoup remuée.* (Drom., 73).

Like Rosa, Jasmine is immensely intrigued by the history of the camel beyond the one existing in the 'Exposition coloniale' on the small African Island (Drom., 26). She changes her job in the town hall to work in the archives in the hope of digging up some history about the subject, but she instead encounters documents on what she calls *les tontons* or the first generation immigrants from North Africa (Drom., 79).

When the deputy mayor notices her working hard in the archives, he tells her that: "C'est une tâche un peu salissante mais méritoire. La génération actuelle ne montre plus d'intérêt pour les travaux de mémoire" (Drom., 81). Angrily, Jasmine told him "qu'il suffisait de retrouver le mot qui entraînerait à sa suite tous les autres" (ibid.). In other words, *les travaux de memoire* are for Jasmine linked to French imperial history that had displaced a great number of people, including her own father. Her search for the history of the displaced camel is linked with her search for her own *tonton,* her father's brother and the only relative they know from their father's family in France (like all the other protagonists of Immache, Jasmine's mother is French). The forced displacement of the first generation due to colonial and post-colonial upheavals is related in Jasmine's imagination with the captivity and enforced displacement of the poor animal. She tells the deputy mayor about the poor animal's one-way journey into exile: "Imaginez, lui racontait d'une voix sépulcrale la jeune femme, cet animal historique, immobile, fatigué s'il en est! en captivité loin des siens, porté les quatre fers en l'air sur le pont d'un bateau, les flancs mouillés d'écume, découvrant soudain à travers la brume glacée et îlot presque! Lui qui croyait enfin rentrer..." (Drom., 83). She expresses the same sympathy for "les tontons" or "les étrangers qui viennent de l'autre côté de la mer" as they remind her of her own used immigrant father: "Ce qui est troublant...c'est qu'il y a entre eux et moi comme un air de famille!" (Drom., 33). A colleague in the town hall where

Jasmine works passes her a medical report where "elle apprend que des rhumatismes et des troubles du sommeil donneront bientôt aux tontons des mines affreuses. Demain, ils feront peur aux petits enfants d'ici avec leur gueule de vieux" (Drom., 31-33). She sees one of those over-exploited old 'tonton' walking on a street pavement: "Il tremble comme un parkinsonien. Ou un Vietnamien sous le napalm." She immediately thinks of telling him in his own language (which is her father's language) what she has learnt before at the university that "il faut rentrer chez toi!" but she cannot as she transfixes to the spot "comme bête. pouffante de chagrin" (Drom., 35). Like the historical camel, their journey is a one-way trip.

Jasmine wants to visit the small island where the animal is kept in a museum, she writes to the Natural History Museum for more information. But she is sent a letter in which she is told that the camel does not exist: "Le dromadaire de Bonaparte n'existe pas et l'étiquetage du Musée est erroné. Ce spéciman fait partie des dons qu'accordait le Muséum national dans les années 1930-1935 aux musées qui le demandaient" (Drom., 84). After receiving the information from the Natural Museum denying the existence of the dromadaire de Bonaparte, Jasmine sends a letter to the deputy mayor asking for permission to stop work because of long illness as if she has given up hope of retrieving the history of the displaced camel, not even acknowledged in official records. Like the camel, her uncle 'tonton' whom they love very much but have lost trace of a long time ago is finally found by Lilas in a community cemetery of a banlieue (Drom., 104-5). Jasmine claims that "Tonton" has changed a lot and become like their father in his last days, an overused and exploited immigrant with no health left and no financial gains either as he keeps on moving from one hotel to another with his wife and his daughters (Drom., 104). Like the camel, her uncle dies ignored, as their contribution to the history of France is not even recognised officially, they are both denied a proper official remembrance by the French. However, the history of *le dromadaire* marks the beginning of the French imperial conquest (the conquest of Egypt in 1798) in North Africa and thus the uprooting of the camel from its own land to die in exile is the beginning of an other enforced displacement of people under colonial subjection.

Her obsession with the archives and the history of the *dromadaire* is replaced by that of her violin (Drom., 92-3-4), which she had stopped playing immediately after

her father's death when she was sixteen (Drom.. 98). Now at thirty. she wants to take courses in playing the violin, and she looks for the teacher's reassurance that she can play again. The violin seems to be her only escape from the confusion of her troubled childhood: her double origins. the 'history' of her father. one of those long forgotten 'tontons' who died, like the historical camel of Bonaparte. unrecognised in a land that was never 'his':

> Il est de ces morts qui vous mordent à la tête, sèchent, cicatrisent et s'effacent et dont vous retrouvez la marque rose et grise, indélébile au creux de vos reins! Il est des morts qui vous tueraient presque pour toujours... Il mourut une nuit. Ce fut sans surprise. Dans l'exil, abandonné de tous, au fond d'un vieil hôpital, la dernière scène fut la plus tragique: celle de "l'immigré de service", grand corps usé, rongé, nié.[34]

For Immache, survival as suggested by the character of Hélène, is through the connection of histories, the French and North African one and not through their essential separation. Hélène, a French woman married to an Algerian immigrant emphasises this link by insisting in her address to those who represent French officialdom on *le droit à la memoire*. In other words, Hélène suggests that by confronting the violence of the past, a move towards the present and future without violence in the banlieue could be possible as the youth of the *banlieues*, mostly from North African descent still suffer from the legacy of that violence. In reading Immache's texts, one comes to the conclusion that her characters are always inhabited by other echoes coming from other histories since history is not 'linear' but collisional. Immache uses the space of the *banlieue* as the site of historical memory, the memory of migration and colonial racism but also most significantly for the Beurs, it is a site of resistance to authority and to the perpetuation of colonial racist attitudes.

4- Tassadit Immache: *Une Fille sans Histoire*[35], 'une Fille de l'histoire'

De l'avoir trop scrutée (le corps penché en avant, arrêté par la table où trône la machine à inventer des histoires) il me semble que la photo de famille se décompose. Troublée, je recule de quelques pas. Mes paupières battent. Ma vue se bruille. Un malaise m'envahit. La petite fille que j'étais, seconde après seconde, me rencoie l'insupportable question: Puis-je aujourd'hui certifier que j'ai survécu sans cesser de vous reconnaître? Elle, derrière sa vitre en souffrance. Toi, dont ils mirent le coeur à nu, comme pour se convaincre de ton inutilité de ciel immigré. Après avoir sué sang et eau, il ne te restait plus dans les veines qu'un mélange de haine et d'alcool. (F., 11).

Une Fille sans Histoire traces the childhood memories of the young Immache. Lil reflects on the life of Immache as the daughter of a French mother and an Algerian immigrant father who confronts the im/possibility of a constructing her own history among the various contradictions that destroy such a history before it is even constructed. Lil, a name given to her by her father as Lila (in Arabic it means the night), is transformed into Liliane by her own mother repressing its Arabic origins so that nobody will suspect she is an 'Arab'. This suppression, born out of the events of the Algerian war marked by traumatic memory-sequences and by the scars and wounds of the war, is what Lil voices in her narrative. Lil speaks about how the doors of hospitality and friendship were being closed from within in France by a shameful violence, which had made her and her brother and sisters the witnesses of a repugnant, inhospitable environment.

(a)- Photographs and Imprints of the past: "C'était à mourir d'amour et de haine"[36]

Trop usé par une vie de misères et d'humiliations, trop occupé à gagner leur vie, lui [le père], qui n'avait jamais eu assez de mots francais pour leur dire, qui n'avait même plus la force de gueuler. Il avait abandoné. Que pouvait-il contre leur féroce assurance d'enfants décidés à survivre envers et contre tout, et... contre lui? (F., 112).

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[34] The protagonist Lil describes the death of her immigrant father in Immache's *Une fille sans Histoire* (1989, 115).

[35] Abbreviated hereafter as F.

[36] An expression used by the protagonist Lil to describe the family photographs (F., 117).

In a photograph that she has found among her father's things after his death, Lil describes herself, the little child in the photo, as having "entre les yeux les deux griffes de l'anxiété" as a child growing up in the Algerian war of independence from an Algerian father and a French mother (F., 10). This family photograph, with which Lil has started to reflect upon her life and her family as a young woman, now takes us back into the past of her life as a child divided between two shores of identity and belonging. In the picture the family wants to 'appear' so that it will not be lost by amnesia with "the Algerian". The family wants to draw attention to itself and not to its origins, but Lil wonders how could that be possible at the time of the war (F., 140). She can finally see as a grown-up the fragility of the unity of the family (in colonial time) represented in the photograph:

> La photo de famille. Nous y voilà, mais y sommes-nous? Est-ce une famille? Ils étaient deux pour la faire et la défaire, non? Le chef de famille est présent. Cela ne va pas durer. Dans une seconde, il va sortir du champ. Le père est algérien, la mère est française. En plein guerre d'Algerie, pourquoi avoir pris la pose? Par amour? Haine? Par désir ou par répulsion? (F., 138).

Love, hatred, repulsion are the emotions Lil struggled with in her relationship with her parents, especially her father, who has always been absent from their life. Unlike her brother, Lil was very close to her father when she was a child, but she feels that he has abandoned her, leaving her 'trapped', 'frightened' and lonely (F., 139). Lil believes that her father has never accepted them as "les tiens". He thinks that by giving his father's name, Farid to his son and his mother's name to his daughter Lila, he will have "tiré à bon compte", but "comptes mauvais d'ennemis Monsieur Ali, à te maquer avec la fille du 'bourreau'" (F., 140). He wants them to be "Algerians", tired at the end, he gives up on them as his last daughter is named Francine (F., 141). Her mother wants them to be French, but like the father, she cannot make them French as "ils ne l'avaient pas été vraiment" (F., 141). Thus "elle ne nous avait plus quitté des yeux. Lui vaincu, ne nous plus parlé, plus touché" (F., 141). Lil cannot escape the labyrinths of her 'destiny' and that of her brother and sisters surviving the turbulent relationship of their parents marked by the violence of the war and enmity between France and Algeria: "la vie, c'était bien ce vacarme qui emplissait le clapier, faisait trembler les années sur le calendrier [...] et les poussait, groupe tragi-comique de marmots affolés, d'une chambre à coucher à une salle de

bains. Ils posait des gants de toilette glacés sur le front de la mère et écoutaient, de l'autre côté de la porte verrouillée, le père cogner et jurer" (F., 79). The image of her worried mother eternally waiting for her absent husband behind the glass of her attic window for fear that he may be murdered at the hands of the French is deeply engraved on Lil's memory since Algerian immigrants and their children were targeted as the enemies of the Republic because they supported the FLN. Lil cannot understand the way her mother is attacked as a French woman sleeping with "the enemy". Her parents give up on her a long time ago, as they cannot accept her marriage with an Algerian, especially as her father was a soldier in the French army.[37] She is seen as "une salope, une putain qui couchait avec un bicot pour ses moeurs bizzares, et qui s'était fait faire deux bâtards, plus un à venir, en pleine guerre d'Algerié madame! Et avec ça, des p'tites gueules blanches et des yeux bleus!" (F., 19). Lil's mother has suffered from brutal racism at the hands of her own compatriots, apart from the misery and poverty of being a wife of an immigrant (F., 19-20). For the sake of her husband, Lil's mother has accepted all forms of misery, people's hatred, loneliness and war (F., 49).

The father's silence condemns his existence to death even before he is physically dead. His actual physical disappearance has changed Lil's perception of the past as she wants to understand the silence of this man who has never told her a story about himself: "Le silence avait dû se faire lourd, son absence, définitive, pour qu'enfin je l'entende lui, et cherche à ne plus perdre son cri" (F., 14). In a post-colonial moment, in the aftermath of colonial scarring, Tassadit Immache's autobiographical self, Lil, attempts to write a history of a girl without history: *Une fille sans histoire* or rather whose history is overdetermined for her as the daughter of an Algerian immigrant and a French mother and who was born and brought up at the time of the Algerian War. The phantom of her father's memory haunts her in an invisible way. She has carried the stigma of her Algerian origins that have degraded her in school (her blue eyes and pale skin will be forgotten when the name Azhar comes up), but still she cannot be on the defensive all the time: "*Papa,* je ne pouvais pas les tuer

[37] With the help of the law, her parents took her two girls from her first marriage and refused to recognise her again on the basis that she had betrayed them, especially her father who was a soldier in the French army during the German occupation (F., 32-3-4). However, Immache ironically points out that many Algerians fought the war against Germany to free France from occupation side by side with the French soldiers including Lil's own Algerian father and many had lost their lives, though this has been deleted from France's heroic narratives of the war of occupation.

tout le temps" (F. 140). With her 'tignasse d'arabe' as one girl describes her, her "esprit bouillait, nourri de visions de vandalisme" Lil is perceived by the director of the *La Maison,* to which she is sent to study, as a threat to the 'future' of society. She writes in Lil's social record: "comment avait-on pu permettre l'accès à la culture à ses jeunes animaux incapables, avec leur frustration, leur rage, de goûter sans dévorer! La société de demain saurait-elle faire face à leur appétit de revanche?" (F., 95-98). Rage and frustration are the emotions that Immache has struggled with in her history of hatred and violence that her parents have tried to survive with their own love and bond of marriage but could not succeed. Her 'revenge', however, comes in the form of counter narratives, a tracing of her parents' *lieux de mémoire*, to give meaning to the historical coordinates of their personal and familial memories.

Lil traces her father's absence and silence to translate it into a cry, "l'étranger" who had to pay "la dette de l'exil"(F., 14). It is only shortly before her father's death that Lil started to search about Algeria and the origins of her Arabic name "Lila". Before then, she has always been "Lili-Liliane" playing on the ambiguity of her father's family name "Azhar" pronounced "Hasard" by the French; she did not attempt to correct the mistake:

> Elle avait si longtemps était cette Lili-Liliane ...aussi vrai qu'elle avait si souvent tablé sur l'ambiguité de son nom de famille, lorsqu'on l'interpellait: "Hasard? Comme c'est original! Et Lil, c'est quelle origine?"
> Avait-elle jamais cessé d'arborer le ruban racoleur, d'abuser du bleu de ses yeux, de mendier publiquement, outrageusement, une histoire qui ne fut pas la sienne? (ibid.).

She had tried to be 'French', to adopt a history that is not hers or to ignore her father's existence. Lil has always been frightened of the idea "qu'elle pût se fendre en deux morceaux avides d'en découdre. La France et l'Algérie" (F., 123). She thinks that school provides a safe haven from this fear of being divided between the two countries in war, but she understands that in school "Là où l'Histoire, quand elle est insoutenable, n'est pas écrite dans les manuels" (F., 123-4). The French History that she is taught in school banished to oblivion all the events that are embarrassing. Colonialism and her father's history are silenced: "Elle n'y avait rien entendu sur

presque un siècle et demi de colonialisme" (F., 124). Her mother has encouraged her to 'forget' that 'history' which her father refuses to share with her with his emotional silence, leaving her confused and perplexed: " Je suis aussi ta chair...mais n'étais-je pas dans le passé ton enfant chérie? ... et pourtant tu ne m'as plus emmenée avec toi...?" (F., 118). Looking at the family photograph after his death, Lil can see him with "ce regard mélange d'orgueil et de souffrance, de rage et de dignité" of an exiled man condemned to silence (F., 50). But after the years that follow her father's death, Lil tries to "capture" her father's silence or "reach" him in an attempt to reach her filiation with him but she fails to be the "other" person and she remains perpetually in a state of homelessness or *'errance'*, a condition of her troubled history:

> Dans les années qui suivirent la mort de son père, Lil voulut noircir ses cheveux, brunir sa peau, assombrir ses pupilles décolorées. Mais elle échoua, là aussi, à paraître une autre. Elle essaya encore de devenir quelqu'un... ce que le dictionnaire définit comme "une personne absolument indéterminée" (F.,124).

After his death, and as if she wants to commemorate his existence, Lil strongly voices the history of her Arab name and its correct pronunciation: Lila as she tries to stress the "i" and the "a" as "Li!...La! El Lil c'est la nuit, la racine du nom est la nuit...La nuit est arabe...je suis aussi une Arabe...comme lui" (F., 130). Her filiation to her father is not about 'les marques de doigts', as her brother told her, but 'des empreintes digitales' that have uniquely marked her life even though she has been trying to suppress it (F., 142). Thus, comes the urgency to give her father a proper burial, to lay his used body to rest by voicing his history and by commemorating his life that had been destroyed since he had been called as a colonial subject to fight against the Germans for French freedom, but years later, the French thanked him by killing his own people in Sétif 1954 (F., 140-1). This double contradictory memory of her father (defending France but being disavowed by it) is also imposed on his son Thierry who joins the French marines when he is seventeen, which Lil perceives as his own way of escaping by sea (F., 108). When his father gets to know about it, "il avait congé sa tête contre le mur...Puis il avait dû relever vers elle un visage vidé de sang" but it was their mother who translated his pain into words: "Son fils! Son unique garçon! Son fils par le sang et le nom! "Mon fils!... et pour les Français!" (F., 107). Thierry's career in the army is cut

short a year and half later: "l'armée expliquait au fils français de Monsieur Ali que les entrailles des sous-marins français arbitaient des secrets que sa filiation trouble exposait à de trop gros danger" (F., 108). Thierry's 'troubled Algerian filiation' cannot be trusted with carrying the secrets of the submarine; it is a matter of suspected loyalty. Thierry takes notes of this 'manquement à l'honneur' (to which his father has been subjected) that suspends his French citizenship because of his Algerian origin (F., 108).

In conjunction with the family photograph marked by *la haine et l'amour*, Lil remembers the trace of another photograph that reveals a certain history to her. It is taken by a photographer who comes to visit aunt Renée's farm in search for pictures for a calendar and he chooses Lil from among all the other children (Lil and her brother and sisters have been staying with aunt Renée, since their mother is hospitalised). The photographer encourages her to tell him the story of the scar underneath one of her eyes. She tells him how Marc, one of the boys living with them in aunt Renée's farm, has hit her in the face with an arrow as he wants to kill her because she happens to be a *bougnoule* at the time of the Algerian war (F., 59). She is possessed by a certain fear: "La douleur était là soudain. Elle que la flèche avait plantée, brûlant la peau, irradiant l'aile du nez, enflammant son visage. Elle avait voulu crier sa peur" (F., 58). She wonders how Marc knows that she is a *bougnoule* though she has eyes and hair fairer than his: "Pourtant, les yeux de Lil étaient aussi clairs que les siens et ses cheveux avaient la même couleur dorée. Comment Marc avait-il deviné qu'elle était un bougnoule!" (F., 59). Contrary to Aunt's Renée's declaration that "les enfants oublient vite", Lil cannot forget the scar that Marc has inflicted on her (F., 66). Even though the photographer calls her Lila as if he knows her real name: "il avait dit distinctement "Lila!" comme s'il l'avait connue", he changes her photograph to represent another person with another history that is not Lil's: "elle y avait les yeux plus bleus, le cheveux plus blond. On ne voyait plus trace de la blessure sous l'oeil droit" (F., 60). The photographer erases her scar, that of being the descendant of an Algerian *bougnoule* at the time of war. He effaces the scar of the war that she has carried as a child and of which she can never free herself. Aunt Renée tells them that their parents will come to collect them as "la guerre est finie!", though Lil imagines "le photographe l'emportait dans

ses yeux, et la promenait intacte, invulnérable, très loin de cette foutue histoire" (F., 61). He has also betrayed her and imposed silence on her scars.

Lil remembers very well the imprisonment of her father and the way the French police has attacked them in their house in search of arms for the FLN and the barbaric way they have treated her pregnant mother. She is taken to the police station where she is interrogated till morning by "des animaux excités depuis des mois par les descentes dans les bistrots, la chasse à l'homme dans les bidonvilles" (F., 34). She is abused by the police inspector and his officers: "Les bougnoules n'ont pas de femme, il n'y a que des putes pour coucher avec" and when she reminded them of her being a French national, they suspected her father of collaborating with the Nazis: "Ça c'est français? Une salope qui se fait sauter par un Arabe pendant qu'ils saignent nos gamins là-bas!" (F., 35). Lil also remembers "l'odeur chaude de l'étranger", "ce mélange délicieux et effrayant de sucre et de haine" when one night he (accompanied by Lil) is arrested by the police and searched for arms (F., 31). Lil's father is kept for five days in prison where "les coups avaient couvert les insultes" and where hundred of them are savagely tortured (F., 40-1). Traumatised by this violence, Lil's father confesses to his wife: "qu'il savait que ses enfants ne parleraient jamais sa langue, il pourrait bien encore trimer comme une bête à l'usine, comme il avait trimé dans les mines avec son père..." (F., 42). It is his fear that his children will confide his language, his memory and his 'Algeria' to oblivion.

Far from being *une fille sans histoire*, Lil is the embodiment of the Franco-Algerian relations in all their contradictions; she emerges from that history that, though stained with bloodshed and violence, can still offer some hope. Being the daughter of a French-Algerian marriage at the height of the Algerian war is already in itself a history of resistance to rage, violence and despair though the scars and wounds that were inflicted on her are persistent and painful. In reconciling her father's and mother's voices, in recognising her father's historical memory, Lil reappropriates past history towards the present where sharing and not negating would be possible.

Conclusion

One can clearly conclude from a reading of these Beur texts that as post-colonial writers, the Beurs attempt to subvert the official representation of history of both sides France and North African. Thus their texts include testimonials, revisions and notations of the anti- and post-colonial experiences, which destabilise fixed and secure national narratives and identities. The Beur refuses to totalise the French national memory that excludes the history of their parents, that is, they reject the monolithic and linear representation of history that excludes and negates the history of their ancestors. They stress the interdependency of the French and North African histories and thus refuse the obscuring of certain events deemed to be 'embarrassing' to the French. The Beurs' exclusion within French society, as we argued in chapter four, has directed their uncovering of colonial and anti-colonial memory since it provides tools for understanding the present with its colonial legacy. Their narratives can be claimed to be narratives of resistance or counter-memories to the State's hegemony over history. Historical memory for the Beurs can be at the service of the present political needs and thus they claim its use in helping to eradicate exclusion, violence and racist crimes against them. The continued exclusion of the post-war immigrants from the making of French history which still perceives them as an "alien wedge" is a manifestation of the perpetuation of colonial culture or the 'empire within' that still preserves the same power structures that existed in the colonies (Robert Young 1990, 175).

I have analysed how the Beurs as a postcolonial diaspora interrupt the idea of the commonality of the French memory as they present a critical alternative to that memory by opening it up to other interpretations and other silenced histories. They problematise the belief in a common memory as the basis of nation-making as they reveal the contingent political dynamics of commemoration and they offer other memories that disrupt the French national genealogy. Kettane and Kalouaz's text are marked by the return of colonial violence that haunts France. Colonial hatred seems to permeate all generations. Even though the Beurs are not colonial subjects but French citizens, racist crimes of the anti-colonial generations are still perpetuated against their descendants. The memory of the 17th October 1961 is a marker of anti-colonial memory within the French territories that is strongly present

in most of the Beur texts. Sebbar provides a multiplicity of voices that participated in or witnessed the 17th of October. French official history, as inscribed in the monumental architecture of Paris, is deconstructed through a counter-inscription of anti-colonial memory that reveals the fragility and hypocrisy of the process of French official commemoration. In Charef's text, such a commemoration comes from the unwanted figure of the harki who disrupts the national narratives of both the French and the Algerians. Immache's texts are unique in 'historising' autobiography and personalising History as most of her protagonists are marked by the devastating hostility that their Franco-Algerian parents underwent at the time of the Algerian war in France. The space of the *banlieue* is still the site of such hostility as a colonial legacy of inhospitality and hatred has been transferred to the predominantly 'ethnic' youths of the *banlieues* still at the receiving end of racist violence.

Reflecting on the Sétif massacre of 1945, Mehdi Lallaoui insists on the importance of sharing colonial and anti-colonial memories between France and North Africa so that the denial of past memories would be brought to the present post-colonial moment with its various forms of racisms in order to construct a future where plurality could be respected. Lallaoui puts it this way:[38]

> Contre les haines de tous bords, la mémoire, elle aussi est un enjeu pour la démocratie. Faire oeuvre de mémoire pour nous, est un acte d'éducation antiraciste élémentaire, car les fondements de ces concepts de supériorité sont nourris par les aventures coloniales. [...] Nous pensons qu' une histoire partagée et acceptée par tous contribuera au respect de l'autre et, d'une certaine façon, à une réconciliation des peuples des deux rives de la Méditerranée.

But can one argue --as Cixous does-- that the violence of colonialism, inhospitality, hostility and fear that united the colonisers and colonised could be turned into something else, into what Cixous (1998a, 172) calls her *Algériance*, something redemptive with an air of hope and promise for the future? She claims that:

> As if there were something stronger than wars, repression, forgetting, resentment, the century of misunderstanding, something gentler, more ancient, more immediate, more fleshy, more free, a force independent of all

[38] As the president of the organisation "Au nom de la mémoire", Mehdi Lallaoui wrote this article on the fiftieth anniversary of the Sétif massacre in *Libération*, 08 May 1995, p. 22.

> struggle that laughs at championshipings, claims and reproaches, and which is called Algériance. My unexpected sisters and I give each other Algeria and for the past we have the future without violence of which we dream together.

Cixous claims that Algeria's violent past returns to her in the figure of her 'Algerian sisters' or 'the Algeria with women's arms', militant activists who have given Cixous renewed hope and promise for a future without violence and a hope in a renewed feminism (ibid.). The Beurs' affiliation with their parents' colonial and anti-colonial memory does not restrict itself to a politics of blame, but extends towards a critique of the French mode of thinking about colonial history that is still marked by exclusion in order to open it up to pluralistic representations of history and memory. If the Beurs' parents were seen as temporary 'guests' that had to be 'welcomed' in order to meet the need for a labour force in the post-war period, and were reduced to the state of servitude as a dominated class with no share in the making of French history, the Beurs rejects this crude economic perspective in the representation of the history of immigration that for them denies the historical complexity of colonialism and post-colonialism. In other words, the history of immigration is part of the history of France (or rather just a part of its contemporary geography) and thus North African immigrants are historic figures strongly linked with French imperial history. While strongly affiliating themselves with their parents' history of migration, colonial and anti-colonial memories as markers of their identities, the Beurs stress their claim to be insiders with a strong filiation to France and refuse to inherit their parents' images of colonial subjects stigmatised with the racist and stereotypical colonialist legacy. But the 'France' that they are hoping to write is not historically and culturally monolithic and does not identify them with the migrant lives of their parents' colonial and anti-colonial generations (or identify them with their parents' native lands) and thus puts their loyalties to France on trial and keeps them at the margins.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Ils nous assimilent à des immigrés, alors que nous on est ici chez nous autant que eux. Et ça ils ne veulent pas pas l'admettre. Ils s'arrangent pour nous parquer. Kettane (1985, 167).

Appartenir ou s'appartenir? Surtout ne pas trahir. Surtout pas de masques. Marcher en dehors du moule, cracher sur la boîte fermée, dévier de l'axe tracé avec dans la tête la chanson de son coeur. De demains personne n'est propriétaire pas plus que d'Aujourd'hui. Kettane (1985, 172).

Se montrer, bouger, crier, quitter l'ombre des robots. Surtout ne pas attendre le couvre-feu, enlever son bâillon et écrire son nom en lettres de couleurs. Arrêter de balbutier, mais crier sa vérité. Marquer le temps présent avec des larmes de l'espoir. Ketane (1985, 172).

Conclusion

The problem of inhospitality or hostility and xenophobia in France and Europe decades after the horrors of colonialism and fascism raises a crucial question about the relationships between communities of different "race", religion, culture, etc. Hospitality is not only marked by the 'autochthonous', the 'familial' and the national that exclude the Other, but is also marked by the legacy of colonialism with its hierarchical and racist subordination of other cultures and people. One comes to the conclusion after reading Beur post-colonial texts that they deterritorialize not only the French language, culture and the constructed national uniformity, but also express the Beur difference in a way that challenges the fixed roles and identities assigned for them as 'second generation immigrants'.

The Beurs, French citizens of Maghrebian descent, still carry the image of the North African immigrant with its violent colonial residue that relegates them to the margins of French society on the basis of their 'cultural', 'ethnic', 'religious', and social affiliations that are deemed incompatible with French values. However, as I argue, through a close reading of the Beur texts in Chapter Four, the Franco-Maghrebians problematise the cultural and historical mechanisms of belonging to France as they provide an alternative to notions of blood, "race" and a bounded national culture. Thus, they offer resistance to patriotic and nationalistic authorities through various strategies. My analysis of Begag's, Tadjer's and Charef's texts in Chapter Four reveals what I call the Beurs' narratives of exclusion in French society, which question the French concept of citizenship seen by the Beur as being exclusive only to those seen as *les français de souche*.

I appropriate in Chapter Two Derrida's deconstruction of hospitality in Western tradition, which is marked by the paternal and the *phallogocentric*, or by the logic of the master/host, nation, the door, or the threshold. This for the purpose of calling into question the limitations of this specifically "European" history of hospitality and thus justify the idea that the determination and experience of hospitality hold a future beyond this history and thus hospitality beyond the logic of "paternity" and

its extension to the nation or the *logos*. Derrida's concept of hospitality destabilises the notions of the host/guest since the host/guest can not be known or determined as a concept because the Other/guest cannot lend him/herself to "objective knowledge" and as the Other is always absolutely Other, beyond calculation.

The closure of cultural, social and linguistic boundaries (apart from territorial ones) marks the 'traditional' concept of hospitality. However, Hospitality deconstructs itself precisely when it is put into practice as it thrives on the paradox of presupposing a nation, a home, a door for it to happen but once one establishes a threshold, a door or a nation, hospitality ceases to happen and becomes hostility. I argue that the aporia that Derrida introduces between on the one hand unconditional, ethical hospitality and conditional, political hospitality does not paralyse hospitality, but in fact, it opens up politics to ethics in the sense of intervening in the conditional hospitality in the name of the unconditional, an intervention that, though surrounded by contradictions and aporias, recognises the need to pervert the laws for the sake of perfecting them.

I deconstruct the 'conventional' perception of hospitality in order to open it up to its various acceptations and meanings. This allows me to use the concept of hospitality beyond the traditional debate about the 'reception' and 'integration' of immigrants in their host countries, which still foster the idea of the immigrant as the Other of the 'host nation', towards the more sophisticated issues of the contradictions in Western democracies in their relation to those who fall outside the definitions of the 'fictional national identity'. The French Republican tradition, one the one hand, claims the equality and 'fraternity' of all its citizens whatever their "race", culture or religion, and on the other hand, fosters the implicit and latent exclusion of "racialised" groups such as the French Muslims or the Franco-Maghrebians from the benefits of the full rights of their citizenship. The French State's treatment of the Beurs is still affected by colonial assumptions based on the notion of a "civilisation superiority" that stems from the creating of 'difference', and upon which the French assimilationist logic is based. Thus, "so long as a colonialist legacy of ethnically based discrimination and limited socio-economic opportunities continues to exclude ethnic minorities from the full benefits of citizenship, the unfulfilled promises of the

republican model of integration will breed bitterness and disappointment" (David Blatt 1997, 53).

Etienne Balibar (1992, 115) refers to the process of the racialization of 'foreign' groups in contemporary France and how the process of assimilation is manipulated by the State's power (or power relations) as it is based on total cultural conformity of individuals and groups:

> Ce n'est pas *parce que* ces populations sont irréductiblement différentes qu'elles doivent être traités différemment par l'Etat, amis, au contraire, *parce que* l'Etat les traite différemment en droit et en fait, que leur différence culturelles, professionelles et ethniques (qui souvent ne sont plus importants que d'autres, intérieures à la "communauté nationale"), occultent ce qui les identifie à la population dominante, et font l'objet d'une discrimination et d'une exclusion.

Moreover, Balibar recognises how racism is an 'excess' of nationalism, or a latent possibility inherent within its project (ibid., 81-2). Chapter Three dwells on the issue of how the Western concept of democracy is based on the law of birth, the natural or the 'national', the law of 'homophilia' or 'autochthony'. I argue that Derrida's language of deconstruction in *Politiques de l'Amitié,* which is strongly linked to the heritage of the pre- and aftermath of the French Revolution and its legacy of *Fraternity, Liberty and Equality*, opens up the issue of democracy and a certain 'French fraternity' beyond the exclusion of the Other, or beyond the nationalistic and the fraternalistic towards the concept of democracy-to-come. French fraternity prescribes the 'androcentric' ethnic group though the French Republican tradition considers itself to be unique in its treatment of its citizens. I argue that Derrida suggests the idea of democracy-to-come that frees the interpretation of the concept of equality from its "phallogocentric schema of fraternity" which has dominated the Western democracies, since the concept of fraternisation has played an important role in the history of the formation of politcal discourse in Europe, especially in France. Derrida calls for a friendship that transcends the 'natural' or determined brother as the basis of democracy-to-come, since democracy, like hospitality, is marked by the same aporia between *the* law and the laws, between incalculation, unconditionality and calculability, conditionality. But political democratic decision must be kept alive to the ethical demand of the advent of the Other. Derrida's work on politics refuses any form of nationalism or

in Critchley (1999, 279) words "a nationalism that believes that justice can incarnated within the frontiers of the state or the words of the tribe."

It is diasporic populations like the Beur that offer versions of solidarity that transcend notions of racial purity and national belonging. As post colonial "translators", the Beurs problematise the issue of representation which is important in deconstructing the nationalist myth of unity and conformity. In Chapter Five, I argue that in reading Beur texts, one senses the constant resistance to a certain French 'monoculturalism', especially in schools, the institutions of 'integration'. It is conveyed through a separation between a French superior culture and thus language and a 'Maghrebian' immigrant inferior culture that stigmatizes its bearers as possessing a 'deviant' culture. Belghoul's, Begag's, Houari's, Kessas' and Boukhedenna's texts stress through a process of translation the loss of an "original" identity or origins. As hyphenated diasporic people, the Beurs exist "in translation", which implies their questioning of notions of essences and origins and their search for a richer complexity that responds to their various clusters of identification. The Beur(ette) protagonists resist the tone of conformism coming from both the French agents of integration and the parents, while opening their identities to the various facets of their being young, women and of Maghrebian descent.

Chapter Six traces the significance of colonial and anti-colonial history in Kettane's, Kalouaz's, Sebbar's, Charef's and Immache's texts that all personalise history and historicise autobiography by giving voice to silenced colonial and anti-colonial testimonies. I argue that the Beur protagonists problematise the belief in a common memory as the basis of nation-making as they reveal the contingent political dynamics of commemoration and they reveal other memories that disrupt the French national genealogy. The commemoration of the anti-colonial memory of 17th October1961 takes pluralistic forms in Beur texts. Kettane and Immache link it to the contemporary history of the space of the *banlieue* which is still the site of such hostility, as the colonial legacy of inhospitality and hatred has been transferred to the predominantly 'ethnic' youths of the *banlieues* still at the receiving end of racist violence. Sebbar inscribes this silenced memory on the heart of the monumental architecture of Paris, which witnesses its amnesia, following the journey of the demonstrators in the city. I maintain that while the Beur strongly affiliate

themselves with their parents' history of migration, colonial and anti-colonial memories as markers of their identities, they stress their claim to be insiders with a strong filiation to France and refuse to inherit their parents' images of colonial subjects stigmatised with the racist and stereotypical colonialist legacy.

Therefore, diasporic cultural translation is crucial in inscribing heterogeneity, emphasising the futility of the myths of pure origins as the latter are always fissured and mixed (Chapter Four and Five) and interrupt the idea of the commonality of the French memory as they present a critical alternative to that memory by opening it up to other interpretations and other silenced histories (Chapter Six). It is the diasporic populations with their artistic creations and literary innovations, such the Beurs in France, which can keep the possibility of an ethical hospitality alive to the dangers of hostility and closure as they resist categorisation, nationalisation, racialization and the authority of the state with its myths of national purity and conformity. Thus, they provide a real alternative to the authority of the state. Even though the Beurs suffer from severe exclusion and marginalisation, they use various strategies to resist and subvert such stigmatisation that come from their inheriting the image of the North African immigrant with its residue of a violent and racist colonial legacy.

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